

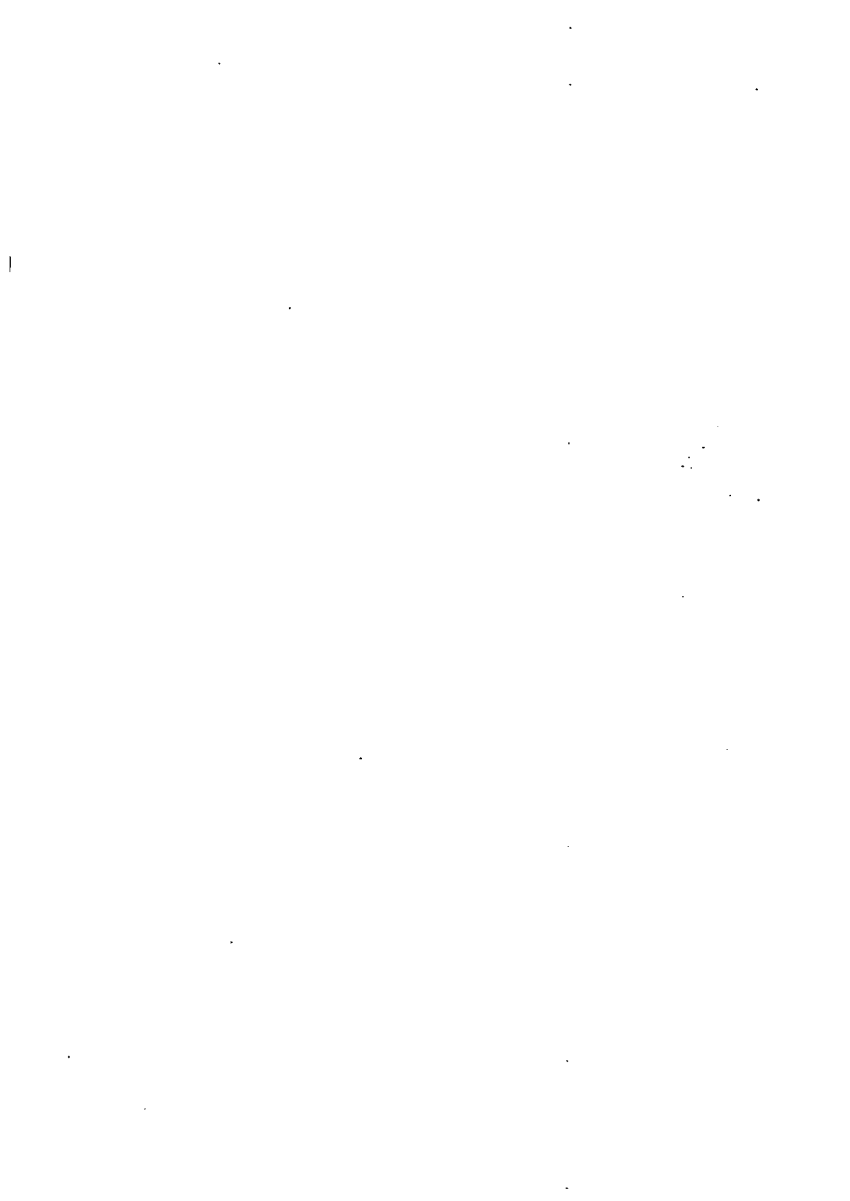
1979



Book
of
Discipline

Free Methodist Church

1.70



The Free Methodist Church
of
North America

THE
BOOK OF DISCIPLINE
1979

“Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son” (Acts 20:28).

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FOREWORD

The Free Methodist Church is a connectional church. That is, all of our congregations live under a common constitution and share in the support of certain common goals and ministries. In non-constitutional terms, we belong to God and to one another.

This book contains actions taken by the General Conference of 1979 along with revisions made to our laws and procedures as a denomination. The material is wide-ranging, much of it having to do with such technical matters as the delineation of conference boundaries, how a minister transfers his membership from one conference to another and who has supervisory responsibility over provisional annual conferences overseas. Therefore, much of what is here may seem remote from the interest of inquiring Christians.

At the same time, the book carries a summary of our doctrinal commitments in such documents as our Articles of Religion — Paragraphs 101-131 — and our rituals — Paragraphs 900-904. It states our understanding of the way doctrine works itself out in Christian living — Paragraphs 300-381. Our mandate for this, we believe, is the teaching of the New Testament. This book therefore reflects the ethos of the Free Methodist Church.

You will discover that we seek to continue in the historic Methodist tradition. We subscribe to the Wesleyan understanding of Christian doctrine, and we seek to live by a Methodist vision of Christian life and ministry. Holiness continues to concern us as a mark of Christian experience and evangelism as a mark of Christian concern. Moreover, we seek to promote the work of the Lord in an orderly way. Hence this handbook of the church is called, appropriately, *The Book of Discipline*.

The Editors

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The Free Methodist Church

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND CHARACTER

The Free Methodist Church is best understood within the framework of the biblical concept of the church, the perspective provided by its historical heritage, and its commitment to the needs of man.

A. The Biblical Concept of the Church

It is clear from Scripture that the church is *of* God and *for* people. It is his creation. Christ is its head. The church is the people of God chosen for a purposeful partnership in accomplishing the will of God on earth. More than eighty metaphors, word pictures, relating to the church appear in the New Testament. Each portrays a more profound reality than does the picture it brings to mind. The pictures together make clear the nature and mission of the church. Paul speaks of the church as "body," "building," and "bride." The most inclusive and perhaps the most significant metaphor is "body of Christ." The redeemed are spoken of as "members of the body."

What is the profound truth that the many word pictures convey? God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — takes a redeemed people into partnership to share in his activities and to realize his purposes. The church is the organic, corporate instrument God has chosen to remake men and society. It has a mission of holy love. The church exists to produce Christlikeness in men and their institutions. Thus our mission may be described as participation with God in bringing holiness and love to

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND CHARACTER

bear upon the sins, hurts, and needs of men. This description of our mission is both individual and social. It points to a social relationship of men to God and to each other described in Scripture as "the kingdom of God."

The metaphors of the New Testament are made emphatic by the greatest portrait of all — the Incarnation, God made flesh. The church, enlightened by the Incarnation, continues the teaching and the ministry of its Lord on earth.

When the church is acting under the headship of its Lord and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it continues the story begun in the Book of Acts. Many are its wonderful achievements since Century One, and many more may yet be realized in the unfolding drama of the acts of the Holy Spirit through redeemed men.

The New Testament reminds us that the church visible is not the church ideal. Because the church is a divine-human partnership, sharing not only in the holy love of its founder but in the blemishes of its humanity, it is ever in need of renewal. God takes the same risk with the church in redemption as he did when he granted men freedom in creation. Just as God, the Holy Spirit, used the hands of the Apostle Paul in "special miracles" so he can use his church today. The results will be the same — the Word of the Lord will grow mightily and will prevail (Acts 19:11 and 20).

B. Historical Heritage and Perspective

Free Methodists turn to the story of the church in the Book of Acts and the other New Testament writings as their primary heritage. They derive from this record their main source of direction and renewal, generation after generation. Men of God have wrestled with issues both old and new throughout the centuries just as they do now. The issues, decisions, and actions of the church in every age are important to us.

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND CHARACTER

From the time of Acts, Free Methodists can sketch a line of descent spelled out in large terms as follows: They trace their spiritual heritage through those men and women of deep personal piety who in all ages have shown that it is possible to maintain the glow of spiritual fervor in the midst of paganism, apostasy, and the corruption of the established church. They trace the development of the Free Methodist Church through a New Testament, Catholic, Anglican, Arminian, Wesleyan, and Methodist tradition. This means they identify with the mainstream of development of the Christian church. They are not a sect. They do not have roots in the Calvinistic traditions developing out of the many faceted era of Reformation of the sixteenth century. Thus they demonstrate that one can remain in the mainstream of the Christian church and still maintain a spiritual emphasis, which is the very essence of Christianity.

Their Catholic-Anglican heritage is seen in their openness on baptismal forms, their refusal to demand a particular millennial view, their commitment to the Bible as the primary rule for faith and life, and their vision of personal piety and discipline.

Their Arminian heritage is seen in their affirmation of the love of God in Christ, which seeks to bring every man to himself but grants to every man the responsibility of accepting or rejecting that salvation. Since salvation is a matter of one's relationship to Jesus Christ, they affirm the security of all who continue in fellowship with and obedience to him rather than an unconditional, eternal security.

Their Wesleyan line of descent is discovered in their commitment to salvation by faith assured to believers by the direct witness of the Holy Spirit and their confidence in a God who is able to cleanse the hearts of men from sin here and now by faith, fill them with the Holy Spirit, and empower them for the fulfilling of God's purposes in the world. The Reverend John Wesley wrote:

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"In 1729 two young men in England, reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw, likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out to raise a holy people."

Their Methodist parentage is seen in Free Methodist organization. They are organized with lines of responsibility connecting local, district, conference, and denominational levels. Their concern is for the total church, not just for the local congregation. Their Methodist parentage is also evident in their social sensitivity. Free Methodists in their earliest days recovered the social awareness which characterized the Wesleys. Their vigorous position and activities against the institution of slavery and the class distinction inherent in the rental of pews to the wealthy demonstrated true Methodism. Born at a time when representative government was being developed by free societies, lay representation in equal number to clergy was a further evidence of awareness of social and political concerns.

About 1858, in western New York, the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church excluded several ministers and many members from the church on various charges and allegations, but really for their adherence to the basic principles of Methodism, especially to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification. Appeals made to the General Conference were denied. Those excluded could not join any other Methodist body, for there was none that agreed with them on the issues on which they were thrust out. Therefore the Free Methodist Church was organized by a convention of lay members and ministers which met at Pekin, Niagara County, New York, on August 23, 1860. The first General Conference met on the second Wednesday of October, 1862, at Saint Charles, Illinois.

By 1960, the Free Methodist Church of North America had extended its borders to include many

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countries other than the United States and Canada. In Japan, the church had developed to general conference stature, and other nations were making progress toward mature strength. An autonomous church of mission origin in Egypt united with the Free Methodist Church in the merger of the Holiness Movement Church in Canada and the Free Methodist Church of North America in 1959. It seemed that the time had come to provide for the establishment of general conferences in addition to the North America General Conference. Therefore, in connection with plans for a World Fellowship of Free Methodist Churches, the General Conference of 1960 defined two national areas outside North America as general conferences, namely, Egypt and Japan.

The 1964 General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America adopted an enabling resolution and revised its constitution to provide for the organization of general conferences in other areas of the world. The purpose of the actions taken was to provide for the more speedy evangelization of the world and the extension of scriptural holiness and its fruits by cooperative ministries of mature Free Methodist churches in many lands.

In order to conserve the essential features of Free Methodism, the resolution provided that each general conference must adopt as a part of its *Discipline* or manual of law a section on the Purpose and Character of the Free Methodist Church and The Constitution of the Free Methodist Church, to be identical in all general conference manuals.

C. The Needs of Persons

Free Methodists are committed to the task of understanding the most important needs of persons, institutions, and varying cultures so that it may minister meaningfully and redemptively to them. In the high priestly prayer of Jesus Christ, he called upon

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND CHARACTER

believers to live in this world actively and intelligently in order that the world might be led both to "know" and to "believe."

Free Methodists are aware of the demonic forces in the world which debase men, pervert the good, and lead men and institutions to ruin. They attempt to help men by restoring personal meaning in a time of depersonalizing developments.

Free Methodists openly rebuke anything in law, persons, or institutions which violates the dignity of persons created in the image of God. They are committed to taking advantage of opportunities where as individuals, local churches, conferences, and denomination they can minister healing and redemptive helpfulness in the world.

D. Distinctive Principles

Free Methodists seek to express the concept of the church of Jesus Christ, their historical perspective, and the needs of persons in specific principles and commitments.

Free Methodists today seek to continue the mission of first-century Christianity which was recovered by John Wesley and the early Methodists who declared they existed 'to raise a holy people.'

Free Methodists are a fellowship of Christians in earnest to get to heaven and committed to working in the world for the salvation of all men. They place their commitment to Christ and his church above all others. They keep themselves free from alliances which would compete for their highest loyalty and from all which would encumber and compromise their effective witness to the Trinitarian faith and man's dependence upon the grace of God. The Christian denies himself, takes up his cross daily, and follows Jesus. He conforms to all the will of God as made known in His Word, and believes the conditions of salvation are the same now as they were in the days of the apostles.

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND CHARACTER

In doctrine, Free Methodists' beliefs are the standard beliefs of evangelical, Arminian Protestantism, with distinctive emphasis on the scriptural teaching of entire sanctification as held by John Wesley.

In experience, Free Methodists stress the reality of an inner cleansing and power that attests the doctrine of entire sanctification, both in the inward consciousness of the believer and in his outward life.

Their worship is characterized by simplicity and freedom of the Spirit, untrammelled by elaborate ritual.

Free Methodists maintain a life of daily devotion to Christ that springs from inward holiness and separates the Christian from the world, even while he lives in the world. They believe the best way to keep worldliness from invading the church is for the church to invade the world with redemptive purpose.

They practice a complete consecration of every power and possession to the service of God and man. They believe so strongly in the mission of the church that they are committed to responsible stewardship in finance. Therefore they do not need to resort to commercial efforts to support the cause of Christ.

Free Methodists sense a special obligation to preach the gospel to the poor. The provisions of the gospel are for all. The "glad tidings" must be proclaimed to every individual of the human race. God sends the true light to illuminate and melt every heart. To savage and civilized, bond and free, black and white, the ignorant and the learned, is freely offered the great salvation. Jesus set the example. Of his ministry it was reported, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." This preaching to the poor was the crowning proof that he was the one who should come. In this respect the church must follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Free Methodists are committed to the New Testament ideals of simplicity and modesty as a style of life.

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND CHARACTER

They wish to call attention, not to themselves, but to their Lord.

These distinctives of the Free Methodist Church from its origin are still living issues. In every era and every land these distinctives are the witnesses of the church, needing utterance clear and strong that they may be heard and heeded amidst the world's confusing and misleading voices.

CHAPTER I

THE CONSTITUTION: DOCTRINE AND MEMBERSHIP

Preamble

A. Articles of Religion

B. Membership and Covenant

The Constitution of The Free Methodist Church

PREAMBLE

¶ 100. In order that we may wisely preserve and pass on to posterity the heritage of doctrine and principles of Christian living transmitted to us as evangelicals in the Arminian-Wesleyan tradition, insure church order by sound principles and ecclesiastical polity, and prepare the way for evangelization of the world and the more effective cooperation with other branches of the church of Christ in the advancement of Christ's kingdom among men, we, the ministers and lay members of the Free Methodist Church, in accordance with constitutional procedure, do hereby ordain, establish, and set forth the following as the Constitution of the Free Methodist Church.

CHAPTER I

THE CONSTITUTION: DOCTRINE AND MEMBERSHIP

A. ARTICLES OF RELIGION

GOD

I. The Holy Trinity

¶ 101. We believe in the one living and true God, the maker and preserver of all things. And in the unity of this Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one in eternity, deity, and purpose; everlasting, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.

II. The Father

¶ 102. We believe the Father is the cause of all that exists whether of matter or spirit. He with the Son and the Holy Spirit made man to bear his image. By intention he relates to man as Father, thereby forever declaring his goodwill toward man. He is, according to the New Testament, the one who both seeks and receives penitent sinners.

III. The Son

His Incarnation

¶ 103. We believe God was himself in Jesus Christ to reconcile man to God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he joined together the deity of God and the humanity of man. Jesus of Nazareth was God in human flesh, truly God and truly man. He came to save us. For us the Son of God suffered, was crucified, dead and buried. He poured out his life as a blameless

sacrifice for our sin and transgressions. We gratefully acknowledge that he is our Savior, the one perfect mediator between God and man.

His Resurrection and Exaltation

¶ 104. We believe Jesus Christ is risen victorious from the dead. His resurrected body became more glorious, not hindered by ordinary human limitations. Thus he ascended into heaven. There he sits as our exalted Lord at the right hand of God the Father, where he intercedes for us until all his enemies shall be brought into complete subjection. He will return to judge all men. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

IV. The Holy Spirit

His Person

¶ 105. We believe the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. Proceeding from the Father and the Son, he is one with them, the eternal Godhead; equal in deity, majesty, and power. He is God effective in creation, in life, and in the church. The incarnation and ministry of Jesus Christ were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. He continues to reveal, interpret, and glorify the Son.

His Work in Salvation

¶ 106. We believe the Holy Spirit is the administrator of the salvation planned by the Father and provided by the Son's death, resurrection, and ascension. He is the effective agent in our conviction, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. He is our Lord's ever-present self, indwelling, assuring, and enabling the believer.

His Relation to the Church

¶ 107. We believe the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the church by the Father and the Son. He is the church's life and witnessing power. He bestows the love of God and makes real the lordship of Jesus Christ in the believer so that both his gifts of words and service may achieve the common good and build and increase the church. In relation to the world he is the Spirit of truth, and his instrument is the Word of God.

THE SCRIPTURES

V. Sufficiency

¶ 108. We believe the Holy Scriptures are God's record, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit. They have been given without error faithfully recorded by holy men of God as moved by the Holy Spirit, and subsequently transmitted without corruption of any essential doctrine. They are the authoritative record of the revelation of God's acts in creation, in history, in our salvation, and especially in his Son, Jesus Christ.

We believe this written Word fully reveals the will of God concerning man in all things necessary to salvation and Christian living; so that whatever is not found therein, nor can be proved thereby, is not to be required of one as an article of faith or as necessary to salvation.

VI. Authority of the Old Testament

¶ 109. We believe the Old Testament is not contrary to the New. Both Testaments bear witness to God's salvation in Christ; both speak of God's will for his people. The ancient laws for ceremonies and rites, and the civil precepts for the nation Israel are not necessarily binding on Christians today. But, on the example of Jesus we are obligated to obey the moral commandments of the Old Testament.

The books of the Old Testament are: Genesis,

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

VII. New Testament

¶ 110. We believe the New Testament fulfills and interprets the Old Testament. It is the record of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is God's final word regarding man, his sin, and his salvation, the world, and destiny.

The books of the New Testament are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude, Revelation.

MAN

VIII. A Free Moral Person

¶ 111. We believe God created man in his own image, innocent, morally free and responsible to choose between good and evil, right and wrong. By the sin of Adam, man as the offspring of Adam is corrupted in his very nature so that from birth he is inclined to sin. He is unable by his own strength and work to restore himself in right relationship with God and to merit eternal salvation. God, the Omnipotent, provides all the resources of the Trinity to make it possible for man to respond to his grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. By God's grace and help man is enabled to do good works with a free will.

IX. Law of Life and Love

¶ 112. We believe God's law for all human life, personal and social, is expressed in two divine commands: Love the Lord God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. These commands reveal what is best for man in his relationship with God, persons, and society. They set forth the principles of human duty in both individual and social action. They recognize God as the only Sovereign. All men as created by him and in his image have the same inherent rights regardless of sex, race, or color. Men should therefore give God absolute obedience in their individual, social, and political acts. They should strive to secure to everyone respect for his person, his rights, and his greatest happiness in the possession and exercise of the right within the moral law.

X. Good Works

¶ 113. We believe good works are the fruit of faith in Jesus Christ, but works cannot save us from our sins nor from God's judgment. As expressions of Christian faith and love, our good works performed with reverence and humility are both acceptable and pleasing to God. However, good works do not earn God's grace.

SALVATION

XI. Christ's Sacrifice

¶ 114. We believe Christ offered once and for all the one perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. No other satisfaction for sin is necessary; none other can atone.

XII. The New Life in Christ

¶ 115. We believe a new life and a right relationship with God are made possible through the redemptive acts of God in Jesus Christ. God, by his Spirit, acts to

impart new life and put us into a relationship with himself as we repent and our faith responds to his grace. Justification, regeneration, and adoption speak significantly to entrance into and continuance in the new life.

Justification

¶ 116. Justification is a legal term that emphasizes that by our new relationship in Jesus Christ we are in fact accounted righteous, being freed from both the guilt and the penalty of our sins.

Regeneration

¶ 117. Regeneration is a biological term which illustrates that by our new relationship in Christ we do in fact have a new life and a new spiritual nature capable of faith, love, and obedience to Christ Jesus as Lord. The believer is born again. He is a new creation. The old life is past; a new life is begun.

Adoption

¶ 118. Adoption is a filial term full of warmth, love, and acceptance. It denotes that by our new relationship in Christ we have become his wanted children freed from the mastery of both sin and Satan. The believer has the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God.

XIII. Entire Sanctification

¶ 119. We believe entire sanctification to be that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believer, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, is cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationship is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and is maintained by faith and obedience. Entire sanctification enables the believer to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind,

and his neighbor as himself, and it prepares him for greater growth in grace.

XIV. Restoration

¶ 120. We believe the Christian may be sustained in a growing relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord. However, he may grieve the Holy Spirit in the relationships of life without returning to the dominion of sin. When he does, he must humbly accept the correction of the Holy Spirit, trust in the advocacy of Jesus, and mend his relationships.

The Christian can sin willfully and sever his relationship with Christ. Even so by repentance before God, forgiveness is granted and the relationship with Christ restored, for not every sin is the sin against the Holy Spirit and unpardonable. God's grace is sufficient for those who truly repent and, by his enabling, amend their lives. However, forgiveness does not give the believer liberty to sin and escape the consequences of sinning.

God has given responsibility and power to the church to restore a penitent believer through loving reproof, counsel, and acceptance.

THE CHURCH

XV. The Church

¶ 121. We believe the church is created by God; it is the people of God. Christ Jesus is its Lord and Head; the Holy Spirit is its life and power. It is both divine and human, heavenly and earthly, ideal and imperfect. It is an organism, not an unchanging institution. It exists to fulfill the purposes of God in Christ. It redemptively ministers to persons. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it that it should be holy and without blemish. The church is a fellowship of the redeemed and the redeeming, preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments according to Christ's

instruction. The Free Methodist Church purposes to be representative of what the church of Jesus Christ should be on earth. It therefore requires specific commitment regarding the faith and life of its members. In its requirements it seeks to honor Christ and obey the written Word of God.

XVI. The Language of Worship

¶ 122. We believe that according to the Word of God and the custom of the early church, public worship and prayer and the administration of the sacraments should be in a language understood by the people. The Reformation applied this principle to provide for the use of the common language of the people. It is likewise clear that the Apostle Paul places the strongest emphasis upon rational and intelligible utterance in worship. We cannot endorse practices which plainly violate these scriptural principles.

XVII. The Holy Sacraments

¶ 123. We believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ. They are means of grace through faith, tokens of our profession of Christian faith, and signs of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, he works within us to quicken, strengthen, and confirm our faith.

Baptism

¶ 124. We believe water baptism is a sacrament of the church, commanded by our Lord, signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ to be administered to believers, as declaration of their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Baptism is a symbol of the new covenant of grace as circumcision was the symbol of the old covenant; and, since infants are recognized as being included in the atonement, we hold that they may be baptized upon the

request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training. They shall be required to affirm the vow for themselves before being accepted into church membership.

The Lord's Supper

¶ 125. We believe the Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death. To those who rightly, worthily, and with faith receive it, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. The supper is also a sign of the love and unity that Christians have among themselves.

Christ, according to his promise, is really present in the sacrament. But his body is given, taken, and eaten only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. No change is effected in the element; the bread and wine are not literally the body and blood of Christ. Nor is the body and blood of Christ literally present with the elements. The elements are never to be considered objects of worship. The body of Christ is received and eaten in faith.

LAST THINGS

XVIII. The Kingdom of God

¶ 126. We believe that the kingdom of God is a prominent Bible theme providing the Christian with both his task and hope. Jesus announced its presence. The kingdom is realized now as God's reign is established in the hearts and lives of believers.

The church, by its prayers, example, and proclamation of the gospel, is the appointed and appropriate instrument of God in building his kingdom.

But the kingdom is also future and is related to the return of Christ when judgment will fall upon the present order. The enemies of Christ will be subdued; the reign of God will be established; a total cosmic

renewal which is both material and moral shall occur; and the hope of the redeemed will be fully realized.

XIX. The Return of Christ

¶ 127. We believe the return of Christ is certain and may occur at any moment. It is not given us to know the hour. At his return he will fulfill all prophecies concerning his final triumph over all evil. The believer's response is joyous expectation, watchfulness, readiness, and diligence.

XX. Resurrection

¶ 128. We believe in the bodily resurrection from the dead of both the just and the unjust, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. The resurrected body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable. The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of resurrection unto life to those who are in him.

XXI. Judgment

¶ 129. We believe God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness in accordance with the gospel and men's deeds in this life.

XXII. Final Destiny

¶ 130. We believe the eternal destiny of man is determined by God's grace and man's response, not by arbitrary decrees of God. For those who trust him and obediently follow Jesus as Savior and Lord, there is a heaven of eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence. But for the finally impenitent there is a hell of eternal suffering and of separation from God.

¶131. The doctrines of the Free Methodist Church are based upon the Holy Scriptures and are derived from their total biblical context. The references below are appropriate passages related to the given articles. They are listed in their biblical sequence and are not intended to be exhaustive.

GOD

I. *Holy Trinity*

Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 3:13-15; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3; 5:19-23; 8:58; 14:9-11; 15:26; 16:13-15; II Corinthians 13:14.

II. *Father*

Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 103:13-14; Isaiah 40:28-29; 64:8; Matthew 6:8; 18:14; Luke 15:11-32; John 4:23; I John 1:3.

III. *Son – His Incarnation*

Matthew 1:21; 20:28; 26:27-28; Luke 1:35; 19:10; John 1:1, 10, 14; II Corinthians 5:18-19; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:17; 9:14-15.

Son – His Resurrection and Exaltation

Matthew 25:31-32; Luke 24:1-7; 24:39; John 20:19; Acts 1:9-11; 2:24; Romans 8:33-34; II Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:1-4.

IV. *Holy Spirit – His Person*

Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15

Holy Spirit – His Work in Salvation

John 16:7-8; Acts 15:8-9; Romans 8:9, 14-16; I Corinthians 3:16; II Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 4:6.

Holy Spirit – His Relation to the Church

Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:14; I Corinthians 12:4-7; II Peter 1:21.

THE SCRIPTURES

- V. *Sufficiency*
Deuteronomy 4:2; 28:9; Psalm 19:7-11; John 14:26; 17:17; Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:21.
- VI. *Authority of the Old Testament*
Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 10:25-28; John 5:39, 46-47; Acts 10:43; Galatians 5:3-4; I Peter 1:10-12.
- VII. *New Testament*
Matthew 24:35; Mark 8:38; John 14:24; Hebrews 2:1-4; II Peter 1:16-21; I John 2:2-6; Revelation 21:5; 22:19.

MAN

- VIII. *Man: A Free Moral Person*
Genesis 1:27; Psalm 51:5; 130:3; Romans 5:17-19; Ephesians 2:8-10.
- IX. *Law of Life and Love*
Matthew 22:35-40; John 15:17; Galatians 3:28; I John 4:19-21.
- X. *Good Works*
Matthew 5:16; 7:16-20; Romans 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:10; II Timothy 1:8-9; Titus 3:5.

SALVATION

- XI. *Christ's Sacrifice*
Luke 24:46-48; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8-11; Galatians 2:16; 3:2-3; Ephesians 1:7-8; 2:13; Hebrews 9:11-14, 25-26; 10:8-14.
- XII. *The New Life in Christ*
John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 8:15-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 3:9-10.
- Justification*
Psalm 32:1-2; Acts 10:43; Romans 3:21-26, 28; 4:2-5; 5:8-9; I Corinthians 6:11; Philippians 3:9.

Regeneration

Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 5:24; Romans 6:4; II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; Titus 3:4-5; I Peter 1:23.

Adoption

Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5-6; I John 3:1-3.

XIII. *Entire Sanctification*

Leviticus 20:7-8; John 14:16-17; 17:19; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 15:8-9; Romans 5:3-5; 8:12-17; 12:1-2; I Corinthians 6:11; 12:4-11; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; I Thessalonians 4:7; 5:23-24; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:14.

XIV. *Restoration*

Matthew 12:31-32; 18:21-22; Romans 6:1-2; Galatians 6:1; I John 1:9; 2:1-2; 5:16-17; Revelation 2:5; 3:19-20.

THE CHURCH

XV. *The Church*

Matthew 16:15-18; 18:17; Acts 2:41-47; 9:31; 12:5; 14:23-26; 15:22; 20:28; I Corinthians 1:2; 11:23; 12:28; 16:1; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:9-10; 5:22-23; Colossians 1:18; I Timothy 3:14-15.

XVI. *The Language of Worship*

Nehemiah 8:5, 6, 8; Matthew 6:7; I Corinthians 14:6-9; I Corinthians 14:23-25.

XVII. *The Holy Sacraments*

Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19; Acts 22:16; Romans 4:11; I Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-26; Galatians 3:27.

Baptism

Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-17; 9:18; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; John 3:5; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-29; Colossians 2:11-12; Titus 3:5.

The Lord's Supper

Mark 14:22-24; John 6:53-58; Acts 2:46;
I Corinthians 5:7-8; 10:16; 11:20, 23-29.

LAST THINGS

XVIII. *The Kingdom of God.*

Matthew 6:10, 19-20; 24:14; Acts 1:8; Romans
8:19-23; I Corinthians 15:20-25; Philippians
2:9-10; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; II Thessalo-
nians 1:5-12; II Peter 3:3-10; Revelation 14:6;
21:3-8; 22:1-5, 17.

XIX. *The Return of Christ*

Matthew 24:1-51; 26:64; Mark 13:26-27; Luke
17:26-37; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalo-
nians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:27-28;
Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:6-7, 12, 20.

XX. *Resurrection*

John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:20, 51-57;
II Corinthians 4:13-14.

XXI. *Judgment*

Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 11:31-32; Acts 10:42;
17:31; Romans 2:15-16; 14:10-11; II Corinthians
5:6-10; Hebrews 9:27-28; 10:26-31; II Peter 3:7.

XXII. *Destiny*

Mark 9:42-48; John 14:3; Hebrews 2:1-3;
Revelation 20:11-15; 21:22-27.

B. MEMBERSHIP AND COVENANT

1. REQUIREMENTS, RIGHTS, AND TENURE

¶ 150. The privileges and requirements of full membership in the church are constitutional, and changes therein may be made only by amendment according to Paragraphs 225-228. Nothing shall be included in the membership ritual that is contrary to the following definitions of conditions and privileges of membership.

¶ 151. The requirements of full membership are:

1. Christian baptism, confession of a personal experience in regeneration, and a pledge to seek diligently until sanctified wholly if that experience has not been attained.

2. Acceptance of the Articles of Religion, guidance for Christian living [the Covenant], and the authority of the DISCIPLINE in matters of church government.*

3. A covenant to support the church, to live in fellowship with the members thereof, and to seek God's glory in all things.

4. Recommendation to membership by the official board of the church, the candidate's public declaration of membership vows, and the approving vote of three-fourths of the members of the receiving society who are present and voting.

¶ 152. The rights of full membership are:

1. Participation in the sacraments and ordinances of the church.

2. To vote and hold office upon reaching the age designated by the General Conference.

3. Trial and appeal if charged with failure to maintain the conditions of membership, with the specific provision that joining another religious denomination or

* When not in conflict with local laws in matters of church government.

sect shall of itself sever membership in the church without trial.

¶ 153. Church membership may be terminated only by:

1. Voluntary withdrawal (including permission to withdraw under complaint).
2. Joining another religious denomination or sect or a secret order.
3. Expulsion after proper summary proceeding, or trial and conviction.
4. Persistent neglect of church relationship by a member residing at a distance from pastoral and church supervision, which in effect is voluntary withdrawal.

2. COVENANT

(NOTE: Scripture references and teaching aids are to be found in Chapter III, B, "Christian Conduct.")

Privilege and Responsibility

¶ 154. Membership in the church is a high privilege and responsibility. We believe the covenant required of members is consistent with the teaching of the written Word of God. Faithfulness to the covenant is evidence of the individual member's desire to sustain a saving relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord, to bring glory to God, to advance the cause of God on earth, to preserve the unity of the body of Christ, and to cherish the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church.

¶ 155. When a member does not keep his covenant and habitually violates his vows, it is the responsibility of minister and members to point to the failure and to seek in love to restore the member. If, after these steps have been taken, the member does not keep his commitments, he must be dealt with in accord with the due processes of the church.

¶ 156. A member of the Free Methodist Church, trusting in the enablement of the Holy Spirit and seeking the support of the other members of the church, makes the following confession and commitments as a covenant with the Lord and the church.

The Confession and Commitment

I confess Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord and will continue to walk with him by faith. I commit myself to know God in his full sanctifying grace.

As Regards God

¶ 157. 1. I will reverence the name of God.

2. I will observe the Lord's Day in worship, Christian fellowship and service, renewal of mind and spirit, avoiding all unnecessary commerce, labors, travel, and pleasures which detract from the moral and spiritual purposes of the day.

3. I will not engage in any form of false worship such as spiritism, witchcraft, and astrology.

4. I will abstain from membership in secret societies and oath-bound lodges, and, recognizing that the religious nature of such organizations tends to divide the Christian's loyalty and confuse his Christian faith, I will keep myself free to follow the will of God in all things.

5. I will seek to grow in the knowledge and love of God by consistent use of the means of grace such as public worship of God, the ministry of the Word, the Supper of the Lord, family and private prayer, searching the Scriptures, and fasting and abstinence.

As Regards Myself and All Men

¶ 158. 1. I will show goodness and mercy to all men, and especially to the household of faith, both to their physical and spiritual needs as I have ability.

2. I will respect the rights of all persons as created in the image of God, regardless of differences of sex, race, or color.

3. I will be just in all transactions, faithful in commitments and contract obligations with full intention to keep them.

4. I will abstain from the manufacture, sale, and use of alcoholic beverages and harmful drugs and from the cultivation, manufacture, sale, and use of tobacco.

5. I will abstain from all forms of gambling.

6. I will observe the scriptural standards of simplicity, humility, modesty, propriety, purity, and good stewardship in everything I buy, use, or wear, and thereby reflect the beauty of the gospel.

As Regards the Institutions of God

¶ 159. 1. I will respect duly constituted authority in the home, church, and state except when it is in violation of the clear teachings of the Scripture.

2. I will observe the teachings of the Scripture regarding the sanctity of the home and marriage and the nurture of children in the Christian faith.

3. I will be guided by the teaching of Scripture regarding separation, divorce, and remarriage as understood by the church, especially recognizing monogamy as God's plan for marriage.

As Regards the Church

¶ 160. 1. I have received Christian baptism.

2. I accept the Articles of Religion and the authority of the DISCIPLINE in matters of church government.

3. I will work for the advancement of God's kingdom and the mutual growth of fellow believers toward full stature in Christ in holiness and love.

4. I will seek to preserve the unity and the witness of the church by nurturing and expressing Christlike love as described in I Corinthians, chapter thirteen.

5. I will cooperate in developing the Christian fellowship by willingness to receive and give counsel with tenderness and meekness; to pray for others; to aid others in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy; and to show understanding, courtesy, and purity in all conversation.

6. I will exercise responsible Christian stewardship by the careful and disciplined use of time, talents, and material resources, being sensitive to the needs of the church and my fellowmen. I will accept the biblical principle of tithes and offerings as the guide of my material stewardship and the support of the church. I will choose those activities which contribute to the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical well-being of myself and those who share in them.

CHAPTER II

THE CONSTITUTION: ORGANIZATION

- A. General Organization**
- B. Restrictive Rules and Methods of Amendment of the Principles of Free Methodism**
- C. Interrelation of General Conferences**
- D. Articles of Organization and Government**

CHAPTER II

THE CONSTITUTION: ORGANIZATION

A. GENERAL ORGANIZATION

¶ 200. Each annual conference in the Free Methodist Church of North America shall be a member of the General Conference of the same.

¶ 201. The General Conference may create a new general conference out of a portion of its area when in its judgment the proposed area has approximated a level of development defined for a general conference in Paragraph 250.

¶ 202. The General Conference shall be represented in a Constitutional Council composed of representatives from all general conferences of Free Methodism, the representation to be proportionate to membership on the basis stipulated in Paragraph 252, Section 2.

1. The General Conference shall submit to the Constitutional Council a copy of all legislation, orders, and policies of the General Conference, and if question should arise concerning the agreement of any action with the "Basic Principles of Free Methodism," shall proceed according to Paragraph 252, Section 5a.

2. The General Conference shall refer all matters requiring referendum voting by other general conferences to the supervision of the Constitutional Council.

3. The General Conference, in cooperation with all general conferences, may assign other functions than the foregoing to the Constitutional Council, but in no case shall the Constitutional Council act as a legislative or governing body.

4. A general conference or its interim administrative board may refer to the Constitutional Council, as a representative coordinating agency, any problem that may arise with another general conference involving boundaries, recognition of credentials, and other matters of comity. If no solution satisfactory to both general conferences should be reached, the recommendation of the Constitutional Council shall prevail. If within six months either conference shall register an appeal, the Constitutional Council shall arrange a referendum vote to decide the issue.

¶ 203. The chief administrative officer or officers of the General Conference shall affiliate with such officers of all general conferences in a Council of Bishops for the purpose of fellowship, mutual understanding, and extension of Free Methodism and the worldwide promotion of its ideals.

¶ 204. The General Conference shall recognize the World Fellowship of Free Methodist Churches as a means of promoting evangelistic outreach through fellowship, understanding, and cooperative planning among all areas of Free Methodism, according to the constitution and bylaws of said organization.

B. RESTRICTIVE RULES AND METHODS OF AMENDMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES OF FREE METHODISM

¶ 225. Paragraphs 100 to 227 inclusive may be altered, changed, or revoked only by concurrent approval of two-thirds of the aggregate votes cast thereon in all general conferences of Free Methodism and two-thirds of the aggregate votes cast thereon in the annual conferences thereof; but Paragraph 228 may not be amended or changed in any way. To ascertain basis for voting see Paragraph 251, Section 3.

¶ 226. Upon a two-thirds vote of a general conference, proposals for amendment of Paragraphs 250-252, whether originating in an annual conference or in a general conference, shall be referred to the Constitutional Council which shall then supervise the referendum voting on the proposed amendment or amendments in all the general conferences and their constituent annual conferences.

¶ 227. The Free Methodist Church of North America may not enact, either by vote of the general conference or by concurrent vote of the general and annual conferences, any order, policy, or legislation that conflicts with, changes, subtracts from, or adds to:

1. The Articles of Religion, the covenant, any condition or standard of membership, any standard or rule of doctrine, as set forth in Paragraphs 100 to 160, or

2. Any part or rule of government so as to do away with substantially equal lay representation, or an itinerant (conference appointed) ministry, or the general superintendency, or the free seat system in our churches; but

Any such change as designated in 1 and 2 preceding may be made only by the procedures set forth in Paragraph 225 above.

¶ 228. Neither the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America nor any or all of the general conferences of Free Methodism by any procedure or method whatever (including deletion or amendment of this Paragraph, number 228), shall have the power to deprive preachers or lay members of the right of trial by an impartial committee, or the right of appeal.

C. INTERRELATION OF GENERAL CONFERENCES

¶ 250. New General Conferences.

1. The Free Methodist Church recognizes the need to preserve unity in faith and fellowship, yet allow for the distinctives of nation, language, and culture. Therefore it provides for a regional or national body to develop into a general conference.

2. A new general conference may be authorized by the sponsoring general conference when the body seeking such status has adopted the provisions of this Constitution which are for all general conferences as defined in Paragraph 251, Section 1, as a part of its constitution and *Discipline*, and has been recommended by the general administrative board of the sponsoring general conference on the grounds that the following desirable standards are satisfied:

- a. An effective church organization on the local, conference, and/or general levels.
- b. Effective programs for the nurture and training of members, new converts, children, young people, and lay workers.
- c. An effective program for ministerial training.
- d. Evidence of responsible stewardship of life and possessions including the proper management of funds and the provision for the support of its own pastors, workers, and officers.
- e. A definite program of evangelism, church extension, and missionary outreach on an indigenous basis.
- f. The existence of a property-holding body, or more than one such body if required by local laws.
- g. A *Discipline* as approved by the general administrative board of the sponsoring general conference.

¶ 251. Constitution for the General Conferences.

1. Definition. The Preamble, Articles of Religion, Membership and Covenant, General Organization, Restrictive Rules and Methods of Amendment of the Principles of Free Methodism, and Interrelation of General Conferences (Pars. 100-252), shall be binding upon all general conferences and shall be part of each constitution and *Discipline*. These provisions may be translated into various languages and dialects, including colloquial and idiomatic English, provided the meaning is not changed.

2. Church name. Wherever the use of the name "Free Methodist Church" is impossible or impractical, a general conference, or in the interim of its sessions, its general administrative board, may authorize an adaptation of the church's name, subject to the approval of the Constitutional Council.

3. Amendments. The provisions of this Constitution for all general conferences as defined in Paragraph 251, Section 1, may be added to or amended only by the concurrent approval of all the general conferences by a two-thirds aggregate vote of those present and voting and of all the annual conferences thereof by a two-thirds aggregate vote of those present and voting. An amendment may be initiated by any general conference or by any of the annual conferences. When such an addition or amendment has been adopted as herein provided, the Constitutional Council shall declare the result, and it shall be in effect.

4. Emergency provision. Whenever any general conference is unable to meet and conduct its business because of an emergency or other unforeseen conditions, or if for any reason any general conference fails to vote on a proposed amendment, the Constitutional Council shall be authorized and empowered to declare the results of the voting, which shall be in effect for all general conferences.

¶ 252. Constitutional Council.

1. The Constitutional Council shall be established by the several general conferences to maintain fidelity to the provisions of this Constitution which are for all general conferences as defined in Paragraph 251, Section 1, to decide matters of comity, and to supervise referendums involving more than one general conference.

2. The Constitutional Council shall be composed of the bishop(s), or comparable officers, together with an equal number of representatives from each general conference with the provision that no general conference shall be entitled to representation by more than one bishop and one other representative for each 15,000 members or major fraction thereof. The representatives shall be elected by the general conference or its interim administrative body, with due regard for the principle of lay representation.

3. The officers of the Constitutional Council shall be the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer (the offices of secretary and treasurer may be combined). They shall be elected by the Constitutional Council from among its members, and shall serve for four years or until their successors are elected.

4. Each general conference secretary shall provide copies of the legislation, orders, and policies enacted by the general conference to the chairman of the Constitutional Council or other officer as designated by that board.

5. The Constitutional Council does not have administrative authority or governing power over the general conferences. Its duties shall be:

- a. To review the legislation, orders, and policies of all the general conferences to determine whether any act appears to be in conflict with the provisions of this Constitution which are for all general conferences as defined in Paragraph 251, Section 1. When the Constitu-

tional Council rules that an act is in conflict with such provisions, the implementation of said act shall automatically be suspended. Upon request by a two-thirds vote of the interim administrative board of the general conference whose action is called in question, further action in the case shall await the opportunity of said general conference at its next session to reconsider the act. If the act should be rescinded, the process shall immediately terminate. If no such request is made within one year or if it should be made and a general conference not rescind the act in question, the act and the findings thereon of the Constitutional Council shall be submitted to all general conferences for vote. If the findings of the Constitutional Council should be approved by a majority of the aggregate votes cast thereon in all of the general conferences, the act in question shall thereby be annulled. Otherwise, the act shall be sustained and the suspension of the act shall terminate.

If the general conference whose action has been called into question should refuse to abide by the referendum, the Constitutional Council shall be empowered to provide, at its discretion, for the reorganization of the loyal elements of the Free Methodist Church within the area of that general conference, and to declare all other ministers and members to be withdrawn from the Free Methodist Church.

- b. To decide any matter that may arise between general conferences involving boundaries, recognition of credentials, and other matter of comity. If no solution satisfactory to the involved conferences should be reached, the recommendation of the Constitutional Council

shall prevail. If within six months either conference shall appeal, the Constitutional Council shall arrange a referendum vote to decide the issue.

- c. To supervise the voting of the general conferences and their respective districts on all matters to be voted on by more than one general conference, including additions or amendments to the provisions of this Constitution which are for all general conferences, and when the vote has been completed to declare the results (Par. 251, Secs. 3-4).

6. The Constitutional Council shall meet at least once each five years, preferably at the time and place of the meeting of a general conference. Special meetings may be called by the officers when necessary.

D. ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA*

1. PASTORAL CHARGES, DISTRICT AND ANNUAL CONFERENCES

a. Pastoral Charges

¶ 275. The lay membership of the church shall be divided into local societies, one or more of which shall constitute a pastoral charge.

b. Districts and District Conferences

¶ 276. The pastoral charges embraced within each annual conference may be grouped into districts, and if so, a district conference shall be organized in each district, composed of such official members of the several

* This may serve as a suggestion for the organization and government of other general conferences.

pastoral charges and invested with such powers as the General Conference shall direct.

c. Annual Conferences

¶ 277. The General Conference shall organize the work at large into annual conferences, of which the ministers (not being members of any local societies) shall be permanent members; and to which, at each session, one lay delegate shall be admitted from each pastoral charge, and in case there be more than one minister in full membership appointed to a pastoral charge, such pastoral charge shall be entitled to one additional lay delegate for every such additional minister and, where a charge has more than one hundred (100) full members, sixteen years and over, an additional lay delegate may be elected; and for each additional two hundred (200) full members, sixteen years of age and over, an additional lay delegate may be elected. The election of a delegate shall be by ballot and shall require a majority vote of those present and voting.

2. THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

a. Of Whom Composed

¶ 280. The General Conference shall be composed of the bishops and ministerial and lay delegates, to be chosen as hereinafter provided.

b. Ministerial Delegates

¶ 281. 1. Each annual conference shall be entitled to one ministerial delegate in the General Conference, and whenever an annual conference shall reach an aggregate of eight hundred full members, it shall be entitled to two ministerial delegates, and to an additional ministerial delegate for every subsequent six hundred full members, provided, however, that in no

case shall a minister be counted more than once in the election of delegates.

2. The ministerial delegates shall be elected by the ministers of the annual conference by ballot. They shall be elders, and at the time of their election, as also at the time of the General Conference, shall be members of the annual conference which elected them. When a ministerial delegate leaves the conference from which he is elected prior to the time of the General Conference, by accepting an appointment to serve another conference, he shall be automatically disqualified as a delegate.

c. Lay Delegates

¶ 282. 1. Each annual conference shall be entitled to the same number of lay as ministerial delegates in the General Conference.

2. Lay delegates to the General Conference shall be elected by ballot of the lay delegates of the annual conference they are to represent. They must at the time of election and at the time of the General Conference be members of the church in full relation within the bounds of the conference which elects them.

d. Credentials

¶ 283. The secretary of each annual conference shall furnish certificates of election to the delegates severally, signed by the president and the secretary, as the credentials upon which they are to be admitted to the General Conference.

e. Sessions

¶ 284. 1. The General Conference shall meet at such times and places as the General Conference itself may from time to time determine. The Board of Administration shall have the power in emergency to change the time and place for the meeting of the General Conference.

2. The bishop or bishops, or if there be none, the secretary of the General Conference, shall, whenever two-thirds of the annual conferences shall demand it, call an extra session of the General Conference, fixing the date thereof and the time of assembling later than the next ensuing session of each of the annual conferences.

f. Presiding Officers

¶ 285. The General Conference shall elect by ballot one or more traveling elders to the office of bishop; and the bishops shall preside at the sittings of the General Conference in such order as they may determine; if no bishop be present, the General Conference shall elect by ballot an elder as president pro tem. The term of office of bishops shall begin at the close of the General Conference session at which they are elected.

g. Other Officers

¶ 286. The General Conference shall have general organizational, promotional, and supervisory powers over the activities of the church and shall be the only lawmaking body of the same. It shall have power to determine the number of its officers, their qualifications for office, and the manner of their selection.

h. Board of Administration

¶ 287. The General Conference is empowered to set up a Board of Administration, to determine its powers, and to prescribe the qualifications of its members and manner of their selection.

i. Quorum

¶ 288. At all times when General Conference is in session, it shall require two-thirds of all the delegates elected by the annual conferences to form a quorum to

do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from time to time until a quorum is obtained.

j. Voting

¶ 289. The members of the General Conference shall deliberate and vote as one body; nevertheless, upon the call of one-fourth of the members present and voting, the house shall divide; and it shall require a majority of the ministerial and of the lay delegates to pass any vote or transact any business.

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

A. Christian Experience

B. Christian Conduct

C. Christian Fellowship

D. Christian Worship

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

A. CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

PREAMBLE

¶ 300. The Christian life can be consciously experienced because it is a relationship between persons — the personal God and humans made in his likeness. Every person is confronted by this personal God, and the outcome of this confrontation is primarily affected by how the person responds.

In love God has fully provided for the salvation of all mankind. But only those who respond in repentance and faith can experience his grace as a redemptive reality.

God deals with all men as free and responsible persons. Therefore, he not only makes his grace available on condition of man's free response, but he also reveals himself and makes known his life to all who put their trust in him. The redemptive relationship with Jesus Christ is experienced as an awareness of his love and fellowship.

Those who are justified by faith experience the peace of God. When his Holy Spirit comes to the heart, there is joy. The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence is the assurance of our relationship to God as his dear children.

1. AWAKENING TO GOD

¶ 301. The Scriptures teach that man is corrupt in every aspect of his nature and has gone far from original righteousness. Added to the depravity common to man because of the Fall there are the enslaving effects of committed sins. Man is unable in himself to

come to God, but God in his grace reaches out to every sinner.

God takes the initiative in making sinners aware of their needs, using his Word, the revelation in Jesus Christ, the gospel proclamation of the church, the witness of individuals, and the circumstances of life. By such means, the Holy Spirit awakens sinners to their needs and to the truth of the gospel (John 16:8, 13). Awakened, they must make a response, either rejecting the call of God or turning to God in repentance and faith.

2. REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION

¶ 302. Awakened by the Holy Spirit to his lost condition before God, a person may move toward God. Since "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), all must repent in order to come into a right relationship with God.

Repentance calls for a sincere and thorough change of mind. To repent is to turn from sin with genuine sorrow and to turn to God in confession and submission. The whole person is involved: mind, feelings, will. Repentance is more than regret for wrongdoing or sorrow at being caught. It is personal sorrow that one has sinned against God. Repentance demands a radical turning from sin and a sincere turning to God. The result is a saving relationship with Christ.

Sincere repentance leads to moral renewal, often evidenced by restitution — the effort to right one's wrongs whenever possible. Acts of restitution, as in the case of Zaccheus, are certainly fruits befitting repentance (Luke 19:8; 3:8). Neither repentance nor restitution save, however, without faith in Christ (Romans 5:1).

3. TRUST

¶ 303. Trust is confidence in and utter reliance upon God (II Corinthians 3:4-5; I Timothy 4:10). Trust includes full acceptance of the promises of God, complete dependence on Christ's sacrifice for salvation, and unconditional commitment to the will of God. God's grace and blessings are open to those who turn to him with firm reliance on his integrity, love, and ability.

Christians experience God's loving care and guidance as they trust and follow him (Ephesians 3:12). When they think they are sufficient unto themselves they become frustrated by trying to do for themselves what God wants to do for them. Self-sufficiency is inconsistent with perfect trust (I Timothy 6:17).

4. ASSURANCE

¶ 304. God gives assurance of salvation and peace of heart to all who repent and put their faith in him (Romans 5:1). The Holy Spirit witnesses to their own spirits that they are forgiven of their sins and adopted into the family of God (Romans 8:16).

The Christian has peace with God through Jesus Christ because his guilt is taken away and his fear of judgment is removed (Hebrews 6:11; 10:22). God continues to give assurance to believers through the Scriptures, the conscious presence of the Holy Spirit, and love for and fellowship with other Christians (I John 3:14).

5. CONSECRATION

¶ 305. God calls his people to set themselves apart to his will and purpose (Romans 6:13; 12:1). Anything thus set apart is said to be consecrated.

All Christians are called to be holy and without blame before God in love (Ephesians 5:27). Christ demands that his disciples follow him in mind and spirit (Romans 7:24-25). If Christians are to witness effectively

in the world, they must be distinguished by righteousness, peace, joy, faith, hope, and love (John 13:35; 14:15; Galatians 5:22-24). God wants a special kind of people for his work (Matthew 16:24; Romans 14:17; 8:6-9; John 17:17; Psalm 100:2). When a Christian sincerely follows Christ and listens to the Holy Spirit as he speaks in the Scriptures, he should sense his need of cleansing from inward sin. He should desire earnestly to be filled with the love of God and long for a relationship with Christ which will satisfy his deepest inward need and empower him to serve and obey his Lord (Ephesians 5:1-2; 1:4; I Corinthians 13:13; 14:1; Acts 1:8).

The Christian, therefore, must consecrate himself to God and surrender his will to the will of the Heavenly Father (Matthew 19:21). He who desires inward sanctification must deny himself, bear the cross, and follow Christ. Devotion to self is idolatry. A Christian who is divided in his loyalty cannot serve God victoriously and steadfastly. Christ must be given the preeminence. He must be the Lord of the Christian's life.

Therefore, to open himself to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, the believer must give himself without reservation to God. He must freely yield all he has to the purposes of God and devote every desire and ambition to the service of Christ rather than to self (Colossians 3:8-13). No Christian can be delivered from the dominion of sin if he permits self to reign in his life. He cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

6. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

¶ 306. Christ gave himself even unto death for the cleansing of his church (Ephesians 2:14-21; Galatians 2:20; John 7:37; Ephesians 5:25-27; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 6:2). His disciples are called to be holy. Christ has provided in the atonement for the believer to be entirely sanctified. Sanctification begins with regen-

eration and results in a deeper relationship when the believer is fully cleansed in heart (Psalm 107:9). This cleansing accompanies the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Paul prayed: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it" (I Thessalonians 5:23-24).

God the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier. Coming into the life at conversion, he fills with his presence when the Christian's consecration is complete, cleansing the heart and empowering for witness and service (Acts 1:8; 15:6-9). He sheds God's love throughout the heart and life of the Christian (Romans 5:5).

Accepting the promise of God by faith, he will enter into a deepened relationship with Christ. He will be enabled to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, and his neighbor as himself (Matthew 22:37-40). He will know an inner surrender to all the will of God, and his life will be transformed from one of inward conflict to one of glad obedience.

Inward sanctification cleanses the Christian from sin and delivers from the idolatry of self. When he is cleansed he is made perfect, not in performance, but in love.

7. GROWING IN CHRIST

¶ 307. The Christian has a new relationship with God and a new life in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The joy of this new life in Christ may for a time obscure the need for growing up in Christ, often referred to as Christian maturity. The new Christian must ultimately choose between growth and decline.

The Bible is the Christian's growth manual. It must be taken seriously, read, and studied for meaning. God will speak to the growing Christian through its pages if he is listening. The value and meaning of life are found

in this book. Scripture is a means of cleansing and changing attitudes and acts.

The growing Christian is increasingly sensitive to both good and evil, steadily learning to distinguish between them. The Holy Spirit will guide him, in harmony with the Scriptures, and he must be alert to the Spirit's directives, immediately resisting temptation and responding to God's call to higher living.

Maturity involves personal development which yields growing respect for one's self and for others. Respect for others necessitates self-respect. The Ten Commandments, summarized into two by Jesus, teach the nature of respect in the growth of the moral person. The quality of a Christian relationship to others affects the quality of his own life. Growth in Christ requires readiness to mend relationships both with God and with others (James 5:16).

Growth in Christ involves responsibility for the well-being of others, all of whom are loved by God and made in his image. Christians need to love and to be loved. They will express their love both by deeds of kindness and by personal words of witness that Christ is the embodiment of God's love and the Savior of the world.

Maturity in Christ should develop adequacy for life and a concern for the transformation of the world according to God's will. Trusting in God and sustained by the Holy Spirit, the Christian will replace attitudes of defeat and futility with those of courage and confidence.

Prayer is an indispensable means of growth toward Christlikeness. In prayer the Christian talks and listens, confesses and adores, asks and thanks. It should be as conversation, avoiding artificial phrases and tones. Sincere prayer changes the supplicant and often his circumstances (James 5:16). The Bible teaches that both individual and group praying are effective for those who are in Christ. Prayer takes us beyond ourselves and

emphasizes our dependence on God. Both prayer and Bible study should be regular, without becoming mere rituals (Psalm 119:11, 105).

The growing Christian finds his proper environment in the fellowship of believers. He does not live in independence from the body of Christ. Worship requires a proper attitude toward God. It involves the believer's active participation. He must prepare his mind and spirit for communication with God. The sincere follower of Christ reaches out to God in praise, thanksgiving, dedication, confession, faith, and service. As a part of the body of Christ he must involve himself in corporate church worship as well as in the other ministries of the church. Support, insight, inspiration, and discipline are fruits of fellowship. Small group participation is a means of grace and growth.

Growth comes with the acceptance of duty in the life of the church. The Holy Spirit provides every Christian with talents which can be developed for the common good. The use of these talents is a means of growth. God ministers to him as he engages in activities pleasing to the Lord.

8. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

¶ 308. The Holy Spirit distributes, as he wills, gifts of speech and service devoted to the common good and the building of the church. Gifts are to be exercised under the lordship of Christ. The believer is to seek as the evidence of the Holy Spirit's fullness, not the gifts themselves, but the Giver. The greater gifts, however, are to be desired above the lesser. "Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (I Corinthians 14:1).

The Apostle Paul gives guidelines, helping the church to discern the authenticity of gifts of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings order out of chaos. This is true of his work in creation as well as in redemption. He is

never the author of confusion but is the source of love, power, and a sound mind. Therefore in public worship everything is to be done decently and in order. Speaking or teaching to speak with unintelligible sounds is not consistent with such order. The language of worship is to be the language of the people. All communication in worship is to be experienced with understanding (I Corinthians 14:6-12).

Life in the Spirit is characterized by pure love. The gifts of the Spirit are to be accompanied by the fruit of the Spirit. Every gift of the Spirit is exercised with the love and compassion of Christ. Unkind critical attitudes and schism in the church are evidences of the flesh (Galatians 5:13-15).

9. DIVINE HEALING

¶ 309. We believe that all healing, whether of body, mind, or spirit, has its ultimate source in God who is "above all and through all and in all." He may heal by the mediation of surgery, medication, change of environment, counseling, corrected attitudes, or through the restorative processes of nature itself. He may heal through one or more of the above in combination with prayer, or he may heal by direct intervention in response to prayer. The Scriptures report many cases of the latter kind of healing which centers in the life and ministry of the apostles and the church. Consistent with the Scriptures, therefore, we urge our pastors to make opportunity for the sick and afflicted to come before God in the fellowship of the church, in strong faith that the God and father of Jesus Christ is both able and willing to heal. At the same time, we recognize that although God's sovereign purposes are good and he is working toward a final redemption which assures wholeness to all believers, he may not grant physical healing for all in this life. We believe that in such cases he can glorify himself through the resurrection to life everlasting.

B. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

¶ 324. We expect that all who are received into the membership of the church shall be examples of Christian conduct. They should avoid evil of every kind and do good in every way possible as set forth in the covenant (Pars. 158-160). They should diligently apply themselves to abide by the principles set forth in the following statements.

1. HUMAN RIGHTS

¶ 325. We believe in and are committed to the worth of all persons regardless of differences of sex, race, color, or other distinctions (Acts 10:34-35). We are pledged to respect the inherent rights of, and to seek justice for, every person in any society or government where we may live as citizens.

Our commitment is based on the creation of all persons in the image of God (Genesis 1:26); the respect of all persons implicit in the commands of God through Moses and in the summary of the law given by Jesus (Deuteronomy 5:11-21; Matthew 22:36-40); the needs of all persons which Jesus placed above institutions and to which he ministered without discrimination; the redemption of all persons by the act of God as recorded in the Bible; the love of all persons as shown in the cross of Christ (John 15:12; 3:16; Romans 5:8).

We are therefore pledged to active concern wherever and whenever human beings are demeaned, depersonalized, or subjected to demonic forces in the world, whether by persons or institutions (Galatians 3:28; Mark 2:27). We are committed to give meaning and significance to every person as God grants us the capability.

As Christians we must grow in awareness, not only of the rights and needs of others but of our own proneness to prejudice.

2. ABORTION

¶326. Induced abortion is the intentional destruction of human life by surgical or other means.

The decision to terminate a pregnancy involves religious and moral values as well as medical and legal realities. Therefore Christians may not determine their rights and privileges only by the extent of the permissiveness of the law of the state or the possibilities of safe medical procedures.

Christian morality demands that we consider both the biblical commandment and the human situation in which the law must be applied. Human life, whether nascent, mature, or senile, is sacred to the Christian because of his faith that life exists in relation to God.

The intentional destruction of human life is murder when any degree of malice or selfishness accompanies the decision and act. Therefore induced abortion is morally unjustifiable except when the act has been decided upon by responsible and competent persons, including Christian and professional counsel, for the purpose of saving the life or sanity of a pregnant woman. Abortion, when it serves the ends of population or birth control, personal preference or convenience, and social or economic security, must be considered as selfish and malicious. Therefore the intentional abortion of nascent life from conception on, except in the instance of extreme necessity, must be judged to be a violation of God's command: "You shall not commit murder."

We advise both physicians and parents that the moral commandment and the law of love are transgressed when human life is destroyed for selfish or malicious ends.

3. CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

¶ 327. The Christian is a citizen of the kingdom of God and also of this world. He receives benefits and bears responsibilities from both relationships. His first allegiance is to God, but that does not release him from responsibilities to his own country if they do not conflict with the clear teachings of the Scriptures (Romans 13:1-7). He should pray for "all who are in high positions" (I Timothy 2:2) and should "be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution" (I Peter 2:13). He should actively participate in civic life by involvement in constructive efforts for the improvement of social, cultural, and educational standards (Matthew 5:13-16); by opposition to degrading influences (II Peter 2:4-10); and by the exercise of his right to vote.

4. CIVIL OATHS

¶ 328. Vain and rash swearing is forbidden by our Lord (Matthew 5:34; James 5:12). However, we hold that the Christian religion does not prohibit the taking of an oath where it is required by a public official. In every case, the Christian must speak in justice and in truth (Jeremiah 4:1-2; Ephesians 4:25).

5. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

¶ 329. 1. We believe that from the beginning God intends for mankind's good that marriage should be a lifelong union of a man and woman (Mark 10:6-9). Marriage is the honorable and proper setting for the full expression of the heterosexual nature of mankind (Hebrews 13:4), and the church has no authority to forbid marriage (I Timothy 4:3). This abiding union in marriage has been used by the apostles to illustrate the holy relationship between Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:23-33). Holding sacred the relationships that are the central part of marriage and family, the

Free Methodist Church declares any voluntary act of premarital sexual intercourse, extramarital sexual intercourse, homosexual acts, lesbianism, and cohabitation of man and woman without a marriage contract duly solemnized by a civil or religious ceremony to be a violation of the moral order, hence sinful, unacceptable conduct.

2. We do not prohibit our people from marrying persons who are not members of our church provided such persons give evidence of being converted to God. Marriage of our members to unbelievers should be discouraged in accord with the apostle's command, "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers" (II Corinthians 6:14). In general, Christian youth ought not to marry without the consent of their parents. All should counsel with their Christian leaders before entering into marriage.

3. We do not permit members of the church to separate, to divorce, and to remarry except in those cases which accord with the counsel of the Word of God.

- a. Whereas forgiveness and reconciliation would be the ideal solution and should be sought, a member of the church may divorce an adulterous mate and remarry (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-11).
- b. The husband and wife when both are members of the church may be permitted to separate when an otherwise impossible situation is destroying the peace of the home. In such cases neither partner may remarry. The way to reconciliation must be kept open (I Corinthians 7:10-11).
- c. When one marriage partner is a Christian and the other a nonbeliever, the Christian may not for that reason divorce the unchristian mate (I Corinthians 7:12, 13), for Christian love may redeem the unbeliever and unite the home in Christ (I Corinthians 7:16).

- d. When a marriage partner deserts the wife or husband, a desertion which leads subsequently to divorce, the Christian brother or sister who is not in violation of the church's position regarding divorce is no longer bound by the marriage and may remarry (I Corinthians 7:15).
- e. A member of the church will be considered guilty of adultery if the member marries one who has divorced a previous mate on any other than biblical grounds (Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; I Corinthians 7:15).

4. The church must seek to be redemptive in all situations. We believe all sin except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit may be forgiven (Matthew 12:31). Therefore, those persons who have been involved in divorce on other than scriptural grounds prior to their Christian conversion and application for membership shall not for that reason be barred from membership, even though they are remarried.

5. Our ministers shall not officiate at the marriage of any person who is under eighteen years of age, unless the parents or guardians be present or have given written consent, and unless at least two witnesses who know the contracting persons be present. They shall refuse to officiate at the marriage of divorced persons, unless furnished with satisfactory evidence that they are not in violation of the church's position regarding divorce.

6. HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR

¶ 330. Homosexual behavior, as with all sexual deviation, is a perversion of God's created order (Genesis 1-3). The sanctity of marriage and the family is to be preserved against all manner of immoral conduct (Exodus 22:16, 17; Deuteronomy 22:23-28; Leviticus 20:10-16).

Homosexual behavior is contrary to the will of God as clearly stated in the Scripture (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26, 27; I Corinthians 6:9, 10; I Timothy 1:8-10).

The person with homosexual inclinations, from whatever source, is accountable to God for his or her behavior (Romans 14:12).

The forgiving and delivering grace of God in Christ is all-sufficient for the homosexual (I John 1:9; Hebrews 7:25; Luke 4:18; I Corinthians 6:9-11).

The church has a personal and corporate responsibility to be God's instrument of healing, restoring love to the homosexual seeking recovery of Christian conduct and life-style (I Corinthians 2:7, 8).

The church opposes legislation which makes homosexual conduct or life-style legitimate.

7. USE OF DRUGS

¶ 331. 1. We believe the Christian presents his body to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) and accepts responsibility to keep himself as a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20). He does not knowingly or willfully abuse his body or mind by what he eats, drinks, or does (I Corinthians 10:31). He avoids the use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and other self-destructive drugs.

2. Crime, accidental death, broken home, and job loss studies show close relationship to the use of drugs including alcoholic beverages. Therefore, the Christian should not knowingly give his vote or influence to elect any person to public office who will use his official or personal influence to legalize the traffic in drugs of any type other than for medicinal purposes.

8. SIMPLICITY OF LIFE

¶ 332. While customs and man-made standards change from age to age throughout the world, we recognize that there are certain scriptural principles which should govern Christians in their attitudes and conduct. Whatever we buy, use, or wear should help us in winning others to Christ, edifying the body of Christ, and glorifying Christ (I Corinthians 10:31-33).

Those biblical principles which should govern Christians in their choice and purchase of all possessions include simplicity, modesty, purity, propriety, humility, and economy. Christians should avoid extravagance, endeavoring to be clean, tidy, attractive, modest representatives of Christ (I Timothy 2:8-10; I Peter 3:1-5).

The principles of simplicity of life should be considered when we purchase or build or furnish a home, buy a car, select clothes, shop for food, and in all other matters.

9. STEWARDSHIP OF POSSESSIONS

¶ 333. The Scriptures teach the right and responsibility of private ownership. The Christian holds title to possessions under civil law, but he regards all he has as the property of God entrusted to him as a steward. Although he may accumulate goods he lays not up *for himself* treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 12:16-21) but gives liberally for the needs of others and the ministry of the church (II Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-13).

10. SECRET SOCIETIES

¶ 334. 1. The Christian's supreme loyalty must be to Jesus Christ who is Lord (Romans 14:9; Acts 2:36). In all his associations the Christian must keep himself free to follow Christ and obey the will of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18). Therefore we require every member to avoid

solemn bonds of fellowship with unbelievers which may confuse his identity and cloud his witness.

2. Those voluntary associations which demand an oath, affirmation, promise of secrecy, or a secret password as conditions of membership are to be considered secret societies. In contradiction to the teaching of Christ and the New Testament these societies require pledges and vows which bind the future actions of those who join (Matthew 5:34-37). The Christian, therefore, who swears his unreserved loyalty to any secret society is in direct conflict with his unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord. The Christian must keep himself free to follow the will of the Lord in all things.

3. Most secret societies are religious in nature. Prayers are offered, hymns are sung, and members engage in acts of worship before an altar. Chaplains are chosen to lead in worship and to conduct funerals. But the worship of these societies is unitarian, not Christian; the religion is moralistic, not redemptive; and the ends are humanistic, not evangelical (Acts 4:12). We insist, therefore, that those who are members of our church refrain from membership in all secret societies and that those who unite with the church resign from active membership in any lodge or secret order previously joined.

4. We do not require those who become members of the church to cease all payments necessary to keep in force insurance benefits previously contracted through lodge membership.

11. EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE

¶ 335. 1. All persons have the right to gainful and meaningful employment irrespective of sex, race, color, national origin, or creed (Romans 10:12).

2. We recognize the right of employees to organize for the purpose of seeking in a proper way their betterment in labor, industry, and business. Oath-bound

secret pacts or acts of violence designed to violate or defend these rights cannot be condoned. We also recognize the right of the individual to remain independent of organization.

3. In labor relations, justice is an indispensable ingredient in the Christian's code of ethics. It is a part of God's nature and of his norm for us. The Christian concern for justice is a peculiar one: it is primarily a concern to do justice and only secondarily a concern to obtain justice. This norm is equally applicable to employer and employee (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22 — 4:1).

4. The Christian should not view management and labor as ultimately hostile opponents. He should not bring distrust and hostility with him either to his place of work or to the negotiating table. There is no place in the Christian ethic for exploitation, for using people as a means to a selfish end, or for seeing them primarily as economic units. He does not use the adversary system for rigid confrontation, but he supports and implements a problem-solving approach.

5. Our people should endeavor to make their witness effective where they work, remembering that a Christian workman is responsible first to God and then to his employer and the organization (Matthew 7:12; Colossians 3:17).

12. WAR AND PEACE

¶ 336. 1. We recognize the sovereign authority of government and the duty of every Christian to reverence the power, to obey the law, and to participate righteously in the administration of lawful order in the nation under whose protection he resides (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7). Members of our church should bear the responsibilities of good citizenship, and they have the right to act in the enforcement of law and the defense of the peace in accord with the conscience of each person.

2. We believe, however, that military aggression is indefensible as an instrument of national policy and strategy (Isaiah 2:3-4). The destruction of life and property and the deceit and violence necessary to warfare are contrary to the spirit and mind of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 5:44-45). It is therefore the duty of every Christian to promote peace and goodwill, to foster the spirit of understanding and mutual trust among all people, and to work with patience for the renunciation of war as a means to the settlement of international disputes (Romans 12:18; 14:19).

3. It is our firm conviction that none of our people should be required to enter military training or to bear arms except in time of national peril and that the consciences of our individual members should be respected (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29). Therefore, we claim exemption from all military service for those who register officially with the church as conscientious objectors to war.

13. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

¶ 337. The Free Methodist Church views the education of its youth as a parental responsibility (Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Ephesians 6:4). Part of that responsibility may be delegated to either public or Christian day schools.

The church gives moral support to the public school system. However, we reserve the right of our children and youth to be exempted from participating in dancing, assignments, and other school-related activities which conflict with the moral and social values held by the denomination. When such conflicts arise, we ask that the students' academic standing not be in jeopardy but when necessary other suitable assignments be substituted.

The church is concerned that concepts of first origins

shall have completely fair consideration in our public schools. Instructional materials are available that permit a scientific treatment of the several concepts of origin, including special creation. We therefore expect that the concept of special creation (that all basic life forms and life processes were created by a supernatural Creator) will be presented in, or along with, all courses, textbooks, library materials, and teaching aids dealing in any way with the subject of first origins.

C. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

¶ 350. It is our purpose to encourage the development and maintenance of warm, caring fellowship in all our societies. The holy love portrayed by the New Testament writers should be our conscious goal and our mark of identity. It is not enough that we attend services of worship with each other. We must know other Christians well enough to share our strengths and weaknesses, our insights and ignorances, our joys and sorrows, that together we may grow up into Christ. Understanding, forgiveness, mutual discipline, and assistance must be found in each of our societies if we are to fulfill the desire of Christ for his church. Let pastor and people show mutual concern that each person realizes his full potential in both character and service. Let pastor and people develop appropriate means for fostering fellowship in the church. Let us remind ourselves that the world will be won, not only by the proclamation of the gospel, but by the availability of a warm and redeeming fellowship.

We should be deeply sensitive to the evil of division in principle, spirit, or practice, and to the dreadful consequences to ourselves and the church. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

2. RECEPTION INTO PREPARATORY MEMBERSHIP

¶ 351. (Ritual other than questions and answers is optional.)

[Those who are to be received as preparatory members shall be called forward by name, and the minister, addressing the people, shall say:]

Dearly beloved, that none may be admitted into the Free Methodist Church without instruction, we receive persons who seek fellowship with us into preparatory membership, during which they may be properly instructed, and also give proof, both to themselves and to the church, of the sincerity and depth of their convictions and of the strength and purpose of their desire to lead a new life.

[Then addressing the persons seeking admission as preparatory members, the minister shall say:]

Beloved in the Lord, you have by the grace of God made your decision to follow Christ and to serve him. Your confidence in so doing is to be based, not on any notion of fitness or worthiness in yourselves, but on the gracious promise of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

That the church may know your purpose, will you please answer the following questions:

1. Do you have the assurance that God has forgiven your sins through faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: I have.

2. Are you willing to receive membership instruction as offered by our church?

Answer: I am.

3. Have you received Christian baptism?

Answer: Yes or no.

If not, will you receive this sacrament at a duly appointed time?

Answer: Yes.

4. You have been won to Christ. Will you endeavor to win others to Christ and the church?

Answer: I will.

[Then shall the minister say:]

On behalf of the Free Methodist Church, and in the hope that you will go forward to complete membership therein, I extend to you a cordial welcome.

[Then shall the minister offer extemporaneous prayer.]

¶ 352. Preparatory members shall not be continued longer than two years on the membership roll, in that relation, without a two-thirds vote of the official board that circumstances warrant a continuation for a longer period.

3. ADMISSION INTO JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP

¶ 355. (Ritual other than questions and answers is optional.)

[Those who are to be received as junior members shall be called forward by name, and the minister shall say:]

Beloved, our Lord Jesus, by his Holy Word has expressly given to everyone who believes in him a place in his kingdom and church. Before you are admitted into the church, it becomes my duty to inquire of you as to your purpose of mind and heart.

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ has forgiven your sins and is now your Savior?

Answer: I do.

2. Have you received Christian baptism?*

Answer: Yes or no.

If not, will you consent to be baptized at such a time as your pastor may choose?

Answer: Yes.

* Those received into junior membership who have been baptized in infancy are required to affirm the baptismal vows. See Paragraph 903.

3. Will you faithfully attend your pastor's class of instruction on living the Christian life and serving God through your church?

Answer: I will.

4. Will you be loyal to the Free Methodist Church and uphold it in your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

Answer: I will.

5. Will you endeavor to show your friends by your life what it means to be a Christian, and will you do your best to win them to Christ?

Answer: I will.

Optional:

[Here the minister may offer an extemporaneous prayer. Then those to be received as junior members shall kneel, and the minister, laying his hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:]

I receive you into the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church as a junior member. May God confirm you in the faith and fellowship of all true disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

¶ 356. All members under sixteen years of age shall be known as junior members. They shall not be counted in the allocation of financial goals by the annual or general conference. Their number shall be kept in a separate column in the statistical report. They are not eligible to vote in business meetings.

The names of junior members shall be reviewed by the official board at least once each year, with a view to character cultivation and Christian nurture, but in no case shall any change in their membership status be made until they reach their sixteenth birthday, other than the provisions in Paragraph 153.

Upon reaching the sixteenth birthday, junior members shall be approved by the official board either for

full membership or for transfer to the preparatory membership roll. To be admitted to full voting membership, they must answer satisfactorily the questions for full membership and receive a three-fourths vote of approval by the members present and voting.

Junior members shall be reported in a separate column in the *Yearbook*.

4. ADMISSION INTO FULL MEMBERSHIP

¶ 360. (Ritual other than questions and answers is optional.)

None shall be received into full membership unless he gives evidence of a renewed heart by living up to the requirements of the general rules; has received at least three months' instruction for full membership as required by the General Conference; has been baptized, and, if baptized in infancy, has publicly assented to the baptismal covenant; has been approved by the official board of the church; and gives affirmative answers to the following questions for full membership, before a public meeting of the church.

[Those who are to be received into full membership shall be called forward by name, and, the minister, addressing the people, shall say:]

Dearly beloved, the church is of God and will be preserved to the end of time for the promotion of his worship and the due administration of his word and ordinances, the maintenance of Christian fellowship and discipline, the edification of believers, and the conversion of the lost. All, of every age and station, stand in need of the means of grace which it alone supplies.

Into this holy fellowship the persons before you, who have received the Sacrament of Baptism, who have learned the nature of these privileges and these duties, and who have also been instructed in the teachings and the mission of the Free Methodist Church, come to be welcomed into full membership. We now propose in the

fear of God to question them as to their faith and purpose, that you may know that they are proper persons to be admitted into this church.

[Then, addressing those seeking admission, the minister shall say:]

Beloved in the Lord, you have come to be received into membership in the Free Methodist Church. We rejoice that you are minded to undertake the privileges and the duties of membership in this church. Before you are fully admitted thereto, you shall here publicly renew your vows, confess your faith, and declare your purpose, by answering the following questions:

1. Have you now the assurance of the Holy Spirit that your sins are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ?
2. Do you now experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit with his cleansing of heart and empowerment for service?

(If the candidate should answer, "No," then ask: Will you seek his fullness through study, counsel, and prayer?)

3. Is it your intention to serve God by the full use of the abilities he has given you?
4. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures to be the revealed will of God containing all things necessary to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?
5. Do you accept the Articles of Religion, the Membership Covenant, and the Organization and Government of the Free Methodist Church, and will you endeavor to live in harmony with them?
6. As a member of the Free Methodist Church, will you be faithful in attendance, prayer, and fellowship with the pastor and fellow-members of the church?

7. Will you practice the principles of Christian stewardship, giving freely of your time, talents, and possessions to Christ and his church?

[Here the minister shall introduce each candidate by name to the congregation, and shall continue as follows:]

You, my fellow-members of this congregation, have heard the vows of these who have completed the requirements for full membership in the Free Methodist Church. Let us indicate our desire to welcome them into our fellowship. (The method shall be left to the discretion of the minister in charge, and this shall fulfill the requirements of Par. 151, Sec. 4, and Par. 361, Sec. 1.)

[Here the minister may offer an extemporaneous prayer.]

This is optional:

[Then those to be received into full membership shall kneel, and the minister, laying his hands upon each of them in turn, shall say:]

_____, I receive you into the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church. May the Lord confirm you in the faith and fellowship of the true disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

[Those being received shall rise, and the minister, addressing the candidates, shall say:]

We rejoice to recognize you as members of the Free Methodist Church and bid you welcome to all its privileges; and in token of our brotherly love we give you the right hand of fellowship and pray that you may be numbered with his people here and with his saints in glory everlasting. May the church be a blessing to you, and may you be a blessing to the church.

[Then shall the minister say to the congregation:]

Brethren, I commend to your love and care these persons whom we this day recognize as members of our church. Do all in your power to strengthen their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

¶ 361. 1. The person giving satisfactory answers to the questions in Paragraph 360 shall, with consent of three-fourths of the members present, be admitted to all the privileges of membership.

2. Any person in good standing in any evangelical church may be received into full membership upon meeting the other requirements of this chapter (see Par. 360), and having received adequate instruction for membership in our church, without having been a preparatory member.

¶ 362. 1. A society already organized, or several persons desiring to unite with the Free Methodist Church and form a new society, shall adopt the DISCIPLINE as a whole and then admit each person in his individual capacity upon his answering the questions in Paragraph 360 and by the consent of three-fourths of the persons forming the society. This is the only circumstance under which members may be received in full relation without letters of transfer or preparatory membership.

2. Groups wishing to become Free Methodist societies shall be called Free Methodist Fellowships until such time as they fulfill all disciplinary requirements.

- a. A Free Methodist Fellowship is defined as a group of believers, some of whom are Free Methodists, or desire to become Free Methodists, and are meeting together for fellowship where no Free Methodist church is nearby, or for the purpose of organizing a new society. They may be under the jurisdiction of either the annual conference or a sponsoring Free Methodist society.

A Free Methodist Fellowship may be one of the following:

- (1) A group of Free Methodist students on a college or university campus.

- (2) Free Methodists stationed overseas.
 - (3) Free Methodists living where no society exists, or committed to planting another Free Methodist church.
- b. When under the jurisdiction of the annual conference, they may elect one person to represent them before the conference board of evangelism. Their tithes and offerings may be paid to the conference and shall be held in a separate account for that fellowship.
 - c. When under the jurisdiction of a sponsoring society, they may elect one person to represent them before that society's official board. Their tithes and offerings may be paid to that society and shall be held in a separate account for that fellowship.

¶ 363. Upon majority vote of contiguous societies or pastoral charges, such may unite, with individual membership automatically transferred to the united society.

¶ 364. 1. Any member who withdraws from the church with no complaints pending against him at the time, may, by a recommendation of the official board and a three-fourths vote of the society from which he withdrew, be reinstated in full membership without being required to serve as a preparatory member, provided that he make request to the pastor of the society within one year of the date of withdrawal. However, any local preacher's or lay minister's license would be invalid until renewed by the official board.

2. If a member lives at a great distance from the society to which he belongs and is unable to attend, he shall, once a quarter, send to the leader or pastor testimony of his religious state. If he fails to do this or to contribute to the financial obligations of his society, he may at the end of one year, by order of the official

board, be recorded on the register as "Removed without a letter." If he afterward claims membership, the official board may restore it.

3. Any member whose membership is terminated by any cause shall have his name placed on a "Discontinued Membership" list to be held by both the pastor and the Christian growth group (class) leader(s) of the church. Such reference list shall be kept in the hope of further contact and restoration to active membership and fellowship in the church.

5. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

¶ 365. Free Methodist students and servicemen and women, and their families, living at a distance from their home and church, may be granted associate membership in any other Free Methodist church. All rights and privileges except the right to vote shall be granted. Associate members shall be recorded on a separate list.

6. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

¶ 366. 1. Only a member desiring to move to another society or to unite with another evangelical church is entitled to a letter of transfer, and, if in good standing, shall receive it upon request.

2. A member in full relation wishing to transfer to another society must have a letter of transfer from the pastor (see Par. 1026, Sec. 1). Without such letter, no one shall be transferred into membership in another place.

When a pastor gives such a letter of transfer, he shall at once give notice of the fact to the pastor of the society to which the letter is addressed. The letter of transfer is valid for one year.

A member holding a letter shall remain a member of and be amenable to the society by which the letter was given until it is presented to another society, which

shall receive the member into membership. After that, the member shall be responsible to the new society for his conduct including that during the time the letter was held.

It shall be the duty of the pastor receiving the letter to notify the pastor who gave it (see Par. 1026, Sec. 2).

3. A letter may be given to a member of our church who wishes to unite with another evangelical denomination (see Par. 1026, Sec. 3).

4. A preparatory member may be transferred to another society by the pastor giving a letter of transfer (see Par. 1026, Sec. 4).

5. A junior member may be transferred to another society by the pastor giving a letter of transfer (see Par. 1026, Sec. 5).

6. No supply pastor in charge of a society shall issue a letter of transfer of his own membership without the consent of his superintendent.

¶367. Reception of Members by Transfer.

(Those who are to be received into membership by transfer shall be called forward by name, and the minister, addressing the congregation, shall say:)

The Free Methodist Church is a connectional denomination organized for effective cooperation with other branches of the church of Christ in the advancement of Christ's kingdom among men. We count it a privilege to receive these members into our fellowship by transfer. Their letters of transfer read:

(The minister will read only the first letter in each category of membership in its entirety. The others can be named along with the name of the church from which they are transferring.)

Let us pray.

(The minister shall lead in an extemporaneous prayer.)

(Name) I welcome you into the fellowship of the _____ church.

(The minister will give a handshake of welcome to each new member.)

(Members transferring from another evangelical denomination must previously have met the requirements of Pars. 360 and 361, Sec. 2.)

D. CHRISTIAN WORSHIP**PREAMBLE**

¶ 375. We believe rites and ceremonies of the church are to be accorded respect. One should not through his own private judgment willfully and purposefully disregard the rites of the church to which he belongs. Such rites are not the same in all places or churches. There have always been differences, reflecting the diversity of times and countries and the customs of men. Therefore, we acknowledge the right of every denomination to change and ordain rites and ceremonies, for the edification of all. But let nothing be ordained against God's Word.

¶ 376. Public worship in our churches shall seek a balance between freedom and form. Preaching shall be emphasized as a means of edifying believers and converting sinners. All public worship shall be in the language of the people.

1. ORDER OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

¶ 377. The Sunday morning corporate worship service should provide four basic results: (1) to provide opportunity for the praise of God; (2) to give worshipers insight into the will of God; (3) to lead individuals to commit themselves personally to God's revealed will; and (4) to strengthen the dedicated person to perform the will of God. To accomplish these desired results, each service should include congregational singing, reading from the Scriptures, pastoral prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and preaching. The apostolic benediction is recommended for dismissing the congregation.

Other services shall include congregational singing, prayer, reading from the Scriptures, and preaching. On occasion, sharing, healing of human hurts, and other forms of worship may be used. The order of services should avoid routine by providing fitting variations in

worship forms within the limitations of propriety, the Scriptures, and specific rituals when used (Chapter IX).

The minister shall insist on reverence and a worshipful attitude before, during, and after worship and shall himself be an example.

2. MUSIC

¶ 378. Qualified persons whose character and life reveal the scriptural principles and support the standards of the Free Methodist Church shall be selected to lead the singing in public worship and, where instrumental music is in use, play the instrument.

The pastor is responsible to provide for the cultivation of sacred music and to guard against complexity and formality in singing. Singing is a part of divine worship in which all persons present should unite. Congregational music shall not be subordinated to special music. Hymns fitting to the occasion should be chosen, and seldom should more than four or five stanzas of one hymn be used. The Free Methodist hymnal is expected to be used in the morning worship service.

The use of instrumental music is the decision of the local church or other ecclesiastical unit conducting worship.

The purpose of music in divine service is to inspire and to sustain worship. Vocal and instrumental music used in the service shall seek to contribute to reverence and exalted worship and not the display of talent, however excellent.

3. LOVE FEAST

¶ 379. The love feast is one of the fascinating yet least understood aspects of the rites of the early church. John Wesley reintroduced it to millions of modern Christians, to whom it proved (and still proves) an inspiring means of grace. Historically, Free Methodists

observed the love feast at least once in three months.

Love feasts are characterized by the singing of hymns, opportunity for testimony, extemporaneous prayer, and the breaking of bread in symbolizing the meals shared by the early Christians. The love feast is not to be confused with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

4. CHRISTIAN GROWTH GROUPS (CLASSES)

¶ 380. In the year 1739 eight or ten persons sought the spiritual counsel and guidance of Mr. Wesley in London. They asked that he spend time with them in prayer and the study of the Scriptures. Thus began the Methodist United Societies. Members saw themselves as "a company of persons having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."*

For the purpose of Christian nurture and more intimate fellowship, societies were divided into classes, not exceeding twelve in number. These classes proved to be one of the most important features in the perpetuation of the Methodist revival. The practice of Christian nurture through small groups has always been regarded as a vital feature of the Free Methodist Church.

Christian growth groups should be formed within the congregation for the careful oversight of the members and the confirmation of seekers in the assurance of God's forgiveness in Christ. Membership in the groups ideally should be not more than twelve. A leader shall be chosen by the group, and the pastor may nominate. The groups should meet in a convenient location on a regular schedule.

* See Historical Appendix.

Group meetings should be devoted to meaningful, creative prayer; the study of the Scriptures; the sharing of needs, aspirations, and victories; and fellowship in Christian love. Persons not yet believers should be invited into the fellowship as they desire to learn of Christ.

Leaders of small groups should be chosen carefully. They shall be members of the Free Methodist Church, persons of mature Christian faith and experience. They should have a good understanding of the Scriptures and agree fully with the doctrines and practices of the church. (See Pars. 620, 621.)

5. SERVICES WITH SACRAMENTS AND RITUALS

¶ 381. Rituals are provided in Chapter IX of the BOOK OF DISCIPLINE to provide for uniformity in certain special services used throughout the denomination. However, the total service providing the context in which the appropriate ritual is used is left to the discretion and order of the minister in charge. Appropriate variations in forms of worship may be used with propriety to enrich the worship experience. Pastors are exhorted to prayerfully consider making every service involving a ritual a fresh means of grace for the worshiper.

CHAPTER IV

OFFICIAL BODIES OF THE CHURCH

PREAMBLE: Connectional Nature and Mission of the Free Methodist Church

- A. Local Church Administration**
 - 1. Society Meeting**
 - 2. Annual Meeting**
 - 3. Official Board**
 - 4. Board of Christian Education**

- B. Conference Administration**
 - 1. Annual Conference**
 - 2. District Conference**
 - 3. Annual Conference Boundaries**

- C. Jurisdictional Conference Administration**
 - 1. Jurisdictional Conference or Provisional
General Conference**
 - 2. Canadian Jurisdictional Conference**

- D. General Administration**
 - 1. General Conference**
 - 2. Board of Administration**
 - 3. Administrative Commission**
 - 4. Commission on Christian Education**
 - 5. Commission on Evangelism**
 - 6. Commission on Missions**

CHAPTER IV

OFFICIAL BODIES OF THE CHURCH

PREAMBLE: Connectional Nature and Mission of the Free Methodist Church

¶ 400. The Free Methodist Church of North America is a body of earnest Christians committed to the will of God as revealed in the Bible, Methodist in doctrine and practice, who consider themselves to be spiritually members of the body of Christ in the world, the visible and universal Church of Jesus Christ.

The membership of the Free Methodist Church of North America is divided into local congregations that are united and incorporated with one another for the purpose of a common worship, fellowship, and mission by means of a constitutionally structured organization that includes local societies, districts, and conference sessions and standing committees, and general sessions and agencies, with specified authority, responsibilities, privileges, and duly elected officers.

Each local congregation accepts members on condition of agreement with a covenant commonly approved and accepted by all local congregations of the church.

Each local congregation holds its real estate and all of its property and assets in trust for the Free Methodist Church of North America.

Each local congregation participates in the formulation of policy and the approval of programs and procedures of the church by duly elected ministerial and lay representation at district, conference, and general levels.

The Free Methodist Church of North America therefore is a connectional church, a body of Christians whose local congregations are united by a charter

democratically constituted and ratified which provides a common character and purpose for all.

The Free Methodist Church admits to no geographic, social, racial, or cultural limitations on the compulsion to preach the gospel of redemption and to share Christ's message of wholeness. We are called, within our power and resources, to introduce all people to Jesus Christ (Matthew 20:28). This includes the inner city, the countryside, the villages, and the marketplaces around the world.

Mission begins in worship. Therefore we encourage congregations to establish worship centers where through prayers, music, meditation, and the preaching of God's Word true worship might take place.

True worship of God demands service to one another within the church and to those outside the church with their varied needs. This service we define as the mission of the church which includes Christian education, evangelism, world missions, and social services.

Free Methodists view Christian education as a means of teaching the Word of God to enable both young and old to develop concepts of doctrine and life in the Christian faith. We establish home studies, Sunday schools, weekday sessions, and other programs. We also operate seminaries. Printed materials for such ministry and numerous books and magazines are produced and/or marketed by the denominational publishing house. We produce and sell these materials, not only to our church members, but to all, recognizing such distribution as a response to our call to make disciples of all nations.

Our mission in evangelism includes both training and opportunity for sharing one's faith in Christ. Means of promoting evangelism include such activities as: group and individual study, seminars and workshops for pastors and lay persons, use of lay witnesses, home Bible studies for inquirers, and outreach ministries to every segment of our society. Radio broadcasts, television programs, tape recordings, videotapes, and all

other means of personal and mass communications are produced, bought, sold, rented, and used.

Free Methodists view their mission as being incomplete until they have done their best to send the gospel message to responsive areas around the world. This is done through a missionary endeavor that involves both career missionaries and short-term volunteer workers. Overseas evangelism is carried on through churches, schools, hospitals, clinics, bookstores, and every other possible means. The goal of our world mission is to minister to the whole person meeting his physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs.

Social services take on many varied forms. At the local church level they may range from day care centers to senior citizen activities. Churches of the denomination cooperate in the support of retirement homes, inner city missions, homes for unwanted or orphaned children, physical and emotional care for unwed mothers, and hospitals.

Many of these ministries converge in camping programs in all sections of North America. Entire families are united in family camps, youth and children have specialized camping programs, and many other groups are brought together for instruction, fellowship, and service.

As real property is needed for the ministry of the church it is held in the name of the Free Methodist Church of North America and those other auxiliary, affiliated, and subsidiary corporations, organizations, and conference and local church bodies.

A. LOCAL CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

1. THE SOCIETY MEETING

¶ 400.1 1. The society meeting shall be composed of the members of the society in full relation. Those under sixteen years of age are ineligible to vote. (See Par. 356.)

2. The pastor shall be chairman of the meeting without vote. Minutes of the society meetings shall be kept in the record book of the official board. When there is but one society on a pastoral charge, the secretary of the official board shall be the secretary of the society.

3. The society meeting shall elect the board of stewards to the number fixed by the annual meeting; elect a statistical auditor from the membership who shall verify the statistical reports to the annual conference, and the accuracy of the permanent record book of the society; elect a director of Christian education, a director of children's ministries, a director of youth ministries, a director of adult ministries, a Penny-a-Day director, a missions coordinator, and at least two members of the board of missions (see Pars. 404, 496, Sec. 4); elect, when necessary, a committee to try members; decide the propriety of incorporating; and elect trustees, subject to the statutes of the territory in which the society is located.

4. The pastor or, in his absence or his refusal to do so, a majority of the official board may call a meeting of the society whenever in their judgment the interests of the church require it.

5. *Robert's Rules of Order* in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure in the sessions of the society meetings.

¶ 400.2. *Suggested Order of Business*

1. Devotions.
2. Roll call.
3. Election of a secretary.
4. Election of tellers.
5. a. Election of a treasurer.
b. Selection of an auditor of the accounts of the church treasurer, the Sunday school treasurer, the Free Methodist Youth treasurer, and all other accounts.
6. Election of a statistical auditor.

7. Election of a director of Christian education by ballot. The pastor may nominate. (See Par. 1011.)

8. Election of Christian education personnel. (See Par. 1011.)

9. Election of board of stewards by ballot (the number fixed by the annual meeting).

10. Election of a director of children's ministries.

11. Election of a director of youth ministries.

12. Election of a director of adult ministries.

13. Election of a missions coordinator.

14. Election of a Penny-a-Day director.

15. Election of trial committee (if necessary).

16. Decision regarding incorporation (if necessary).

17. Annual report of workers.

18. Election of trustees by ballot (if the civil law allows). (See Par. 851.)

19. Election of members at large to the board of missions.

20. Election of Christian growth group (class) leaders by ballot. Each group may elect its own leader. The pastor may nominate.

21. Election of a church nominating committee.

22. Miscellaneous business.

23. Approval of minutes.

24. Adjournment.

2. THE ANNUAL MEETING

¶ 401. 1. a. Each society or group of societies under one pastor, commonly known as a pastoral charge, shall have an annual meeting, of which the pastor shall be chairman, without vote, and the secretary of the official board, secretary. The meeting shall be announced in each society at least ten days before it is held. Absentee voting is not permitted.

b. Where there is but one local church on a pastoral charge, the business designated for this meeting may be conducted at a society

meeting called for this purpose and announced and conducted as specified in this paragraph.

2. At this meeting the members in full relation on the pastoral charge who are sixteen years of age and over (see Par. 356) shall from their number elect by ballot delegates to the annual conference according to the provisions in Paragraph 277. The election of a delegate shall be by a majority vote of those present and voting. No person in preparatory or junior membership or a ministerial candidate in an annual conference is eligible to be a delegate. If, however, a delegate is received into the conference as a ministerial candidate, he does not lose his seat as delegate.

3. The annual meeting shall decide the number of stewards to be elected by each society. Election of trustees shall be as specified in the charter or bylaws or by the civil law. Vacancies shall be filled by the society in which they occur.

4. At this meeting the trustees shall present a full report of the church property.

5. The pastor or, in his absence or his refusal to do it, a majority of the official board may call an annual meeting whenever in their judgment the interests of the church require it.

6. Every second year of a pastor's tenure at least ninety days prior to the conference sessions, the pastoral charge or society may vote by ballot without debate 'yes' or 'no' upon the continuance of their pastor(s).

The ballot shall provide opportunity for comments and indication of membership status (i.e. adult full, preparatory, or associate). The time, place, and method of the vote shall be determined by the annual meeting. Such vote shall not be counted, but shall be placed in a plain envelope, sealed in the presence of the society, and immediately forwarded by the secretary of the annual meeting to the district or conference superintendent, who shall inform the stationing committee of the results of the vote. A pastor shall be informed of the results of

this vote taken on his pastoral charge if he requests it.

Each society is urged to use the ballot approved by the Board of Bishops and distributed by the Publishing House.

7. The pastoral charge or society shall elect by ballot a standing committee on nominations, composed of not less than three or more than nine persons plus the pastor, which shall prepare nominations of candidates, except delegate(s) to annual conference, for election at the annual or society meeting, and to nominate personnel for interim vacancies. This committee on nominations may have a three-year rotation for purposes of continuity and stability.

8. *Robert's Rules of Order* in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure in the sessions of the annual meeting.

¶ 401.1. *Suggested Order of Business*

1. Devotions.
(Secretary of the official board acts as secretary.)
2. Calling of the roll.
3. Report of treasurer of official board (Par. 402, Sec. 3).
4. Election of tellers.
5. Election of delegates to the annual conference by ballot.
6. Election of reserve delegates by ballot.
7. Decide the number of stewards for each society on the pastoral charge.
8. Receive the report of the trustees.
9. Miscellaneous business.
10. Approval of the minutes.
11. Adjournment.

3. THE OFFICIAL BOARD

¶ 402. 1. An official meeting, composed of the pastors, local preachers, lay ministers, stewards, Christian growth group (class) leaders, local director of Christian education, director of local children's minis-

tries, director of local youth ministries, director of local adult ministries, president of the local Women's Missionary Fellowship International, president of the local Light and Life Men International, a member from the senior teen youth organization, a representative from the Agape Fellowship, chairman or president of the local Light and Life Christian school board, treasurer of the society, financial secretary, trustees of the local church property (except in the United Kingdom where membership on the official board shall be by annual rotation and shall include no more than two at any one time), delegate(s) to annual conference, and such members at large as the society may determine, shall, whenever practicable, be held on each pastoral charge once a month. It is understood that the officials designated above have a seat on the official board only when members of the church in full relation, and in the case of all local officials, members on the pastoral charge.

2. The pastor shall be chairman of the official meeting, except as provided for in Paragraph 580, Sections 3 and 4, and in his absence a chairman shall be elected.

3. The official board shall elect a secretary and a treasurer. When there is but one society on a pastoral charge, the treasurer of the society shall be the treasurer of the official board. The secretary shall keep, in a suitable book provided for that purpose, faithful minutes of the proceedings of the official board and of the annual meetings and shall record all marriages and baptisms. The treasurer shall keep a record of all money raised on the pastoral charge and of the manner in which it is expended, and shall give a full report of it at the annual meeting. It is recommended that the official board elect two tellers, at least one of whom shall, with the treasurer, count each offering, and together with the treasurer he/they shall fill in a form stating the date, the amount of the offering, and the purpose for which it

was received. The treasurer shall retain all such forms, and they shall be available for the auditor when he makes the annual audit of the treasurer's accounts.

It is also recommended that a financial secretary be elected if the size of the congregation and amount of funds handled make it advisable. Duties of the financial secretary shall be defined by the official board. The treasurer shall be responsible for furnishing, in writing, a detailed monthly financial statement. See Paragraph 402.1, Section 9(j).

Upon the joint request of the pastor and finance committee the financial books shall be made available for inspection.

4. The official board shall look after the spiritual and temporal interests of the pastoral charge.

5. It is recommended that the official board elect from the members of the church a budget or finance committee of which the pastor and the treasurer shall be members, to prepare for the consideration of the board an estimate of the amount needed for the support of the pastoral staff and for the other expenses of the pastoral charge.

6. The members of the finance committee shall see that each member of the society is solicited for the support of the local work and urged to give regularly (weekly, monthly, or quarterly) according to his means. (See Par. 804 re raising of funds.)

7. The official board shall provide a permanent book in which the pastor shall enter the information prescribed in Paragraph 540, Section 10.

8. The official board shall provide a board of Christian education consisting of the director of Christian education, director of children's ministries, director of youth ministries, director of adult ministries, and, where elected, the sub-directors of each of the three age levels. The pastor shall be an ex officio member.

The board of Christian education shall report to the regular meeting of the official board. (See Par. 413, Sec.

7.)

9. The official board may subdivide into two or more commissions assigning such duties as: administration including the work of the finance committee, outreach, worship, Christian education including the work now assigned to the board of Christian education, and others as it deems appropriate, provided, however, that the commissions function as subcommittees of the official board taking action only in areas authorized by that board.

A member of the senior teen youth organization may be elected an honorary member of each commission. Where not so organized, a member of the senior teen youth organization may be made an honorary member of each major board and committee of the official board.

10. There shall be a pastor's cabinet which shall be elected by the official board to assist the pastor in the administration of the worship, finance, education, outreach, and fellowship areas of the church program. The pastor's cabinet may serve as the church calendar committee.

The members of the cabinet shall be the pastor, as chairman, a representative from the delegates to the annual conference, and at least two others chosen by the official board (the pastor may nominate). The total cabinet membership shall not exceed nine members. A further function of this cabinet is to aid the pastor in making his ministry most effective by being available for counsel, keeping him advised concerning conditions within the congregation as they affect the relations between pastor and people, and keeping the people informed concerning the nature and function of the pastoral office. The cabinet shall cooperate with the pastor in choosing of suitable supply ministers when he is to be absent, groups for special services, or special speakers, unless otherwise provided for by the official board.

11. A committee on church growth may be elected by the society to function throughout the year. Its duties

may be to (a) study established patterns of church growth, (b) seek practical means with which to apply these principles to the local church, and (c) diligently seek to inspire people of the church to implement these principles. This committee should report on a regular basis to the official board.

12. *Robert's Rules of Order* in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure in the sessions of the official board.

¶ 402.1. *Suggested Order of Business*

1. Devotions.
2. Election of a secretary.
3. Calling of the roll.
4. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting.
5. Election of a treasurer.
6. Selection of an auditor.
7. Election of a committee on social ministry.
8. Election of a church calendar committee. (The pastor's cabinet may serve. See Par. 402, Sec. 10.)
9. Inquire:
 - a. Are there any sick?
 - b. What is the status of membership?
 - (1) Have any been received as junior members?
 - (2) Have any been received as preparatory members?
 - (3) Are converts and junior and preparatory members receiving instruction in Christian living and church membership according to Paragraph 540, Section 28?
 - (4) Are there any junior or preparatory members whose terms of training have expired?
 - (5) Have any been received into full membership?
 - (6) Have any been received into associate membership? (See Par. 365.)

- (7) Have any died?
- (8) Have any been otherwise removed?
- c. Are there any violating our rules of church membership who will not be reprovved?
- d. Are there any persons to be recommended, examined, or licensed as local preachers? (See Pars. 477.1, 520.)
- e. Are there any local preacher's licenses to be renewed?
- f. Are there any persons to be recommended for lay minister's license for examination and approval by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance? (See Par. 600.1.)
- g. Are there any lay minister's licenses to be granted? to be renewed?
- h. Have any been married or baptized?
- i. Report of the board of Christian education.
- j. Treasurer's report:
 - (1) Amount raised as ordered by the conference.
 - (2) Amount raised for pastoral support.
 - (3) Amount raised for United Ministries for Christ.
 - (4) Report of other money received and disbursed.
 - (5) Balance in the treasury.
- k. Are there any claims to be presented?
 - l. Is there any unfinished business, or are there any committees to report?
- m. Is there any new business, or are there any committees to be appointed?
- n. Reports of department heads:
 - (1) The president of the Women's Missionary Fellowship International.
 - (2) The president of the Light and Life Men International.
 - (3) The board of stewards.
 - (4) The board of trustees.

- o. Are there any vacancies in the board of trustees?
- p. Is the title to the church property secure?
- q. Are the legal documents for this pastoral charge deposited for safekeeping; and if so, where? Are the official records in safekeeping?
- r. Is the church property insured?
- s. Are the advices and requirements regarding the cultivation of vocal music found in Paragraph 378 being observed?
- t. Annually at a fall meeting (October, if possible) of the official board, the pastor, with the aid of the local board of Christian education, shall report in writing the following information concerning members of his own congregation, particularly young people who are in college and other educational institutions at home and away from home, and also those in the armed services.

It is expected that these reports shall include names and current addresses of those away in school and elsewhere. This, of course, includes names of schools being attended if of collegiate level.

The report is expected to be divided according to answers to the following questions:

- (1) Who are the young people of the local church who are members of the senior class in the local high school?
- (2) Who are the young people who are members of the second year in a local junior college?
- (3) Who are the people, younger or older, of this pastoral charge now away from home in theological seminaries? Give the name of the seminary in each case.
- (4) Who are the individuals now away from

home or away from the community who are considered as belonging to this local church enrolled in other colleges, universities, or graduate schools, or schools of nursing? Here again, in each case, the name of the school in which the person is enrolled should be given.

- (5) What individuals from this church are now in the armed services, and what are their present addresses?
 - (6) Has the list of the students now enrolled as seniors in the local high school or as second year students in the local junior college been sent to the admission officer of the area Free Methodist college?
 - (7) What is being done by the local church to extend and maintain its ministry to students away from home or away from the church in attendance at college and graduate institutions?
 - (8) What is being done to extend and maintain the church's ministry to those individuals now in the armed services?
10. Reading the minutes.
 11. Adjournment.

4. THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

¶ 403. 1. A local board of Christian education shall be composed of the director of Christian education, director of children's ministries, director of youth ministries, and director of adult ministries. These four persons constitute the executive committee of the board of Christian education. They shall be full members of the Free Methodist Church. In larger churches, one, two, or three assistants to the director of each age level may be elected. When so increased, the board may divide itself into three age-level committees. The pastor shall

be an ex officio member. (As an optional plan, the board of Christian education may be composed of the executive committee plus one to three persons elected at large.)

Where desired an assistant to the director of Christian education may be elected to work with the executive committee of the board of Christian education to promote Sunday school growth. The person so elected becomes a member of the board of Christian education.

2. The board of Christian education shall submit an organizational plan and list of officers needed for the new year to the annual society meeting. (The organizational plan will take into consideration the size of the church and its ministry needs.) The board may submit nominations for the new board of Christian education to the church nominating committee.

3. Upon authorization by the society meeting the newly elected board of Christian education will name all staff personnel for: the Sunday school, including officers, department superintendents and teachers; Joybells, Herald and Cadet programs; Young Teens, FMY, and post-high school programs; adult programs including Family Life and Senior Citizens; others, e.g., VBS, junior choir, children's church, etc. When a society chooses to elect such personnel, the newly elected board of Christian education shall make nominations to the society.

4. The responsibilities of the local board of Christian education shall include:

- a. Provide for administration of all Christian education programs.
- b. Coordinate all Christian education activities.
- c. Implement denominational curricula for all Christian education endeavors.
- d. Make sure training is provided for Christian education workers, including certification and workers' conferences.
- e. Encourage adherence to denominational standards by Christian education workers.

- f. Project, plan, and evaluate total Christian education programs.
- g. Review all Christian education financial programs.

5. BOARD OF MISSIONS

¶ 404. 1. A local board of missions shall be composed of the missions coordinator, representatives of the Women's Missionary Fellowship International and Light and Life Men International, local Penny-a-Day director, director of Christian education, directors of youth and children's ministries, and the pastor, with two or more members elected at large where practicable.

2. The local board of missions shall develop an annual program of missions education and activities in cooperation with the General Missionary Board.

3. The missions coordinator shall serve as chairman of the local board of missions unless the board decides to elect its own chairman.

4. The responsibilities of the local board of missions shall include:

- a. Alerting the congregation to missions prayer needs from "Prayer Focus," "Missions Hotline," and other available sources.
- b. Promotion of the formation of "Missions Prayer Cells."
- c. Dissemination of information as to "mission opportunities" through VISA or as a career missionary.
- d. Forwarding to the personnel department of the General Missionary Board the names and addresses of young people in the local church sensing a call to missionary service.
- e. Coordinating all missions activities or programs for the year.
- f. Promoting and evaluating all methods for missions fund raising. (See Pars. 400, Sec. 3; 400.1, Sec. 19; and 496, Sec. 4.)

B. CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION**1. THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

(See John Wesley's admonitions preceding Paragraph 440.)

¶ 405. Annual Conferences. There shall be the following annual conferences: Atlantic Southeast, California, Canada East, Canada Great Lakes, Canada West, Centenary, Central Illinois, Columbia River, East Michigan, Florida, Genesee, Illinois-Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky-Tennessee, Louisiana, Maryland-Virginia, Minn-I-Kota, Nebraska-Wyoming, New York, North Michigan, Ohio, Oil City, Oklahoma, Oregon, Ozark, Pacific Coast Japanese, Pacific Coast Latin American, Pacific Northwest, Pittsburgh, Rocky Mountain, Southern California-Arizona, Southern Michigan, Susquehanna, Texas, Wabash; the following overseas and/or missions related conferences: Brazilian, Burundi, Dominican, Haiti Inland, India, Mexican, Mozambique and South Africa Mines, Natal-Transkei, Nikkei, Philippine, Rwanda, Taiwan, Zaire, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia; and the following overseas provisional conferences: Hong Kong-Macau, Indonesia, Malawi, Northwest Mexico, Paraguay, and Transvaal-Orange Free State; and others as they shall be duly organized.

¶ 406. Annual Conference Membership. Each annual conference shall be composed of all the traveling, supernumerary, and retired ministers who have been received into full membership within its bounds, and lay delegates elected by the several pastoral charges, as provided in Paragraph 277. A delegate is not a member of the annual conference until he is present with his credentials and has been seated. The ministerial candidates are without vote. The delegate(s) shall be considered as liaison or representatives between the local church and the conference during the interim of

conference sessions with their tenure continuing until the next annual election.

¶ 407. Annual Conference, Place and Time. Each annual conference shall appoint the place and, with the concurrence of the bishop, the time of its own sessions. If for any reason a conference cannot be held at the place appointed, the determination of the place shall be left with the superintendent(s) and the secretary of the last conference. The Friday preceding each annual conference should be observed by our people as a day of fasting and prayer.

¶ 408. Annual Conference, Voting. The ministerial and lay members composing the annual conference shall deliberate and vote as one body; but at the call of one-fourth of all the members present and voting, the house shall divide and the ministers and lay members vote separately; and it shall require a majority of both branches to constitute a vote of the conference. *Robert's Rules of Order* in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure in the annual conference sessions.

¶ 409. Annual Conferences, Officers.

1. In the absence of the bishop and of the elder whom he may have appointed, the conference shall elect, by ballot, an elder from its own number to preside. All other conference officers must be members of the church within the bounds of the conference.

2. It shall elect, by ballot if it wishes, a secretary who shall continue in office until a successor is elected with duties as follows:

- a. To record in a suitable book the proceedings of the conference, excluding anything not actually conference business.
- b. To keep, in a book to be preserved with the journal, the original or so-called rough minutes

as approved by the conference.

- c. To keep on file the reports adopted by the conference and record in the journal only financial and such other reports as the conference may order.
- d. To be custodian of the conference records and journal.
- e. To transcribe from the annual conference records all the decisions of disciplinary law rendered by the president, giving the number of the pages upon which those decisions are recorded, and forward the transcript promptly to the secretary of the General Conference and, if there are no such decisions, to send a statement to that effect to the secretary.
- f. To send the conference records to the General Conference.
- g. To report annually to the Department of Ministerial Education and Guidance following the annual conference session the names of ministers whose ordination parchments are no longer valid, whether by issuance of certificates of transfer to other denominations, uniting with other denominations without our papers, withdrawal, expulsion, or death, and listing the reason for such invalidation.
- h. To keep a proper register containing names, addresses, and dates of declaration of all members of the church within his conference who declare themselves to be conscientious objectors and to make a prompt report of these declarations to the secretary of the General Conference, who shall keep a complete record of them. (See Pars. 336 and 445.)

3. It shall elect a treasurer who shall be bonded. In case of a vacancy the superintendent(s) of the conference may appoint a treasurer to act until the next conference session. He shall remit monthly all funds due the

general church treasurer. The general church treasurer shall, immediately after the conference session, notify the conference secretary of any deficit.

4. It shall elect an auditor who shall carefully audit the accounts of the treasurer and report to each annual session.

5. It shall elect a secretary of stewardship who shall direct attention to tithing by:

- a. Setting a date when each pastor shall preach on this subject and informing him of it.
- b. Arranging for the distribution of literature by the pastors on their charges.
- c. Providing cards to be used by each pastor to secure pledgers to the tithing system. The pastor shall tabulate results and forward them to the stewardship secretary to be used as a part of his annual report.
- d. Making such other provisions as he may judge best to create interest.
- e. Making a report at the close of each conference year to the general director of stewardship and to the annual conference.

6. The annual conference shall require of its members a financial report of their receipts from the field. This report shall be published in the *Yearbook*.

7. The annual conference shall designate a pension plan agent who will be responsible to oversee the administration of the pension plan at the conference level in harmony with guidelines developed by the general pension board.

8. It shall elect a conference Penny-a-Day director.

9. Each annual conference shall elect a conference claimants executive secretary with duties as follows:

- a. To study all claims and recommend to the annual conference the amount of each claim. In no case, however, shall income from insurance or life savings be considered a reason for reducing any claim in which

- contributive service constitutes all or part of the service record.
- b. To receive emergency claims in the interim of annual conferences and recommend them directly to the General Board of Conference Claimants. These emergency claims shall be only temporary and must be submitted to the next session of the annual conference for recommendation to the general board.
 - c. To receive all Claimants' Applications; see that they are properly filled out with all necessary information; and transmit them to the general executive secretary after they have been properly acted upon. He shall also certify annually all the claimants in the conference to the general executive secretary.

¶ 410. Superintendency.

1. Each annual conference shall elect one or more elders as superintendents to man the work, and may elect, appoint, or make provision to employ one or more elders to serve as assistant(s) to the superintendent.

The territory embraced by each annual conference may be divided into districts, and over each district one of the elders shall be appointed by the conference as district superintendent. The conference may instruct a superintendent to work under the general direction of an advisory committee, provided that there be no infringement of the disciplinary powers of the superintendent.

2. If two or more contiguous conferences so desire, they may request that they be under common direction of an area superintendent. The superintendent shall be nominated by a committee composed of one lay and one ministerial member from each of the conferences involved with the area bishop serving as chairman. The nominee must receive a majority vote in each conference involved. Election shall be by ballot.

¶ 411. Superintendent's Cabinet. Each annual conference may establish a superintendent's cabinet, to meet at the call of the superintendent.

1. The purpose of the superintendent's cabinet shall be:

- a. To serve as a forum for the superintendent(s), pastors, and laity.
- b. To aid the superintendent(s) in counsel, encouragement, and evaluation.
- c. To inform the churches concerning the nature and function of the superintendency.

2. The members of the superintendent's cabinet shall be the superintendent, as chairman, two representatives from the delegates to General Conference (one ministerial and one lay), and a representative from the conference interests of evangelism, missions, property, and finance. Total membership shall not exceed nine members.

3. In conferences with more than one superintendent, the chairmanship shall follow a yearly rotation.

¶ 412. Administrative Committee.

Each annual conference shall elect a standing administrative committee of not less than four members to act as the executive committee of the conference in the interim between annual conferences to care for routine business and items specifically delegated to it by the conference within the limits of the DISCIPLINE.

¶ 413. Board of Christian Education.

1. The conference shall elect a board of Christian education which shall consist of the conference director of Christian education, director of children's ministries, director of youth ministries, director of adult ministries, and, where elected, the sub-directors of each of the three age levels, and any necessary additional personnel. Where desired an assistant to the conference director of Christian education may be elected to work with the

executive committee of the board of Christian education to promote Sunday school growth. The person so elected becomes a member of the board of Christian education. The superintendent is an ex officio member of the board and all committees.

2. The conference board of Christian education shall divide itself into three age-level committees. The director of Christian education shall be an ex officio member of each of these committees. The responsibilities of the board of Christian education and of the age-level committees will be outlined in denominational handbooks.

3. The executive committee of the conference board of Christian education shall be nominated by the conference nominating committee, and elected by the annual conference.

4. The nine age-level directors shall be nominated by the conference nominating committee, after consultation with the newly elected executive committee (who shall be ready to submit names of qualified persons for these positions), and elected by the annual conference.

Where an assistant to the director of Christian education is desired, the same procedure for election shall be followed.

5. In the event the conference director of Christian education is employed full time, he may be given the privilege to present nominations to the nominating committee for the conference board of Christian education.

6. The previous board of Christian education may submit nominations for the executive committee of the new board through the conference nominating committee.

7. It shall be the duty of each local Sunday school to forward the tithe of all money spent for Sunday school expenses to the treasurer of the conference board of Christian education or, where so designated, to the annual conference treasurer. Thirty percent of the

Sunday school tithe shall be remitted to the general headquarters for United Ministries for Christ, the remainder to be used for conference Sunday school promotion and other ministries of the conference board of Christian education.

¶ 414. Board of Evangelism.

1. Each annual conference is required to organize a conference board of evangelism which shall be authorized to carry on aggressive evangelistic work within its bounds. This board shall have power to raise funds and to employ evangelists, crusade teams, and helpers to labor within the conference, who, with the concurrence of the superintendent(s), shall be authorized to establish new societies, provided it make provision and be responsible for the support of all the laborers it employs.

2. Each annual conference shall elect a member of the Free Methodist Youth and a member of the Light and Life Men International to the conference board of evangelism. The Free Methodist Youth and the Light and Life Men International may nominate.

¶ 415. Evangelists. All evangelists shall be recommended by the conference board of evangelism according to the guidelines established by the Commission on Evangelism, and the approval of the conference board of ministerial education and guidance, prior to their appointment by the stationing committee. They shall be entitled to the rights and privileges of those appointed to pastoral charges and shall be subject to the same rules and regulations, so far as they apply to their circumstances. They shall be subject to the restrictions of Paragraph 560, Section 3. They shall prepare a prospectus for publicity and use the standard forms for evaluation as prescribed in Paragraph 481, Section 1:a:3.

¶ 416. Board of Ministerial Education and Guidance.

1. Each annual conference shall have a standing board of ministerial education and guidance, the personnel of which shall be the members of the stationing committee with additional members as deemed advisable by the electing body, the total membership not to exceed twelve members nor to be less than four with due regard to a proper division of membership on the board between laymen and ministers.

2. This board shall assist in recruiting personnel and shall be invested with the responsibility of carefully screening candidates for reception into the conference or advancement in conference relation or ordination. The board shall guide and counsel those who are received, that they may be able to meet all the demands of their holy office. For instructions on administration of multiple staff, see the Board of Ministerial Education and Guidance manual.

3. The annual conference, acting upon the recommendation of the board of ministerial education and guidance, has final responsibility for the approval of all ministerial candidates in keeping with the standards outlined in Paragraphs 477.2, 477.5, and 530, and the certification of the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.

4. Each pastor shall present to the board annually his program for continuing education which board shall monitor the program.

5. It shall be the duty of this board through the year to serve as a planning committee and as a counseling body for the superintendent(s).

6. A superintendent or a board of ministerial education and guidance, planning to recommend that a minister should not receive a pastoral appointment the ensuing year, shall so notify that minister at least sixty days prior to the session of the annual conference.

However, final decision in the case shall rest with the stationing committee, according to Paragraph 419, Section 2.

7. A conference board of ministerial education and guidance may grant a certificate of standing with view to transfer to another conference during the interim between annual or district conference sessions.

8. This board shall give consideration to the character of and performance of duty by each ministerial member of the conference in light of Paragraph 428, Section 17, and shall present to the annual conference a statement as to the integrity and Christian discipleship of the ministerial members of the conference. (See Par. 553 for restrictions regarding divorce of ministers or spouses.)

Where conferences are not divided into districts, the board of ministerial education and guidance shall pass the character of local deacons and local elders, reporting such action to the annual conference.

9. The early identification of young people sensing God's call to the ministry shall be a primary responsibility of the board of ministerial education and guidance in cooperation with the local church. Every attempt shall be made to discover such young people before they graduate from high school. Proper records shall be kept of their educational progress, and regular communication shall be maintained.

¶ 417. Missions Board. The annual conference shall elect a missions board to cooperate with the General Missionary Board in presenting the interests and support of home and overseas missionary work. The Women's Missionary Fellowship International, the Light and Life Men International, and the Free Methodist Youth shall elect representatives to the board. In addition, the conference may elect an equal number of ministers and laymen on rotating tenures. The chairman of the missions board may serve as a missions

coordinator for conference activities or someone nominated and elected by the missions board.

¶ 418. Committee on Social Issues and Ministries. Each annual conference shall elect a committee on social issues and ministries to deal with the needs and hurts of people which demand that as Christians we be open and sensitive to the unique qualities and social problems of all ages, classes, sexes, and social groups. It shall be the duty of the committee:

1. To study and recommend to the annual conference or, in the interim, to the administrative committee, the establishment of conference positions on current social issues.

2. To communicate to the local societies and the public the conference positions on social issues and bring about appropriate action.

3. To organize the resources, both human and material, of the conference to assist the local society in meeting the needs and hurts of people.

¶ 419. Stationing Committee.

1. The district superintendents and an equal number of lay members of the conference (one from the district of each superintendent) to be elected by ballot shall, together with the area bishop or his appointee, constitute a stationing committee of which the area bishop or his appointee shall be chairman and have a vote. When an annual conference has but one superintendent, it may, if it so desires, increase the number of members on the stationing committee by electing an additional elder and an additional layman. In an annual conference in which there is one conference superintendent, he shall be the vice-chairman of the stationing committee. If there are two or more superintendents, then the committee shall designate one of the superintendents as vice-chairman. If, for any reason, a member is unable to serve during

the conference session, the conference may elect an elder or layman to serve in his place. No person who is recommended to the annual conference to be received as a ministerial candidate, nor a supply, though acting as a delegate, shall be eligible to serve on the stationing committee. The committee shall serve until the close of the following annual conference.

2. It shall be the duty of the stationing committee to appoint the ministers to their several fields of labor each year and to fill any vacancies which may occur during the interim of the annual conferences. Opportunity shall be provided for each pastor to express himself concerning his appointment. The committee shall give consideration to the vote on the pastor's return. Pastoral appointments shall be considered long-term appointments, and any proposed changes shall be discussed with both pastor and delegate.

3. A minister may be appointed to a pastoral charge without having charge of it; the administration of it shall then devolve upon the superintendent and the official board.

4. Any minister who refuses to serve a pastoral charge when appointed by his conference or who has not been given a pastoral appointment shall not be appointed to any work by another conference or superintendent without the consent of the stationing committee of the previous conference.

5. No minister, under appointment by the conference, may be changed in the interim between annual conferences against his wishes unless by request of two-thirds of the full members of the pastoral charge present and voting at a duly called meeting of the society. A new minister may not be appointed to fill the vacancy without the consent of the official board.

6. The stationing committee, or a special committee of six, three ministers and three laymen, appointed by the superintendent involved, shall have authority to suspend any minister for preaching doctrines contrary to

that of the Free Methodist Church, or for conduct unbecoming a minister. This is in no way to be construed as conflicting with his rights as outlined in Chapter VII. (See Par. 553 for restrictions regarding divorce of ministers or spouses.)

¶ 420. Appointments — Left Without Appointment. An annual conference may, upon the unanimous recommendation of the stationing committee, leave a minister without appointment. Any minister so left without an appointment two years in succession may be located by vote of the annual conference.

¶ 421. Appointments — Supernumerary, Leave of Absence. Any minister not regularly in effective relationship to the ministry of the Free Methodist Church may be granted the supernumerary relationship or leave of absence by his conference on the recommendation of the stationing committee. After two years on leave of absence, a minister who is not restored to active relationship automatically shall become supernumerary, unless, upon recommendation of the stationing committee, he is located or is continued on leave of absence. After two years in supernumerary relationship or two years on leave of absence, a minister may be located on the recommendation of the stationing committee. One so located, either from leave of absence or supernumerary relation, may be restored to the traveling relationship only by the conference that located him. The published appointment of ministers on leave of absence shall designate the reason for the leave.

¶ 422. Appointments — Location. When a minister is located, or discontinued by an annual conference, the stationing committee shall fix the place of membership. Ordained persons in good standing will be listed as local elders or local deacons as the case may be.

¶ 423. Board of Stewardship and Finance. Each conference shall elect a board of stewardship and finance with not less than five members. Its duties shall include the preparation of the conference budget and the supervision of the performance of that budget. It shall assist the superintendent in stewardship education and the promotion of the United Ministries for Christ throughout the conference. The conference superintendent and treasurer shall be ex officio members.

¶ 424. Conference Year. The conference year of each annual conference shall close automatically with the adjournment of that conference. The fiscal and statistical year for the local churches, conferences, and the general church shall coincide with the calendar year.

¶ 425. Limitation of Powers. An annual conference is not a legislative body. It cannot enact laws, nor can it interpret the DISCIPLINE by resolutions or reports and bring ministers or laymen to trial for violation of them.

¶ 426. Ministerial Relations Committee. An annual conference may appoint a committee on ministerial relations. Only the case of a minister accused of dissemination of false doctrine or immoral conduct may be referred to a committee on ministerial relations.

This committee shall act only as a committee of preliminary investigation, to determine whether there is a probable cause for such accusation and report such findings to the conference. The committee's report upon a particular case must, except with the consent of the accused to expunge it, be placed in the conference records, with a statement of the findings and the final disposition.

¶ 427. New Societies on Conference Boundary. A new society, organized near the boundary line between the conferences and in a conference which has no

organized work within forty miles, shall be permitted to decide for itself to which of the two conferences it shall belong.

¶ 428. Annual Conference, Order of Business. Each annual conference shall inquire:

1. What are the names of ministers and delegates having a seat in this conference?
2. Who are the stationing committee?
3. Who are to be admitted as ministerial candidates?
4. Who remain as ministerial candidates?
5. Who are to be admitted into full membership?
6. Who are the deacons?
7. Who are to be elected and ordained elders this year?
8. Who are the missionaries with honorary membership? (See Par. 499.)
9. Who has located this year?
10. Who are the supernumerary ministers?
11. Who are the retired ministers?
12. Who has been received by transfer, and from what conferences? (It is the duty of the conference receiving a minister by transfer to send notice of his reception to the secretary of the conference from which he has transferred.)
13. Who has withdrawn from the conference this year?
14. Who has been given a certificate of good standing with a view to transfer to another conference?
15. Has any been permitted to withdraw under charges or complaints?
16. Has any been expelled?
17. Has the conference board of ministerial education and guidance given due consideration to the character of and performance of each ministerial member of the annual conference? (See Pars. 501, 510, and 540, Sec. 28. Let the president call attention to these portions of the DISCIPLINE.)

18. Who has died this year?
19. What is the number of church members? (Gain or loss as reported in the statistical forms refers to total membership.)
20. What is the number of ministerial candidates and ministers in full membership in this conference?
21. Has the conference raised or exceeded its assigned share of the United Ministries for Christ budget?
22. Have all the churches raised their assigned shares of the conference budget?
23. Number of Sunday schools? Of officers and teachers? Of scholars? Of members on the cradle roll? Of members in the home department? Of volumes in the library?
24. What has been expended during the year in the societies for Sunday schools? What has been raised in the Sunday schools for foreign missions and other benevolences?
25. How many copies of *Light and Life* are taken?
26. What amounts are recommended for the retired ministers and the widows and orphans of ministers?
27. Where are the ministers stationed this year?
28. Where, and when, shall our next conference be held?

2. THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE

¶ 430. 1. The district conference shall be composed of the traveling ministers, the members of the official boards of the district, as listed by office in Paragraph 402, Section 1, president of the district Women's Missionary Fellowship International, district directors of children's ministries and youth ministries, *Light and Life* Men's promoter, and district conference trustees who are members of the church and live within the bounds of the district. A minister holding a certificate of standing from his annual conference retains his rights and membership in his district conference. His confer-

ence relationship is fixed by his annual conference; he cannot, therefore, be a member of a district conference in another annual conference in which he may be supplying work.

2. The district conference shall hold as many sessions each year as it shall deem necessary, preferably in connection with a general district meeting. However, upon the written request of one-half of the ministers on the district and an equal number of lay members of the district conference, the superintendent may call a special session. (See Par. 580, Sec. 5.) A district conference may order a session to be held outside its geographical limits when two or more districts unite in district or conference camp meetings or conventions. The last district conference of the year may fix the time and the place of the first meeting of the ensuing year. The Friday preceding each district conference shall be observed by our people as a day of fasting and prayer.

3. The superintendent shall be president of the district conference, and in his absence and in the absence of an elder whom he may appoint, the district conference shall elect one of its members amenable to the annual conference to preside.

4. A secretary shall be elected by the district conference, who shall keep a faithful record of its proceedings and shall send the record to the annual conference for examination.

The district conference shall also elect a treasurer for the district.

5. The district conference shall have the right to review the records of the official boards of the district at its discretion, or on demand of the superintendent, and to pass upon whatever is not in harmony with the DISCIPLINE or with parliamentary law.

6. The district conference shall:

- a. Hear complaints.
- b. Try appeals.
- c. Elect a district director of youth ministries.

- d. In cooperation with the superintendent, appoint and hold camp meetings as the interests of the cause of God may require. It may set the time of the camp meetings for as many years as may seem advisable and engage workers for the same.

¶ 430.1. *Suggested Order of Business*

1. Call to order by superintendent or, in his absence, by the secretary.
2. Devotions.
3. Calling of the roll. (At the first session of the year a roll should be made out and then called.)
4. Election of secretary.
5. Election of treasurer.
6. Election of auditor.
7. Reading of the minutes of previous session.
8. Financial report of superintendent.
9. Report of treasurer.
10. Reports of committees.
11. Is there unfinished business?
12. Is there new business?
13. Are there complaints?
14. Are there appeals?
15. Shall we hold camp meetings this year? If so, how many? When? Where?
16. Reports from ministers on condition of their churches, Sunday schools, instruction in Christian living and church membership (see Par. 540, Sec. 28), the number of subscribers to *Light and Life*, and the use of Free Methodist Sunday school literature, with statements that the permanent records of their societies are up to date.
17. Report of district director of youth ministries.
(Questions 18 to 20, last session of year only.)
18. Are all the local elders and local deacons blameless in life and faithful and efficient in service?
(All ministers should retire while their characters are

under consideration.)

19. Annual report of the district board of trustees.

20. Are the corporate seal, record books, and valuable documents of the district conference deposited for safekeeping? If so, where?

21. When, and where shall our next session be held?

22. Reading and approval of minutes.

23. Adjournment.

¶ 431. *Robert's Rules of Order* in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure in the sessions of the district conference.

3. ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOUNDARIES

a. North American Conferences

¶ 433. 1. Genesee (1860). The Genesee Conference shall embrace that portion of the state of New York lying west of a line beginning at the Irondequoit Bay and running due south to West Bloomfield, New York, thence following the eastern line of Livingston County to Wayland, New York; thence along Route 2 to Savona, New York, thence due south to the Pennsylvania line. All cities or villages on this boundary line shall be in the Genesee Conference, except those on Route 2, which shall remain in the Susquehanna Conference.

2. Susquehanna (1862). The Susquehanna Conference shall embrace the counties of Tioga, Sullivan, and Bradford, in the state of Pennsylvania, and all that part of the state of New York east of the Genesee Conference and north of a line beginning at Great Bend, Pennsylvania, and running due north to the Delaware and Hudson railroad, thence east along that railroad to Oneonta, but not including the villages situated immediately upon that portion of the Delaware and Hudson railroad. From Oneonta, north on Route 28 to Poland, but excluding the city of Herkimer; thence on Route 8 to Route 9, then along this highway to Route

73, and then due east on this route to Lake Champlain; from this point north on the New York state line to the Canadian border.

3. Southern Michigan (1865). The Southern Michigan Conference shall embrace that part of the state of Michigan in the two southern tiers of counties; that part of Eaton County south of a line running east and west five miles north of Charlotte; and the parts of Oakland and Macomb Counties east of Novi Road and south of a line running east and west one mile north of Twelve Mile Road to John R. Road, then east of a line running north and south along John R. Road to Eighteen Mile Road, then south of a line running east and west along Eighteen Mile Road to Lake St. Clair.

4. Kansas (1871). The Kansas Conference shall embrace all the state of Kansas.

5. New York (1873). The New York Conference shall embrace all parts of the states of New York and Pennsylvania not included in the Genesee, Pittsburgh, Oil City, Centenary, and Susquehanna Conferences, and the state of New Jersey.

6. Iowa (1875). The Iowa Conference shall embrace all of the state of Iowa except Davenport south of a line beginning at Clayton on the Mississippi River running straight west to the Big Sioux River and Dakota County, Nebraska.

7. North Michigan (1876). The North Michigan Conference shall embrace that portion of the state of Michigan lying north of the Southern Michigan Conference and west of a line running north and south parallel with the eastern boundary of Eaton County, except the towns of Grayling, Frederick, Gaylord, and Vanderbilt, in Crawford and Otsego Counties. It shall also include the Upper Peninsula and Drummond's Island.

8. Ohio (1879). The Ohio Conference shall embrace the state of Ohio, except the towns included in the Pittsburgh and Oil City Conferences.

9. Central Illinois (1879). The Central Illinois Conference shall include that portion of the state of Illinois not included in the Illinois-Wisconsin and Wabash Conferences. On the east it shall be bounded by a line running from Shelby County south through Teutopolis, Illinois, and then south to Shawneetown. It shall also include the city of Saint Louis, Missouri.

10. Texas (1881). The Texas Conference shall include all of the state of Texas.

11. Pittsburgh (1883). The Pittsburgh Conference shall include all that part of the state of Pennsylvania lying west of the Susquehanna River and bounded on the north by a line running west along the Pennsylvania Turnpike, excluding Carlisle, to Fulton County, thence along the northern boundary lines of Fulton, Bedford, Cambria, Indiana, and Armstrong Counties, directly west across Butler County to the Lawrence County line, thence south to the northern boundary of Beaver County. It shall also include all the towns from the Pennsylvania state line to Bridgeport, Ohio, on the west bank of the Ohio River. It shall also include the state of West Virginia.

12. California (1883). The California Conference shall embrace all the state of California lying north of San Luis Obispo, Ventura, Los Angeles, and Inyo Counties, and the state of Nevada.

13. East Michigan (1884). The East Michigan Conference shall embrace all that part of the state of Michigan lying north of the Southern Michigan Conference and east of a line running north and south parallel with the eastern boundary of Eaton County. It shall also include the towns of Grayling, Frederick, Gaylord, and Vanderbilt, in Crawford and Otsego Counties.

14. Louisiana (1884). The Louisiana Conference shall include the states of Louisiana and Mississippi.

15. Oregon (1885). The Oregon Conference shall include all of the state of Oregon not in the Columbia River Conference, and Clark County, Washington.

16. Wabash (1885). The Wabash Conference shall include all of the state of Indiana; Jefferson County, Kentucky; and that part of the state of Illinois bounded by a line running west from Fowler, Indiana, to a point six miles west of the Champaign branch of the Illinois Central railroad, thence southwest parallel with that railroad to the south line of Shelby County, and thence along the Springfield branch of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad to Shawneetown.

17. Rocky Mountain (1886). The Rocky Mountain Conference (formerly Colorado) shall embrace the state of Colorado, the state of Utah, the state of New Mexico, and the city of Cheyenne, Wyoming.

18. Nebraska-Wyoming (1890). The Nebraska-Wyoming Conference shall include the state of Nebraska, except Dakota County; all of the state of Wyoming except the city of Cheyenne; and six counties in South Dakota bounded by a line commencing at the southeast corner of Shannon County and running north to the White River and east along it to its junction with the Missouri River; thence along the Missouri River to the south line of South Dakota.

19. Southern California-Arizona (1891). The Southern California-Arizona Conference shall embrace all of the state of California not embraced in the California Conference, and the states of Arizona and Hawaii.

20. Columbia River (1896). The Columbia River Conference shall include that part of the state of Washington east of Okanogan, Grant, and Benton Counties, and that part of Oregon east of Gilliam, Wheeler, and Crooke Counties and north of Harney and Malheur Counties; it shall also include the state of Idaho and that part of the state of Montana lying west of the 110th meridian.

21. Pacific Northwest (1896). The Pacific Northwest Conference shall include all of the state of Washington (except Clark County) west of the Columbia River and the eastern boundaries of Grant and Okanogan

Counties; Alaska; and that part of British Columbia west of a line running from the southern border north following the crest of the Monachee Range to Mount Robson and further extend along the crest of the Rocky Mountain Range to and including the Yukon Territory.

22. Canada Great Lakes (1896). The Canada Great Lakes Conference shall include all that part of the province of Ontario lying west of the following boundary line: The Niagara River, the west bounds of the counties of Peel and Simcoe, and the west bounds of the Muskoka, Parry Sound, and Nipissing districts.

23. Canada East (1896). The Canada East Conference shall include all of the province of Ontario east of the eastern boundary of the Canada Great Lakes Conference, including also all of the province of Quebec.

24. Kentucky-Tennessee (1896). The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference shall include the states of Kentucky and Tennessee, except Jefferson County, Kentucky.

25. Oil City (1899). The Oil City Conference shall include all of northwestern Pennsylvania west of a line described as the western and southern boundaries of Tioga County, the eastern and southeastern boundaries of Lycoming County to the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, and south along the Susquehanna River to, and including, Harrisburg. The southern boundary, beginning at the intersection of the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the Susquehanna River, runs west along the Turnpike, including Carlisle, to the Fulton County line, thence along the northern boundaries of Fulton, Bedford, Cambria, Indiana, and Armstrong Counties, directly west across Butler County to the Lawrence County line, thence south to the northern boundary of Beaver County and west to the Ohio line. The western boundary is the Ohio state line north of Beaver County, with the exception of the area around the cities of Conneaut, North Kingsville, and Ashtabula, Ohio.

26. Oklahoma (1899). The Oklahoma Conference shall include all of the state of Oklahoma.

27. Atlantic Southeast (1913).* The Atlantic Southeast Conference shall include the states of Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Alabama.

28. Florida (1913).* The Florida Conference shall include the state of Florida.

29. Canada West (1914).† The Canada West Conference shall include the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, and all that portion of the province of British Columbia not in the Pacific Northwest Conference.

30. Maryland-Virginia (1939). The Maryland-Virginia Conference shall include all of the states of Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware, and the District of Columbia.

31. Centenary (1960). The Centenary Conference shall embrace that part of the state of New York east of the Susquehanna Conference and north of a line beginning at Oneonta, and thence due east to the state line of Massachusetts. This conference shall also include the states of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, excluding Fairfield County.

32. Pacific Coast Japanese (1963). The Pacific Coast Japanese Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work among the Japanese people in the United States.

33. Minn-I-Kota (1965). Northern Iowa-Minnesota (1872); Dakota (1883); North Minnesota (1887). The Minn-I-Kota Conference shall include all of the state of Minnesota and that portion of the state of Iowa not included in the Iowa Conference; the state of North Dakota; that part of the state of Montana lying east of the 110th meridian; and all of the state of South Dakota

*Organized as the Georgia and Florida Conference in 1913 but divided by the act of the General Conference of 1951.

†Organized as Saskatchewan Conference and Alberta Conference in 1914 but combined in 1970.

except that portion included in the Nebraska-Wyoming Conference.

34. Pacific Coast Latin American (1965). The Pacific Coast Latin American Conference shall embrace all of the work of the Free Methodist Church among the people of Mexican descent in California, U.S.A., and in Lower California, Mexico.

35. Illinois-Wisconsin (1966). Illinois (1860); Wisconsin (1875). The Illinois-Wisconsin Conference shall embrace all that part of the state of Illinois north of a line beginning at Fort Madison, Iowa, running east to the Illinois River, thence down the river to a point due west of Fowler, Indiana, and thence east to the state line. It shall include the state of Wisconsin. It shall also include Davenport, Iowa.

36. Ozark (1966). Ozark (1895) formerly Arkansas and Southern Missouri; Missouri (1883). The Ozark Conference shall embrace the state of Arkansas and all of the state of Missouri except the city of Saint Louis.

b. Overseas and/or Missions Related Conferences

37. Dominican (1951). The Dominican Free Methodist Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work in the country of the Dominican Republic.

38. India (1961). The India Free Methodist Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work in the country of India.

39. Burundi (1961). The Burundi Free Methodist Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work in the country of Burundi.

40. Taiwan (1963). The Taiwan Free Methodist Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work on the island of Taiwan.

41. Philippine (1963). The Philippine Free Methodist Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work in the Republic of the Philippines.

42. Mexican (1964). The Mexican Conference of the

Free Methodist Church shall embrace all Free Methodist work in Mexico not including Baja California, and the Mexican work in Arizona.

43. Mozambique and South Africa Mines (1964). The Mozambique and South Africa Mines Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work in the country of Mozambique, and in the Mines District work in South Africa.

44. Natal-Transkei (1964), formerly South Africa (1907). The Natal-Transkei Free Methodist Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work in the province of Natal and the country of Transkei of South Africa.

45. Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (1964). The Zimbabwe-Rhodesia Free Methodist Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work in the country of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

46. Rwanda (1965). The Rwanda Free Methodist Conference shall embrace all Free Methodist work in the country of Rwanda.

47. Nikkei (1966). The Nikkei Conference shall embrace all of the work of the Free Methodist Church among the Japanese people in Brazil.

48. Brazilian (1966). The Brazilian Conference shall embrace all of the work of the Free Methodist Church among the Brazilian people in Brazil.

49. Zaire (1974). The Zaire Conference shall embrace all of the work of the Free Methodist Church in the Republic of Zaire.

50. Haiti Inland (1979). The Haiti Inland Conference shall embrace all of the work of the Free Methodist Church in the country of Haiti.

¶ 434. Any question of boundaries that may arise in the interim between General Conferences shall be referred to the Administrative Commission.

C. JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION

1. JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE OR PROVISIONAL GENERAL CONFERENCE

¶ 435. A jurisdictional conference or a provisional general conference may be organized from one or more annual conferences by the mutual agreement of the Free Methodist Church of North America and the annual conference(s) involved. Such conference, when organized, may continue its given status, subject to periodic review, or may move toward becoming a full general conference (see Par. 250). The constitution shall be drawn up and submitted for approval to the General Conference.

2. CANADIAN JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE

¶ 436. 1. There shall be a Jurisdictional Conference for Canada consisting of the Free Methodist Church in Canada.

2. The governing body of the Canadian Jurisdictional Conference shall be composed of the delegates elected by the Canadian annual conferences to the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America, as provided for in the DISCIPLINE and in harmony with the laws of Canada.

3. At the close of the last Canadian annual conference, prior to the General Conference, delegates elected to the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America shall take office as the governing body of the Jurisdictional Conference. The members of this Jurisdictional Conference shall hold office until their successors have been elected. The governing body shall fill vacancies from among the elected reserve delegates.

4. The General Conference shall elect on separate ballot a Canadian citizen as a bishop, with the

recommendation that he be assigned to Canada by the Board of Bishops, with major responsibilities in Canada, and that he reside in Canada.

5. The Jurisdictional Conference shall have the following powers and duties conferred on it by the General Conference and as set forth by the Act of Incorporation of the Free Methodist Church in Canada:

- a. To supervise and promote, in harmony with the DISCIPLINE and contractual agreements, the evangelistic, educational, missionary, benevolent, institutional, and other connectional interests within its territory.
- b. The Jurisdictional Conference may constitute a Board of General and Home Missions, Evangelism, and Pensions for the Free Methodist Church in Canada.
- c. The Jurisdictional Conference shall have general supervision of all matters pertaining to the function of the Free Methodist Church in Canada and in accordance with its constitution and bylaws.
- d. The Jurisdictional Conference shall cooperate with the General Conference in raising an amount of the United Ministries for Christ budget approved by the Canadian Jurisdictional Conference.

6. Ministers who transfer from any Canadian conference to any conference in the United States, or vice versa, shall, when they become pensioners, receive their apportionments from the ministers' pension plan of the respective treasuries according to the years of service in each area.

7. The office of the resident Canadian bishop and all of its attendant expenses shall be funded by the Free Methodist Church in Canada, beginning July 1, 1974.

8. The Free Methodist Church in Canada shall retain an approved percentage of UMC funds raised in Canada. The balance shall be remitted to Free

Methodist World Headquarters in Winona Lake, Indiana.

9. The financial formula shall be reviewed annually by a joint committee from the Jurisdictional Conference and the Board of Administration of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

D. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

1. GENERAL CONFERENCE

‘It is desired that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that every person speak freely whatever is in his heart. While we are conversing, let us have an especial care to set God always before us. In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises. Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on our labor.’ — John Wesley, *Large Minutes*.

¶ 440. 1. The General Conference shall be composed of the bishops and an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates to be elected by the annual conferences, at their last sessions prior to the session of the General Conference, except that conferences held within three months of the General Conference may elect their delegates the year before. For further directions see Paragraphs 280-283.

2. A delegate to the General Conference is not a member until he is present with his credentials and has been seated.

¶ 441. Conferences of mission origin may send their delegates to General Conference as provided for in their several constitutions which have been approved by the General Conference.

¶ 442. The next session of the General Conference shall be held in June, 1984, or as near that time as may

be determined by the Board of Administration, in accordance with the Constitution, Paragraph 284, which prescribes also the procedure for calling extra sessions. The Friday preceding each General Conference shall be observed by our people as a day of fasting and prayer.

¶ 443. The officers to preside at the sittings of the General Conference, the number of members required for a quorum, and the method of voting are defined in the Constitution, Paragraphs 285, 288, and 289.

¶ 444. 1. Each General Conference shall elect by ballot two or more traveling elders as bishops to serve as the pastoral overseers of various areas of the denomination (see Par. 436, Sec. 4). The Board of Administration shall be authorized to employ suitable personnel in the leadership of the various church ministries, such as outreach, missions, education, publishing, stewardship, and administration.

2. The General Conference shall elect one traveling elder and one layman from each of the General Conference administrative districts, who, with the bishops and the secretary of the General Conference, shall constitute the Board of Administration. The elective members of the board, a majority of whom must be members of the General Conference electing them, shall first have been nominated by the delegates from their General Conference administrative districts. In making the nominations the delegates of a district shall vote by ballot. Except in cases in which one annual conference forms an administrative district, the minister and the layman shall not be from the same annual conference.

¶ 445. The General Conference secretary shall continue in office until his successor is named and shall be custodian of the General Conference records and journals. He shall also keep a record of conscientious

objectors reported to him by the annual conference secretaries as ordered in Paragraphs 336 and 409, Section 2(h). (See Par. 451, Sec. 5.)

¶ 446. The General Conference is the only legislative body in the church. It alone has the power to authorize a denominational referendum or survey of opinion. It shall have full power to make rules and regulations for our church, under the limitations and restrictions described in Paragraphs 225-228. *Robert's Rules of Order* in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure in the General Conference sessions.

¶ 447. It is the inalienable right of any annual conference, district conference, society, or individual member of the Free Methodist Church to submit protests, petitions, or resolutions to the General Conference and to have them fully heard. Such papers must be introduced by a member of the General Conference and be subject to the rules of that body.

¶ 448. The annual conferences shall be grouped into nineteen General Conference administrative districts, as follows:

- No. 1 — East Michigan
- No. 2 — Genesee
- No. 3 — Pacific Northwest
- No. 4 — Pittsburgh
- No. 5 — Southern California-Arizona
- No. 6 — Southern Michigan
- No. 7 — Wabash
- No. 8 — California, Oregon
- No. 9 — Central Illinois, Iowa
- No. 10 — Canada East, Canada Great Lakes,
Canada West
- No. 11 — Centenary, New York, Susquehanna
- No. 12 — Illinois-Wisconsin, North Michigan

- No. 13 — Ohio, Oil City
- No. 14 — Kansas, Nebraska-Wyoming, Oklahoma
- No. 15 — Atlantic Southeast, Florida, Maryland-Virginia
- No. 16 — Kentucky-Tennessee, Louisiana, Ozark, Texas
- No. 17 — Columbia River, Minn-I-Kota, Rocky Mountain
- No. 18 — Pacific Coast Japanese, Pacific Coast Latin American
- No. 19 — Brazilian, Burundi, Dominican, Haiti Inland, India, Mexican, Mozambique and South Africa Mines, Natal-Transkei, Nikkei, Philippine, Rwanda, Taiwan, Zaire, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

2. BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

¶ 450. 1. The Board of Administration shall consist of the bishops, the General Conference secretary who is the secretary of the board, nineteen traveling elders and nineteen lay members elected in the manner prescribed in Paragraph 444, Section 4. Termination of membership in the Free Methodist Church shall automatically terminate membership on the Board of Administration. No General Conference officer other than the bishops and the secretary shall be a member of the Board of Administration. The Board of Administration shall elect its president and vice-president. It may request nominations from the special committee outlined in Section 3 of Paragraph 451 if it so desires.

2. The board shall provide rules and regulations for the conduct of its business. *Robert's Rules of Order* in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure in the sessions of the Board of Administration.

¶ 451. 1. The Board of Administration shall have general organizational, promotional, and supervisory powers over all the activities of the church during the

interim between General Conference sessions. It shall meet annually and whenever the bishops or one third of the members shall deem it necessary. A majority of the members elected shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

2. The Board of Administration shall have power to accept resignations and fill vacancies, to remove for cause any of its members or any denominational executive during the interim between General Conference sessions, subject to the provisions of the DISCIPLINE. In the event of a vacancy in the Board of Bishops in the first four years of the interim between General Conferences, each conference board of administration may submit a nomination to the general Board of Administration which shall elect by ballot.

3. The Board of Administration shall meet immediately at the close of the General Conference and shall have power to organize itself into commissions and assign its work to the commissions, notwithstanding anything hereinafter set forth.

A committee of not less than eight of equal number of ministers and laymen, exclusive of the Board of Bishops, shall be elected by the Board of Administration to nominate the chairmen and other members of the respective commissions. The committee may consult the Board of Bishops if it deems it wise to do so. The bishops shall be ex officio members of all commissions but shall not serve as chairmen.

The members of the Board of Administration owe their primary duty to the board and their secondary duty to the commission to which they have been appointed as committee members. All the commissions are committees of the Board of Administration to which each commission is responsible for duties assigned.

4. The Board of Administration shall elect an Investment Committee composed of qualified persons, both ministers and laymen, who are active in the life and work of the church, the total number to be

determined by the board. Members shall be nominated by the Executive Committee of the Board of Administration. The board shall determine the length and number of rotating terms served by a member of the committee.

A philosophy of investment and guidelines for implementation shall be prepared by the Investment Committee for periodic review and approval by the Board of Administration.

The Investment Committee will have charge of the investment funds of the general church, including the funds to be invested by the several commissions, and such funds as may be assigned by other church-related institutions, according to purposes and policies established by the Board of Administration.

No treasurer of these church funds shall be a member of this committee. No member of the committee shall be eligible to borrow directly or indirectly or to participate in the benefits of any money borrowed from the funds of the church. The Investment Committee shall not invest the trust funds of the church in any investments except such as are lawful for the investment of trust funds in the state in which the Free Methodist Church may be incorporated.

The Investment Committee shall report annually to the Board of Administration.

5. The Board of Administration shall elect a secretary of the General Conference who shall serve as the secretary of the Board of Administration and its executive committee. The secretary may be nominated by a committee of the board. He shall be the custodian of the General Conference records and journals and shall keep a record of conscientious objectors reported to him by the annual conference secretaries. (See Par. 336, Sec. 3.) It shall be his duty to make a full report of the proceedings of the Board of Administration to the General Conference.

When the Board of Administration deems it feasible, it shall employ a general church secretary as a

denominational executive who shall then assume all the responsibilities and authority of the secretary of the General Conference and other duties as may be assigned him by the board. The general church secretary shall be nominated by the executive committee of the board.

6. a. The Board of Administration shall employ an administrator who shall be charged with the general administration of the denominational headquarters and other responsibilities as assigned by the Board of Administration and who shall be amenable to the Board of Administration through its president.
- b. The Board of Administration shall employ a director of finance and general church treasurer to administer the finances of the church. The general church treasurer shall be bonded.
7. a. The Board of Administration shall employ other suitable personnel in the leadership of the various church ministries pursuant to Paragraph 444, Section 1. Those designated as denominational executives shall meet with the commissions to which their work is assigned.
- b. All denominational executives employed by the Board of Administration shall be responsible to the Board of Administration as to their official duties and shall work under the direction and supervision of the commission to which they are appointed (see Par. 451, Secs. 1, 2).
- c. A denominational executive may retire after he reaches the age of sixty-two years. Otherwise he shall retire when he reaches the age of sixty-five years. He may retire at any time because of failing health. Any question of disability shall be determined by the Board of Administration. (See Pars. 593 and 594 for retirement of bishops.)
8. The Board of Administration shall employ a certified public accountant firm to audit annually the

accounts of the general church treasurer. The auditor will make an annual report in writing to the Board of Administration with recommendations, if any.

9. The Board of Administration shall elect from its membership one minister and one lay member from each commission who with the Board of Bishops and the secretary of the Board of Administration shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Board of Administration. The duties and powers of the Executive Committee shall be defined by the Board of Administration. This committee shall be responsible for general coordination of the work of the commissions and the departments.

The acts of the Executive Committee shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Administration.

10. The Board of Administration shall appoint a Committee on Cooperative or Federated Ministries, Comity, and Merger Exploration. The committee shall be responsible to and report to the Board of Administration. The committee shall be composed of not less than nine and not more than thirteen members. This committee shall serve as a liaison between the Free Methodist Church and other denominations or organizations of like spiritual concerns and doctrine.

11. The proper officers shall publish in the *Yearbook* annually full and detailed statements of the assets, liabilities, net worth, and financial standing of the various general church boards and corporations.

12. All of the commissions, the Women's Missionary Fellowship International, and the Light and Life Men International shall make and file annually their financial statements with the secretary of the Board of Administration.

¶ 452. United Ministries for Christ Budget Committee.

1. The Board of Administration shall elect a United Ministries for Christ budget committee of eight members to serve four-year terms. This committee shall have five major responsibilities:

- a. To examine and review the sources available for expenditure and to recommend to the Board of Administration provisions for underwriting by the annual conferences.
- b. To review and to recommend to the Board of Administration for consideration and approval the expenditure budgets of each of the commissions.
- c. To serve as an adjunct to the director of finance in his role as budget administrator and to the director of communications in his role as United Ministries for Christ promoter.
- d. To review annually the performance of each department and to recommend controls to maintain their operations within their income.
- e. To report to the Board of Administration following review by the Executive Committee.

2. The elected membership of this committee shall be divided equally between ministers and laymen but shall not include any person who is a denominational executive of the church or a member of one of the commissions, except that one layman and one minister may be from the Administrative Commission. The director of finance and the director of communications shall be advisory members of the committee. The committee shall select its own chairman from its elected membership.

3. Terms of service on the committee shall be staggered so that two members are elected each year. If a member must be replaced before his term is completed, the replacement shall be for the balance of the unexpired term. Members may succeed themselves.

4. In selecting persons to serve on the United Ministries for Christ budget committee, representation by geographic area and from conferences of different sizes shall be sought. Persons selected to serve should have specific budget training and/or experience. They should also have demonstrated a vital interest in the total mission of the church.

¶ 453. United Ministries for Christ Operational Guidelines.

1. The United Ministries for Christ concept must be accepted and promoted by church leaders at all levels.

2. Promotion of our world mission should be carried out by every department of the church at general, conference, and local levels. Each department is to share in the promotion of the world ministries concept and the securing of support to make possible the expansion of our entire outreach ministries program.

3. Seminars at general, conference, and local levels shall be sponsored to develop a better understanding of the principles of stewardship and the United Ministries for Christ concept.

4. All promotional material and effort shall be coordinated through the director of communications.

5. All general church departments are encouraged to cooperate in raising funds for the United Ministries for Christ provided their methods are approved by the United Ministries for Christ budget committee and the Board of Administration. The departments shall solicit gifts from the church membership only for UMC operational budget, Board of Administration approved UMC special growth or selected projects, and deferred gifts in the area of annuities, wills, and estate planning.

6. The departments shall recommend projects for inspirational giving within the United Ministries for Christ operational budget. The Board of Administration shall encourage and promote UMC special growth or selected departmental projects which are a part of our

total world mission but are above the UMC operational budget. Such projects shall bear their pro rata share of administrative and UMC overhead costs. The Board of Administration shall develop guidelines for defining, approving, and handling special growth projects.

7. Approved projects outside the United Ministries for Christ budget shall be made available to individuals, groups, and organizations outside the Free Methodist Church.

8. All contributions received at the general church headquarters except deferred gifts shall be applied to the United Ministries for Christ unless otherwise specifically designated by the donor.

9. The proposed budget of each headquarters department shall be prepared annually by the appropriate commission and reviewed by the United Ministries for Christ budget committee with the departments and organizations involved. Following review by the Executive Committee of the Board of Administration, the recommended budget shall be submitted by the United Ministries for Christ budget committee to the Board of Administration for approval each year.

10. The United Ministries for Christ budget committee shall recommend to the Board of Administration procedures for encouraging support of Free Methodist world ministries. Then the director of communications shall inform the conferences of approved goals and opportunities and shall encourage them to make adequate commitments in support of United Ministries for Christ. Where conferences fail to make such commitments, the United Ministries for Christ budget committee shall set goals for them which shall be communicated through the director of communications.

11. The director of communications shall inform the conferences regularly concerning progress in achieving United Ministries for Christ goals and shall assist them in developing adequate methods for inspiring increased United Ministries for Christ giving.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

a. Its Powers

¶ 460. 1. The Board of Administration has authority over the Administrative Commission and its departments. The Administrative Commission shall consist of the number of persons as directed by the Board of Administration (see Par. 451, Sec. 3).

2. It shall be the Board of Directors of the Free Methodist Publishing House and shall have advisory supervision of all church property.

3. The Administrative Commission shall constitute the Court of Appeals, whose decision shall be final. Should any member of this court be absent or disqualified to sit, his place shall be filled pro tem by the Board of Administration from its members, or, if they are disqualified, from a list of members of the church at large approved by counsel for both sides; so that no appeal shall be heard except before a full court. The Court of Appeals shall, if necessary, hold a session once a year, for the purpose of trying all appeals that may be taken thereto by any traveling minister from the decisions of an annual conference. The chairman of the Administrative Commission shall ordinarily preside over the court; but if he should be absent or disqualified, the Board of Administration shall elect one of its members to preside.

4. The Administrative Commission shall have the power to decide all questions of law referred to it in the interim of the General Conference. In case of any alleged legal irregularities in a trial court, wherein the court has delivered a verdict against the church, the prosecution may, upon a written recital of the irregularities, apply to the Administrative Commission or to the General Conference for a writ of review, and it shall be the province of that body receiving the application to review the proceedings of the lower court as recited, and if the reviewing body finds the alleged

irregularities to exist, the case may be remanded, but only once, for a new trial.

5. The Administrative Commission shall have power to make such preliminary arrangements for the public services of the General Conference as it may deem necessary.

6. The Administrative Commission shall set the salaries of the bishops and the denominational executives, subject to the approval of the Board of Administration.

7. The Administrative Commission, together with two representatives elected by the Association of Social Service Agencies, shall constitute the Board of Social Ministry of the church.

8. The Administrative Commission shall constitute a Board of Industrial Relations, the duty of which is to furnish information and render decisions upon all matters of industrial relations. To this board shall be committed all questions, communications, and papers relating to labor unions or membership in them. This board shall, wherever practicable, constitute a collective bargaining agency on behalf of the members of our church.

¶ 460.1 The acts of the Administrative Commission shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Administration except when it sits as an appellate court.

b. Retirement Program

¶ 461. Social Security

1. The benefits available under the Federal Old Age and Survivors Insurance (hereinafter called Social Security) Program are a part of the church's plan for support of its retired ministers and retired licensed missionaries, or their widows and orphans, and widows and orphans of ordained ministers and retired missionaries.

2. It is recommended that each society, pastoral charge, conference, or other organization responsible for a minister's or missionary's salary obligate itself to contribute to said minister or missionary, in addition to said salary, an amount equal to at least one-half of his annual contribution, or assessment for Social Security, as a "self-employed" minister.

¶ 461.1 The Conference Claimants' Fund plan in effect prior to June 1, 1955, shall (with changes noted herein) be continued for a sufficient time to carry out the obligations of the church to its retired ministers, missionaries, etc., now covered by the plan.

¶ 461.2 Funds which have been collected for the benefit of retired ministers or their widows and orphans, the widows and orphans of ordained traveling ministers, and retired missionaries who have labored under the appointment of the Commission on Missions of the Free Methodist Church, previously known as the Conference Claimants' Fund, are divided into the Permanent Endowment Fund and the Operating Fund.

1. The Permanent Endowment Fund shall consist of funds and investments now held and known as the Permanent Endowment Fund, and gifts, bequests, legacies, and annuities which may be received for this fund, and amounts transferred by appropriate action from the Operating Fund.

2. The Operating Fund shall consist of the income accruing from the Permanent Endowment Fund: gifts, bequests, and legacies specifically designated for the use of the Operating Fund and allocations from the United Ministries for Christ.

¶ 461.3 Administrative Organization

1. The General Board of Conference Claimants. The Board of Administration shall constitute the General Board of Conference Claimants. It shall be the duty of this board:

- a. To pass upon all claims and make final disposition of them.
- b. To draw up such regulations and prepare such blanks as are necessary to the proper and efficient administration of the work of the board and the operation of the Conference Claimants' Fund.
- c. To estimate the amount necessary to be allocated from the United Ministries for Christ.

2. The General Executive Secretary. The executive secretary of the General Board shall be employed by the Board of Administration. It shall be his duty:

- a. To keep a record of all proceedings of the General Board and make a report of them to the General Conference.
- b. To receive, audit, classify, file, and be custodian of the Claimants' Applications, the Certificates of Income, and the list of certified claimants. (See Par. 409, Sec. 9.)
- c. In the interim of the meetings of the General Board to receive and pass upon emergency claims, subject to action by the board.
- d. To adjust amounts due on claims of deceased claimants.
- e. To keep a record of all claims allowed and payments made on them.
- f. To direct the activities of the annual conference executive secretaries, and supply them with such forms and other record materials as are necessary. (See Par. 409, sec. 9.)
- g. To perform such other duties as shall devolve upon him as executive secretary.

¶ 461.4 Classification of Claimants

Claimants against the Conference Claimants' Fund shall be classified as follows:

1. Retired ministers of the traveling connection whose wives are living.
2. Retired ministers of the traveling connection who are bachelors, spinsters, unmarried widowers, or unmarried widows.
3. Unmarried widows of retired ministers or ministers of the traveling connection.
4. Orphans of ministers or retired ministers of the traveling connection.
5. Missionaries, or their widows and orphans, who have served under the appointment of the Commission on Missions in foreign fields and who are not full members of an annual conference in the United States or Canada.

¶ 461.5 Schedule of Benefits to Claimants

Benefits to claimants shall be paid according to the following schedule, and no claim shall be allowed in excess of or contrary to the regular disciplinary allowance. For those who began effective service at the time of their annual conferences in 1935 or subsequently, the allowance shall be based upon the number of years of effective and contributive service only.

1. The allowance to claimants who come under Classification 1 in Paragraph 461.4 shall be at the rate of \$15.00 per year of effective and contributive service up to a maximum of 36 years, making a full claim of \$540.00 per year.
2. The allowance to claimants who come under Classifications 2 and 3 shall be at the rate of \$10.50 per year of effective and contributive service up to a maximum of 36 years, making a full claim of \$378.00 per year.
3. For those coming under Classification 4 the

annual conference board of claimants shall estimate an amount, not to exceed \$45.00 per annum, for each child under the age of 16 years.

4. For those coming under Classification 5, the amount allowed shall be recommended by the Commission on Missions in accordance with the schedules in this Section.

5. For those who already had effective service records at the time of their annual conferences in 1935 and who retired thereafter, the allowance shall be based upon the number of years of effective service prior to the end of the conference year in 1935, provided that not more than 25 such years may be counted for those in Class 1 in Paragraph 461.4, nor more than 28 years for those in Classes 2 and 3, and upon the number of years of effective and contributive service thereafter, up to the maximum number of years allowed altogether as stated in schedules 1 and 2.

6. The allowance for those who come under Classification 3, and who were married before the General Conference of 1931, shall be computed upon the basis of the husband's effective and/or contributive service as provided in the schedule in this section.

7. For those who were eligible as claimants under any classification in Paragraph 461.4 at the close of the conference year in 1935, the allowance was \$10 per year of effective service for Classification 1 and \$7 per year for Classifications 2 and 3; provided, however, that the amount of the claim was not less than the amount received during the conference year 1934-35 nor more than the maximum allowance under the law in effect prior to the General Conference of 1935; and provided further, that no Class 2 or 3 claimant was eligible to receive more than \$200.

¶ 461.6 General Regulations

1. By "effective service" is meant the time actually employed by a minister as directed by his conference

subsequent to the time he was received into the full traveling connection. By "effective and contributive service" is meant the time actually employed in "effective service" during which he contributes his ratable portion of the amount shown on his Certificate of Income.

- a. A member of a conference attending school can be rated 100 percent effective only when appointed to a pastoral charge by disciplinary provision and devoting not less than two days per week regularly to the appointment while school is in session and full time otherwise.
- b. If a minister shall take a certificate of location and subsequently be restored to conference membership, the years of effective, or effective and contributive service, prior to location may be restored by the General Board only upon the following conditions: that not more than ten years have elapsed since his location, that he has remained a member of the Free Methodist Church during the time of location, that the conference which granted the certificate of location recommends the restoration, and that the restoration is to enable him to return to effective service.
- c. If a minister withdraws from the church or is expelled, all rights and claims are forfeited; and should he be readmitted to the church and conference, and afterward be retired, the years prior to his withdrawal or expulsion shall not be restored to his service record.
- d. If a minister who has had effective service under the Commission on Missions joins an annual conference in full connection after serving as a ministerial candidate, his years of service as a ministerial candidate may be counted in his service record upon the recommendation of his annual conference,

provided he has fulfilled the other requirements for effective and contributive service.

- e. If, subsequently to the General Conference of 1931, a minister marries while a member of an annual conference and before he is retired, the claim allowed his widow shall be based only upon the years she labored with him in effective and contributive service.
2. a. Claimants shall receive benefits only so long as they remain members of the Free Methodist Church.
b. No minister shall be eligible as a claimant until he has reached the age of sixty-five years except when, in the opinion of the General Board of Conference Claimants, mental or physical disability disqualifies him for service.
c. Widows of ministers and retired ministers shall receive benefits from the Conference Claimants' Fund only so long as they remain single.
 3. a. Each new claimant must file with the conference claimants executive secretary in time for action at the annual conference, an original Claimant's Application in duplicate on forms provided by the General Board of Conference Claimants, containing such information as the board deems necessary.
b. Each claimant shall have the right to appear in person or by counsel before the annual conference to present his case, and to appeal an unreconciled difference between himself and his annual conference to the General Board of Conference Claimants, where final disposition shall be made.
 4. All claims shall be paid from the general treasury in equal quarterly payments beginning January 2 of each year.
 5. The Board of Administration is empowered to amend such regulations as may be found necessary.

¶ 461.7. Pension Plan

1. The Board of Administration by authorization of the 1964 General Conference has established a pension plan which became effective January 1, 1969, and covers ministers, general officers, and other persons as described in the pension plan.

2. The pension plan was created for the exclusive benefit of employees of the employer and their beneficiaries and shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with its being a qualified pension plan as defined in section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as the same may be amended from time to time.

3. The pension plan shall be supervised by the pension board in accordance with the plan and in accordance with such rules and regulations in harmony therewith as may be approved by the Board of Administration of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

4. The pension plan may be amended by the General Conference or the Board of Administration of the Free Methodist Church of North America, provided that the text of such amendment and the name(s) of its sponsor(s) shall have been communicated to the plan participants in a proper manner at least thirty days prior to the time action on the amendment is taken. Any amendment which in the judgment of the pension board should be adopted before the next General Conference or before the next regular meeting of the Board of Administration, may be adopted ad interim by the Executive Committee of the Board of Administration, and any amendment so adopted shall be presented for ratification at the next General Conference, or the next regular meeting of the Board of Administration. No amendment shall abridge or annul the rights of members in respect to their accumulations as of the date of the adoption of such amendment.

5. Each church of a participating conference shall contribute to the support of the pension plan, even if its

present pastor may not be eligible. The total yearly contributions from each conference will be allocated equally to the accounts of all eligible members within that conference. The contribution which the church pays is in addition to the pastor's earnings, not a deduction from them.

6. No participant in the pension plan shall have any right to assign, alienate, anticipate, or commute any payments from the plan; and, except as otherwise prescribed by law, no payment shall be subject to the debts, contracts, or engagements of any payee, nor to any judicial process to levy upon or attach the same for the payment thereof.

c. Church and Parsonage Aid

¶ 462. 1. The Board of Administration shall constitute the General Church and Parsonage Aid Society of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

2. The objective of this society shall be to aid in rebuilding partially or totally destroyed buildings of any Free Methodist society, district, or conference, or residence of retired minister owned by an annual conference.

3. The Administrative Commission shall prepare budgets and administer funds for the Church and Parsonage Aid Society.

4. This society shall publish in the *Yearbook* an annual report of its work and also submit a full report to the General Conference.

5. In case of loss to a church or parsonage, it shall be the duty of the official board to appoint three persons who, with the superintendent and the pastor of the society, shall constitute a board of appraisers. This board shall send the estimate of loss to the Church and Parsonage Aid Society.

6. The amount of aid given any society shall not be more than one-half of the net loss, and in no case shall exceed \$1,500. However, in case both church and

parsonage are destroyed wholly or in part at one time, and in case the two are in separate buildings, the allowance shall be paid for each building.

7. The Church and Parsonage Aid Fund shall protect the household goods of all ministers under appointment by, and in the active service of, the Free Methodist Church, and of all retired ministers, to the extent of one-half of their net loss, but in no case to exceed \$350.

8. All applications for aid shall be in accordance with forms furnished by the Administrative Commission. Loss report must be filed within sixty (60) days of loss.

9. The adjustment of any claim shall be made by the Administrative Commission.

10. It shall be the duty of each pastor of a society to promote annually the ministry of the Church and Parsonage Aid Society in relation to the United Ministries for Christ budget.

¶ 462.1 Any Free Methodist society, publishing house, minister, or recognized school or benevolent institution, desiring additional aid from this fund, other than that allowed under the preceding sections, may receive it on the following conditions:

1. Each applicant shall contribute to the Church and Parsonage Aid fund the amount stipulated by the action of the Board of Administration.

2. Each building shall be aided under separate application to be made by the person, society, or institution desiring the aid.

3. A society which takes advantage of this "special provision" shall in addition have the benefits provided for under Paragraph 462.

4. In case of loss, the Church and Parsonage Aid Society shall have the option either to replace what is destroyed or to pay in cash the aid to which the applicant is entitled. Claim for any loss must be filed within sixty days of loss.

5. No credit shall be extended to any church or institution under the provisions of this chapter. The aid hereby provided for shall automatically cease with the expiration date, unless the contributions herein provided for have been paid promptly upon the due date.

6. No application made under the provisions of this chapter shall become effective until approved by the Administrative Commission.

7. The Administrative Commission shall provide application blanks and agreements for special aid and shall have power to do anything necessary to put into effect the special provisions of this chapter.

8. When a loss has been sustained by an applicant, then the Church and Parsonage Aid Society may send a special representative or employ an adjuster to adjust the claim, and the decision of the Church and Parsonage Aid Society shall be final.

9. It shall be expressly agreed and understood between the Church and Parsonage Aid Society and any applicant for special aid under the provisions of this chapter, that the agreement for special aid shall in no sense constitute a contract of insurance or indemnity, any civil laws notwithstanding.

10. The Church and Parsonage Aid Society interprets "parsonage" to mean a dwelling provided for the occupancy of a duly assigned pastor or superintendent. Any other use of the "parsonage" must be reported to the Church and Parsonage Aid Society immediately.

¶ 462.2. Canadian Conferences. Any Canadian conference may, by voting to do so and by making the contributions provided for in Paragraphs 462 and 462.1, receive all the benefits allowed the societies and conferences in the United States. All contributions and benefits shall be paid in Canadian currency.

d. Department of Social Ministry

¶ 463. 1. It shall be the duty of the commission to inspect the institutions of social ministry operating in and receiving support from the Free Methodist Church. No such institution shall be approved until it has been officially recommended by its local conference.

2. The commission shall determine the financial standing of these institutions, their plan of operation, and the character and amount of work done, and shall determine whether or not they qualify for accreditation by the Free Methodist Church.

3. The commission shall have power to regulate the establishment of new institutions of social ministry so as to avoid the jeopardizing of those already operating as accredited institutions, and to this end the commission shall assign each approved institution its supporting territory.

4. The commission shall receive and examine the annual reports of these accredited institutions upon their financial status, their work, and the general plan and scope of their activities.

5. The accredited institutions of the Free Methodist Church are:

Heritage Village (The Gerry Homes), Gerry, New York 14740. Founded in 1880.

Sunset Manor, Inc. (Woodstock Homes), 920 N.Seminary Ave., Woodstock, Illinois 60098. Founded in 1903.

Deaconess Hospital and Deaconess Home (The Home of Redeeming Love), 5501 N. Portland Avenue, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73112. Founded in 1900.

Life Line Children's Home, 4322 Mission Road, Kansas City, Kansas 66103. Founded in 1917.

Warm Beach Manor, 20420 Marine Drive NW, Stanwood, Washington 98292. Founded in 1967.

Wesley Manor, 815 Kennedy Street, 113A, New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada V3M 1R8. Founded in 1966.

Clawson Manor, New Life, Inc., 255 W. 14th Mile Road, Clawson, Michigan 48017. Founded in 1970.

Olive Branch Mission, 1047-51 W. Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois 60607. Founded in 1875.

And all others established by the commission.

6. We recommend that each pastor preach a sermon at least once a year on the subject of practical charity and present an opportunity for charity offerings, to be used for the relief of the poor on the pastoral charge where the offering is received or sent to an accredited institution of social ministry in whose patronizing territory the society lies.

7. The pastor shall cooperate with the Sunday school in the Easter offering for institutions of social ministry.

8. Each annual conference shall appoint among its regular committees a committee on social issues and ministries.

e. The Publishing House

¶ 464. 1. The Free Methodist Publishing House is a corporation established by the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America for the purpose of producing and circulating wholesome literature. It is incorporated under the laws of the state of Illinois, with headquarters at Winona Lake, Indiana.

2. The Free Methodist Publishing House is the denomination's official publishing agency.

3. The Board of Administration constitutes the corporate membership. The site of the Publishing House can be changed only with the consent of three-fourths of all the members of the Board of Administration present and voting at a regular or specially called meeting.

4. The Administrative Commission shall be the Board of Directors of the Free Methodist Publishing House and have general supervision of the publishing interests of the church during the interim between General Conferences.

5. The publisher is the chief executive of the Publishing House. He shall have authority to direct all of its functions under the direction of its Board of Directors. He shall report at least annually to the Board of Directors and to each General Conference.

6. The publishing of the denominational magazine shall be administered through the Publishing House.

f. Department of Communications

¶ 465. 1. The Department of Communications shall communicate to the church and the public the worldwide ministries and activities of the Free Methodist Church.

2. It shall consolidate and implement the promotion of the funding of the United Ministries for Christ in cooperation with the several departments (see Par. 453, Secs. 10, 11).

3. It shall produce all promotional materials in cooperation with the several commissions, boards, and departments.

4. It shall coordinate and produce denominational radio and television programs.

5. It shall develop the use of audio cassettes, cable television, video cassettes, and/or other media forms.

6. It shall provide consultation and assistance to local churches for the production of broadcasts and other media communications.

7. It shall provide technical assistance to all departments in media ministries.

4. COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

a. General Organization and Personnel

¶ 470. 1. The Board of Administration shall constitute the Board of Education, which has authority over the Commission on Christian Education and its departments. The Commission on Christian Education shall consist of the number of persons as directed by the Board of Administration (see Par. 451, Sec. 3) and two

ected by the Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions.

2. The members of this commission shall continue in office until the close of the session of the General Conference next after their election and until others are elected in their places.

3. The commission shall meet annually. Notices of meetings shall be sent to members at least one month in advance. The chairman shall have authority to call a special meeting of the commission in an emergency or upon the written request of three other members of the commission.

4. The acts of the commission shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Administration.

5. The officers of the commission shall be chairman, elected by the Board of Administration; secretary, to be elected by the commission from its own membership; and general church treasurer as ex officio treasurer.

6. The commission shall be responsible for the general direction of the program of the church dealing with (a) the Christian education and training of childhood and youth, (b) the guidance and control of organized youth activities, (c) the education and training of young people in church-related high schools and colleges, (d) the education and training of ministers for the church through church-related Bible schools and theological seminaries, (e) provision in local churches and elsewhere for the training of lay leaders in Christian education and evangelism, (f) bringing under the influence of these activities children, young people, and adults from outside the church membership.

7. The commission shall function through two departments, as follows:

- a. The Department of Christian Education. Responsible for all local church Christian education ministries, including Sunday school; training for Christian education personnel for the local church; instruction in church member-

ship; studies related to evangelism, missions, stewardship, doctrine, moral issues, and biblical knowledge; vacation Bible school; family life ministries; and camping.

- (1) Division of Children's Ministries. Includes all ministries and group activities for children, including Sunday school, worship, and weekday programs for preschool, primary, and junior ages.
 - (2) Division of Youth Ministries. Includes all ministries and group activities for youth, including Sunday school, worship, and weekday activities for young teen, senior teen, and post-high school ages.
 - (3) Division of Adult Ministries. Includes all ministries and group activities for adults, including Sunday school, worship, and weekday activities for young adults, middle adults, and older adults.
- b. The Department of Higher Education and the Ministry.
- (1) Division of Educational Institutions. Responsible for promoting and helping to maintain adequate opportunity for pre-school, elementary, secondary, collegiate, and graduate training of the children and young people of the Free Methodist Church. In order to discharge its basic responsibility, the Division of Educational Institutions shall recognize the following areas of educational service:
 - (a) Colleges and Secondary Schools:
 - Denominational Institutions
 - Cooperating Institutions
 - Educational Foundations
 - Aldersgate Fellowships
 - (b) Canadian Educational Institutions
 - (c) Christian Elementary and Preschools

(2) Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance

- (a) Ministerial Education and Guidance. Responsible for setting up or approving and supervising the various programs in the church for the education and training of ministers.
- (b) John Wesley Seminary. The Free Methodist Church shall maintain a theological seminary for the post-college training of candidates for the ministry and other types of Christian service, known as John Wesley Seminary.

8. The responsibility for carrying out the policy of the commission in each of these departments is vested in a denominational executive employed by the Board of Administration.

b. Department of Christian Education

¶ 471. General Organization

The Department of Christian Education shall function under the direction of the Commission on Christian Education.

1. The Division of Children's Ministries functioning under the Department of Christian Education shall have the following objectives:

- a. To lead children into a genuine experience of salvation from sin and a basic understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- b. To nurture the mental, physical, spiritual, and social development of the children involved.
- c. To afford opportunities for children to receive training and experience in winning others to Christ.
- d. To provide a wholesome outlet for the interests and activities of children under the direction of Christian leaders.

- e. To acquaint children with the history, teachings, and ministries of their church.
- f. To strengthen the Christian commitment of adult leaders through leadership and service opportunities.
- g. To teach children to worship a personal Heavenly Father through singing, praying, sharing, and other means of expression.

The organization functions under a charter in the official handbook. For further particulars also see Paragraphs 1010-1015.

2. The Division of Youth Ministries functioning under the Department of Christian Education shall have the following objectives:

a. YOUNG TEENS MINISTRIES

Purpose

- (1) To lead young teens into a genuine experience of salvation from sin and a knowledge of the Holy Spirit and an understanding of the Scriptures.
- (2) To nurture the mental, physical, spiritual, and social development of young teens.
- (3) To offer opportunity for young teens to receive training and experience in winning others to Christ.
- (4) To provide wholesome relationships with Christian models of all ages through innovative activities.
- (5) To acquaint young teens with the history, teachings, and ministries of the Free Methodist Church.
- (6) To guide young teens in worship in the company of other Christians through prayer, singing, silence, and other means of communication.

Organization

The organization functions under a charter

for young teen ministries found in the official handbook. Also see Paragraphs 1010-1015 for further information.

b. SENIOR TEENS MINISTRIES

Preamble

To promote the spiritual welfare of youth connected with the Free Methodist Church, to provide Christ-honoring activities, and to help them in their contribution to the church, their community, and the world, there shall be ministry provided for senior teens, under the Division of Youth Ministries, the Department of Christian Education of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

Purpose

The purpose of this ministry shall be:

- (1) To seek and maintain among its members the highest level of Christian experience through salvation and the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- (2) To inspire, to enlist, and to train members to be effective witnesses of Jesus Christ by providing for the needs of people.
- (3) To guide youth that they may more effectively fulfill the will of Christ for their lives.
- (4) To help youth in understanding relationships with parents and family and to guide youth in their future plans for marriage and family living.
- (5) To bring youth into full membership in the Free Methodist Church.
- (6) To study the needs of mankind and become intelligent supporters of the United Ministries for Christ.
- (7) To provide opportunities and training for senior teens to worship God through

sharing, praying, singing, silence, and other means.

Organization

The organization functions under a charter for senior teen ministries found in the official handbook. Also see Paragraphs 1010-1015 for further information.

c. POST-HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRIES

Preamble

To promote the spiritual welfare of post-high school youth attending the Free Methodist Church, to provide Christ-honoring activities, and to help post-highs in their contribution to the church, their community, and their world, there shall be a ministry for post-highs, under the Division of Youth Ministries, the Department of Christian Education of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

Purpose

The purpose of this ministry shall be:

- (1) To seek and maintain among its members the highest level of Christian experience through salvation and the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- (2) To inspire, to enlist, and to train members to win the lost to Jesus Christ, even as they have been won.
- (3) To help participants to know and apply more effectively the will of Christ for their lives.
- (4) To create a warm and nurturing fellowship within the local body of believers.
- (5) To study the needs of mankind and become intelligent supporters of God and his church through proper principles of stewardship and giving to the United Ministries for Christ.

- (6) To establish and strengthen membership ties in the Free Methodist Church.
- (7) To provide opportunities and training for its members to worship God through sharing, praying, singing, silence, and other means.

Organization

The organization functions under a charter for post-high school ministries found in the official handbook. Also see Paragraphs 1010-1015 for further information.

3. The Division of Adult Ministries functioning under the Department of Christian Education has the following objectives:

- a. To promote the teaching ministry of the Great Commission.
- b. To promote the knowledge of the Bible through systematic reading, study, and memorization.
- c. To bring as many persons as possible to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.
- d. To build numerically and strengthen spiritually the Free Methodist Church.
- e. To cooperate in bringing about a spiritual revival through the Sunday schools.
- f. To provide training for Christian service.
- g. To provide Christian fellowship, through organized classes, outings, and other social activities.
- h. To provide a channel through which the community may be reached with Christian teaching.
- i. To provide materials and programs for the development of the Christian family.
- j. To be a channel for nurturing children, guiding youth, and developing adults to a life of wholeness.
- k. To provide training and experiences in worshipping God and in leading others to worship

God "in spirit and in truth."

The adult ministry program functions under a charter provided in the official handbook. Also see Paragraphs 1010-1015 for further information.

c. Department of Higher Education and the Ministry

(1) Division of Educational Institutions

¶ 472. Powers and Responsibilities

The Division of Educational Institutions shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

1. Provide guidance and assistance to the church-related colleges, secondary schools, elementary and preschools, and their supporting conferences, looking toward an efficient educational program for Free Methodist youth, under the auspices of the church.

2. Set standards, academic and otherwise, which Free Methodist schools are expected to maintain. This shall include an emphasis upon achievement of full accreditation as an immediate objective.

3. Adopt procedures for assigning and, when need arises, for changing the boundaries of the supporting areas of any educational institution when it is believed to be for the best interests of the church, the areas, the schools, and the students concerned. Such action may be subject to appeal.

4. Take initiative, in cooperation with the various trustee boards, faculties, and administrative officers of the Free Methodist schools, in preserving such policies and objectives as will relate those institutions closely to the church.

5. Assist in fostering in these institutions such an atmosphere of Christian dedication, devotion, and service as will encourage both faculty and students to live constantly under the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit and stimulate students through positive personal Christian experience, as well as through academic and biblical studies to give continuing witness

to the power of the gospel.

6. Encourage in every department of these institutions the highest educational standards and foster in students the understanding that true Christian education centers in Christ.

7. Review the financial methods of all educational institutions and recommend improvements which seem to be needed for sound business practice and standard fiscal procedures for institutions of learning.

8. Devise ways and means to provide supplementary financial aid to our church schools.

9. Establish fellowships on college, university, and other school campuses which are not affiliated with the Free Methodist Church. These fellowships shall be operated in accordance with the constitution approved by the Commission on Christian Education of the Free Methodist Church. Wherever practical, Free Methodists shall be encouraged to cooperate with other evangelicals in establishing and operating such fellowships.

The secretary of higher education shall maintain a program including visits by the secretary and others for the guidance, fellowship, and encouragement of Free Methodists who are in such other schools not affiliated with the Free Methodist Church where Free Methodist fellowships have not been established.

10. Publish annually in the *Yearbook* the following: (a) a list of all approved educational institutions of the Free Methodist Church under the Division of Educational Institutions, (b) the type, or classification, of each school, (c) the highest academic accreditation of each school, including the name of the accrediting agency, (d) a list of the conferences assigned to each school. Each annual conference shall publish in its section of the *Yearbook* a list of all Light and Life elementary schools and preschools designating the levels of instruction offered and the respective enrollments.

11. Assist conference boards of Christian education in carrying out their responsibilities with respect to Free

Methodist educational institutions within their own conference and assigned geographic area.

12. Provide and administer a program of scholarships for students in Free Methodist collegiate, graduate, and theological institutions. This shall include responsibility for setting up the conditions necessary for a student to qualify for a scholarship, for determining methods for distributing scholarships to the various schools, and for selection of recipients.

13. Solicit bequests, money, property, and other securities to be used in providing financial assistance to the various educational institutions, to provide funds for the operation of the department, and to build up the endowment, the scholarship, and the student aid funds consistent with United Ministries for Christ guidelines.

14. Make surveys, call and hold conferences, and conduct workshops and seminars having to do with any phase of the schools, their problems and their programs, or related to the church's responsibility in the field of education.

15. Prepare and distribute promotional leaflets and other literature throughout the church to interest both youth and adults in attending and supporting our schools.

16. Maintain a file of all ministerial students, undergraduate and graduate, who are under the guidance of any Free Methodist conference, and, for those attending a Free Methodist school, maintain a record of earned academic and professional credits as reported by the institution attended.

17. Engage such personnel, appoint such committees, and adopt such regulations as are necessary for the discharge of its responsibilities.

¶ 473. Guiding Principles

The educational institutions of the Free Methodist Church are expected to comply with the following

standards and to seek to achieve the objectives proposed below:

1. In broad yet meaningful concepts it may be said that the educational objectives in a positively Christian institution are: Christian culture, intellectual growth, spiritual maturation, physical development, and vocational preparation. To varying degrees these goals, in any overall effort to help students toward self-realization and the maturing of their relationship to God and society, are valid on all levels of study.

2. Two further objectives of every Free Methodist educational institution are the development in each Free Methodist student of:

- a. an understanding of and a permanent loyalty to the Free Methodist Church, and
- b. a sense of call from God either as a full-time Christian worker in the Free Methodist Church or as a Spirit-guided Christian layman dedicated to the growth and spiritual progress of the church. Free Methodist schools are open to young people of all faiths who are in harmony with the required standards of conduct. It is the responsibility of each Free Methodist school to maintain such an atmosphere and to provide such guidance and Christian fellowship that all students in attendance will come to a new appreciation of the Free Methodist Church — its mission, its message, its doctrines, and its standards, and will find their lives becoming increasingly aglow with spiritual vision and victory.

3. All Free Methodist educational institutions shall maintain scriptural standards in modesty of person and attire, in the types of amusement permitted, and in the use of dramatics.

4. The intercollegiate athletic program is a visible, integral part of the total college. One of the major purposes of athletics in Free Methodist colleges is to

challenge athletes toward Christian commitment and maturity. Through discipline, training, and a variety of experiences the college will provide a quality competitive program. God's Word is the authority for the coach as he disciplines his team in the Christian life. This well-developed program will provide the process for the athlete as he strives to become a whole person.

The Free Methodist Church disapproves of the scheduling of intercollegiate sports on Sundays by AFMEI schools.

5. The use of tobacco or alcoholic beverages shall be prohibited. Membership in social fraternities shall not be permitted.

6. The board of trustees of each school shall have the primary responsibility, with the cooperation of the president and faculty, for insuring that the school's objectives, instruction, standards, program, and activities, both curricular and extracurricular, are in harmony with the "guiding principles" as herein set forth.

7. Any complaint that an educational institution is in violation of any of these principles shall be directed to the Commission on Christian Education. Should the complaint be found to be valid, the commission shall apply such penalty to the school found guilty as it deems appropriate. Such school, however, shall have the privilege of appeal, with full hearing, to the Board of Administration of the church.

¶ 474. Organization and Administration

1. Colleges and Secondary Schools

a. Denominational Institutions

- (1) At least two-thirds of the members of the board of trustees of each institution shall be members of the Free Methodist Church. A majority of the trustees shall be elected directly by the supporting conferences, or from nominees presented by such conferences.

- (2) The chief executive officer shall be a member of the Free Methodist Church.
- (3) Whenever possible, two-thirds of the full-time faculty members shall be members of the Free Methodist Church, and in no case less than a majority.
- (4) All instruction in the several departments shall be in harmony with and in conformity to the teachings of the Scriptures and the standards of the Free Methodist Church as set forth in the Articles of Religion in the BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.
- (5) (a) The board of trustees of each presently existing educational institution is requested to give serious consideration to having the following statement or its legal equivalent placed in its Articles of Incorporation: "This corporation shall be subject to the rules, regulations, and *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America as from time to time adopted by the General Conferences of the church, insofar as the same do not contravene the laws of the state or province of incorporation. In the event of dissolution of this corporation, the property of the same, if any remains after all prior obligations have been discharged, shall become the property of the Free Methodist Church, and the proceeds therefrom shall be used for educational purposes for the benefit of the conferences of the school's assigned area."
- (b) No school shall hereafter be established which does not contain the above

provision in its Articles of Incorporation.

- (c) No institution shall be closed, disposed of, or merged with another institution or institutions without the approval of the Commission on Christian Education and the Board of Administration.
- (6) The president of the institution and the chairman of the board of trustees of each Free Methodist school meeting the above conditions, shall be members of the "Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions." The association shall elect two of its members to serve on the Commission on Christian Education. One representative shall be a president and the other a trustee, each representing a different school. (See Par. 470, Sec. 1.)

b. Cooperating Institutions.

- (1) The Free Methodist Church may affiliate with one or more other evangelical denominations in the operation of cooperating educational institutions. Cooperative arrangements shall be based on the following guidelines subject to the approval of the Commission on Christian Education:
 - (a) The number of members of the Free Methodist Church on the board of trustees shall be at least in equitable proportion to the number of other cooperating denominations.
 - (b) The number of members of the Free Methodist Church on the faculty and administration shall be at least in equitable proportion to other cooperating denominations.
 - (c) Provision shall be made for instruction

- in Free Methodist history and doctrine.
- (d) Provision shall be made for official representatives of the Free Methodist Church to have opportunity for contact and conferences with students in the interest of the church.
 - (e) Provision shall be made for the organization of an Aldersgate Student Fellowship on campus.
 - (f) All instruction in the several departments shall be in harmony with and conformity to the teachings of the Scriptures and the standards of the Free Methodist Church as set forth in the Articles of Religion in the BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.
 - (g) A cooperating institution shall include in its Articles of Incorporation a statement which would conform to the following principles:
 - (i) In case of dissolution any residue will be used for educational purposes.
 - (ii) Any such residue shall be distributed equitably to the cooperating denominations.
- (2) Cooperative arrangements with other institutions or groups that are not denominationally affiliated, for the purpose of establishing a new institution, may be considered on approval of the Commission on Christian Education with the understanding that the Free Methodist Church is appropriately represented in the governance of the institution, that the doctrine and standards of the church are respected, that Free Methodist youth are given the opportunity to receive instruction and

counsel regarding the history and mission of the Free Methodist Church, and that adequate provision be made for the equitable distribution of the residue in the event of its dissolution. The specific terms of such agreement shall be approved by the Board of Administration.

- (3) Provision shall be made for the president of a cooperating institution and an official representative of the board of trustees who is a member of the Free Methodist Church to participate in the meetings of the Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions. Educational institutions thus represented shall be recognized as associate members having one vote in the association
- c. Educational Foundations. Foundations incorporated under the auspices of the Free Methodist Church which are established for the specific purpose of serving the education needs of Free Methodist youth shall be recognized as approved institutions on the condition that the charters of the foundations are approved by the Commission on Christian Education and the Board of Administration. The executive officer and the chairman of the governing board of such foundation shall be members of the Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions.
- d. Aldersgate Fellowships. Organized chapters of Free Methodist and other interested students on secular or other church-related campuses shall be recognized as official units of Free Methodist educational institutions upon qualifying for a charter as an Aldersgate Fellowship and on approval by the Commission on Christian Education and the Board of Admin-

istration. The president of the national organization of Aldersgate Fellowships and a representative of the governing board shall be members of the Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions.

2. Canadian Educational Institutions

Because of the international differences in educational standards and practices, Canadian educational institutions shall operate under the control of the Canadian Jurisdictional Conference, subject to the "Guiding Principles" set forth in Paragraph 473. Canadian schools shall be exempt from supervision by the Department of Higher Education and the Ministry except upon request of the Canadian Jurisdictional Conference with reference to special problems.

3. Christian Elementary and Preschools

The Commission on Christian Education shall encourage and promote the establishing of Christian day schools.

- a. It is recommended that such schools be designated Light and Life Christian Schools.
- b. The commission shall make available to local churches and annual conferences information concerning existing Christian elementary and preschools.
- c. Light and Life Christian Schools are expected to meet or exceed state educational standards.
- d. Each annual conference is authorized to establish a Conference Board of Light and Life Christian Schools which shall oversee the work of all Light and Life Christian Schools within the conference in accord with guidelines established by the Commission on Christian Education and the annual conference. The president of the conference shall instruct the nominating committee to exercise care in naming to this board persons competent to serve.

- e. Responsibility for the operation of Light and Life Christian Schools shall rest with the local board of directors, two-thirds of whom shall be members of the Free Methodist Church, which shall cooperate with the conference board in accord with the guidelines established by the commission and the annual conference.
- f. The commission is authorized to develop a plan for assisting Free Methodist young people attending Free Methodist colleges in preparation for teaching in Light and Life Christian Schools.
- g. It is the responsibility of each conference having Christian schools and of the local officials controlling such schools to see that the appropriate trust clause is a part of each deed pertaining to such school property, the same as other church property (see Pars. 850-859).
- h. The "Guiding Principles" of Paragraph 473 shall apply to Light and Life Christian Schools. Any complaint of violation of any of these principles shall be directed to the board of Light and Life Christian Schools of the conference in which the school is located. Should the complaint be found to be valid, the board shall apply such penalty to the school found guilty as it deems appropriate. Such school, however, shall have the privilege of appeal, with full hearing, to the Board of Administration of the conference.

¶ 475. Education Funds

1. *Educational Endowment Fund.* All educational endowment funds, including the permanent endowment fund, allotted by the general church to educational institutions (including John Wesley Seminary Foundation) and such moneys as may be raised or otherwise received for the Educational Endowment Fund, shall be

held for safe and proper investment by the Investment Committee of the Board of Administration. The income only, from the fund, shall be distributed annually to Free Methodist schools in the United States and Canada according to action taken each year by the Commission on Christian Education. It is understood that the commission is not required to follow a fixed formula year after year, but when determining allotments, it may take into account the provisions which appear in Section 7 of this paragraph.

2. *Free Methodist Scholars Fund.* This fund was established on January 1, 1975, to assist qualified Free Methodist scholars to pursue their graduate education to equip them to teach more effectively in Free Methodist institutions of higher education. The Commission on Christian Education has been authorized by the Board of Administration to make this fund and the following two funds available to prospective donors who wish to designate their contributions for this purpose.

3. *Free Methodist Student Scholarship Fund.* This fund was established on October 27, 1977, to assist qualified Free Methodist students to pursue their undergraduate or graduate education in Free Methodist or affiliated institutions of higher education.

4. *Free Methodist Graduate Ministerial Student Scholarship Fund.* This fund was established on June 1, 1978, to assist qualified Free Methodist ministerial students to pursue graduate theological educational programs in approved seminaries and graduate schools not presently affiliated with John Wesley Seminary.

5. *Canadian Fund.* The Canadian conferences shall be allowed to retain for the schools of Canada all moneys raised for education in their conferences except funds raised for the United Ministries for Christ (see Par. 474, Sec. 2).

6. *Other Funds.* These shall be administered by the Commission on Christian Education.

7. *Allocation of Funds.* When funds are available for

direct financial assistance to educational institutions for their operating budget, or for capital outlay, or both, the Commission on Christian Education shall, when determining the appropriation for each school, give due consideration to the following:

- a. Actual current needs of the school as shown in carefully prepared reports. These shall set forth total institutional assets, current and fixed liabilities, operating costs, faculty salaries, student enrollment, enrollment of Free Methodist students, etc. This information shall be presented on forms provided by the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.
- b. Effectiveness of the ministry of the school as an agency of the church in advancing God's kingdom, both locally and beyond, outside as well as within the Free Methodist Church.
- c. Level of accreditation attained by the school and the emphasis being placed upon qualifying for further recognition.
- d. Extent of financial support given in recent years to the school by its supporting conferences.
- e. Response by the supporting conferences to suggestions for cooperation with the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry in improving the work and good name of the school.
- f. Response by the school itself to suggestion from the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry for cooperative effort looking toward increasing the school's effectiveness.

(2) Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance**476. Organization and Administration****1. Ministerial Guidance****Statement of policy:**

God's call to the ministry is a call to adequate preparation for the ministry, for self-improvement is an important element in self-dedication. Spiritual qualifications are indispensable to the gospel ministry and can never be replaced by any professional training, but the two are not incompatible.

Today training beyond high school is considered necessary in most vocations. A college education, therefore, is important for the person who is looking toward the ministry of the Free Methodist Church. The Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance urges that a Free Methodist college be given first choice in the planning of undergraduate training. Advantages of such choice will be found in an early acquaintance with the organization and doctrines of the church, personal friendships within the framework of the church, and the development of loyalty to the church through a growing understanding and sharing of its responsibilities.

We urge all Free Methodist ministerial candidates to continue their studies, following graduation from college, under the guidance of John Wesley Seminary Foundation.

We believe that students receive unique and outstanding values when they take their studies under denominational guidance in an institution in the Wesleyan tradition. In such situations students are confirmed in the great doctrinal principles of their faith. They learn the methods that are most relevant to their future work. They prepare themselves for their greatest possible contribution to the church and the kingdom of God.

- a. The department director shall work with the various schools and colleges in their ministe-

rial training programs and cooperate with the annual conferences in their ministerial guidance activities and be responsible for keeping the central file of credits and the duplicate copies of ordination parchments of all ministers in conference relationship throughout the church, who are amenable to the respective conference boards of ministerial education and guidance.

- b. The specific responsibilities of the Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance shall be to:
 - (1) Approve, in cooperation with the Division of Educational Institutions, the various schools which offer theological and collegiate training for prospective Free Methodist ministers.
 - (2) Approve correspondence courses for candidates who fail to get required courses while in regular college attendance.
 - (3) Define standards for uniform procedures for reporting the work done at, under the supervision of, or evaluated by approved schools and agencies, and to keep a complete file of such reports.
 - (4) Specify activities and set up standards for their evaluation having to do with itinerant credit which may be earned through supervised practical service.
 - (5) Keep a permanent file of the duplicate copies of parchments of ordination of all ministers in the denomination remitted by the bishops or their deputies; provide annual conference secretaries a form on which they shall report after each annual conference session the names of all ministers whose ordination parchments are no longer valid and the reasons for the

invalidation; and establish procedures whereby a minister who may have lost his original parchment of ordination may secure a certified duplicate copy. The duplicate copies of ordination parchments remitted at the time of ordination shall be retained by the division at all times.

2. John Wesley Seminary

- a. *Authorization:* The Free Methodist Church shall maintain a theological seminary for the post-college training of candidates for the ministry and other types of Christian service. This institution shall be known as John Wesley Seminary and shall be incorporated to secure the rights and privileges belonging to such educational institutions.
- b. *Control:* The Board of Administration shall constitute the John Wesley Seminary Board of Control with the Commission on Christian Education serving as the Executive Board.
- c. *Support:* John Wesley Seminary shall be supported by general funds, special appropriations, and solicitations consistent with the United Ministries for Christ and approved by the Board of Administration.
- d. *Affiliation:* The Board of Control may affiliate the institution with such other seminary organizations as it may deem desirable or necessary, provided such institutions are evangelical and Wesleyan in doctrine as interpreted by the Free Methodist Church.

d. The Training of Ordained Ministers

¶ 477. Steps to Ordination

There are four stages in becoming a fully ordained Free Methodist minister. The person feeling the call of God to the ministry is first licensed as a local preacher. The call is tested by service in the local church where

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initial training begins. Step two involves acceptance by the annual conference as a ministerial candidate. During this period the candidate prepares for full conference membership and ordination as a deacon. Election to elder's orders is the fourth and final step. Following are detailed requirements for each stage.

¶ 477.1. Qualifications for becoming a licensed local preacher:

1. Is a full adult member of the Free Methodist Church.
2. Has declared a call to preach in the presence of the society.
3. Is recommended, examined, and licensed by the official board according to Paragraph 520. Notification is given immediately to the conference board of ministerial education and guidance and the denominational Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.
4. Is counseled by the pastor and/or pastor's cabinet on a continuing basis.
5. Has license renewed annually by official board (see Par. 520, Sec. 5).
6. Retains membership in the local church.

¶ 477.2. Qualifications for becoming a ministerial candidate:

1. Is a licensed local preacher.
2. Is a high school graduate.
3. Has earned a minimum of 30 semester credits in liberal arts courses in an approved accredited college, preferably Free Methodist.
4. Has completed three specified courses in college or by correspondence:
 - a. History and Polity of the Free Methodist Church.
 - b. Introduction to Christian Doctrine.
 - c. An inductive Bible study.
5. Has been academically certified by the Depart-

ment of Higher Education and The Ministry.

6. Has been recommended by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance.

7. Is approved by the annual conference and is admitted as a non-voting member.

8. Is under the guidance of the conference superintendent.

9. Retains membership in a local Free Methodist church.

10. Maintains relationship as a ministerial candidate by annual recommendation of the board of ministerial education and guidance (see Par. 530, Sec. 4).

¶ 477.3. Qualifications for deacon's orders:

A. TRACK I — Seminary Course

1. Is a ministerial candidate.
2. Is a graduate of an approved accredited college, preferably Free Methodist, with a bachelor's degree.
3. Has completed specified courses in college or in seminary:
(Biblical Studies, 6 semester credits;
Systematic and Wesleyan Theology, 6 credits;
Pastoral Theology and Practical Studies, 6 credits in three areas).
4. Has had two years of full-time pastoral experience under conference appointment, one of which may be an approved internship. (Seminary students may substitute one year of equivalency service.)
5. Is certified by the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.
6. Is recommended by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance for full membership in the conference and election to deacon's orders.
7. Is a member of the annual conference.
8. Is ordained by the presiding bishop or his

appointee.

9. Shall file annually a continuing education program with the board of ministerial education and guidance which shall monitor the program.

B. TRACK II — College Course

1. Is a ministerial candidate.
2. Is a graduate of an approved accredited college, preferably Free Methodist, with a bachelor's degree.
3. Has completed specified courses in college or in seminary:
(Biblical Studies, 6 semester credits;
Systematic and Wesleyan Theology, 6 credits;
Pastoral Theology and Practical Studies, 6 credits in three areas).
4. Has had two years of full-time pastoral experience under conference appointment, one of which may be an approved internship.
5. Is certified by the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.
6. Is recommended by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance for full membership in the conference and election to deacon's orders.
7. Is a member of the annual conference.
8. Is ordained by the presiding bishop or his appointee.
9. Shall file annually a continuing education program with the board of ministerial education and guidance which shall monitor the program.

C. TRACK III — Correspondence Course

1. Is a ministerial candidate.
2. Has completed approved courses in college or by correspondence:
(Biblical Studies, 4 semester credits;
Wesleyan Theology, 3 credits;

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Church History Survey, 3 credits;
Homiletics, 3 credits;
Church Administration, 2 credits;
Evangelism and Church Growth, 2 credits;
Pastoral Care, 2 credits).

3. Has completed three years of full-time pastoral experience under conference appointment.
4. Is certified by the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.
5. Is recommended by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance for full membership in the conference and election to deacon's orders.
6. Is a member of the annual conference.
7. Is ordained by the presiding bishop or his appointee.
8. Shall file annually a continuing education program with the board of ministerial education and guidance which shall monitor the program.

¶ 477.4 Qualifications for elder's orders:

A. TRACK I — Seminary Course

1. Is an ordained deacon.
2. Is a graduate of an approved accredited seminary with an M. Div. or equivalent degree. Those graduating from a non-affiliated seminary may be required to take additional courses including a four-semester-credit course in Wesleyan theology.
3. Has completed two years of full-time pastoral experience under conference appointment subsequent to deacon's ordination.
4. Is certified by the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.
5. Is recommended by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance to elder's orders.
6. Is a member of an annual conference.

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7. Is ordained by the presiding bishop or his appointee.
8. Shall file annually a continuing education program with the board of ministerial education and guidance which shall monitor the program.

B. TRACK II — College Course

1. Is an ordained deacon.
2. Is a graduate of an approved accredited college, preferably Free Methodist, with a bachelor's degree and a major in religion. Those without a major in religion and those graduating from non-AFMEI* schools must have completed a minimum of 30 semester credits in approved religion courses in college, in seminary, or by correspondence. The credits are to be distributed equally among the three areas: Biblical Studies, Systematic and Wesleyan Theology, and Pastoral Studies.

Those graduating from a non-AFMEI* school with a major in religion must earn at least four semester credits in Wesleyan Theology.

3. Has completed three years of full-time pastoral experience under conference appointment subsequent to deacon's ordination.
4. Is certified by the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.
5. Is recommended by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance to elder's orders.
6. Is a member of an annual conference.
7. Is ordained by the presiding bishop or his appointee.
8. Shall file annually a continuing education program with the board of ministerial education and guidance which shall monitor the program.

*Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions

¶ 477.5. Itinerant Credit for ministerial candidates in approved seminaries

1. One of the standard requirements for ordination as deacon by the Free Methodist Church throughout its history has been the completion of two years' service as an appointed pastor. This requirement of itinerant service is in addition to the academic requirements and satisfying an annual conference that the candidate is in agreement with the church in doctrine, discipline, government, and usages, and also that he possesses the needed gifts, graces, and promise of usefulness. At least two years of pastoral experience are required of a deacon before he can be ordained an elder. Because of the postponement of entering the active pastorate for several years on the part of a ministerial student to attend college and seminary, the church has made provision whereby students in approved seminaries under certain conditions may meet a considerable portion of their requirement of itinerant service by earning what is called "Itinerant Credit" while in school.

2. Practical service under supervision during a regular seminary program shall be applied toward the itinerant credit requirement for ordination as deacon under the following conditions:

- a. He must have been received as a ministerial candidate in an annual conference.
- b. He must be under church supervision and report regularly to his conference board of ministerial education and guidance, which shall carefully examine him upon his call, his doctrine, and his other qualifications.
- c. He must have favorable recommendations from his superintendent and from the conference board of ministerial education and guidance.
- d. He may not earn more than one year of itinerant credit by supervised practical service during his seminary career.

- e. The Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance shall define activities in which practical service may be rendered for itinerant credit, and set up standards of judging accomplishments therein. Credits must be earned in accordance with these standards.

5. COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM

a. General Provisions

¶ 480. 1. The Board of Administration shall constitute the Board of Evangelism with authority over the Commission on Evangelism and its departments. The Commission on Evangelism shall consist of the number of persons as directed by the Board of Administration (see Par. 451, Sec. 3), two members elected by the Light and Life Men International and the executive secretary of LLMI as honorary ex officio members. One member shall be elected by the Association of Free Methodist Evangelists. The acts of this commission shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Administration.

2. The Commission on Evangelism shall have as its objective the evangelization of the North American continent (with the exception of Mexico) and such English-speaking areas as shall be assigned to it by the General Conference or the Board of Administration.

3. The commission shall meet at least once each year to plan for the evangelistic work of the church and to do such other business as may be necessary to carry out its responsibilities.

4. The commission shall have authority, within the guidelines of the United Ministries for Christ, to raise funds, to employ evangelists and field representatives, to appoint superintendents and pastors in church extension areas as authorized by the General Conference or the Board of Administration, to determine the manner of their support, and to carry on evangelistic efforts throughout the church.

5. In order to function more effectively, the work of the commission shall be done through departments as determined by the commission.

6. The general director of evangelism and church growth shall have general supervision of the entire evangelism ministry, subject to the direction and approval of the commission.

He shall travel throughout the church, inspire the work of evangelism, and plan for and supervise the extension of the work of the commission into new and old fields.

He shall discover and use available evangelistic talent in our schools, conferences, Free Methodist Youth, Light and Life Men International, and elsewhere.

He shall promote in cooperation with conference boards of evangelism and superintendents an effective general program.

He shall raise money for evangelistic outreach under the guidelines established by the United Ministries for Christ.

The general director of evangelism and church growth shall serve as the executive secretary of the Association of Free Methodist Evangelists as outlined in their constitution.

b. The Department of Evangelism and Church Growth

¶ 481. 1. The Department of Evangelism and Church Growth shall function through the divisions of Evangelism, Church Extension, Church Planting, and Urban and Ethnic Ministries.

a. The Division of Evangelism

- (1) The Division of Evangelism shall work in conjunction with the annual conference boards of evangelism in holding evangelism conventions, employing evangelists, organizing evangelism campaigns, publishing literature, and other-

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- wise endeavoring to coordinate and promote evangelism throughout the church.
- (2) It shall organize and promote visitation evangelism, community canvass, small group evangelism, and other methods of neighborhood evangelism which shall better enable our churches to evangelize their communities.
 - (3) It shall supervise the work of general evangelists who shall be approved according to Paragraph 415 and the Commission on Evangelism. It shall assist in preparing a prospectus for publicity for evangelists and standard forms for evaluating both the work of evangelists by local churches and the evangelist's perspective of the evangelistic outreach of the local church. It shall develop means of communication between the division and the conference boards of ministerial education and guidance.
 - (4) It shall promote the second Wednesday in January as a day of fasting and prayer for evangelism.
- b. The Division of Church Extension
- (1) The Division of Church Extension shall aid in the planning, developing, and building of new churches in the areas assigned to it by the Board of Administration.
 - (2) It shall work with the conferences in building up their churches through evangelism and extension services such as church growth seminars, area demographic studies and consultation, assisting pastors in evangelism internships in growing churches, and providing a variety of written materials to assist in church growth and church planting.

- (3) It shall provide financial aid through grants and loans to churches which qualify under conditions set up by the commission. If a church which has received aid from the funds of the Division of Church Extension should become extinct and the buildings be sold, the conference agrees to return the original grant or use it for a new church project at the option of the Department of Evangelism and Church Growth.
 - (4) It shall provide architectural consultation, including church building services, to assist our societies in erecting functional buildings in harmony with disciplinary standards. (See Par. 859.)
 - (5) It shall provide a service known as "Church Member Relocation Service" by contacting each church in order to maintain a file of Free Methodists who are relocating.
- c. The Division of Church Planting
- (1) The Division of Church Planting shall establish or assist in establishing new churches.
 - (2) It shall identify those areas of the English-speaking world in which favorable conditions exist.
 - (3) It shall work with the conferences deemed to have unusual growth opportunities by providing research services intended to locate the most favorable communities for the establishment of new churches.
 - (4) It shall assist in developing strategies promising the most productive effort.
 - (5) It shall identify pastors gifted as church planters.
 - (6) It shall assist the conference financially in the support of church planters whenever

the resources of the conference are deemed inadequate and to the extent of available means.

- (7) It shall assist the conference in the preparation of the job description of men appointed as church planters and participate with the superintendent in the supervision of those men receiving assistance from the department.
 - (8) It shall appoint and supervise church planters in those places where no conference exists or where favorable opportunities exist within conference boundaries but lie beyond the abilities of the conference to develop.
- d. The Division of Urban and Ethnic Ministries
- (1) The Division of Urban and Ethnic Ministries shall be responsible for promotion and coordination of all ministries to ethnic and inner-city groups.
 - (2) It may administer schools operated for ethnic communities.
 - (3) It shall provide financial coordination, secure and screen personnel, recommend training, offer educational seminars, and approve projects.
 - (4) It may employ, with the approval of the Commission on Evangelism, a coordinator(s) to carry out these responsibilities.
 - (5) It may use annual Brotherhood Sunday in highlighting these ministries to assist in raising funds for approved UMC projects.

c. Church Extension Areas and Districts

¶ 482. 1. It shall be the responsibility of the Department of Evangelism and Church Growth to: establish and evangelize church extension areas; aid and give guidance in the work of the area; organize societies and establish churches in accordance with the BOOK OF DISCIPLINE; assist in organizing and supervising their building projects.

2. Development and Administration

- a. Church extension areas may be formed by the Commission on Evangelism upon either of the following:
 - (1) Assignment by the Board of Administration of an area outside the bounds of organized conferences;
 - (2) Recommendation by the general director and the chairman of the Commission on Evangelism for extension of the church among ethnic peoples. Such extension areas may include all or part of the territory of one or more conferences and shall relate to the Commission on Evangelism in the same manner as do extension areas organized outside the boundaries of existing conferences.
- b. Church extension districts may be formed by the Commission on Evangelism upon request from annual conferences. Church extension districts may be formed within the bounds of Canadian annual conferences in the manner described, and elsewhere in the Dominion, when approved by the Canadian Jurisdictional Conference.
- c. Superintendents (or pastors) of church extension districts shall be appointed by the stationing committee of the conference, in consultation with the general director of

evangelism and church growth. The superintendent shall be given guidance in his work by the general director. He shall give report to the bishop of his area and the commission through the general director.

- d. Reception of members and organization of societies shall be as prescribed in the *BOOK OF DISCIPLINE*. Church extension societies shall have the same rights and privileges as do those of any other society.
- e. Pastoral appointments to societies in church extension districts shall be made by the stationing committee of the conference upon recommendation of the general director of evangelism and church growth.
- f. Pastoral appointments to societies in church extension areas assigned by the Board of Administration and unaffiliated with any conference shall be made by the bishop of the area in consultation with the general director of evangelism and church growth. In those church extension districts where there are ten or more pastoral appointments and where a full-time superintendent is functioning, the superintendent may recommend pastoral appointments to the general director. All appointments are to be made for one year by the bishop upon recommendation of the general director. The superintendent, to be appointed by the commission, shall be given guidance in his work by the general director. He shall report to the bishop of his area and to the commission through the general director.
- g. A church extension district within the continental United States, having reached sufficient size and maturity, shall be assigned to a conference by the Board of Administration upon recommendation of the Commission on

Evangelism. The commission, in consultation with the district and conference involved, may recommend this assignment.

- h. Overseas church extension districts may be assigned to the commission by the Board of Administration.

d. Church Extension Loan Fund

¶ 483. The Department of Evangelism and Church Growth shall have a fund known as the Church Extension Loan Fund. The purpose and use of this fund shall be to loan money to our churches to purchase, build, or remodel properties.

1. This fund shall be promoted by the Department of Evangelism and Church Growth. Loans shall be investigated and approved by representatives of the department.

2. Loans from the Church Extension Loan Fund shall be administered by the Investment Committee, in consultation with the general director of the Department of Evangelism and Church Growth, and their decision shall be final.

3. Moneys for this fund shall be borrowed from investors and shall be loaned to qualifying churches at rates of interest as determined by the Board of Administration.

4. Written evidence of investment shall be given to each investor with a signature authorized by the Board of Directors of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

5. The general church treasurer shall carry this fund in a separate account from those of all other funds. All moneys shall be paid through his office, and he shall keep all essential records.

6. This shall be a nonprofit organization. All money reverting to this fund, or not voted for operating expenses of the agencies administrating the funds, shall go into the fund to increase the loan capital.

7. A percentage of the interest earned on loans, as determined by the Board of Administration, shall be transferred to the operating agencies to meet the expenses involved in handling the loan fund.

8. Loans from other sources shall be added to this fund as determined by the Board of Administration.

e. Finance

¶484. 1. The Department of Evangelism and Church Growth shall receive its financial support from, or as approved by, the United Ministries for Christ.

2. It shall assist the United Ministries for Christ in raising funds through approved methods.

f. Light and Life Men International

¶485. The Light and Life Men International of the Free Methodist Church is recognized as an auxiliary of the Board of Evangelism, operating through the Commission on Evangelism, and is governed by its own constitution and bylaws. The executive secretary of Light and Life Men International shall be an honorary ex officio member of the executive committee of the Commission on Evangelism.

6. COMMISSION ON MISSIONS

a. Objects, Membership, Officers, Duties

¶490. The Free Methodist Church by the Board of Administration and through the Commission on Missions accepts responsibility to obey the Great Commission of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). Missionaries are sent into all the world to evangelize and make disciples for the Lord and to build them together in his church (I Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:20-22). This is done most effectively when missionaries work toward helping the national churches become self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing. Missionaries also ex-

press the love of Christ in ministries of compassion, relief of suffering, and educational and physical uplift.

1. The Board of Administration shall constitute the General Missionary Board which has authority over and functions through the Commission on Missions and its departments. The Commission on Missions shall consist of the number of persons as directed by the Board of Administration (see Par. 451, Sec. 3), two members elected by the Women's Missionary Fellowship International, and one member elected by the Light and Life Men International.

The area administrative assistants to the general missionary secretary shall meet at least once each year with the commission for consultation, without vote.

2. The members of the commission shall continue in office until the close of the next session of the General Conference and until others have been selected to take their places. The Commission on Missions shall meet at least once each year to plan its work.

3. The general church treasurer shall be the treasurer of the Commission on Missions.

4. The commission shall be responsible for all missionary work outside North America except for English-speaking areas which may be assigned to another conference or department.

5. The Commission on Missions shall have as its purpose and responsibilities the following:

a. Objectives

- (1) To serve in missionary partnership with the national church in evangelization and church planting in the country.
- (2) To provide ministries of teaching and healing through the sending of missionaries as needed and in harmony with the Great Commission.

b. Responsibilities

- (1) To recruit, process, and send missionary candidates called by God from churches in

North America to serve in other countries.

- (2) To train workers by providing schools, seminaries, and training programs for development of national leaders.
- (3) To minister to the physical needs of persons as an expression of a caring church.
- (4) To reach into unevangelized areas with the gospel of Christ when the overseas church lacks funds or staff.
- (5) To educate the home church as to missionary opportunities, needs, and outreach through missions.

¶ 491. The commission shall have the following powers and duties:

1. The chairman of the commission shall, with the consent of the majority of its members, make general calls from time to time for funds to meet contingencies on the mission fields, subject to the guidelines of the *United Ministries for Christ*.

2. To take charge of all money allocated for foreign and home missions and appropriate it to the purposes for which it has been contributed.

3. To see that the receipts for the fiscal year are audited and reported to the commission. The commission shall appropriate the receipts to the missionary work, making adequate provision in the budget for unforeseen contingencies which may arise during the year.

4. To provide for an overseas loan fund. The purpose and use of this fund shall be to loan money to our churches overseas to purchase, build, or remodel properties.

5. To accept, appoint, license, and commission candidates for missionary service in an appropriate ceremony.

6. At their discretion, to place a missionary on leave of absence following a year of furlough. The leave of

absence status shall be reviewed annually and shall not extend beyond three years unless for medical reasons.

7. To request of the area bishop the ordination of missionary candidates whenever it is expedient.

8. To survey the needs of unevangelized areas contiguous to established mission fields or in countries not presently served where there are places of unusual opportunity and promise; and, where feasible, to promote the evangelization of the area and the establishment of a national church, as approved by the Board of Administration.

a. The commission shall have the following relationship to new work:

(1) Until the church is established in an unevangelized area as either a provisional conference or full conference, the work shall be under the jurisdiction of the Commission on Missions as a mission conference.

(2) The commission must approve all candidates for ordination in mission and provisional conferences. When a candidate is affiliated with another conference, consultation shall occur with that conference prior to ordination.

b. To organize provisional and full conferences on the mission fields:

(1) Provisional Conferences. When a mission conference in the field is in the preparatory stage and shall adopt in principle the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church together with a constitution approved by the Commission on Missions adapted to its local situation and needs, the same shall be approved by the Commission on Missions as a provisional conference. Members of a full conference serving in a provisional conference shall, within two years from the

beginning of their service in the provisional conference, transfer their memberships to the provisional conference.

- (2) Full Conferences. When a provisional conference has made a marked advancement in national leadership, evangelistic outreach, self-government, and self-support and has reached the stage where it is able to operate satisfactorily under the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church and has a constitution that has been approved by the Commission on Missions and by the General Conference, the Commission on Missions shall recommend such conferences to the area bishop to be organized into a full conference as outlined in Paragraph 591, Section 9 (b) and (e).

Any changes in constitutions of full conferences of mission origin shall be considered by the Commission on Missions for recommendation to the Board of Administration or General Conference for approval.

9. To have the following relationship to full conferences and general conferences of mission origin:

- a. Full Conferences. Full conferences of mission origin are related to the Commission on Missions through the field mission. The mission consists of the missionaries under appointment by the commission. Where the legal situation in a country forbids organization of a field mission the liaison function normally handled by the field mission shall be maintained through missionary representatives designated by the commission.
- b. Full Conferences. A full conference shall have a liaison committee composed of missionaries and national church leaders to submit their

request for needed personnel and finances together with full explanation to the Commission on Missions through the missionary secretary.

- c. **General Conferences.** A general conference may continue a missionary relationship to the General Missionary Board. Missionaries may be appointed by request to assist in training leadership, operating institutions, and evangelizing urban areas. Personnel will be provided by the Commission on Missions as it is able.
- d. General conferences relate to the commission through the field mission or through missionary representatives designated by the commission.

10. Upon the recommendation of the general missionary secretary, to employ an assistant for missionary personnel and field relations, an executive assistant and other executives for the General Missionary Board office, and to approve overseas area administrative assistants as may be required for the geographic areas. Job descriptions for all assistants shall be approved by the Commission on Missions, be on file in the General Missionary Board office, and be distributed to all missionaries.

11. To perform such other acts as are contemplated under the duties of the General Missionary Board.

12. The acts of the Commission on Missions are subject to the approval of the Board of Administration.

b. General Missionary Board

¶ 492. 1. The Board of Administration shall constitute the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an incorporated body. The General Missionary Board is incorporated and is used for special financial transactions for the Commission on Missions.

2. The objects for which this corporation is formed are:

- a. To receive, hold, pay out, or dispose of any property, of whatever nature and wherever situated as allowed by law, that may be obtained in aid of the general missionary work of the Free Methodist Church.
- b. To acquire real estate or personal property in North America or in foreign lands and to hold or sell or convey the same as in its judgment may be necessary in the prosecution of its missionary work.

c. The Directors of the Commission

¶ 493. 1. The Board of Administration, at its first meeting after the session of the General Conference, shall elect by ballot, from the membership of the commission, seven persons who shall constitute a Board of Directors. At least one of these directors shall be a member of the Women's Missionary Fellowship International.

2. The Commission on Missions may elect an executive committee whose acts shall be subject to the direction of the commission.

d. The General Missionary Secretary

¶ 494. 1. The general missionary secretary shall be employed, pursuant to the authority in Paragraph 444, Section 1.

2. He shall keep the records of the commission, receive and answer all correspondence relating to the missionary work of the church, and pay over to the general church treasurer all money received.

3. He shall have charge of the missionary interests of the church, subject to the orders and under direction of the commission, except in a sudden emergency, when he may be at liberty to act without waiting for orders

from the commission, provided that such action shall be subject to the approval of the commission.

4. He shall travel at large throughout the church in the interest of missions and shall visit the foreign fields whenever in the judgment of the Commission on Missions it is necessary.

5. He may be authorized by the area bishop to ordain all eligible candidates for the office of deacon or elder when visiting the foreign fields.

6. He shall make yearly, and whenever else the commission requests him to do so, a full and detailed report to the commission of all business pertaining to both the missionaries and the mission stations.

7. a. The missionary secretary is responsible to examine missionary candidates who feel called to full-time missionary service and recommend them to the Commission on Missions for appointment and commissioning.

- b. (1) The term of service for all fields is four years. The missionary secretary shall review the term of service for each missionary and recommend reappointment. When conditions warrant, the term may be extended or shortened.
- (2) The regular furlough period of a missionary is up to one year. When conditions warrant, the commission may extend or shorten the furlough period upon the recommendation of the missionary secretary.
- (3) Furlough without salary shall be counted toward tenure. Three years leave of absence may be counted toward tenure by special action of the commission.
- (4) Upon recommendation by the missionary secretary and approval by the commission, after one year of furlough a missionary

may be granted a leave of absence not to exceed three years except for medical reasons.

e. Title to Land in Foreign Countries

¶ 495. Titles to land purchased for missions and institutions under the direction of the General Missionary Board shall be in the name of the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church of North America or deeded to trustees elected or approved by the General Missionary Board. Trustees may be missionaries, nationals, or both. Such trustees shall hold the property for the benefit and use of the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church of North America. Where property cannot be titled or held in trust for the General Missionary Board, it shall be held for the benefit and use of the Free Methodist Church and its institution in those countries. Any sale or disposal of property or use of funds from the sale of such property shall be with the approval and consent of the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church. Whenever possible the tenure of the office of the trustees shall be subject to the board and in all cases to the laws and regulations of the country where the property is located.

f. Responsibilities of Pastors and Local Societies

¶ 496. 1. It shall be the responsibility of every pastor in charge of a local church to promote Free Methodist missions through a yearly program of missionary emphasis and to direct the establishment of a financial program for the support of the missionary outreach of the church through the United Ministries for Christ.

2. A missions Penny-a-Day director shall be elected by the society. The name and address of the Penny-a-Day director should be sent to the missions

education department of the General Missionary Board so that the necessary promotional materials may be sent to him.

3. A local missions coordinator shall be elected by the society at its annual meeting to assist in coordinating missionary promotional and educational activities in the church. The missions coordinator may serve as chairman of the local board of missions. The coordinator will, upon contact with the General Missionary Board, receive helpful materials and suggestions relating to missionary promotion and education.

4. The local society shall have a board of missions consisting of the pastor, the missions coordinator, the director of Christian education, representatives of WMFI, Division of Youth Ministries, LLMI, and Division of Children's Ministries, the local Penny-a-Day director, and wherever practicable, two or more members elected at large by the society. (See Pars. 400, Sec. 3; 400.1, Sec. 19; and 404.)

g. The Women's Missionary Fellowship International

¶ 497. The Women's Missionary Fellowship International of the Free Methodist Church is recognized as an auxiliary arm of the General Missionary Board, operating through the commission and is governed by its own constitution and bylaws.

h. Missions and Conferences

¶ 498. Of the following conferences, the provisional conferences are administered by the General Missionary Board through the commission. Copies of their constitutions and bylaws may, when adopted by the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America, be secured from the secretary of the General Missionary Board.

The conferences so recognized are:

Conferences – Brazilian, Burundi, Dominican, Haiti

Inland, India, Mexican, Mozambique and South African Mines, Natal-Transkei, Nikkei, Philippine, Rwanda, Taiwan, Zaire, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

Provisional Conferences - Hong Kong-Macau, Indonesia, Malawi, Northwest Mexico, Paraguay, Transvaal-Orange Free State.

i. Missionaries' Relationship to Home Conferences

¶ 499. North American conferences may grant honorary conference membership to those missionaries who are employed by the General Missionary Board and who were previously full members of a North American conference and are now members of conferences of mission origin. These missionaries shall be encouraged to report annually to their conferences in writing or in person.

CHAPTER V

THE MINISTRY

Preamble

A. Personal Life of the Minister

B. Advice to the Minister

C. Examination of Candidates

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CHAPTER V

THE MINISTRY

PREAMBLE

¶ 500. The ministry is the high calling of God to dedicated men to fulfill the prophetic and priestly functions in the church of Jesus Christ. No work is more demanding or more satisfying than that of the Spirit-anointed minister. He stands between God and man; he faithfully preaches the Word, pleads with God for men, nurtures the believers, and comforts the bereaved. Administrative and pastoral responsibilities may leave him physically spent and emotionally drained, but he seeks renewal in the resources of the Holy Spirit. The challenge of his work inspires the man of God to redemptively love his people and serve his Lord.

A. PERSONAL LIFE OF THE MINISTER

¶ 501. 1. *Use of Time.* Walk closely with God. Always be conscientious about your work. Be self-disciplined in the use of time, rising and retiring at reasonable hours. With no one to supervise your schedule, you must be very careful to devote your time to the work of the ministry, avoiding laziness. There is no excuse for a slothful pastor.

2. *Devotional Life.*

- a. The pastor is a man of prayer. Practice private, family, and public prayer consisting of confession, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Make private devotions a daily means of grace. The quality of what you do will be determined by what you are.
- b. Searching the Scriptures is an essential daily

discipline. Read the Bible regularly, carefully with notes. Meditate upon it, practice what you learn, and relate your insights from the Scripture to the needs of your people. Read through the entire Bible using the best versions. Participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at every opportunity, with prayerful self-examination. Fast regularly as health permits.

3. *Conversation.* Guard your conversation, keep confidences, be careful in your judgments, and limit your visits and counseling sessions to a reasonable length. Regard all pastoral conversations of a confessional nature as a trust between you, the person concerned, and God. Be prudent in language; eliminate slang and cheap worldly expressions.

4. *Ethics.*

a. Endeavor to live honorably among all men. Be a careful steward of money, tithing systematically and buying no more than you can financially afford. Avoid embarrassing debt. Pay the bills on time.

b. When you leave a church to serve another appointment, be careful to make the transition for your successor as smooth and delightful as possible. Withhold judgment and criticism of the pastor who follows you and speak of him only with kindness and grace. Restrain yourself from making unnecessary visits to former parishioners. When you do return, let the pastor know. Apply the golden rule in all relationships with your former church, protecting the best interests of the man who follows you.

5. *Health.*

a. The pastoral ministry makes great demands on the emotional and physical resources. Recreation is essential to the creative demands upon

the minister. You should systematically take a day away from routine duties. Take at least two weeks for vacation with your family, and more as tenure permits.

- b. It is sinful to abuse one's body, even in the work of the Lord. Get ample rest at night, and find time for relaxation. Be careful in your eating habits and neither undernourish your body nor overeat. It is important to watch one's weight and to have a periodic medical examination by a physician. You will abstain from anything that is harmful to your body, mind, and spirit. You will not use tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and other unnecessary drugs.

6. *Relationships with People.* An effective pastor loves people. Make yourself available to all men at all times in meeting the needs of people and healing their hurts. Talented and capable pastors may severely limit their ministry by failing to love, understand, and show compassion.

B. ADVICE TO THE MINISTER

¶ 510. 1. *Conduct.*

- a. Be diligent; don't waste time. Never be triflingly employed. Be punctual for all occasions.
- b. Be serious. Avoid inappropriate humor and foolish conversation.
- c. Conduct yourself prudently with the other sex.
- d. The pastor should be a person of unimpeachable character, and when married, show the spouse honor and love in public and in private (I Timothy 3:2).
- e. Your family is your first responsibility; take time for them; do not neglect them. Control your children with loving discipline (I Timothy 3:4-5).

- f. The selection of a spouse is important to your ministry. Take no step toward marriage without first consulting with your spiritual leaders.
 - g. Speak evil of no one. Careless words can do great harm, especially from the pastor. Never divulge confidences.
 - h. Be yourself in honesty and simplicity. Avoid all affectation. Keep the rules of the DISCIPLINE for conscience' sake.
 - i. Your most important ministry is to win men to Christ; devote yourself in this redemptive work. Be a good steward of your ministry; be available to all who need you.
 - j. Carry out your responsibilities, not according to your own convenience, but as a faithful minister of the gospel. Employ your time in preaching, visitation, reading, meditation, and prayer.
 - k. Admonish those under your care with honesty and love. Endeavor to be understanding and objective. Do not be hasty in forming conclusions, but hear all sides.
2. *Preaching.*
- a. Keep your appointments.
 - b. Begin every meeting on time.
 - c. Adapt your subject to the congregation.
 - d. Choose an appropriate Scripture for each occasion.
 - e. Do not ramble; but be faithful to your subject and Scripture.
 - f. Have the message thoroughly prepared.
 - g. Avoid awkward and affected gestures, cliches, and overused phrases. Use words that are easily understood and pronounce them properly and clearly. Project your voice so that you can be easily heard.

- h. Keep your prayers reasonably short and specific; avoid broad meaningless generalities. Eliminate vain repetitions such as "I pray Thee."
 - i. Preach from the Bible, expounding the Scriptures to your congregation. Beware of topical preaching which is subject-oriented rather than Scripture-oriented. You can deal with any proper subject by exposition of appropriate Scripture.
 - j. Take advantage of the great events of the church year to give focus to your preaching.
 - k. Series preaching and preaching through a book of the Bible develop broad understanding of the Scriptures and attract continuity of interest.
 - l. Never imitate others; be yourself.
 - m. Endeavor to spend your mornings in study and meditation. Interruptions are inevitable, but the pastor who organizes his morning hours for prayer and preparation will be able to minister with greater confidence and effectiveness.
 - n. Strongly emphasize inward and outward holiness in every phase of the Christian life and declare both the law and the gospel.
3. *Pastoral.*
- a. Set aside at least four afternoons each week and an evening or more for visitation.
 - b. Call on the hospitalized at least once each week. Visit especially in the homes of new contacts. Be alert to those who are new in the community.
 - c. Care for the elderly and for those who are confined. Be available for counseling to all who are distressed.
 - d. Systematically practice evangelism in your calling through person-to-person confrontation.

- e. Take time to visit door-to-door in the community. An hour each week over an extended period of time will pay rewarding dividends. Use the opportunity to introduce people to the ministries of the church with an attractive brochure.
 - f. Lead your people in a program of visitation evangelism. Set aside one night each week if possible.
 - g. Visit at the opportune occasions of life: birth, marriage, death, joy, sorrow, tragedy, and illness.
 - h. Counsel those who have spiritual problems, encouraging them to become spiritually mature.
 - i. Carefully plan and conduct a class for new believers and prospective members. Use the materials provided by the denomination to teach them the history, doctrines, and standards of the church as taught in the Scriptures and outlined in the **BOOK OF DISCIPLINE**. No member should be brought into the Free Methodist Church without a thorough understanding of our beliefs and standards for Christian living.
 - j. Instruct the children and youth. Teach a junior membership training class. Teach them about God, the meaning of the church, its ministry and sacraments, and principles of Christian living.
4. *Administrator.*
- a. The church is more than an institution, organization, and facility for worship. The church is people — the community of believers, “the body of Christ” united to build the kingdom of God. And the community of saints is only as effective as the united ministry of its people.

- b. The Holy Spirit provides the gifts necessary to carry on the ministry of the church. It is your responsibility to discover, encourage, and implement the gifts of your people so the church may effectively fulfill its ministries.
- c. As pastor, you must organize and program the church for the work of the ministry. This demands analysis, evaluation, and planning. Organize your people so they will effectively discharge their responsibilities.
- d. The fruits of many effective labors have been lost for lack of adequate organization. You must not only fulfill your prophetic and priestly functions, but you must also administer the program of the church to conserve the results of your ministry. Laymen must be trained for leadership. Their talents must be recognized and utilized. Business meetings are essential to church life and should be a means of grace. Board meetings, committees, planning, and business sessions are to be regularly scheduled and properly conducted.
- e. For instructions on administration of multiple staff see the Board of Ministerial Education and Guidance Manual.

C. EXAMINATION OF LOCAL PREACHERS

¶ 520. 1. A local preacher is a full adult member of the Free Methodist Church who is seriously considering a call to full-time Christian ministry. Before being granted a license the local preacher shall have been a member of the church long enough to have given evidence of possessing those qualities and gifts normally expected of a Christian minister. Spirituality and good conduct and attitudes are the qualities desired. A local preacher shall be amenable to instruction, supervision, and related discipline to assure growth in grace, knowledge, and usefulness to the church.

2. The following questions shall be asked in the presence of the official board to determine the candidate's understanding of the call of God to the ministry, and quality of spiritual life:

- a. When and how did you come to know Christ as Savior and Lord?
- b. What is your understanding of the doctrine of entire sanctification?
- c. Have you experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- d. Are you open to the call of God to full-time ministry?
- e. What preparations and plans are you making in order to follow God's will for your life?
- f. What types of ministry and witness do you plan to participate in as a local preacher?

3. Upon the satisfactory answering of the above questions, the official board may issue a local preacher's license and assign responsibility for counsel and guidance to the pastor and/or the pastor's cabinet. This action will be communicated to the society, the conference board of ministerial education and guidance, and the denominational Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.

4. Upon being licensed, local preachers shall maintain their membership in a local church and be members of the official board.

5. The local preacher's license is subject to annual review and renewal by the official board. If the local preacher is not in college or seminary, he will follow the course of study for lay ministers provided for in Paragraph 601. After four renewals, if the local preacher has not become a ministerial candidate or is not in college or seminary with that objective in mind, the license will be discontinued. The person shall then be advised to serve in another relationship, e.g., as a licensed lay minister. (For instructions regarding the duties of local preachers, see Par. 540, Sec. 30.)

¶ 521. A local preacher appointed as a supply shall hold membership in the church served.

¶ 522. A local preacher appointed by a stationing committee to have charge of a society may solemnize marriages in that place if the civil laws permit. Such local preachers also have the right to administer the sacrament of baptism.

D. MINISTERS AND ANNUAL CONFERENCES

1. RECEPTION AS MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE

¶ 530. 1. Qualifications for reception as a ministerial candidate in an annual conference:

- a. Must be a licensed local preacher in good standing.
- b. Must be recommended by the district conference or annual conference board of ministerial education and guidance.
- c. Must be recommended by the board of ministerial education and guidance of the receiving conference.
- d. Must have met preliminary educational requirements as outlined in Paragraph 477.2 and have filed with the director of the Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance a transcript of all post-secondary credits earned and also a Personal Data Sheet properly completed.

2. No candidate who has been divorced shall be admitted to the conference as a ministerial candidate or in full membership until approved by the Board of Bishops. This shall also apply to a candidate whose spouse has been thus divorced. Divorce prior to conversion shall not in itself bar a candidate from consideration for conference membership.

3. The board of ministerial education and guidance shall examine persons for the relationship of ministerial

candidate by considering the following questions:

- a. Is the candidate holy and loving in all personal relationships?
- b. Has the candidate gifts as well as graces for the ministry?
- c. Does the candidate have good judgment, adequate discernment of the things of God, and a proper understanding of salvation by faith?
- d. Is the candidate able to speak effectively?
- e. Does the candidate present the gospel with doctrinal integrity?
- f. Are people convinced of sin and converted to God by the candidate's preaching and witness?

4. A ministerial candidate shall be allowed a maximum of four years to complete the course of study required for admission into the conference in full membership (see Par. 477.3). If he should fail to complete the course of study in that time, his status as a ministerial candidate may be continued only upon recommendation of the conference board of ministerial education and guidance.

5. At an appropriate time the ministerial candidates will be called before the annual conference, and the president shall say:

The leaders and members of this annual conference, having observed your Christian life and conduct, feel you are endowed with the gifts of ministerial leadership. The conference board of ministerial education and guidance has carefully inquired into your qualifications and has presented you as a candidate for membership. We offer our words of encouragement and congratulations. We know you take seriously this first step on the road to ordination. We expect you to give yourself diligently in prayer and study in preparation for effective ministry. That you may fix your eyes more clearly upon your goal we ask you the following questions:

- a. Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and offer yourself in service to him as a ministerial candidate in the _____ Annual Conference of the Free Methodist Church?

Answer: I do.

- b. Recognizing that being a ministerial candidate in this annual conference is an important step toward full membership and ordination, do you pledge to equip yourself spiritually, morally, and intellectually for the Christian ministry?

Answer: I do.

- c. Will you seek and accept the guidance of your superintendent and the board of ministerial education and guidance to fulfill these goals?

Answer: I will.

The chairman of the conference will present a certificate to the newly received ministerial candidate.

2. RECEPTION INTO FULL MEMBERSHIP

¶ 531. 1. A traveling preacher may be received into full membership and be reported as having a seat in the conference after having been employed in the regular itinerant work two successive years subsequent to his reception as a ministerial candidate and after satisfactorily completing the required course of study (Par. 477.3) and giving satisfactory answers to the following questions:

- a. Have you faith in Christ?
- b. Have you present assurance that your sins are forgiven?
- c. Do you believe that purity of heart and life and empowerment for service, through the fullness of the Spirit, is a privilege and responsibility to be experienced by every Christian?

- d. Do you now possess that cleansing of heart and empowerment for service which accompany the fullness of the Holy Spirit? (If the candidate should answer "No," then ask:

Will you through study, counsel, and prayer seek this experience until you obtain it?

Alternate: Will you make this your purpose?)

- e. Are you resolved to devote yourself to God and the work to which he calls you?
- f. Do you partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper when it is offered?
- g. Since you have studied our DISCIPLINE, will you abide by its instructions?
- h. Will you endeavor to effectively communicate the message God lays upon your heart?
- i. Will you see that the children and youth are properly instructed and cared for?
- j. Will you visit, ministering to those within and without the church?
- k. Will you recommend fasting and prayer, both by teaching and example?
- l. Will you, without being sectarian, promote the Free Methodist Church and its ministries in building the kingdom of God?
2. For restrictions upon the admission of divorced persons, see Section 2 of the preceding paragraph.

3. ORDINATION CREDENTIALS

¶ 532. 1. Every minister, whether local or itinerant, whose ordination is recognized by an annual conference, shall be entitled to a parchment from the president of the conference, certifying the fact of his ordination. A duplicate copy of the parchment for ministers received after June 20, 1969, shall be remitted by the president of the conference for retention and permanent filing by the Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance.

2. An ordained minister in good standing who unites

with another church or is granted permission to withdraw from the Free Methodist Church, shall deposit his parchments with the secretary of the conference and receive a receipt for them. If he does not deposit his parchments with the secretary of the annual conference from which he has withdrawn, his parchments shall be declared null and void by action of the annual conference.

3. A minister who is expelled from the church, or is allowed to withdraw under charges, forfeits the pension benefits provided by the church, and must surrender his parchments. If he refuses or neglects to deposit his parchments with the secretary of the conference from which he has separated, the conference shall by official action declare them null and void.

4. In the event of the loss of ordination parchments, a certified duplicate copy shall be made available through the Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance according to procedures established by the department.

4. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

¶ 533. 1. To transfer to another annual conference a minister must have a certificate of standing from the district conference, the conference board of ministerial education and guidance, or the annual conference. This certificate is valid until the ensuing annual conference to which the certificate is given.

2. Only an annual conference or its board of ministerial education and guidance may give a certificate of standing to a minister intending to join another denomination. Membership in the conference and the church terminates upon the giving of such a certificate.

3. A conference minister who unites with another denomination without having requested or received from our church proper credentials of withdrawal may, upon satisfactory evidence of that fact, be declared withdrawn by a majority vote of the conference.

4. A minister who is serving a conference and who plans employment elsewhere the succeeding year shall notify his superintendent prior to the sixty-day period immediately preceding the session of the annual conference, or, failing to give such notice prior to the specified date, shall apply to the conference board of ministerial education for permission to withdraw from the service of the conference at the close of the current conference year.

5. RECEPTION FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

¶ 534. 1. Ministers from other evangelical churches who desire to unite with the Free Methodist Church may be received according to our procedures, provided that they:

- a. Satisfy an annual conference of holding ministerial orders.
- b. Give satisfactory answers to the questions which we propose to:
 - (1) lay persons for full membership;
 - (2) ministers for admission to annual conference membership.
- c. Indicate agreement with our doctrine, discipline, government, and usages.
- d. Submit full academic credentials to the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry.
- e. Complete courses in Free Methodist History and Polity and in Arminian-Wesleyan theology.
- f. Be certified by the Department of Higher Education and The Ministry and by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance.
- g. Give evidence of appropriate gifts, graces, and usefulness.

2. In determining the level of ordination to be recognized, equivalency is of most importance. No person may attain ordination status more easily by transfer from another denomination than through following the requirements of the BOOK OF DISCIPLINE for all Free Methodist ministers. The candidates must qualify in full, both academically and in itinerant service.

3. Candidates recognized as deacons or elders shall be given an appropriate certificate in lieu of ordination parchments.

4. We do not recognize the credentials of a minister from another denomination if he has remarried and has a divorced wife living, or if his wife has a divorced husband living, unless at the request of the conference board of ministerial education and guidance, the Board of Bishops has reviewed and approved admission into the conference.

6. TERMINATION OF CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

¶ 535. Conference membership may be terminated by:

1. Voluntary location.
2. Location through action of the conference under the provisions of Paragraphs 421-422.
3. Ceasing to travel or to do the work assigned, without proper consent (see Par. 552).
4. Withdrawal with consent of the conference (Pars. 428, Sec. 13, and 533, Sec. 2).

A minister who leaves the church after complaints have been lodged against him and who regains membership by any means, shall not be allowed to exercise any of the functions of the ministerial office until he has given satisfaction to the conference to which he belonged at the time of leaving the church.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PASTORS

¶ 540. The duties of a minister who has the charge of a pastoral appointment are:

1. To look after the spiritual and temporal interests of the church or churches to which he is appointed.

2. To receive and dismiss members according to the **DISCIPLINE**; provided, however, that no person shall be recorded on the register as "withdrawn at his own request" until the action is approved by the official board.

3. To see that the other ministers on his pastoral charge behave well and need nothing.

4. To examine each of the leaders concerning the method of leading the Christian growth group (class), observe which leaders are the most useful and have these meet the other groups as often as possible, and see that all the leaders are persons not only of sound judgment, but truly devoted to God. (See also Par. 620, Sec. 4.)

5. To hold watch-night services and love feasts.

6. To give instruction concerning the meaning and observance of the Lord's Supper.

7. To celebrate the Lord's Supper quarterly and more often when possible.

8. To take care that every society is duly supplied with books.

9. To take an exact account of all members, including every one whose name is on a society roll, keeping the names of local elders, local deacons, local preachers, and lay ministers properly distinguished, and deliver it to the annual conference, that their number may be printed in the *Yearbook*.

10. To enter the following information in the permanent record book furnished him by the official board as prescribed in Paragraph 402, Section 7:

- a. A complete and up-to-date account of all baptisms, weddings, and funerals;

b. A list of the names and addresses of all members of the societies, with time and method of reception, date of birth and baptism, completion of pastoral instruction classes of each, and time and reason for termination of membership.

11. To report quarterly to the official board the entries made in the record book during the quarter.

12. To leave to his successor a particular account of the society, with the permanent record book and a list of the subscribers to our periodicals.

13. To give an account of his pastoral charge at every session of the district conference, with the statement that the detailed records are up to date.

14. To enforce vigorously, but calmly, all the rules of the society.

15. As soon as there are four believers in any place to put them into a Christian growth group (class).

16. To meet the societies and Christian growth groups (classes); to visit the sick; to visit all persons in the congregation whenever practicable.

17. To welcome the use of all means of proclamation and evangelism which can be effectively implemented and financed.

18. To warn all from time to time that none are to remove from one society to another without a letter of transfer from the pastor.

19. To recommend everywhere decency and cleanliness.

20. To use the membership covenant once a year in every society.

21. To see that the trustees are elected and that the real estate belonging to the church is secured according to the civil laws.

22. To see that no steps are taken involving the society in financial liability, without the consent of the official board.

23. To warn the people of the evil consequences to themselves and the church of God, of covetousness and withholding of their means from supporting the gospel, and to urge upon all and to preach upon systematic and proportionate giving, encouraging our people to tithe their incomes. (See Par. 804.)

24. To see that all financial obligations ordered by the conference are raised in full.

25. To send the name and address of any person of his constituency who moves from his community to the pastor or superintendent of the Free Methodist Church in the conference to which such person moves. (See Par. 481, Sec. 1:b:5.)

26. To execute all the rules fully and strenuously against frauds, and particularly against dishonest insolvencies, membership in secret societies, labor and capitalistic organizations contravening Paragraphs 334 and 335, and to suffer none to remain in our church who are found guilty thereof.

27. Pastors who are not members of a conference shall not employ evangelists who are not members of our church, without first consulting with and securing the consent of the superintendent and the official board.

28. To provide for the culture of converts by such instruction and encouragement as will help them go on into a definite experience of entire sanctification; to inform junior and preparatory members of the privileges, duties, and responsibilities of membership, using particularly *Belonging*, the DISCIPLINE, the history of the Free Methodist Church, and such other materials as the church provides; and to form classes for the purpose wherever practicable, but in no case neglecting to see that each person receives this care.

29. To remind the board of Christian education of the urgency of using Free Methodist Sunday school curriculum materials in every Sunday school class and to promote the use of the denominational magazine by every member.

30. To provide opportunities for local preachers to determine and develop their gifts for ministry in such ways as:

- a. Proclaiming the gospel.
- b. Assisting the pastor in visitation.
- c. Assisting in conducting public worship services.
- d. Participating fully in the local church program of witnessing to the unsaved, winning them to Christ, and nurturing them in Christian living.

31. To perform the following duties on special occasions:

- a. To promote Free Methodist missions through a yearly program of missionary emphasis (see Par. 496).
- b. To observe Christian College Day.
- c. To hold a Children's Day service the second Sunday in June.
- d. To preach a sermon on practical charity (Par. 463, Sec. 6).
- e. To read Wesley's sermon on Evil Speaking. (See the Historical Appendix, Par. 1033.)
- f. To use the membership covenant once a year in every society.
- g. To see that a day of fasting and prayer be planned in every society on the first day of each month and at such other times as required by the BOOK OF DISCIPLINE (Pars. 407; 430, Sec. 2; 442; 481, Sec. 1:a:4).
- h. To foster Sunday schools and child evangelism.
- i. To promote on a regular basis spiritual growth and renewal through revival meetings and revival preaching.
- j. To encourage and engage in regular prison ministry.

¶ 541. Adequate arrangements should be made for services to be held during the absence of the pastor at the time of annual conference and/or camp meeting. Licensed local preachers or lay ministers should be employed for such services if possible.

F. DEACONS AND ELDERS

¶ 550. Traveling Deacons:

1. A minister who has been employed in the regular itinerant work for two successive years after his reception as a ministerial candidate and who has satisfactorily completed the course of study (see Par. 477.3) may be constituted a traveling deacon by a majority vote of the conference and the laying on of hands of the president. On mission fields, the conference shall have authority to elect him to the deacon's office sooner if it is judged expedient.

2. The deacon has the authority to baptize, to officiate in marriage ceremonies, to administer the Lord's Supper, and, when appointed to a charge, to perform all the other responsibilities of a traveling minister.

¶ 551. Traveling Elders:

1. Every traveling deacon shall exercise that office two years before he is eligible to the office of elder, except in the case of missions, when the conference shall have authority to elect him to the elder's office sooner if it is judged expedient. A traveling deacon who has satisfactorily completed the course of study for traveling ministers (see Par. 477.4) shall be constituted a traveling elder by a majority vote of the conference and by the laying on of the hands of the president and of some of the elders present.

2. In time of war the Board of Bishops shall have authority to elect to elder's orders an ordained deacon who has completed only a part of the two-year time

requirement of Paragraph 477.4, if he is an approved candidate for the chaplaincy in the army or the navy of the United States and has been recommended by his conference.

3. The election to elder's orders constitutes the acknowledgement of the annual conference that the person so elected and ordained has fulfilled the ecclesiastical requirements to participate in the larger administrative and leadership roles of the church.

It is the duty of an elder to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, to officiate in marriage ceremonies and all parts of divine worship, and, when appointed to a charge, to perform all the responsibilities of a traveling minister.

¶ 552. No elder or deacon who, except in case of sickness, inability, or other unavoidable circumstances, ceases to travel without the consent of the annual conference, certified under the hand of the president of the conference, shall exercise the peculiar functions of his office or even be allowed to preach among us; nevertheless, the final determination of the case rests with the annual conference. (See Par. 706.)

¶ 553. A ministerial member of a conference who divorces or is divorced by the spouse may not remarry while the former spouse lives until the Board of Bishop reviews the case and determines that the minister has scriptural grounds for remarriage. A minister who marries contrary to these guidelines shall not be reappointed by the annual conference. This provision shall apply to a minister whose spouse has been divorced from a mate who still lives.

No person may be appointed to serve as a supply pastor who does not meet the qualifications of a minister outlined in Paragraphs 530, Section 2, and 553.

G. EVANGELISTS

¶ 560. Evangelists are a class called of God to promote revivals and to spread the gospel of Christ abroad in the land, but not necessarily called to pastoral charges or to government in the church.

1. General evangelists devoting full time to their ministry are approved by the Commission on Evangelism. Conference evangelists are those limited by circumstances to a part-time ministry.

2. All evangelists are amenable to the annual conference of which they are a member.

3. No evangelist shall appoint or hold meetings where they will interfere with the regular work of any society, without the consent of the pastor and the superintendent.

H. SUPERNUMERARY AND RETIRED MINISTERS

¶ 570. A supernumerary minister is one whose efficiency is temporarily impaired, and whose relationship is fixed by a vote of his conference on recommendation of the stationing committee. He shall not have any claim on the Claimants' Fund. His district conference relation shall be determined by the stationing committee. (See Pars. 572 and 422.)

¶ 571. A minister may be retired because of failing health, or upon reaching age sixty-five; otherwise he shall be retired at the time of the annual conference following his seventieth birthday. The question as to his disability shall be determined by his conference, on the recommendation of the stationing committee. His district conference relation shall be fixed by the stationing committee.

¶ 572. If, in the interim of conferences, a supernumerary or a retired minister moves where attendance at the district conference in which his relation was fixed is inconvenient, upon his request he may be transferred within the bounds of his annual conference to any convenient district conference by its superintendent with the consent of that district conference.

I. SUPERINTENDENTS

¶ 580. It shall be the duty of a conference or district superintendent:

1. To look after the spiritual and temporal interests of the churches within his assigned area; to take charge of pastoral charges without pastors; and to have general oversight of the work in his area.

2. To see that the permanent record book of each society is kept up to date and that all other parts of the DISCIPLINE are enforced.

3. To visit each church as he deems is in the best interests of the work. He may hold an official board, a society, or an annual meeting in connection with the visits.

4. To visit a pastoral charge when in an emergency the official board requests him to do so. He or his designee shall then have power to call an official board, a society, or an annual meeting and preside over it. The pastoral charge sending for him shall pay his traveling expenses.

5. To convene and preside over district meetings or area conventions, workshops, and rallies in cooperation with the interests and needs of the varied organizations of the conference as is deemed necessary and advisable by the conference board of administration.

6. To labor as an evangelist in his assigned area when directed to do so by the annual conference.

7. To maintain close contact with the ministers under his care for the purpose of encouragement and

counsel by meeting periodically with them. He shall be a pastor to pastors.

8. To recommend appointment, reception, suspension, and change of ministers in his assigned area to the stationing committee in the interim between the annual rearing of the appointments.

9. To see that deeds of lands upon which it is proposed to build churches or parsonages are properly made out and recorded, or that good and sufficient bonds or contracts are given before the buildings are begun.

10. To divide a pastoral charge in the interval of the annual conference, if in his judgment the interests of the work require it and the pastor and the official board consent. He may not appoint a pastor to serve two pastoral charges at once, but he may unite an unsupplied one with another with the consent of the official board of the former.

11. To give the bishop all the necessary information of the state of the district and cooperate with him in setting goals and framing plans.

12. To be the liaison between the pastor and the general church.

13. To notify the superintendent of a prospective transferee prior to serious consideration of his employment, and, when possible, to observe the same sixty-day notification rule that applies to ministers in Paragraph 533, Section 4.

¶ 581. 1. Superintendents must be elected from among the ordained elders of the denomination and shall be elected by ballot by one of the following methods:

- a. In open conference without debate or petition.
- b. By vote of the annual conference to designate the board of ministerial education and guidance or a special committee of not less than six plus the area bishop as chairman to nominate the superintendent. In overseas conferences the

special committee may elect its own chairman. The incumbent superintendent shall not serve on the committee.

The area bishop is requested to assist the annual conference in determining the qualifications desired in a conference superintendent.

2. When a superintendent is elected and accepts office in an annual conference of which he is not a member, he shall transfer his membership to said conference.

3. The superintendent(s) shall be assigned to districts either by conference vote or by appointment of the stationing committee as the conference shall decide (see Par. 410, Sec. 1).

4. A conference may vote to have a stationed superintendent and/or stationed assistant(s) to the superintendent in which event the stationing committee will nominate.

5. A conference may appoint a superintendent to more than one district at the same time. By a two-thirds ballot vote of the conference, the term of a superintendent may be fixed for three years. He may be recalled by a like vote by any succeeding annual conference.

6. If a vacancy should occur in the office of the superintendent between conferences, the bishop who presided at the last session, or who was to have presided, or his successor, shall call an adjourned sitting of the annual conference, authorizing the conference secretary to notify the members of the conference, the delegates, or the reserve delegates, of the time and place of such sitting at least ten days prior to the sitting, for the purpose of filling the vacancy and for any other items of business.

¶ 582. The superintendent shall be a member of the conference on the district which he serves; if he should be appointed to two or more districts, the stationing committee shall fix his district conference relation.

¶ 583. The superintendent shall be supported by the conference or district to which he is elected, each pastoral charge contributing its proportion as agreed upon by the annual or the district conference. A stationed superintendent shall be supported by the pastoral charge to which he is appointed. The conference or district shall assist when necessary. A conference or district budget is recommended for the traveling superintendent's support.

J. BISHOPS

¶ 590. 1. The General Conference shall elect by ballot two or more traveling elders as bishops to serve as the pastoral overseers of various areas of the denomination who shall constitute the Board of Bishops. They shall remain in office for the years of the interim between General Conferences and, unless the General Conference decides upon a lesser number of bishops, until others shall be elected in their places. (See also Par. 436, Sec. 4.)

2. It shall be the duty of the Board of Bishops:
 - a. To organize with a chairman and a secretary;
 - b. To meet at least four times a year;
 - c. To exchange experiences and to counsel and formulate plans for the work of the church.
 - d. To group the conferences, except the full conferences of mission origin, into areas, equal in number to the number of bishops.
 - e. To assign themselves to the several areas, including the British Isles, to give consideration to making such assignments for the period of the interim between the General Conferences, and to arrange the conference schedules so that, as far as practicable, no substitute other than a bishop will preside at any one conference for two successive years.
 - f. To administer the full conferences of mission

origin of the North America General Conference. The bishop of the area, in consultation with the conferences and the area administrative assistants to the general missionary secretary, shall designate the presiding officer for the conference.

- g. To give concerted leadership in the articulation of policy, the planning of strategy, the ordering of priorities, and the evaluation of programs of the general ministries of the church through the Board of Administration and all of its commissions.

¶ 591. It shall be the duty of the bishops:

1. To visit each conference in their respective areas during the year, and, as far as possible, call the pastors and conference leaders together to counsel and advise them in the promotion of the spiritual and temporal interests of the church in accordance with the plan of the Board of Bishops.

2. To form, and be chairman of, area cabinets which may meet annually. The cabinet shall be composed of the superintendent(s) and one layman for each superintendent from each conference, to be elected by the annual conference. Each conference shall care for the travel expenses of its respective members.

The area cabinet in each area shall have authority to nominate a conference superintendent for any given conference vote of that conference to do so.

The area cabinet in each area shall be authorized to recommend to the Commission on Evangelism the subsidization of the salary and/or travel expenses in the case of any conference superintendent when it is deemed necessary for more efficient service. The cabinet shall not recommend subsidizing salaries or travel expenses in any conference which has more than one superintendent.

In the case of a conference of less than 600 members,

or of a conference with membership falling below 10 ministers in full membership and/or 600 full members, or any other conference showing continuous loss, the area cabinet shall have authority to initiate and recommend corrective measures to the general Board of Administration and those conferences affected.

3. To travel throughout the church at large. To oversee the spiritual and temporal interests of the church, and to labor to promote its purity, peace, and prosperity. The bishops may reside in the area where they serve.

4. To establish new societies.

5. To assist superintendents in personal and professional development through periodic training, giving special training for newly elected superintendents.

6. To receive and suspend ministers, according to the provisions of the DISCIPLINE.

7. To change a minister from one district to another presided over by a different superintendent, with the consent of the minister to be removed, of the district superintendents, and of a majority of the official board of the pastoral charge from which he is to be removed.

8. To transfer a minister from one conference to another, with the consent of the minister and of the conference to which he is transferred; provided, that no minister shall be transferred to another conference without a certificate of his good standing and general acceptability, given by the district conference, the conference board of ministerial education and guidance, or the annual conference.

9. To cite a minister for trial for insubordination or maladministration, according to Paragraph 730.

10. a. To assist the area fellowships in the development of national leadership and in achieving the level indicated in the disciplinary standards for new general conferences.

b. To form new conferences in the interim

- between general conferences, as the needs of the work demand, subject to the approval of the General Conference; provided, that no new conference shall be formed without the consent of the conferences whose territory is affected, nor without the consent of two-thirds of the members of the Administrative Commission; and that no new conference shall be organized with less than ten ministers in full membership and six hundred full lay members within its bounds, with exceptions to be approved by the Board of Administration upon recommendation of the Board of Bishops. In the event an annual conference no longer meets these minimum standards, the area cabinet shall make a study of the situation, and submit recommendations for change to the Board of Administration.
- c. The Board of Administration may prepare proposals to merge two or more conferences or otherwise revise existing conference boundaries and recommend such proposals to the conferences involved and to the area bishop. Changes will be made upon the majority vote of the annual conferences concerned and with the consent of a majority of the Administrative Commission. In the event that the proposal is rejected, a written rationale for the rejection shall be submitted to the Board of Administration by the conferences. The Board of Administration shall have authority to revise the proposal if it deems it wise and resubmit it to the conferences. The Board of Administration may send representatives to the conferences to make a full explanation.
 - d. Conferences considering merger or the revision of their boundaries (except as provided in Par.

427) may initiate discussions with their concerned neighbors keeping their area bishop informed. The bishop shall inform the Board of Administration which may convey its thinking to the conferences through the area bishop if it so desires. Approval requires a majority vote of the annual conferences involved, voting separately, and a majority vote of the Administrative Commission.

- e. Nothing in (b) preceding shall prevent the organization of conferences of mission origin out of provisional conferences, the areas of which may extend over the boundaries of other conferences, when such other conferences have approved and all other requirements for full conference status have been met. For an overseas provisional conference to become a full conference, there must be no less than five national elders and four hundred adult full lay members.

11. To preside at the sessions of the General Conference and of the annual conferences, and at the trial of appeals taken from district or annual conferences, and to decide all questions of law therein, subject to an appeal to the General Conference.

A bishop's decision upon a point of law arising in annual conference proceedings shall be the rule until reversed by the General Conference.

When a bishop is requested by an annual conference of which he is president to rule upon a point of law not arising in conference proceedings, the question shall be presented in writing, together with a full written explanation of the circumstances out of which the question has arisen and, if there be any, statements by the opposing parties in the dispute; all this information shall later be placed in the hands of the General Conference when the bishop's decision is referred to it.

The bishop immediately upon ruling shall appeal to the other bishops for their opinions; and the ruling shall become binding upon them only after they have been notified that at least two of them have concurred in writing and until reversed by the General Conference.

12. To receive from one whom they have appointed to hold an annual conference a comprehensive written report of all the administrative proceedings which arise in that conference.

13. To ordain ministers who qualify according to the BOOK OF DISCIPLINE. A parchment of ordination shall be presented to each minister ordained, and a duplicate copy of each ordination parchment shall be remitted to the Division of Ministerial Education and Guidance. The authority to ordain rests only with a bishop or his deputy.

¶ 592. The bishops shall be amenable to the General Conference for the discharge of their official duties. They shall give a state of the work report annually to the Board of Administration. They shall be responsible to the annual conference to which they belong for their Christian conduct.

¶ 593. A bishop may retire at the General Conference following his sixty-second birthday. Otherwise, he shall retire at the time of the General Conference following his sixty-eighth birthday. He may retire at any time because of failing health. Any question of disability shall be determined by the Board of Administration. When a bishop, or former bishop, retires, he shall be given the title of Bishop Emeritus provided he has served the church as a bishop for a minimum of six years.

¶ 594. A bishop shall receive a pension on retirement based upon his years of service as a bishop, up to a maximum of twelve years of such service.

The pension for a bishop with less than twelve years of service as a bishop shall be one-twelfth of the twelve-year maximum pension for each year of service. For example, a bishop with six years of service as a bishop would receive one-half of the maximum pension for bishops. The maximum pension shall be as follows:

Bishop and wife — 26 percent of the current salary for bishops;

Bishop, a widower — 24 percent of the current salary for bishops.

Bishop's widow — 19 percent of the current salary for bishops.

A bishop need not be in office when he retires, to be eligible for these retirement benefits.

This retirement benefit shall be paid through the Board of Bishops budget. The church's pension plan shall be a part of the funding of these pension provisions. When the church's pension plan provides an amount equal to the above it will become the retirement pension provision for bishops.

CHAPTER VI

LAY MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN LAY LEADERS

A. Licensed Lay Ministers

B. Crusade Teams

C. Christian Growth Group (Class) Leaders

D. Board of Stewards

CHAPTER VI

LAY MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN LAY HELPERS

A. LICENSED LAY MINISTERS

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, effectively used lay ministers in enlarging and edifying the body of Christ. Persons who accept the challenge to consecrate their resources, time, and gifts in active church ministry are encouraged to become licensed lay ministers.

¶ 600. They are lay persons with the desire and/or call to actively serve the Lord and his church. They do not plan to follow the church's procedure for becoming fully ordained pastors. They are persons, however, who consistently use their resources, time, and gifts in such ministries as Christian education, music, preaching, outreach, evangelism, Christian growth groups, senior adults, single adults, youth, children, family life, church extension, and camping. The common element in all lay ministry is soul winning, the basic task of the church.

¶ 600.1. The following conditions must be met before a person becomes a licensed lay minister:

1. Show evidence of piety, ministerial talents, and usefulness.
2. Be recommended by the official board.
3. Be examined and approved by the board of ministerial education and guidance in regard to doctrinal soundness.
4. Complete required studies (see Pars. 600.2 and 600.3).
5. Give satisfactory answers to the following ques-

tions in the presence of the congregation where membership is held:

- a. Do you know God in his forgiving grace?
 - b. Do you desire nothing but the will of God?
 - c. Do you believe in the doctrine of entire sanctification?
 - d. Do you have love for all people and desire the salvation of their souls?
 - e. Are you able and willing to present the plan of salvation to persons as the occasion arises?
 - f. Will you consecrate your time, resources, and gifts to advance God's kingdom and build his church?
6. Is licensed by the official board.

¶ 600.2. Initial Curriculum

The completion of an initial curriculum of three courses is required of candidates for a lay minister's license. These courses should be pursued in a class or, when necessary, through individual study. In the latter instance, an acceptable, original 200-word essay summarizing each course must be submitted to the local director of Aldersgate Christian Training.* Upon completion of these courses, certification shall be made by the director through the pastor to the official board for recommendation for a one-year lay minister's license. Courses taken in previous years, attested by the local director of Aldersgate Christian Training,* may be counted.

¶ 600.3. The Courses in the Initial Curriculum:

Matthew

The Meaning of Church Membership

Bible Doctrines

(For the current list of textbooks or other resources, contact the Director of Aldersgate Christian Training,

*or local director of Adult Ministries

Department of Christian Education, 901 College Avenue, Winona Lake, IN 46590.)

¶ 601. Renewal of Lay Minister's License

1. A lay minister's license may be renewed annually. Three additional specified courses must be completed for each of the first seven renewals. If, at the close of any year, a licensed lay minister has not properly completed all three of the required courses, consideration for renewal of a license is to be postponed until all three are completed. The local director of Aldersgate Christian Training* shall keep the records.

2. The courses for the first seven annual renewals of each license shall be specified by the conference board of ministerial education and guidance from the current list established by the Aldersgate Christian Training Advisory Council, with approval by the denominational Commission on Christian Education. The texts or resources for such courses shall be identified by the Aldersgate Christian Training Advisory Council. After the first seven renewals, a lay minister's license may be renewed annually without further required studies.

The denominational Director of Aldersgate Christian Training shall prepare a brochure outlining the requirements and procedures related to lay ministers' licenses and renewal requirements.

¶ 602. Any candidate for a lay minister's license, or for renewal thereof, may satisfy the requirements of Paragraphs 600.2 and 600.3 for any year by successfully completing a college, seminary, or Bible college course offering at least three (3) quarter hours academic credit, provided such course is approved by the denominational Division of Adult Ministries.

*or local director of Adult Ministries

¶ 603. Annual conferences with non-English-speaking constituencies shall be authorized through their conference boards of ministerial education and guidance to establish educational and other requirements for such constituents for the licensing of lay ministers in accordance with their culture and the needs of the annual conference concerned. Evidence of continuing study and progress shall be apparent before renewals of such licenses are granted.

¶ 604. 1. The conference board of ministerial education and guidance shall provide a special service of recognition and/or commissioning for licensed lay ministers at each annual conference. The particular type of ministry for each recipient shall be identified.

2. It is the duty of the pastor to use the licensed lay minister(s) in preaching and/or performing regularly such other ministerial functions as the pastor and official board shall outline.

3. To have the license renewed by the official board, a licensed lay minister must have made satisfactory reports to the board of ministerial education and guidance concerning his/her spiritual life and activities as a lay minister. (See Par. 601 for studies required for each license renewal.)

4. The board of ministerial education and guidance may revoke a lay minister's license for violation of its conditions.

5. The examination of lay ministers may be oral.

¶ 605. Local elders, local deacons, local preachers, and lay ministers shall have their names enrolled in the records of the annual conference. They shall be amenable to the the local church and the board of ministerial education and guidance (or district conference) for their Christian character and the faithful performance of their ministerial office.

A local deacon or elder, when accepting a pastoral

appointment, may become a full member of the annual conference upon the recommendation of the board of ministerial education and guidance, having given satisfactory answers to the questions of Paragraph 531 of the BOOK OF DISCIPLINE, and having received the approving vote of the annual conference.

Every local elder, local deacon, local preacher, or lay minister shall attend regularly a Christian growth group (class). In neglect of these duties or failure to pass an examination in the prescribed course of study, the board of ministerial education and guidance may deprive him of his ministerial duties. However, no local elder or local deacon shall be deprived of his parchments without due form of trial and conviction.

¶ 606. Schedules shall be arranged to give licensed lay ministers active, regular, and systematic duties.

¶ 607. When a lay minister is employed as a supply, his membership shall be in the church where he labors. No person may be appointed to serve as a supply pastor who does not meet the qualifications of a minister as outlined in Paragraphs 530, Section 2, and 553.

¶ 608. A licensed lay minister appointed by a stationing committee to have charge of a society may solemnize marriages in that place if the civil laws permit. He also has the right to administer the sacrament of baptism.

B. CRUSADE TEAMS

¶ 610. 1. Superintendents, evangelists appointed by the general or annual conferences, general church executives, and pastors may organize teams of young people for evangelistic or charitable work.

2. The rules and regulations of crusade teams shall be subject to the approval of the conferences involved.

C. CHRISTIAN GROWTH GROUP (CLASS) LEADERS

¶ 620. 1. Christian growth group (class) leaders shall be elected in the last quarter of the conference year. The pastor may nominate, and the group shall elect the leader by ballot. Any member of the society, whether or not the nominee of the pastor, shall be eligible to election as leader.

2. Each leader should carefully inquire how each soul in his group prospers; not only how each observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

3. The leaders should consult with those who have the charge of their societies.

4. Let the pastor see that improper leaders are changed by a new election.

5. The leaders should frequently meet one another's groups.

¶ 621. Course of Reading for Christian Growth Group (Class) Leaders*

The following course of reading for Christian growth group (class) leaders is recommended by the General Conference in the belief that it will meet a general need throughout the church, and that the few inexpensive volumes therein named will not only edify all group leaders who will carefully read them, but will also increase their efficiency in dealing with those under their care in this responsible office.

Discipline of the Free Methodist Church.

Theological Compend — Binney.

Christian Perfection — Wesley.

Perfect Love — Wood.

Fishers of Men — Roberts.

* When any of the above books are not available write to the Department of Christian Education, 901 College Avenue, Winona Lake, IN 46590, for a current list of recommended books.

The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life — Smith.

Story of Our Church — Howland.

Possibilities of Grace — Lowery.

The Dynamic of Service — A. Paget Wilkes.

The Path of Prayer — Chadwick.

"By My Spirit" — Jonathan Goforth.

The Way to Pentecost — Chadwick.

D. BOARD OF STEWARDS

¶ 630. 1. The stewards should be persons of solid piety, who are members of the Free Methodist Church, who both know and love the Free Methodist doctrine and DISCIPLINE, and have natural and acquired abilities to transact temporal business.

2. The number of stewards in each society shall not be less than three.

3. The stewards shall be elected by ballot at a regular society meeting to be held after the annual meeting. Where there is but one society they may be elected by the annual meeting.

¶ 631. Privileges and responsibilities of the board of stewards.

1. It shall serve as the social arm of the pastor and society to:

- a. Solicit sustenance for its needy (and others within its means).
- b. Give special ministries of comfort to its sick and sorrowing.
- c. Perform courtesies for its aged.
- d. Initiate action toward the establishment of children's day care centers and schools where practical.
- e. Seek support and encouragement for its youth preparing for kingdom service.
- f. Assist in the promotion of accredited institutions as listed in Paragraph 463, Section 5.

2. It shall prepare the elements for the Lord's Supper.

3. It shall involve itself in action with approved movements within the community which improve the welfare of the whole man, but ever keeping in mind that all of its services have but one objective, the redemption of the soul in a full knowledge of Jesus Christ.

4. It shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the electing body.

CHAPTER VII

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

A. Church Trials

B. Insolvencies and Settlement of Disputes

CHAPTER VII

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

A. CHURCH TRIALS

1. OBJECT OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

¶ 700. The great object of church discipline is to reclaim and restore erring members. This should be steadily kept in view in every step taken. Every effort that love can suggest should be made to bring back to the Lord one who, while under our care, has wandered from him.

¶ 701. In all cases of personal trespass and in others where the circumstances permit, let the duty be lovingly and faithfully performed, which our Lord enjoins in Matthew 18:15-17:

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

2. GENERAL DIRECTIONS

¶ 702. If the last duty becomes necessary, let it be performed in the following manner.

1. Every crime forbidden in the Word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, shall subject a member to expulsion from the church.

2. Any member charged with immoral conduct or

violation of our rules is entitled to a speedy trial, unless the complaint is otherwise disposed of. Both accuser and accused shall be entitled to the assistance of such counsel as they may select from the lay members or ministers of the church. In the trial of a traveling minister the conference may appoint further counsel as it may deem proper. The accusers shall be responsible for the expense of their own counsel, unless he also represents the conference. The body to which the accused is amenable shall pay the costs of prosecution.

3. Both the accused and the accuser shall have the right of challenge for cause, the validity of which shall be determined by the presiding officer at the society meeting where the committee to try the case is elected.

4. In all trials the proceedings shall be taken down by a secretary appointed by the court; and when an appeal is taken, the case shall be decided from the testimony as it appears upon the record.

5. Whenever it is for the best interests of the church and the convenience of witnesses, and whenever the parties so stipulate, a case may be referred to one person appointed by the bishop or other presiding officer to try it without a committee; and when so referred, his decision shall have the same effect as that of a trial committee of an annual conference or of another appointing body, and be subject to the same right of appeal and for writ of review.

6. In an appeal, no person shall be allowed to sit who has previously voted in the decision of the case.

7. In all appeal cases the appellant shall present the counsel for the church a statement in writing of the grounds of his appeal, at least five days before the trial of the appeal. The appellate court must confine itself to the grounds of the appeal but is entitled to all relevant information that will throw light upon the appeal as presented.

8. When the appellate court grants a new trial, the case may either be remanded to the original court for a

new trial or (with the consent of both parties) tried *de novo* (that is, by the appellate court itself).

9. Penalty shall be deferred pending the hearing of an appeal, except that a suspended minister shall not in the meantime exercise his ministerial office, nor during a period of penalty after conviction.

10. In the trial of appeals the court shall either affirm or reverse the verdict rendered in the former trial, or remand the case for a new trial; in a new trial no person shall be eligible as a juror who voted in the first trial.

11. Persons expelled after such forms of trial shall have no privileges of society or sacraments in our church without contrition, confession, and reformation satisfactory to the conference or society from which they have been expelled.

¶ 703. In all trials, either the plaintiff or the defendant may request a change of venue, and shall present in writing the reasons for the request; and if the presiding officer shall, after duly considering the grounds upon which the request is made, be convinced that conditions and circumstances render a fair and impartial trial reasonably doubtful in the body before which the action has been commenced, he may order the change of venue and name another body before which the case shall be tried.

3. TRIAL OF MINISTERS IN FULL MEMBERSHIP

¶ 704. The neglect of duties required by the Word of God, the indulgence of sinful tempers, words, or actions, or the dissemination of false doctrine, shall subject a minister to private reproof by the officer of the church having the oversight of him; and, in case of persistence after proper admonition and labor, to trial and suspension from ministerial functions or expulsion.

¶ 705. Any minister against whom a charge is brought shall be furnished, by the person preferring the charge, or by the presiding officer of the tribunal to which he is judicially responsible, with a copy of the charges against him, at least ten days before the trial, unless all the parties agree upon an earlier time for trial.

¶ 706. Any traveling minister who, in violation of Paragraph 552, willfully neglects or refuses to do the work assigned him by his annual conference, except in case of sickness or other unavoidable circumstance, shall be brought, by the superintendent or the bishop, before a committee of three ministers and three laymen, which shall have power to suspend him from all the functions of a minister until the ensuing session of the annual conference, which shall have final determination of the case and power to render the suspension final.

¶ 707. If a charge of immorality or of unchristian conduct is brought against a minister in the interval of the annual conferences, the superintendent shall call a committee of not less than three nor more than six traveling ministers and an equal number of laymen, which shall have power to suspend until the next session of the annual conference, with which shall rest the decision of the case.

¶ 708. But if the accused be a superintendent, then three of the ministers of his district/conference shall call in the superintendent of an adjoining district/conference, who shall call him before a committee as provided above, and preside. The district/conference making the call shall pay the traveling expenses of the superintendent called.

¶ 709. Each annual conference shall have original jurisdiction over every minister belonging thereto, and

shall have power to reprove, suspend (for a period of not more than one year, after which period he has legally satisfied the charges against him and is again entitled to a seat in the conference), locate for inefficiency or want of usefulness, or expel, according to the nature of the case and as justice may require. This shall not be so construed as to deprive traveling ministers of the ten-day notice provided in Paragraph 705, except in the case of a minister charged with immorality who voluntarily absents himself from the session of his annual conference.

¶ 710. All cases brought before an annual conference, either by complaint or by appeal, may be, and must be if the defendant prefers, referred to a committee of not less than four from each branch, which, in the presence of the president of the conference or of an elder whom he may appoint with the consent of both parties, shall, either during the session of the conference or after its adjournment, try the case and decide upon its merits, and its decision shall have the same effect as that of the annual conference.

¶ 711. In all cases of trial and conviction of traveling ministers, an appeal to the ensuing General Conference or the court of appeals, as the appellant may choose, shall be allowed, if he signifies at the time of verdict, or within thirty days after he has been notified thereof, his intention to appeal.

¶ 712. All cases brought before the General Conference by appeal, may, with the consent of both parties, be referred to a committee of not less than six ministerial and six lay delegates, which, in the presence of one of the bishops, shall hear the case and decide upon its merits; and its decisions shall have the same effect as that of the General Conference.

4. FORM OF PROCEDURE

I. Form for a Bill of Charges

- ¶ 713. 1. Charge. (Name the offense.)
2. Specifications. (Name the acts, times, and places.)

II. Order of Conducting Church Trials

- ¶ 714. 1. Devotional exercises.
2. Reading of the action of the society meeting or conference by which the committee to try the case was appointed, and the names of the committee.
3. The appointment of a secretary.
4. Reading the charges and specifications by the secretary.
5. Answer by the accused in person or by counsel.
6. Statement of the case, and line of evidence by the prosecution.
7. Evidence of the prosecution, and cross-examination by the defense.
8. Statement of the case and line of defense, by the defense.
9. Evidence for the defense, and cross-examination by the prosecution.
10. Rebutting evidence for the prosecution.
11. Rebutting evidence for the defense.
12. Summing up the case by the prosecution.
13. Summing up the case by the defense.
14. If it should be deemed proper to allow the prosecution to reply, the defense shall also be permitted to reply.
15. Instructions of the presiding officer upon the form of bringing in the verdict.
16. The verdict.
17. The court shall announce the verdict and impose the penalty fixed by the trial committee.

5. SURRENDER AND RESTORATION OF CREDENTIALS

¶ 715. 1. When a member of an annual conference is deprived of his credentials, by expulsion or otherwise, they shall be filed with the papers of his conference; and should he, at any future time, give satisfactory evidence to the conference of his amendment, and procure a certificate from the official board of the charge where he resides or from another annual conference which may have received him as a ministerial candidate, recommending to the annual conference of which he was formerly a member the restoration of his credentials, the conference may restore them.

2. When a local elder or deacon is expelled, the superintendent shall require of him the credentials of his ordination, to be filed with the papers of the annual conference; and should he, at any future time, produce to the annual conference a certificate of his restoration, signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary of the official board, his credentials may be restored to him.

3. If an ordained elder or deacon shall refuse to surrender his credentials of ordination when lawfully asked to do so, he thereby forfeits them, and, at its first session thereafter, his annual conference should declare them forfeited.

6. THE TRIAL OF A MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE

¶ 716. 1. A ministerial candidate shall be accountable for his moral and Christian conduct to the local church of which he is a member and to the annual conference if he is appointed to a charge.

2. An accused ministerial candidate shall be tried in the same manner as a lay member (Pars. 721-728); or, at the option of the district or annual conference, by a committee of not less than five nor more than nine,

chosen for this purpose by the district or annual conference, which shall have power to reprove, suspend, or expel, according to the nature of the case and as justice may require. The superintendent shall preside at the trial. But, if for any reason, the superintendent is unable to preside, or if he is personally so related to the case as to be disqualified for presiding, the bishop who last presided at the annual conference shall appoint another elder to preside. After confession of flagrant sin, however, the accused candidate can be allowed by the annual conference to withdraw from the church under complaint.

3. If a charge of immorality is brought against a ministerial candidate under conference appointment, in the interval of the sessions of the district or annual conference, the superintendent shall call a committee of not less than five members of the district or annual conference, which shall have power to suspend until the next session of the district or annual conference.

¶ 717. 1. Whenever a change of venue is granted, the district conference to which it is removed shall take cognizance of the case and give it a hearing at its first regular session.

2. If in the change of venue the case is removed to a district conference over which another superintendent presides, then that superintendent shall preside at the trial.

¶ 718. Any ministerial candidate feeling aggrieved at the decision of his case shall be allowed an appeal to the ensuing session of the annual conference.

7. THE TRIAL OF A LOCAL PREACHER

¶ 719. 1. A licensed local preacher shall be accountable for his moral and Christian conduct to the local church of which he is a member and to the annual conference if he is appointed to a charge.

2. An accused local preacher shall be tried in the same manner as a ministerial candidate (see Pars. 716-718).

8. THE TRIAL OF A LAY MINISTER

¶ 720. 1. A licensed lay minister shall be accountable for his moral and Christian conduct to the local church of which he is a member and the conference board of ministerial education and guidance.

2. An accused lay minister shall be tried in the same manner as a lay member (see Pars. 721-728).

9. THE TRIAL OF AN ACCUSED LAY MEMBER

I. Ground of Complaint - Disciplinary Labor - Penalties

¶ 721. When it becomes necessary to admonish a member who is in the neglect of duties required by the Word of God or indulgence of sinful tempers, words, or actions, or the violating of conditions of church membership, the offending member shall be subjected to private reproof by the official members of the church having oversight of him, and, if he persists after proper admonition and labor, to summary proceedings to terminate membership, trial, and censure or expulsion.

2. The person in neglect of duties or violation of membership covenant shall be cited to the official board according to Paragraph 402.1, Section 9c, and a committee to admonish such person shall be appointed by the official board.

3. Whenever it becomes necessary to appoint a committee to admonish and labor with an erring member, if after admonishment and labor he persists in his way, he may be cited by that committee to appear before the official board to show cause why his membership should not be terminated.

In any determination of the case, however, the action may be suspended by the committee, and he may be placed on probation, with status of preparatory member-

ship, for not more than one year.

In no event shall his membership be terminated until the official board by ballot vote of two-thirds of the total membership has so ordered.

4. If it should become necessary to cite a member to show cause why his membership should not be terminated, let the committee appointed to admonish and labor issue the citation and attach thereto a statement of the charge constituting the error. The citation should state the time and place he is to appear before the official board. The citation must be served on the member personally or by registered mail not less than ten days before the hearing. If the official board should find good cause for the termination of his membership, or if he should fail to appear, his membership in the church may be terminated at the expiration of thirty days. If, however, within thirty days after the final action of the official board he request a trial, it shall be granted.

II. Notification of Time and Place of Trial

¶ 722. Any member against whom a charge is brought shall be furnished, by the persons bringing the charge, or by the presiding officer of the tribunal to which he is judicially responsible, with a copy of the charges against him, and notification of time and place of the trial at least fourteen days prior to the trial, unless he demands an earlier trial. He shall also, at least ten days prior to its election, be notified of the place of the election of the committee to try the case.

III. Election of Trial Committee

¶ 723. When charges are preferred against a member, the minister who is to preside at the trial shall call a meeting of the society, which shall select a committee of not less than five nor more than nine, who shall be lay members of the church within the bounds of

the annual conference, to try the case. No minister belonging to an annual conference, either as a ministerial candidate or in full membership, shall be eligible to act on this committee.

¶ 724. If the society shall refuse to appoint such a committee, the district or annual conference shall appoint a committee to try the case, and if, after conviction, the member appeals to the district or annual conference, no member of that committee shall be eligible to sit as a juror in the trial of the case.

IV. Presiding Officer

¶ 725. The pastor, when in full membership in the conference, shall preside at the trial of his members; but the district superintendent may, for sufficient reasons, appoint some other traveling minister in full membership to preside at any particular trial. The superintendent shall not preside.

V. Right of Appeal

¶ 726. Any member who has been tried and convicted by a committee shall be entitled to an appeal to the next district or annual conference, provided he did not voluntarily absent himself from the trial, and provided he gave notice of his intention to appeal at the time of his condemnation, or within thirty days after having been notified thereof. If he should be tried and convicted by the district conference, he shall have the right of an appeal to the ensuing annual conference, provided that within thirty days of having been notified of the verdict he files the appeal and that he has complied with the other requirements of this paragraph.

VI. Restrictions Under Penalty

¶ 727. A member under penalty for unchristian conduct shall not be permitted to exercise any official

functions, except that of trustee in states or provinces where the civil law does not, for such a reason, permit the suspension from office of a trustee. He shall vacate all offices (except that of trustee as explained above) and surrender all credentials, to be held during the period of the penalty by the secretary of the body which issued them.

VII. Restoration of Membership

¶ 728. A person placed on probation in accordance with the provisions in Paragraph 721, Section 3, may, at the expiration of the probation, have his membership restored upon recommendation of the official board, a three-fourths vote of the society, and satisfactory answers to the questions in Paragraph 360.

2. A member who has been expelled and later proved innocent may be restored to membership by vote of the society from which he was expelled.

9. CITATION OF SOCIETY, DISTRICT CONFERENCE, OR ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO SHOW CAUSE

¶ 729. 1. The Board of Administration shall have the power to cite a society, a district conference, or an annual conference to appear before it to show cause, if it has any, why it should not be declared in a state of insubordination when reliable information reaches the board that the accused body is openly in a state of insubordination and disobedience. Notice of the order to show cause shall be given in a clear and definite statement of the facts constituting the state of insubordination so that the accused body may be properly informed of the grounds of the accusation. The order shall be served upon the secretary of the accused body. If the board should find it guilty or if it should admit guilt, the board shall have the power to suspend it of all rights and of recognition as a Free Methodist

body until the ensuing General Conference, which shall have final disposition of the case.

2. If the convicted body should reform and pledge its loyalty to the church and the DISCIPLINE and show contrition for its insubordination, the Board of Administration shall have the power to reinstate it.

10. CITATION OF MINISTER TO SHOW CAUSE

¶ 730. 1. A bishop shall have the power to cite a minister to appear before a committee of not more than six persons, three of whom shall be ministers and three laymen, there to show cause, if any he may have, why he should not be declared in a state of insubordination and maladministration when the bishop has reasonable cause to believe that the minister is in a state of insubordination or in violation of the DISCIPLINE, or when he has been accused of willful neglect in the administration of the DISCIPLINE or refusal of work assigned to him by the annual conference.

2. If the minister should be so cited, he shall be furnished with a statement of facts purporting to constitute the insubordination and maladministration, stating time, place, and action. The citation shall show the date, hour, and place where he is to appear, and the names of the members of the committee appointed by the bishop. If the committee should find him guilty of maladministration and insubordination, or if he should plead guilty, the committee shall have the power to suspend him of all rights as a minister until the sitting of his annual conference, with whom the final decision of his case shall be; and if the conference should take no action, or refuse to take action, a trial committee may be appointed by the Board of Administration, consisting of not less than six and not more than twelve persons, one half of whom shall be ministers and one half laymen, before whom the minister shall be tried, according to the procedure for trial of ministers, and if

he is found guilty, the committee shall have the power to censure, rebuke, or expel him according to the terms of the *DISCIPLINE*.

Paragraphs 729 and 730 shall not be so construed as to deprive the accused of the right to challenge for cause any person appointed to sit on the trial committee.

B. INSOLVENCIES AND THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

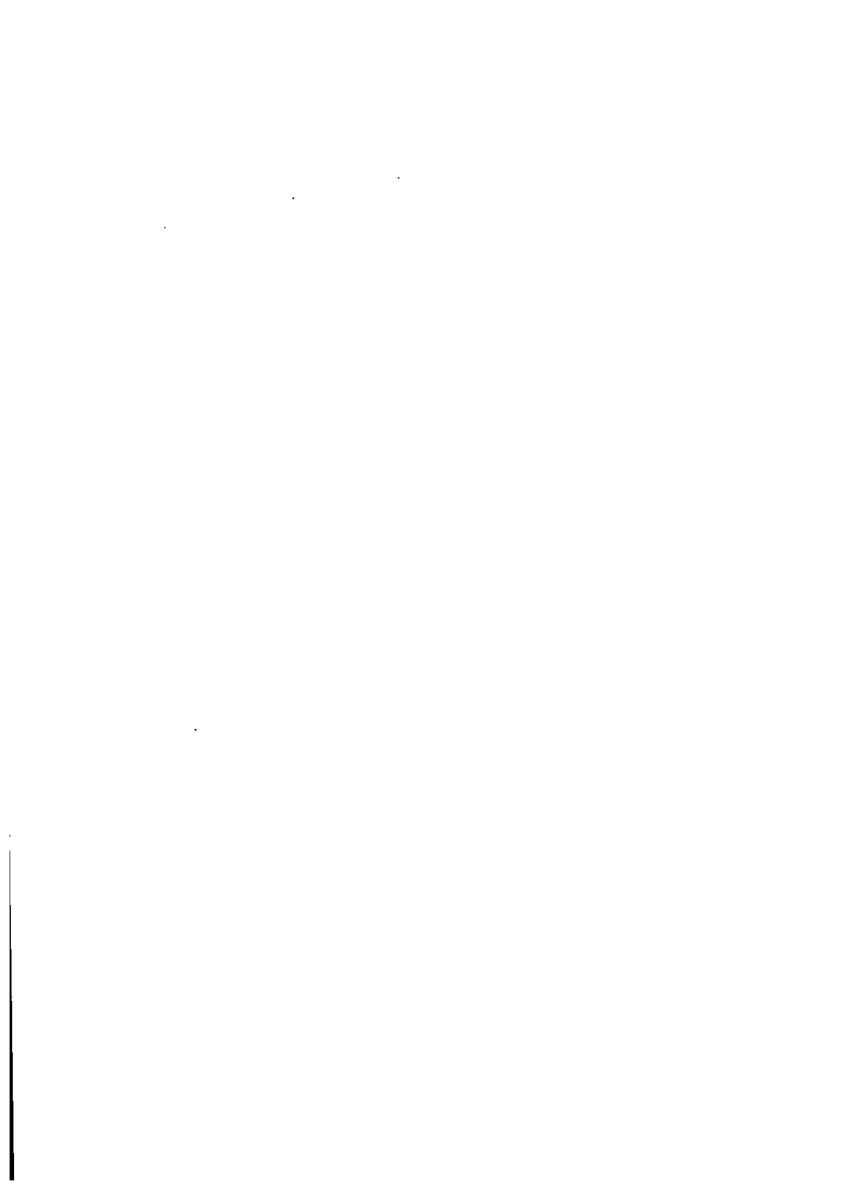
¶ 740. In a dispute between two or more lay members concerning the payment of debts, or other matters not involving personal character, which cannot be settled by the persons concerned, the pastor of the society shall inquire into the circumstances and recommend a reference, consisting of one arbiter chosen by the plaintiff, another chosen by the defendant, and a third person chosen by the first two, the three arbiters being members of the church.

¶ 741. If one of the disputants should be dissatisfied with the judgment given, he may appeal to the ensuing district or annual conference, which may for sufficient reason grant a second arbitration, in which each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four arbiters shall choose a fifth, the judgment of the majority of whom shall be final; and any person refusing to abide by that judgment shall be excluded from the church.

¶ 742. If any member of the church shall refuse, in case of debt or other dispute, to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended by his pastor, or shall enter into a lawsuit with another before such measures are taken, he shall be expelled by a regular trial according to the *DISCIPLINE*, unless the case be of such a nature as to require or justify a process of law.

¶ 743. When a complaint is made against any member of the church for nonpayment of debt and when the accounts are adjusted and the amount is ascertained, the pastor of the society shall call the debtor before a committee of at least three, to show cause why he does not make payment. The committee shall determine what further time shall be granted him for payment; and if he should refuse to comply, he shall be expelled; but in that event he may appeal to the district or annual conference, the decision of which shall be final; and in case the creditor complains that justice is not done him, he may lay his grievance before the district or annual conference, and its decision shall be final; and if the creditor refuses to comply, he shall be expelled. In case the debtor refuses or neglects to comply with the findings of the committee or of the district or annual conference, the creditor may have recourse to the civil courts without affecting his membership in the church.

¶ 744. To prevent scandal, when any member of the church fails in business or contracts debts which he is not able to pay, two or three judicious members of the church shall inspect the accounts, contracts, and circumstances of the supposed delinquent; and if he has behaved dishonestly, or borrowed money without a probability of paying, he shall be expelled. The official body to which he is amenable shall appoint the committee of inspection.

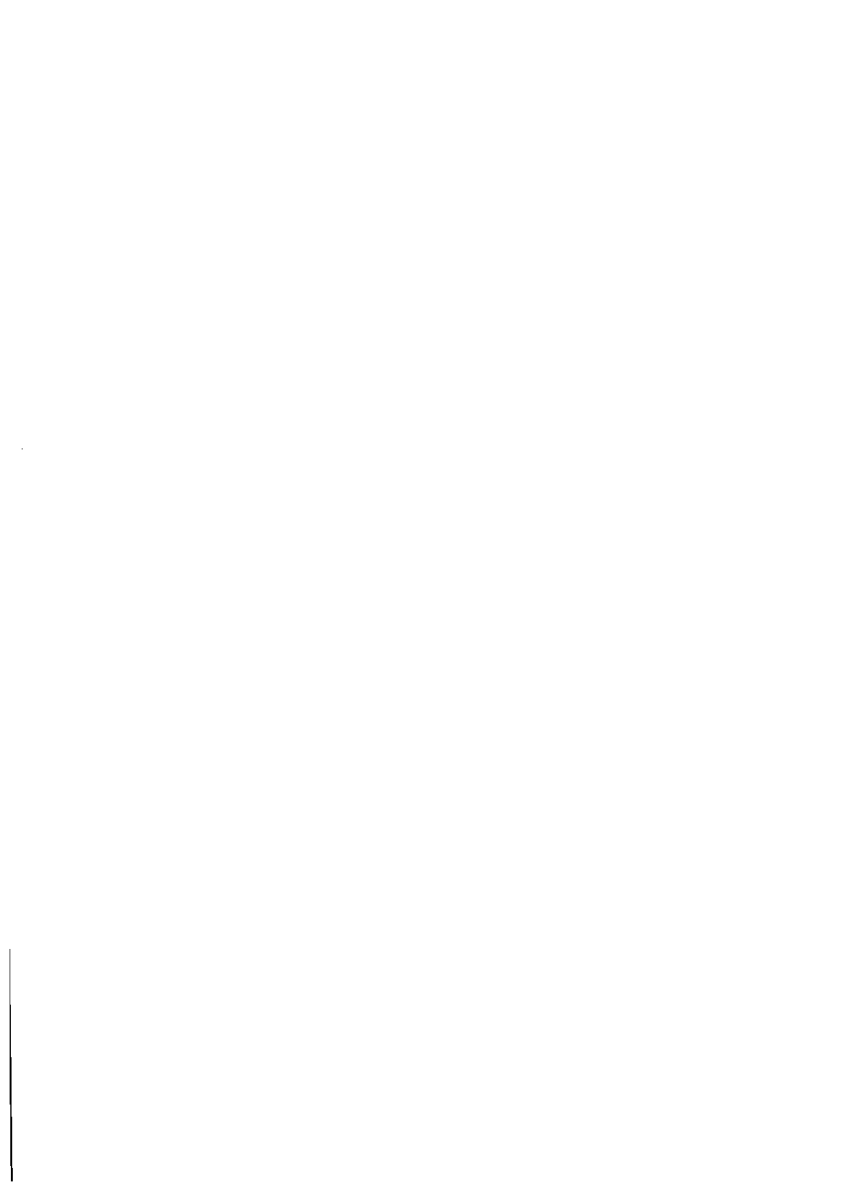


CHAPTER VIII

TEMPORAL ECONOMY

A. Support of Active Ministers

B. Church Property



CHAPTER VIII

TEMPORAL ECONOMY

A. SUPPORT OF ACTIVE MINISTERS*

1. SUPPORT OF BISHOPS

¶ 800. The salaries of our bishops shall be raised by the United Ministries For Christ.

2. SUPPORT OF SUPERINTENDENTS

¶ 801. The superintendent shall be supported by the conference or district to which he is appointed, as provided for in Paragraph 583, each society contributing its proportion, as agreed upon in the annual or district conference. A stationed superintendent shall be supported by the society or pastoral charge to which he is appointed. The conference or district shall assist when necessary.

A home purchased for the superintendent can be rented to others only if he consents and receives the rental.

3. SUPPORT OF PASTORS

¶ 802. 1. It shall be the duty of the finance committee recommended in Paragraph 402, Section 5, to prepare, after consulting with the pastor, an estimate of the amount necessary for the support of the pastoral staff, and to present the estimate to the official board for action.

* For the support of retired ministers, see Plan for Conference Claimants, Paragraphs 461-461.8 and Pension Plan, Paragraph 461.7; and for bishops, Paragraph 594.

2. The finance committee shall report regularly to the official board.

3. The membership is requested to cooperate heartily by giving not less than one-tenth of their income for the Lord's work. (See Par. 360, Question 7 and Par. 804.)

4. If a pastor refuses to occupy the parsonage, the official board may, without his consent, rent it to others but must pay him the money received from it.

4. SUPPORT OF EVANGELISTS

¶ 803. Evangelists shall depend upon the fields in which they labor for their support. Evangelists employed by the Department of Evangelism and Church Growth shall be supported by collections in their fields of labor and appropriations by the department.

B. RAISING OF FUNDS

¶ 804. 1. The support of the church is to come from the tithes, offerings, and gifts of its people.

2. Other methods for the raising of funds may be used by constituents of our churches providing that:

- a. They are not a substitute for the giving of tithes and offerings;
- b. They are consistent with the ethics and practices of our faith;
- c. There is no form of marketing or merchandising in the name of the church; that is, the church itself does not serve as a sales agent, advertising agent, or marketing facility for products or services of its constituents.

C. CHURCH PROPERTY

1. TRUSTEES — ELECTION AND DUTIES

¶ 850. Any board of trustees in the Free Methodist Church, whether conference, district, or local, shall consist of not less than three persons of whom two-thirds shall be full members of the Free Methodist Church. They shall be so organized as to properly discharge their duties, except that in the case of an incorporated conference, the maximum number of trustees shall be in accordance with the applicable civil laws, Articles of Incorporation, and Bylaws under which the respective board operates. In no case shall the total of elected and ex officio members exceed fifteen.

¶ 851. 1. Boards of trustees shall be elected by their respective bodies: conference trustees by the annual conference, district trustees by the district conference, pastoral charge trustees by the annual meeting, and local trustees by the society.

2. Trustees of property of an extinct, unincorporated society embraced within a pastoral charge shall be elected by the annual meeting.

3. The determination for the continuance, merger, or closing of a local church by an annual conference, when recommended by its conference board of administration, shall be based on the following considerations: recent growth patterns, proximity to other Free Methodist churches, the present and long-range priorities of the location, facilities, and financial ability.

In the event that membership of a society declines below a minimum of ten supporting adult full members, the conference board of administration may authorize the district or conference board of trustees to supervise the property.

4. Trustees shall be elected only in a manner allowed by the civil laws and shall hold office for a term

fixed by the body electing them and until their successors are elected.

¶ 852. When for a period of one year a duly elected trustee refuses by his action to attend legally called meetings of the board of trustees, the body electing him shall declare his place on the board vacant and at once elect a successor to fill the unexpired term; and whenever a member of the Free Methodist Church who holds the office of trustee is dismissed by letter, withdraws from the church, is expelled, or moves beyond the bounds of the body which elected him, that body may declare his place vacant and at once elect a successor to fill the unexpired term, except where either of such declarations is in conflict with the civil law.

¶ 853. A board of trustees is subject at all times to the direction and control of the body which created it and to the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church. Local trustees are subject to the official board as well as to the society. When action of a board of trustees is required, it can be exercised only by official vote of the board in a regularly called meeting.

¶ 854. 1. The office of trustee is a responsible one, and its duties are to be taken seriously. A board of trustees shall have and hold in trust any and all property committed to it. It shall see that titles are good; that deeds are drawn in harmony with the civil law; that they contain the trust clause given in Paragraph 856, Section 1; that they are immediately recorded; and that abstracts and other valuable papers are safely stored. The board of trustees shall be responsible to the electing body for the general oversight of the property committed to it, and, when so directed by the electing body, shall supervise expenditures for repairs, improvements, and alterations. A board of

trustees may be appointed as the building committee for a new building.

2. Annually, and whenever else the chairman of the electing body may require, the president of the board of trustees shall make to the electing body a report of all business transacted, including a statement of the financial and material condition of all property entrusted to it.

3. Prohibitive measures. A board of trustees shall not accept a deed which contains a clause by which the land conveyed may revert to the original grantor, his heirs, or assigns. A board of trustees shall not permit church property to be sold, mortgaged, or otherwise encumbered for current expenses. No other denomination shall be permitted to hold stated appointments in any of our churches without the consent of both the pastor and a majority of the board of trustees.

2. INCORPORATION AND DEEDS

¶ 855. Before an annual conference, district conference, a pastoral charge, or a society purchases real estate, let a reliable lawyer be consulted. Provide him with a copy of our DISCIPLINE for reference, and wherever the civil laws will permit, proceed to incorporate. The articles of incorporation, wherever the law will permit, should provide that the corporation shall be subject to the rules, regulations, doctrines, and DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church, incorporated as "The Free Methodist Church of North America," as from time to time adopted by the General Conference of that church insofar as they do not contravene the civil laws, and that the secular affairs of the corporation shall be managed by trustees elected according to the provisions of this chapter. When incorporation is complete, the deed shall be made out directly to the owning body in its corporate name and shall without

exception contain the trust clause given in the following paragraph.

¶ 856. 1. In states or provinces where the law requires church property to be held by trustees, and where incorporation can not be secured as provided for in the preceding paragraph, let all deeds be made to trustees, naming them and their successors in office, and containing the following trust clause: "In trust for the use and benefit of the Free Methodist Church of North America, incorporated under the name of 'The Free Methodist Church of North America,' subject to the DISCIPLINE, usages, and ministerial appointments of said church, as from time to time authorized and declared; and, if sold, the proceeds shall be disposed of and used in accordance with the provisions of said DISCIPLINE, and the civil law; and in further trust and confidence that in the houses of worship now erected or that may hereafter be erected on said premises hereby conveyed, the seats shall be forever free; and in further trust and confidence that the said trustees and their successors in office shall permit at all times the preachers who may be duly authorized according to the DISCIPLINE of the said Free Methodist Church, to hold religious services in said houses of worship according to said DISCIPLINE."

2. All property, whether real, personal, or mixed, acquired by any local society, pastoral charge, district conference, annual conference, or other body, whether incorporated or unincorporated, shall be held subject to the foregoing trust as set forth in Paragraph 856, Section 1, whether appearing in the evidence of title, or whether left out of such evidence of title, by mistake, inadvertance, willfully, or otherwise; and can only be released pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph 857 of the DISCIPLINE.

3. Since the Free Methodist Church in Canada has been incorporated by an Act of Incorporation assented to

on July 8, 1959, by the Parliament of Canada, therefore, let all property titles be drawn as follows:

- a. That all deeds for church property under the direction of the Free Methodist Church in Canada be held in trust for the Free Methodist Church in Canada by the trustees of the _____ Society, of _____ in the province of _____.
- b. That all deeds or conveyances to the trustees on behalf of the Free Methodist Church in Canada or any congregations thereof, be drawn in harmony with the Second Schedule of the Act of Incorporation. (See Act of Incorporation, p. 12 and following.)

¶ 857. Whenever it becomes advisable and the electing body so authorizes, the trustees may sell or encumber or otherwise dispose of or convey church property by securing the consent of the superintendent of the district or conference in which the property lies and of the Board of Directors of the Free Methodist Church of North America; provided that in all cases the proceeds of such sale or encumbrance shall be used for the purchase or improvement of property for this same corporation or trustees, or held subject to the order of the annual conference in which the property lies. If within three years of the date of sale or encumbrance the proceeds have not been so used, the Board of Administration of the annual conference may name a committee to cooperate with the local church to lay plans for using such proceeds. If after two years of such cooperative effort satisfactory plans have not been developed, the annual conference may take control of the proceeds. In the case of annual conference property, the authority so given may either be limited to specific property or may be a general authorization pertaining to any or all of its property.

¶ 858. Whenever any property is no longer used permanently for church purposes and it is so declared by the annual conference, the trustees, if any remain, shall sell it and turn over the proceeds of sale to the annual conference, or convey the same to the conference in its corporate name or to the conference board of trustees. If the local trustees should refuse to do so, their offices shall be declared vacant by the annual conference and shall be replaced by the conference board of trustees. If no such trustees remain, the trustees of the annual conference shall take possession of the property by due process of law. The annual conference may authorize the conference board of trustees to sell and convey such property, the proceeds of sale to be used as the conference may direct, in accordance with the civil law.

3. ERECTION OF CHURCHES

¶ 859. 1. Our houses of worship must be plain and neat, and no more expensive than is required for comfort, convenience, and stability, and with all seats free. Let the architecture and interior arrangements of our churches be planned and constructed to contribute to a distinctively evangelical simplicity and reverence in worship which makes the preaching of the Word central in the service. It is understood that we will build in keeping with prevailing architecture of the surrounding area and with such attractiveness as to commend the gospel to the community.

2. No step shall be taken involving pecuniary liability in erecting houses of worship or parsonages, or in purchasing real property of any kind, until the financial plan be approved in writing by the proper conference boards as determined by the annual conference.

3. No houses of worship, parsonages, or other buildings shall be purchased or erected on leased ground, except on reservations or in other places where

it is impossible to secure a deed in fee, or without the unanimous written consent of the church building and locations committee of the annual conference in whose territory the property is situated.

4. Each annual conference shall appoint a committee of not less than three on "Church Buildings and Locations," and no real property shall be purchased or building erected within the bounds of the conference without this committee's approval in writing both of the location and the plan of the building and of the title of the property. When a church building is involved, this committee shall make sure that proper accommodations have been made for the Sunday school before giving its approval.



CHAPTER IX

THE RITUAL

- A. Baptism**
- B. The Lord's Supper**
- C. Solemnization of Matrimony**
- D. The Burial of the Dead**
- E. Ordination Services**
- F. Dedication of Churches**



CHAPTER IX

THE RITUAL

A. BAPTISM

¶ 900. 1. Adult persons and the parents or guardians of every child to be baptized shall have the choice of immersion, sprinkling, or pouring.

2. We will on no account whatever make a charge for administering baptism.

1. OF INFANTS

[The minister coming to the font, which is to be filled with pure water, shall say:]

¶ 901. God, through Moses, made covenant with Israel, saying to the people, "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."*

In the days of the new covenant, Christ Jesus said, "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven;"** and on the day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter declared, regarding the salvation given through Christ, "The promise is to you and to your children."***

It is therefore our privilege to present our children to the Lord and our duty to raise them in his ways. These parents now bring *this child* to offer *him* in dedication and to pledge in the presence of this congregation, to bring *him* up in the Lord's discipline and instruction.

*Deuteronomy 6:6-7

**Matthew 19:14

***Acts 2:39

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who has made saving covenant with your people and who, out of your loving kindness, has ordained that they should live before you in families; we thank you that it is our privilege to dedicate our children to you, in steadfast hope that they will cleave to your covenant and live to your glory. We entreat you for *this child* that *he* may be delivered from the power of sin and Satan and be set apart to you by the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray for these parents that they may be given divine aid, so that both by instruction and example they may lead *this child* in the way of everlasting life, and so all may come in unity together to your eternal kingdom. We pray for this congregation, that we may faithfully discharge our duties to both parents and child, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

[Questions to parents]

1. Do you, in the presence of God and this church, solemnly dedicate *this child* to the Lord?

Answer: We do.

2. Do you, so far as you are able on *his* behalf, renounce the devil and his works, the lure of the world and the sinful desires of fallen man, so that in the training of *this child* you will not be led by them and so that, so far as you are able, you will keep *this child* from following them?

Answer: We do.

3. Do you accept the authority of the Old and New Testaments?

Answer: We do.

4. Out of them, will you diligently teach *this child* the commandments and promises of the most high God,

raising *him* in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?

Answer: We will.

The congregation will now stand. Let us acknowledge our duty to strengthen this family with prayers and encouragement, thus aiding both parents and child to fulfill all that here has been promised.

[The pastor shall here take the child, and say:]

Name this child.

_____, I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray: O God, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, grant that *this child* may increase in wisdom and stature, growing in favor with you and with man. So guide and uphold these parents that they may lead *this child* into that life of faith in Jesus Christ whose mark in this world is righteousness and in the world to come, everlasting bliss. May *he* be brought early to affirm in faith all that has here been pledged on *his* behalf, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction: "Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen." (Jude 24, 25).

[In the place of the second prayer, the minister may offer an extemporaneous prayer which will include the petitions set forth in the printed prayer. If the parents request a dedication ceremony only, the minister shall substitute for the statement of baptism, the following:

"_____, we dedicate you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

[In the latter case, water shall not be used.]

2. OF CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE

¶ 902. In lieu of the questions to parents or guardians in Paragraph 901, the following may be asked candidates for baptism who are under twelve years of age:

1. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and do you desire to be baptized in his name?

Answer: I do.

2. Do you intend by this act to testify to all the world that you are a Christian and will be a loyal follower of Christ?

Answer: I do.

3. Do you believe in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

Answer: I do.

4. Trusting God to help you, will you resist temptation always and keep from doing those things which you know to be sinful or displeasing to God?

Answer: I will.

5. Will you attend the church services and do those things you know a Christian should do?

Answer: I will.

3. THE AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISMAL VOWS FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS

¶ 903. Dearly beloved, in your infancy your parents presented you at the altar of the church for the Sacrament of Baptism. That service was one of both dedication and consecration. Your parents dedicated you to the Lord and took vows in your behalf. They promised

to teach you from the Word of God and to train you in the way that you should go.

God in his goodness has brought you to years of responsibility, and you now desire to acknowledge before God and his church the covenant then made on your behalf, to profess your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to consecrate yourself to him, and thereby to bind yourself anew to his service.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven."

Question: Do you confess your faith in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, and do you promise with the aid of the Holy Spirit to be Christ's faithful disciple to your life's end?

Answer: I do.

Question: Have you read and considered the vows taken for you in baptism, and do you affirm them with a humble and contrite heart, putting your whole trust in the mercy of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

Answer: I do.

Question: Do you promise to make diligent use of the means of grace, to share faithfully in the worship and service of the church, to give of your substance as the Lord may prosper you, and to give your whole heart to the service of Christ and his kingdom throughout the world?

Answer: I do.

NOTE: Adults having been baptized in infancy should reaffirm their baptismal vows according to Paragraph 360 of the DISCIPLINE.

4. OF THOSE IN MATURE YEARS

¶ 904. Dear friends in Christ, our faith declares that by the sin of Adam, man as the offspring of Adam is corrupted in his very nature, so that from birth he is inclined to sin; and that new life and a right relationship with God are possible only through the redemptive acts of God in Christ Jesus. Believing these declarations to be true, and in obedience to the command of Christ, *this person* has come to make public confession that his sins have been washed away, and, by means of baptism with water, to give sign of that inward washing and new life in Christ which are now his, by faith. We therefore implore you to pray that through this means of grace *he* may be further moved to keep covenant with God and so may *he* ever experience the constant washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

[Then shall the minister say:]

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, whose covenant is firm and whose promises are always to be trusted, we call upon you for *this person* that *he*, coming to *his* baptism, may by this act give clear witness that *he* has received your inner washing through faith in the cleansing blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. May *he* ever rejoice in the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling of your Spirit, the fellowship of the church and the assurance of resurrection to glory in the world to come.

[Then shall the people stand, and the minister shall say:]

Christ Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the close of the age."

You, who present yourself for water baptism, have heard this congregation's prayers that God will continue

his loving favor toward you and bring you to his eternal kingdom. And God, who keeps covenant, has promised by his only Son, who offered himself up for our redemption, to grant you these gracious favors. You must now promise, in the presence of this congregation, to keep covenant with him, renouncing the life of sin, believing his holy Word and obediently keeping his commandments.

[Then shall the minister ask each candidate these questions, to be answered individually:]

1. Do you have the inward witness that your sins are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord?

Answer: I have.

2. Do you renounce the devil and his works, the lure of this ungodly world and the sinful desires of fallen man, so that you will not follow nor be led by them?

Answer: I do.

3. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth? and in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord? that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary? that for our sakes he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried: that he arose again on the third day? that he ascended into heaven and now sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from which place he will come again, at the end of this present age, to judge the living and the dead? And do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the fellowship of the church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life after death?

Answer: All this I firmly believe.

4. Is it your desire to be baptized in this faith?

Answer: It is my desire.

5. In the fellowship of the church, will you obediently do God's will and walk in his holy commandments all the days of your life?

Answer: I will endeavor to do so, the Lord being my helper.

[Then shall the minister take by the hand each person to be baptized, place him in a convenient place and shall baptize him by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to his desire, saying:]

_____, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

(Then shall the minister use the following prayer, or substitute an extemporaneous one including the same petitions:)

God, our Father, who gives to all who repent and believe the gospel the right to be called children of God, may your grace ever be effectual in this, *your child*. And may *he* enjoy the greater baptism of the Holy Spirit so that all sinful inclinations may be conquered by your power, and every Christian virtue may live and grow in *him*. Grant to *him* a place of service in the fellowship of your church and may *his* witness in the world bring glory to your holy name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Here may follow a benediction if the service is ending.)

B. HOLY COMMUNION: THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(The use of individual communion cups is recommended, wherever practicable.)

1. GENERAL DIRECTIONS

¶ 910. 1. Let all our ministers exercise due care to see that no person known to be living an immoral life, or to be guilty of any disreputable practice be admitted to the Lord's table among us until he shall have given satisfactory evidence of repentance and amendment of life.

2. All persons properly included in the general invitation may be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper among us.

2. ORDER FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

**The Invitation*

¶ 911. You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbors, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and, humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The General Confession

[The minister may pray:]

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men, we confess that we have sinned, and we are deeply grieved as we remember the wickedness of our past lives. We have sinned against you, your holiness, and your love, and we deserve only your indignation and anger.

We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge that we are hopeless without your grace.

Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for us.

Forgive us.

Cleanse us.

Give us strength to serve and please you in newness of life and to honor and praise your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Then may the minister say, "Let us continue our confession as we pray together the prayer Jesus taught his disciples."]

** The Lord's Prayer (In unison)*

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

[The minister may continue the prayer.]

**The Affirmation of Faith*

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who with great mercy has promised forgiveness to all who turn to you with hearty repentance and true faith, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins, make us strong and faithful in all goodness, and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Then may the minister say, "Let us pray for inner cleansing."]

**The Collect (To be prayed in unison)*

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are opened, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Sanctus

It is always right and proper, and our moral duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we honor and adore your glorious name, evermore praising you and saying,

(In unison)

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to thee, O Lord, most high. Amen.**

[Then may be sung or recited]

The Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.**

[Then may the minister pray:]

The Prayer for Spiritual Communion

We do not come to this your table, O merciful Lord, with self-confidence and pride, trusting in our own

righteousness, but we trust in your great and many mercies. We are not worthy to gather the crumbs from under your table. But you, O Lord, are unchanging in your mercy, and your nature is love; grant us, therefore, God of mercy, God of grace, so to eat at this your table that we may receive in spirit and in truth the body of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and the merits of his shed blood, so that we may live and grow in his likeness, and, being washed and cleansed through his most precious blood, we may evermore live in him and he in us. Amen.

**The Prayer of Consecration of the Elements*

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who gave in love your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by his sacrifice, offered once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world, we come now to your table in obedience to your son, Jesus Christ, who in his holy gospel commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of his precious death until he comes again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we, receiving this bread and this wine, as he commanded and in the memory of his passion and death, may partake of his most blessed body and blood.

In the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread,

[Here the minister may take the bread in his hand.]

and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In like manner, after supper he took the cup,

[Here the minister may lay his hands upon the vessels which contain the wine.]

and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink of this, all of you, for this is my blood of

the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. Amen.

[Then may the minister first receive the communion, both the bread and the wine, and then give of the same to other ministers who may be present to assist him in the service. After that the minister shall give to the people the communion, both the bread and the wine. When he delivers the bread, he may say:]

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed upon him in your heart, by faith with thanksgiving.

[When the minister serves the wine he may say:]

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

[If the consecrated bread or wine shall be used up before all have been served, the minister should consecrate more by repeating the prayer of consecration. When all have communed the minister shall return to the Lord's table and place upon it the consecrated elements which remain, covering the same with a white linen cloth. The minister may then offer extemporaneous prayer, or speak briefly of the significance of the service, and conclude with a blessing.]

The Benediction

May the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be yours now and forever. Amen.

*These sections may be used when an abbreviated service is desired.

C. THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY

¶ 920. Publication of banns shall be made by proclaiming the intended marriage openly, in an audible voice, during divine service, in some church, chapel, or place of public worship of the religious body to which the minister or clergyman who is to solemnize the marriage belongs, situated within the local municipality, parish, circuit, or pastoral charge where at least one of the parties to the intended marriage has resided for the period of eight days immediately preceding, at one or more services according to the requirements of the local jurisdiction. (Extracted from British Columbia Marriage Act)

The minister shall declare during the church service:

I publish the banns of marriage between _____ of _____ (place) and _____ of _____ (place). If any of you know cause or just impediment why these two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony you are to declare it.

[At the time set, the man and woman to be married shall stand together facing the minister, the woman on the man's left, and the minister shall say:]

¶ 921. Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and the presence of these witnesses to join together _____ and _____ in holy matrimony. Marriage is an honorable estate, instituted by God in the time of creation for the blessing of mankind, protected by the laws of Moses, affirmed by the words of the prophets, and hallowed by the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Marriage is a union close and abiding in which a man and a woman forsake all others to become one flesh. This abiding union has been used by the apostles to illustrate the holy relationship between Christ and his church. Marriage is therefore not to be entered into by

any lightly, but reverently, soberly, and in the fear of God.

[Addressing the man and woman, the minister shall say:]

_____ and _____, I charge you both as you stand in the presence of God to remember that love and loyalty alone will avail as the foundation of a happy and enduring home. Let Christ, who was faithful to his own unto death, be your example. Let the Apostle Paul be your instructor, who wrote: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." If you keep this love ever before you and, holding closely to each other, steadfastly endeavor to fulfill the vows here made, God's blessing will be upon you, and the home you now establish will endure through life's every change.

[Then the minister shall say to the man, using his Christian name:]

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

[The man shall answer:]

I will.

[Then the minister shall say to the woman, using her Christian name:]

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all

others, keep yourself only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

[The woman shall answer:]

I will.

[Then shall the minister say:]

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

[The father of the woman, or whoever gives her in marriage, shall answer:]

I do.

[Then the minister, receiving the hand of the woman from her father or other sponsor, shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and say after him:]

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, and thereto I pledge you my faith.

[Then shall they loose their hands, and the woman, with her right hand, shall take the man by his right hand, and shall likewise say after the minister:]

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, and thereto I pledge you my faith.

[Then shall they again loose hands. The groomsman may give to the minister a ring, which the minister in turn will give to the groom, who will put it upon the third finger of the woman's left hand and, holding the ring, shall say after the minister:]

This ring I give you in token and pledge of our constant faith and abiding love.

[In case of a double ring ceremony, the minister shall receive the other ring from the bridesmaid and shall deliver it to the woman to put upon the third finger of the man's left hand. The woman, holding the ring there, shall say after the minister:]

This ring I give you in token and pledge of our constant faith and abiding love.

[Then the minister shall say:]

Let us pray.

O Eternal God, creator and preserver of all mankind, giver of all spiritual grace, the author of everlasting life: send your blessing upon this man and this woman whom we bless in your name; that they, living faithfully together, may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant between them made, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to your laws through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Then the minister shall say:]

Forasmuch as _____ and _____ have consented together in holy wedlock and have witnessed the same before God and this company and have pledged their faith each to the other and have declared the same by joining hands (and by giving and receiving a ring), therefore, by the authority granted to me as a minister of Jesus Christ, I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together, let not man put asunder. Amen.

[The man and woman then kneeling, the minister may pray over them an extemporaneous prayer, prepared especially for the two of them, or may here say the Lord's Prayer alone or in unison with the congregation:]

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done
 in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
 as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and
the glory, for ever. Amen.

[The man and woman shall stand, and the minister shall pronounce over them one of the following benedictions:]

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace; now and in the world to come. Amen.

[or]

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may so live together in this life, that in the world to come you may have life everlasting. Amen.

D. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

¶ 930. We will not charge for funeral services.

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

[The minister may use the following order of worship at the church or chapel.]

Opening Sentences, such as:

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

"For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

Invocation:

O Eternal God, our Father, from whom we come and to whom we go, grant us the favor of your divine presence at this time in our earthly pilgrimage; assure us by your Spirit that the one we serve, even Jesus, has conquered death and is alive forever more; enable us to view our temporal lives in the light of the eternal; and so may our spirits grow calm and our vision clear. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

Hymn (by the congregation, musicians, or organist)
(Optional)

Obituary and/or Tributes (Optional)

Old Testament Scriptures, such as: Psalms 23, 90,
121

New Testament Scriptures, such as: John 14:1-6;
I Corinthians 15:35-49; II Corinthians 5:1-5.

Hymn (by the congregation, musicians, or organist)
(Optional)

Meditation

Prayer (for the family and community)

Benediction (not used if the service is to continue at the graveside)

[The minister shall at the appropriate time at the cemetery say:]

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

"For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth;
and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then from my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold . . ." (Job 19:25-27).

"For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world" (I Timothy 6:7).

"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away:
blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

[The following may also be used at the cemetery.]

"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going. Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me'" (John 14:1-6).

[Then shall the minister say:]

Inasmuch as Almighty God, in his wise providence, has taken out of this world our deceased brother (sister, or child), we therefore commit this mortal body to the ground, looking for the general resurrection in the last

day and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose second coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed, and made like unto his own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

[The minister may pray extemporaneously or use the following:]

The Collect

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall not die eternally, we meekly beseech you, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life we may rest in him, and at the general resurrection on the last day may be found acceptable in your sight and receive that blessing which your well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear you, saying, Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech you, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

E. ORDINATION SERVICES

1. ORDINATION OF ELDERS

[When the time appointed for ordination shall have come, one of the elders shall present to the president those who are to be ordained, saying: "I present to you these persons (reading their names aloud) to be ordained elders." Then the president shall say to the people:]

¶ 940. Dear friends in Christ, these who stand before you we purpose, God willing, this day to ordain elders. After due examination, we find they are persons called by God to this ministry and suited for the same. If any of you knows anything to the contrary, come forth now in the name of God and make your objection known.

The Collect

Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, who of your divine providence appointed various orders in your church: Give your grace, we humbly pray, to these persons now called to the Order of Elders and so replenish them with the truth of your doctrine and endue them with holiness of life that they may faithfully serve before you to the glory of your great name and to the benefit of your holy church, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.

The Old Testament - Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

The Epistle - Ephesians 4:7-13

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said,

"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,

and he gave gifts to men."

(In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The Gospel - John 10:11-18

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf

snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father.

Beloved nor here the ordinands may be called by name, and that done, the president shall say to them as follows:]

Each of you has heard in the lessons taken from the Scriptures what dignity and importance belong to this office to which you are called. We have good hope that you have weighed and pondered these things long before this time and that you have clearly determined, by God's grace, to give yourself fully to this office to which it has pleased God to call you, so that with all your strength you will apply yourself wholly to this one thing and direct all your concerns and studies this way and that you will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Savior, Jesus Christ, for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, you may grow riper and stronger in your ministry, and that you may endeavor repeatedly so to sanctify the lives of you and yours and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that you may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow.

And now, so that this present congregation of Christ, here assembled, may also understand your mind and will in these things, and that your promise may the more move you to do your duties, you shall answer

plainly these questions, which, in the name of God and his church, we here shall ask.

Questions for Elders

President: Do you confidently believe that you are called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to perform the duties of an elder?

Answer: I so believe.

President: Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all doctrine required as necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of these Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge and to teach nothing as necessary to salvation but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded from and proved by the Scriptures?

Answer: I am so persuaded and have so determined by God's grace.

President: Will you then faithfully give diligence always so to minister the doctrines and sacraments and discipline of Christ, as the Lord has commanded?

Answer: I will do so by the help of the Lord.

President: Will you be ready, with faithful diligence, to banish all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word; and will you use both public and private warnings and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, as need shall require and occasion be given?

Answer: I will, the Lord being my helper.

President: Will you be diligent in prayers and in reading the Holy Scriptures and such studies as help to a knowledge of the same, shunning only that which is of the world and the flesh?

Answer: I will endeavor so to do, the Lord being my helper.

President: Will you be diligent to regulate and fashion yourself and your family according to the doctrine of Christ and to make both yourself and them, as far as you are able, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?

Answer: I will be diligent to do so, the Lord being my helper.

President: Will you maintain and set forward, as far as you are able, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people and especially among those who are committed to your charge?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

[The ordinands shall kneel, and the president shall say:]

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who of your infinite love and goodness toward us has given us your only and most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be our redeemer, and the author of everlasting life, for these so great benefits of your eternal goodness we render unto you most hearty thanks; we praise and worship you; and we humbly beseech you that we may continue to show ourselves thankful to you for these and all your other benefits, and that we may daily increase and go forward in the knowledge and faith of you and your Son, by the Holy Spirit, so that your holy name may be forever glorified and your blessed kingdom

enlarged, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, now and ever. Amen.

[The president and the elders present shall lay their hands severally upon the head of each of them, and the president, addressing each by name shall say:]

The Lord pour upon you the Holy Spirit for the office and work of an elder in the church of God now committed unto you by laying on of our hands. Faithfully teach the Word of God, faithfully serve his holy sacraments, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[They shall continue to kneel, and the president shall deliver the Bible to each one of them and shall say:]

Take authority to preach the Word of God and to administer the holy sacraments in the congregation.

Closing Prayer

Most merciful Father, we beseech you to send upon these, your servants, your heavenly blessings, that they may be clothed with righteousness and that your word spoken by their mouths may have success. Grant us also that we may have grace to hear and receive what they shall deliver out of your most holy Word, or shall speak in agreement with the same, as the means of our salvation; and that in all our words and deeds we may seek your glory and the increase of your kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assist us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor and further us with your continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you we may glorify your name and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

[Presentation of credentials and congratulations]

2. ORDINATION OF DEACONS

[One of the elders shall present to the president those to be ordained, saying: "I present to you these persons (reading their names aloud) to be ordained deacons." Then the president shall say to the people:]

¶ 941. Dear friends in Christ, these persons who stand before you we purpose, God willing, to ordain deacons. After due examination, we find they are persons called by God to this ministry and suited for the same. If any of you knows anything to the contrary, come forth now in the name of God and set forth your objection.

The Collect

Almighty God, who by your divine providence has appointed various orders of ministers in your church, and who did inspire your apostles to choose into the order of deacons your first martyr, Stephen, with others, mercifully behold these your servants, now called to the same office and administration; replenish them so with the truth of your doctrine and adorn them with blamelessness of life that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve you in this office, to the glory of your name and the building up of your church, through the merits of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The Old Testament - Jeremiah 1:4-10

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,
 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
 and before you were born I consecrated you;
 I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." But the Lord said to me,

"Do not say, 'I am only a youth';
 for to all to whom I send you you shall go,
 and whatever I command you you shall speak.
 Be not afraid of them,
 for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord."

Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me,

"Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.
 See, I have set you this day over nations and
 over kingdoms,
 to pluck up and to break down,
 to destroy and to overthrow,
 to build and to plant."

*The Epistle - I Timothy 3:8-13**

Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

*[For women ordinands, let this Scripture reading end with "faithful in all things."]

The Gospel – Luke 12:35-38

Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants!

[The congregation shall stand and remain standing, and the president shall examine each one of those to be ordained, in the presence of the people, in the following manner.]

Questions for Deacons

President: Do you believe you are inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon you the office of the ministry in the church of Christ, to serve God, promoting his glory and edifying his people?

Answer: I so believe.

President: Do you sincerely believe all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

Answer: I believe them.

President: Will you diligently read and expound the same to the people placed under your care?

Answer: I will.

President: It belongs to the office of a deacon to assist the elder in divine service, to read and expound the Holy Scriptures, to instruct the young, and in the absence of the elder to baptize and to minister holy communion. And, furthermore, it is his office to search for the sick, the poor, and the helpless, that they may

be visited and relieved. Will you do this gladly and willingly?

Answer: I will do so by the help of God.

President: Will you apply all diligence to regulate and fashion your own life (and the lives of your family) according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make (both) yourself (and them), as far as you are able, wholesome example(s) of the flock of Christ?

Answer: I will do so, the Lord being my helper.

President: Will you reverently obey those to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with glad mind and will their godly admonitions?

Answer: I will endeavor so to do, the Lord being my helper.

[The ordinands shall kneel, and the president, laying his hands severally upon the head of each of them, shall say:]

Take authority to execute the office of a deacon in the church of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[Then shall the president deliver to each one of them the Holy Bible, saying:]

Take authority to read the Holy Scriptures in the church of God and to preach in the same.

[Then shall be said the collects following:]

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who of your great goodness has vouchsafed to accept and take these, your servants, into the office of deacon of your church; make them, we beseech you, O Lord, to be modest, humble, and constant in their ministration and to have a ready will to observe all spiritual discipline; that they, having always the testimony of a good conscience and

continuing ever stable and strong in your Son, Christ Jesus, may so well behave themselves in this lower office, that they may be found worthy to be called into the higher ministries in your church, through your same Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honor, now and ever. Amen.

Assist us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name, and finally, by your mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

F. DEDICATION OF CHURCHES

[The congregation being assembled, let an appropriate hymn be sung. Afterward, let extemporary prayer be offered. Then shall the minister, or someone appointed, read:]

¶ 950. The first lesson, Psalm 84:

How lovely is thy dwelling place,

O Lord of hosts!

My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of
the Lord;

my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living
God.

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the
swallow a nest for herself,

where she may lay her young,

at thy altar, O Lord of hosts, my King and
my God.

Blessed are those who dwell in thy house,

ever singing thy praise! *Selah*

Blessed are the men whose strength is in
thee,

in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

As they go through the valley of Baca

they make it a place of springs;

the early rain also covers it with pools.

They go from strength to strength;

the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;

give ear, O God of Jacob!

Selah

Behold our shield, O God;

look upon the face of thine anointed!

For a day in thy courts is better

than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper

in the house of my God

than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
he bestows favor and honor.
No good thing does the Lord withhold
from those who walk uprightly.
O Lord of hosts,
blessed is the man who trusts in thee!

The second lesson, Hebrews 10:19-26:

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

[Then let an appropriate hymn be sung, after which the minister shall deliver a sermon suitable to the occasion. Contribution may then be received from the people.]

[Then let the trustees stand before the altar, and one of them, or someone in their behalf, say unto the minister:]

We present unto you this building, to be dedicated as a church for the service and worship of Almighty God.

[Then shall the minister request the congregation to stand, while he repeats the following declaration:]

DECLARATION

Dearly beloved, it is meet and right, as we learn from the Holy Scriptures, that houses erected for the

public worship of God should be specially set apart and dedicated to religious uses. For such a dedication we are now assembled. With gratitude, therefore, to Almighty God, who has signally blessed his servants in their holy enterprise of erecting this church, we dedicate it to his service, for the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the holy sacraments, and for all other exercises of religious worship and service, according to the DISCIPLINE and usages of the Free Methodist Church.

[Then let the dedicatory prayer be offered.]



CHAPTER X

APPENDIXES

A. Incorporation

B. Christian Education Organization

C. Forms

D. Historical



CHAPTER X

APPENDIXES

A. INCORPORATION

1. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

Under the Laws of California*
Office of the
Secretary of State

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

¶ 1000. That we, the undersigned, a majority of whom are citizens and residents of the State of California, have this day voluntarily associated ourselves together for the purpose of forming a corporation under Title XII, Article I of the Civil Code of the State of California.

AND WE HEREBY CERTIFY:

FIRST: That the name of the corporation shall be
THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA.

* Editor's Historical Note (1943). Originally the church was incorporated under the laws of the state of New York, April 30, 1873, as "The Free Methodist General Conference of North America." The General Conference of 1915 authorized the board of trustees of the General Conference to incorporate in the state of Illinois. Pursuant to this order, a charter was granted by the state of Illinois, December 2, 1915, under the title "The Board of Trustees of the Free Methodist Church of North America." This incorporation was approved by the General Conference of 1919 and was duly authorized to assume all the duties and exercise the prerogatives of the original incorporation. The General Conference of 1931 ordered a consolidation of the several boards into a Board of Administration. The General Conference of 1935 authorized the Board of Administration to form a new incorporation. Pursuant to this order, a corporation known as "The Free Methodist Church of North America" was formed in 1937, whose articles of incorporation are set forth above.

SECOND: That the purposes for which it is formed are religious, charitable, and benevolent, and especially:

To conduct religious services; to cultivate social intercourse among its members and assist in improving and ameliorating the moral and social conditions of humanity; to purchase, own, sell, mortgage, and lease real estate and other property as may be necessary for the purposes of this corporation; to receive donations; to receive, manage, take, and hold real and personal property by gift, grant, devise, or bequest, and to sell or dispose of the same; and to do every thing necessary, suitable, or proper for the accomplishment of any of the purposes herein enumerated, or which shall at any time appear conducive or expedient for the protection or benefit of this corporation.

To take and hold by donation, gift, grant, devise, or otherwise any property, real, personal, or mixed, in any state in the United States, or in any other country in behalf of and for the benefit of The Free Methodist Church of North America or any of its subsidiary interests, and the same to manage, grant and convey, lease or otherwise dispose of, and to execute such trust or trusts as may be confided to said corporation, the whole to be under the supervision of and amenable to the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

To carry on a general publishing and printing business including that of stationers, printers, lithographers, stereotypers, electrotypers, photographic printers, photolithographers, engravers, die-sinkers, book printers, account book manufacturers, dealers in parchments, dealers in stamps, advertising agents, designers, draftsmen, ink manufacturers, booksellers, publishers, paper manufacturers, and dealers in the materials used in the manufacture of paper, and dealers in or manufacturers of any other articles or things of a character similar or analogous to the foregoing, or any

of them, or connected therewith for the furtherance of the general objectives of this corporation.

To receive property by devise or bequest, subject to the laws regulating the transfer of property by will, and to otherwise acquire and hold all property, real or personal, including shares of stock, bonds, and securities of other corporations.

To act as trustee under any trust incidental to the principal objects of the corporation or for the benefit of any of its members, or members of their families, and to receive, hold and administer and expend funds and property subject to such trusts.

To convey, exchange, lease, mortgage and encumber, transfer upon trust, or otherwise dispose of all property, real or personal.

To borrow money, contract debts, and issue bonds, notes, and debentures, and to secure the same.

To do all other acts necessary or expedient for the administration of the affairs and attainment of the purposes of the corporation including the conduct of any business for profit, providing said profits are used for the objects of said corporation and not distributed to the members thereof.

THIRD: That the principal office for the transaction of business of said corporation is to be located in the County of Los Angeles, State of California.

FOURTH: That the term for which said corporation is to exist is perpetual.

FIFTH: That it is a corporation which does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit to the members thereof, and therefore there shall be no capital stock.

SIXTH: That this corporation shall be successor to and take the property of the following corporations which are hereafter to be dissolved:

The Board of Trustees of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation.

The Board of Conference Claimants of the Free

Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation.

The Board of Education of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation.

The Board of Church Extension of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation.*

This corporation shall also become the successor of the Free Methodist Publishing House, an Illinois Corporation, and the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation, whenever the same shall be dissolved and ordered consolidated with this corporation by an order of the Board of Administration of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

SEVENTH: That said corporation shall be subject to the rules, regulations, and DISCIPLINE of The Free Methodist Church of North America as from time to time adopted by the General Conference of The Free Methodist Church of North America insofar as the same do not contravene or conflict with the laws of the State of California or the several states of the United States.

The DISCIPLINE, rules and regulations of The Free Methodist Church as from time to time adopted by the General Conference of The Free Methodist Church of North America shall at all times be a part of the bylaws of this corporation.

* *Editor's Note (1943).* On October 28, 1943, the Board of Administration of the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America in session at Winona Lake, Indiana, took the following action: That the respective officers of the Board of Trustees of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation; the Board of Conference Claimants of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation; the Board of Church Extension of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation; the Board of Education of the Free Methodist Church of North America, an Illinois Corporation, take any necessary steps or execute any necessary papers for the dissolution of these corporations and to transfer any and all of the assets of said corporations to the Free Methodist Church of North America, a California Corporation, their successor.

EIGHTH: That the names and addresses of the persons who are to act in the capacity of directors until the selection of their successors, and who shall be known as trustees, are:

NAMES	ADDRESSES
CLAUDE A. WATSON	Los Angeles, California
B. E. ILER	Santa Monica, California
A. G. BALL	Los Angeles, California

That the number of trustees may be changed by a bylaw duly adopted or amended by the members, authority for which is hereby expressly conferred.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, for the purpose of forming this corporation under the laws of the State of California, we, the undersigned, constituting the incorporators of this corporation including the persons named hereinabove as the first directors of this corporation, have executed these Articles of Incorporation this fifteenth day of January, 1937.

CLAUDE A. WATSON
B. E. ILER
A. G. BALL

2. BYLAWS OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

Article I

Members

¶ 1001. Section 1: The several members of the Board of Administration of The Free Methodist Church of North America, elected by the General Conference of The Free Methodist Church of North America, shall constitute the members of this corporation.

Section 2: All meetings of members except as herein otherwise provided shall be held as directed by the corporation or by the Board of Directors of said corporation.

Section 3: The regular annual meeting of the members shall be held at a time and place to be fixed by the Board of Administration or a committee designated by them.

The annual meeting of the members and of the Board of Directors may be held either in or out of the state of incorporation, as fixed by the Board of Administration or by the Board of Directors.

Section 4: Notice of the annual meeting of members shall be given by publication of such notice in *Light and Life* paper published at Winona Lake, Indiana, for at least two (2) weeks before said meeting.

Section 5: Special meetings of the members may be called at any time for any purpose or purposes whatsoever, by the president, or by the Board of Directors, or by any three or more members thereof.

Section 6: Notice of special meetings of the members, stating the time and in general terms the purpose or

purposes thereof, shall be mailed by the secretary to each member entitled to vote, at his address as the same appears on the records of the corporation, or as supplied by the member for the purpose of notice, at least one week prior to the date of the special meeting.

Section 7: Should the address of any member not appear on the records of the corporation, then notices of any meetings of the members shall be mailed, addressed to such member at Winona Lake, County of Kosciusko, State of Indiana.

Section 8: An entry of the service of notice of a meeting of the members, given in the manner above provided, shall be made in the minutes of the proceedings of the members, and such entry, if read and approved at a subsequent meeting of the members, shall be conclusive on the question of such service.

Section 9: When all the members are present at any meeting, however called or notified, and sign a written consent thereto, or when the members present, and the members not present at such meeting, give their written consent thereto, and such written consent is made a part of the records of such meeting the proceedings had at such meeting are valid, irrespective of the manner in which the meeting is called, or the place where it is held.

Any member of the Board of Directors of this corporation may be removed from office according to the **FREE METHODIST DISCIPLINE** and any amendments thereto, duly adopted by the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

Section 10: At any meeting of the members, a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum to transact business.

Section 11: Any regular or called meeting of the members may adjourn from day to day, or from time to time, without further notice, until its business is completed; and any regular or called meeting of the members may adjourn from day to day, or from time to time, without further notice, if for any reason there be not present a quorum to transact business, in person or by proxy, such adjournment and the reasons therefor being recorded in the journal of the proceedings of the members; and when a quorum shall attend, any business may be transacted which might have been transacted at any meeting had the same been held on the day on which the same was originally appointed or called.

Section 12: The president, or, in his absence, the vice-president, or, in the absence of the president and vice-president, a chairman, elected by the members present, shall call the meetings of the members to order and shall act as the presiding officer thereof.

Section 13: The secretary of the corporation shall act as secretary at all meetings of the members, and in his absence the presiding officer may appoint any person to act as secretary.

Section 14: At the regular annual meeting of the members subsequent to the meeting of the General Conference of The Free Methodist Church of North America, the members entitled to vote shall elect by ballot a Board of Directors as constituted by these bylaws, and the articles of incorporation of this corporation.

Section 15: All proxies must be in writing, executed by the members themselves, or by their duly authorized attorneys, and must be filed with the secretary of the corporation at or before the meeting of the members.

Article II

Directors

Section 1: The corporate powers, business, and affairs of the corporation shall be exercised, conducted, and controlled by a board of five directors.

Section 2: No person shall be elected or appointed a director unless he is a member in good standing of The Free Methodist Church of North America. If a director shall cease at any time to be a member in good standing of The Free Methodist Church of North America, he shall thereby cease to be a director, but no act of the corporation, its officers or directors shall be invalidated by reason thereof.

Section 3: Each director shall hold office for eight years or for such shorter period as he may have been appointed, and until his successor shall have been elected.

Section 4: Any vacancy occurring in the office of director by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise, except vacancies caused by the removal of the Board of Directors pursuant to the provisions of Section 310 of the Civil Code of the State of California, shall be filled by an appointee of the majority of the remaining directors, though less than a quorum. Such director, so appointed, shall hold office until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the members, or at any special meeting duly called for that purpose prior thereto.

When one or more of the directors shall give notice of his or their resignation to the board, effective at a future date, the board shall have the power to fill such vacancy or vacancies to take effect when such resignations shall become effective. Each director so appointed shall hold office during the remainder of the

term of office of the resigning director or directors, or until their successors are appointed and qualified.

Section 5: Immediately after the election of directors at the annual meeting of the members subsequent to the meeting of the General Conference of The Free Methodist Church of North America, the directors shall meet for the purpose of organization, the election of officers, and the transaction of other business.

Section 6: All meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held as directed from time to time.

Section 7: The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be determined by the Board of Directors and the date to be fixed by them in connection with the annual meeting of the corporation.

Section 8: Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be called at any time on the order of the president or on the order of two (2) or more directors.

Section 9: Notices of special meetings of the Board of Directors, stating the time, and in general terms the purpose or purposes thereof, shall be mailed or telegraphed or personally delivered to each director, not later than five days before the day appointed for the meeting, or published in *Light and Life* for not less than two weeks prior to such meeting. An entry of the service of notice, given in the manner above provided, shall be made in the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors, and such entry, if read and approved at a subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors, shall be conclusive on the question of service. If all the directors shall be present at any directors' meeting, however called or noticed, and sign a written consent thereto which is entered on the record of such meeting, or if the majority of the directors are present, and those not present sign a written waiver of notice of such meeting,

whether prior to or after the holding of such meeting, which said waiver shall be filed with the secretary of the corporation, and entered on the record of such meeting, any business may be transacted at such meeting, and the transactions of such meeting shall be as valid as if had at a meeting regularly called and noticed.

Section 10: Each director shall register his address with the secretary, and notices of meetings mailed or telegraphed to such address shall be valid notices thereof.

Section 11: A majority of the whole number of directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and every act or decision of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present, made or done when duly assembled, shall be valid as the act of the Board of Directors; but a majority of those present at the time and place of any stated or special meeting, although less than a quorum, may adjourn the same from time to time, or from day to day, without further notice, until a quorum shall attend, and when a quorum shall attend, any business may be transacted which might have been transacted at the meeting had the same been held on the day on which the same was originally appointed or called.

Section 12: The Board of Directors shall have full power and authority to borrow money on behalf of the corporation, including the power and authority to borrow money from any of the members, directors, or officers of the corporation, and otherwise to incur indebtedness on behalf of the corporation, and to authorize the execution of promissory notes, or other evidences of indebtedness of the corporation, and to agree to pay interest thereon; to sell, convey, alienate, transfer, assign, exchange, lease, and otherwise dispose of; mortgage, pledge, hypothecate, and otherwise en-

cumber the property, real and personal, and the franchises of the corporation; to purchase, lease, and otherwise acquire property, real and personal, on behalf of the corporation; and generally to do and perform, or cause to be done and performed, any and every act which the corporation may lawfully do and perform.

Section 13: The directors of this corporation shall serve without compensation except for their actual expenses.

Section 14: The Board of Directors may appoint an executive committee of such board and may delegate to such committee any of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors, except the power to adopt, amend, or repeal the bylaws. Such executive committee shall be composed of members of the Board of Directors and shall act only in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Directors, and shall be subject at all times to the control of the Board of Directors.

Section 15: The business of the Board of Directors may be conducted by mail. Any matter submitted by the secretary to the members of the board shall, when approved by a majority of the board and recorded in the minutes of the board by the secretary, be a legally approved act of the board.

Article III

Officers

Section 1: The executive officers of the corporation shall be a president, a vice-president; a secretary, and a treasurer.

Section 2: All of the officers of the corporation shall be elected by ballot by the Board of Directors except the treasurer. The general church treasurer shall be the treasurer of the corporation.

Article IV

President

Section 1: The president shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation. He shall preside at all meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors. He shall have general charge of the business of the corporation, shall execute, with the secretary, in the name of the corporation, all deeds, bonds, contracts, and other obligations and instruments authorized by the Board of Directors to be executed.

Section 2: The president shall also have such other powers and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors.

Article V

Vice-President

Section 1: The vice-president shall be vested with all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the president, in case of the absence or disability of the president.

Section 2: The vice-president shall also have such other powers and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors.

Article VI

Secretary

Section 1: The secretary shall keep the minutes of all proceedings of the members and of the Board of Directors in books provided for that purpose. He shall attend to the giving and serving of notices of all meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors and otherwise. He shall execute, with the president, in the name of the corporation, all deeds, bonds, contracts,

and other obligations and instruments authorized by the Board of Directors to be executed, and, with the president, shall sign all certificates of membership of the corporation. He shall be the custodian of the corporate seal of the corporation, and when so ordered by the Board of Directors shall affix the seal to deeds, bonds, contracts, and other obligations and instruments. He shall keep and have charge of the journal of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of the members, the book of bylaws, and such other books and papers as the Board of Directors may direct. He shall, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of secretary, subject to the control of the Board of Directors. (He shall perform the duties of the treasurer in case of the absence or disability of the treasurer.)

Section 2: In case of the absence or disability of the secretary, or his refusal or neglect to act, notices may be given and served by the president, or by the vice-president, or by any person thereunto authorized by the president, or by the vice-president, or by the Board of Directors.

Article VII

Treasurer

Section 1: The treasurer shall keep, or cause to be kept, full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books to be kept for that purpose. He shall receive and deposit, or cause to be received and deposited, all moneys and other valuables of the corporation in the name and to the credit of the corporation, in such depositories as may be designated by the Board of Directors. He shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the corporation only as directed by the Board of Directors of the corporation and shall take proper vouchers for such disbursements. He shall render to the president of the Board of Directors

and to the members, whenever they may require, accounts of all his transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the corporation. He shall, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of treasurer, subject to the control of the Board of Directors.

Article VIII

Seal

Section 1: The Board of Directors shall provide a suitable seal for the corporation, which shall be in circular form, which will contain the following inscription: The Free Methodist Church of North America, Incorporated Jan. 15, 1937, Los Angeles, California.

Article IX

Section 1: The DISCIPLINE, rules and regulations of The Free Methodist Church as from time to time adopted by the General Conference of The Free Methodist Church of North America shall at all times be a part of the bylaws of this corporation.

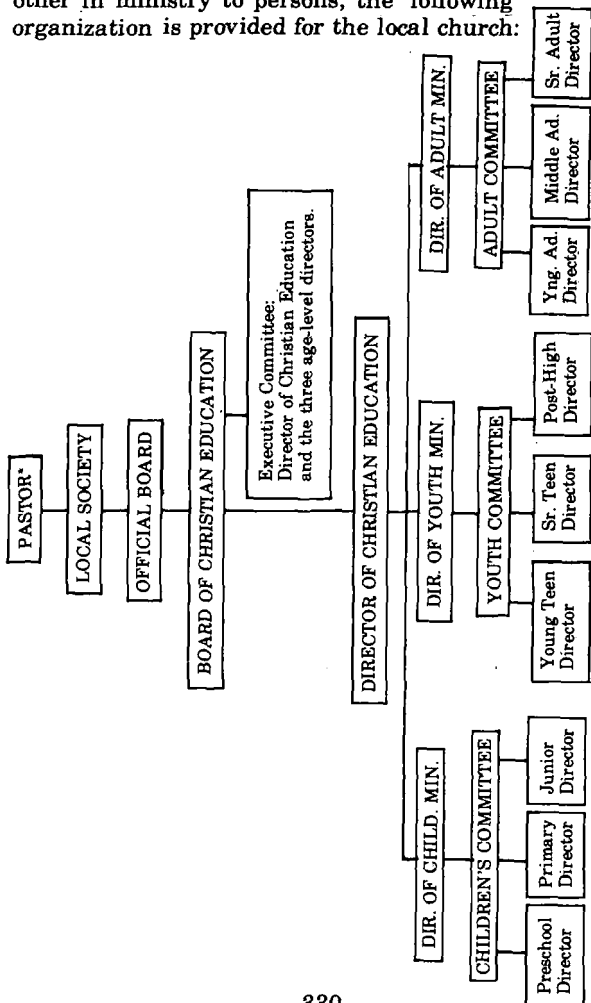
Article X

Section 1: The bylaws of this corporation may be amended at any annual meeting of the members of the corporation by a majority vote of those present and voting.

B. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ORGANIZATION

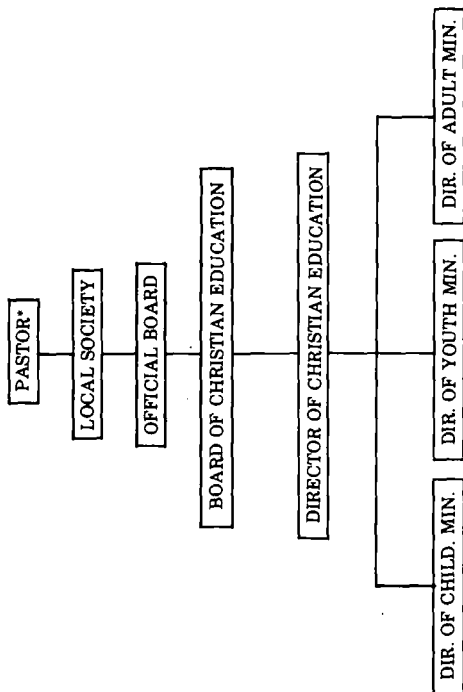
¶ 1010. The Christian education enterprise of the denomination is carried out through program agencies, such as the Sunday school, the FMY, the CYC, and Service Training. To prevent the programs from competing for persons rather than complementing each

other in ministry to persons, the following organization is provided for the local church:



*The pastor is an ex officio member of all boards and committees.

For a smaller local church where deemed advisable the following pattern may be used.



*The pastor is an ex officio member of all boards and committees.

¶ 1011. 1. Director of Christian Education

The director of Christian education shall serve as chairman of the board of Christian education. He may be a layman or pastor. It shall be his responsibility to administer and coordinate:

- a. The Sunday school.
- b. Weekday clubs and expressional activities.
- c. Training programs for Christian education leadership.

- d. Promotion and instruction in stewardship, missions, and moral issues as they relate to Christian education.
- e. Evangelism efforts and church membership training as they relate to Christian education.

2. Director of Children's Ministries

The director of children's ministries shall be chairman of the children's ministries committee if one is elected. It shall be his duty to administer and coordinate:

- a. Sunday school departments, preschool through junior.
- b. Weekday clubs for preschool, primary, and juniors.
- c. Other activities such as: vacation Bible school, day camp, and children's church.
- d. Stewardship, missions, and moral issues education.
- e. Evangelism and membership training.

3. Director of Youth Ministries

The director of youth ministries shall be chairman of the youth ministries committee if one is elected. It shall be his duty to administer and coordinate:

- a. Sunday school departments, young teen through post-high school.
- b. Young teen, senior teen, post-high school programs.
- c. Other activities such as: camping retreats, membership training, VISA-VIA, TASC, etc.
- d. Stewardship, missions, and moral issues education.
- e. Evangelism and membership training.
- f. Campus ministries (area college representative) and servicemen's ministries.

4. Director of Adult Ministries

The director of adult ministries shall be chairman of the adult ministries committee if one is elected. It shall

be his duty to administer and coordinate:

- a. Adult Sunday school departments.
- b. Midweek social activities for adults.
- c. The training program for adults, including membership training as it relates to Christian education curriculum.
- d. Stewardship, missions, and moral issues education.
- e. Evangelism, visitation, and lay-witnessing.
- f. Family Life emphases and programming.
- g. Act as liaison with WMFI and LLMI in the adult program.

¶ 1012. Local Board of Christian Education

1. Responsibilities:

- a. Provide for administration of all Christian education programs.
- b. Coordinate all Christian education activities.
- c. Evaluate, approve, and coordinate all instructional curricular material to be used in the ministry of the local congregation.
- d. Implement denominational curricula for all Christian education endeavors.
- e. Assure that training is provided for Christian education workers, including certification and workers' conferences.
- f. Encourage adherence to denominational standards by Christian education workers.
- g. Project, plan, and evaluate total Christian education programs.

2. Composition. The director of Christian education, director of children's ministries, director of youth ministries, director of adult ministries, and the pastor constitute the executive committee of the board of Christian education. Members of the executive committee shall be full members of the Free Methodist Church. Upon election they become members of the official board. Depending upon the size of the church, the

director of each age-level may have one, two, or three assistants for the ages represented under his responsibilities. Such assistants are full members of the board of Christian Education. The board may divide itself into three age-level committees; when so divided, the director of Christian education shall be an ex officio member of each of these committees.

As an optional plan, the board of Christian education may be composed of the executive committee plus one of three persons elected at large.

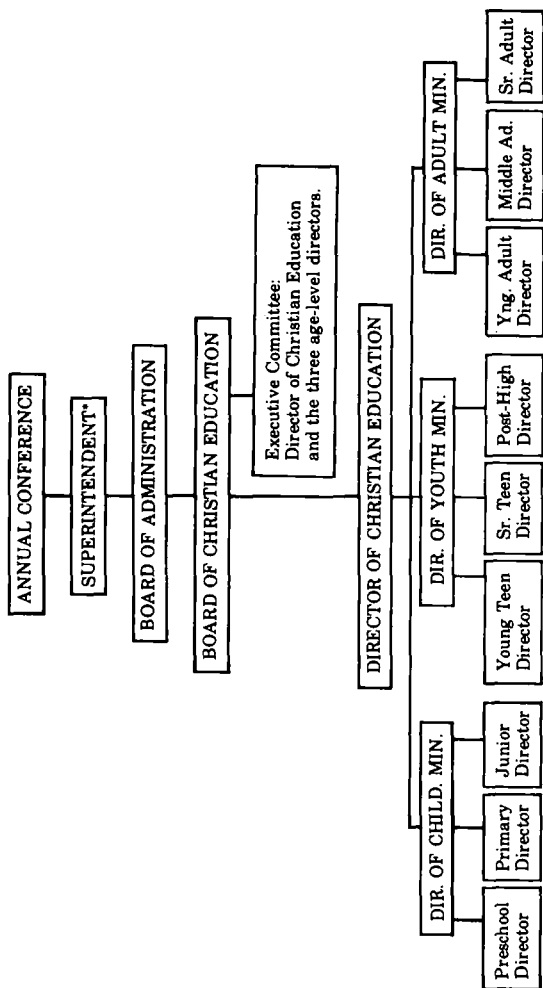
Where desired, an assistant to the director of Christian education may be elected to work with the executive committee of the board of Christian education to promote Sunday school growth. The person so elected becomes a member of the board of Christian education.

3. Election: The board of Christian education shall submit an organizational plan and list of officers needed for the new year to the annual society meeting. (The organizational plan will take into consideration the size of the church and its ministry needs.) The pastor may submit a nomination for the director of Christian education. The previous board may submit nominations for the new board of Christian education to the church nominating committee.

4. Responsibility for Christian education staffing: Upon authorization by the society meeting the newly elected board of Christian education will name all staff personnel for: the Sunday school, including officers, department superintendents and teachers; the preschool through junior weekday club programs, young teen, senior teen, and post-high school programs, all adult programs including Family Life and senior citizens, others as needed, such as leaders for vacation Bible school, junior choir, children's church, etc.

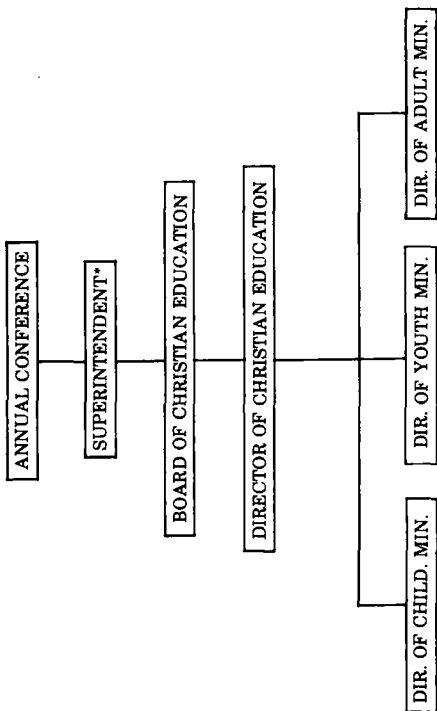
When a society chooses to elect such personnel, the newly elected board of Christian education shall make nominations to the society.

¶ 1013. The following organization is provided for the conference:



*The superintendent is an ex officio member of all boards and committees.

For a small conference, where deemed necessary or advisable, the following organizational pattern might be used.



*The superintendent is an ex officio member of all boards and committees.

¶ 1014. 1. Director of Christian Education

The conference director of Christian education shall be the executive director and chairman of the board of Christian education. He may be professional or volunteer, full-time or part-time. He shall be responsible to:

- a. Coordinate all Christian education promotion and programs in the conference.

- b. Promote Sunday schools and Aldersgate Christian Training.
- c. Coordinate and promote camp curriculum and program for all age-groups.

2. Director of Children's Ministries

The conference director of children's ministries shall be chairman of the children's ministries committee. He shall:

- a. Assist the director of Christian education in promotion of the Sunday school program and curriculum for preschool, primary, and junior age-levels.
- b. Promote preschool through junior weekday club programs.
- c. Promote vacation Bible schools.
- d. Coordinate camp curriculum and programs.
- e. Promote stewardship, missions, and moral issues education.
- f. Promote evangelism and membership training.

3. Director of Youth Ministries

The conference director of youth ministries shall be chairman of the youth committee. He shall:

- a. Assist the director of Christian education in promotion of the Sunday school program and curriculum for young teen, senior teen, and post-high school age-levels.
- b. Promote young teen programs.
- c. Promote senior teen programs.
- d. Promote post-high school programs.
- e. Coordinate the camp curriculum and programs.
- f. Promote stewardship, missions, and moral issues education.
- g. Promote evangelism and membership training.
- h. Promote campus ministries and act as area college representative.

4. Director of Adult Ministries

The conference director of adult ministries shall be

chairman of the adult committee. He shall:

- a. Assist the director of Christian education in promotion of the Sunday school program and curriculum for adult age-levels.
- b. Promote Family Life programs.
- c. Promote young adult programs.
- d. Promote middle adult programs.
- e. Promote senior adult programs.
- f. Coordinate adult camping ministries.
- g. Assist director of Christian education in promotion of training programs.
- h. Promote stewardship, missions, and moral issues education.
- i. Promote evangelism and membership training.

¶ 1015. Conference Board of Christian Education

1. Composition: The conference board of Christian education shall consist of the conference director of Christian education, director of children's ministries, director of youth ministries, director of adult ministries, and, where elected, the subdirectors of each of the three age-levels and any necessary additional personnel.

Where desired an assistant to the conference director of Christian education may be elected to work with the executive committee of the board of Christian education to promote Sunday school growth. The person so elected becomes a member of the board of Christian education.

The conference board of Christian education shall divide itself into three age-level committees. The director of Christian education shall be an ex officio member of each of these committees. The responsibilities of the board of Christian education and of the age-level committees will be outlined in denominational handbooks.

2. Election: The executive committee of the conference board of Christian education shall be nominated by the conference nominating committee, and elected by the annual conference.

The nine age-level directors shall be nominated by the conference nominating committee, after consultation with the newly elected executive committee (who should be ready to submit names of qualified persons for these positions), and elected by the annual conference. If an assistant to the conference director of Christian education is desired, the same procedure for election shall be followed.

In the event the conference director of Christian education is employed full time, he may be given the privilege to present nominations to the nominating committee for the conference board of Christian education.

The previous board of Christian education may submit nominations for the executive committee of the new board through the conference nominating committee.

3. Tenure: Nominees elected to the conference board of Christian education by the annual conference shall each serve a period of two to five years. The annual conference may adopt a rotational plan for continuity and stability.

C. FORMS

Property

¶ 1020. 1. Application for Permission to Sell or Mortgage Church Property of the Free Methodist Church

Name of: Society _____
 Pastoral Charge _____
 District _____
 Conference _____
 Other _____
 Date _____

- (1) Has the body owning the property given authority to SELL* MORTGAGE* the property? _____

- (2) In what book of record is the action recorded? _____

 page _____ date _____
- (3) What will be the disposition of the proceeds of SALE* MORTGAGE*? _____
- (4) Has the Conference Building and Location Committee approved your plan? _____
- (5) Is the title to the property to be SOLD* MORTGAGED* a warranty deed? _____
 If not, what is the character of the title? _____
- (6) Is the property deeded to the organization in its corporate name, or to the individual trustees? (See Pars. 855 and 856.) _____
- (7) If the organization is incorporated, give corporate name. _____
- (8) Does the deed to the property to be mortgaged contain the following trust clause: "In trust for the use and benefit of the membership of The Free Methodist Church of North America . . . ," etc? (See Par. 856.) _____
- (9) If property is being purchased with proceeds of SALE* MORTGAGE*, will the title thereto include the trust clause referred to in "8" above? _____
- (10) Is there a reverting clause in the title to the property being MORTGAGED* or PURCHASED*? _____
- (11) Describe the property to be SOLD* MORTGAGED*: Number of lots or acres type of building _____
 (frame, stone, brick, other) _____
 dimensions of building _____
 condition of building (good, fair, poor) _____
 other comments, if any _____

- (12) Appraised value of property to be SOLD* MORTGAGED* _____

What amount is expected from SALE* MORTGAGE*? _____

- (13) Give legal description of property to be SOLD* MORTGAGED*, enclosing a copy of the deed or copying therefrom. _____
- (14) List names and addresses of the trustees, if the property to be SOLD* MORTGAGED* is held in the name of the trustees: _____

- (15) Signatures approving the SALE* MORTGAGE*:

Pastor in charge: _____

Address: _____

Superintendent: _____

Address: _____

Secretary of _____

Official Board: _____

Address: _____

Other: _____

Board of Directors

The Free Methodist Church of North America

Free Methodist Headquarters

Winona Lake, Indiana 46590

* Strike out the term that does not apply.

2. Consent of the Superintendent Having Jurisdiction of Property to Be Sold Under Provisions of Paragraph 857 of the DISCIPLINE

I, _____, being the superintendent of the territory in which the hereinafter described real property is located, hereby give my consent to the sale of the same for not less than the sum of \$_____, to _____ The hereinbefore described real property as the

hereinafter described real property is more particularly described as:

(Here insert description of real property)

Date

Signature of superintendent

3. Declaration of Trust (Suggested)

(Whenever a piece of property does not have the trust clause set forth in its deed, the local society may adopt the following trust clause and have it duly recorded at the county recorder's office, thus conforming to the provisions of Paragraphs 855 and 856 of the DISCIPLINE.)

WHEREAS, the _____ Free Methodist Church of _____, a _____ corporation or society, is the owner of the hereinafter described real property and,

WHEREAS, said Free Methodist Church is a subsidiary of the Free Methodist Church of North America, a California corporation, subject to the Rules, Regulations, and DISCIPLINE thereof, and,

WHEREAS, the DISCIPLINE of said church provides that all real property held by said corporation shall include the following trust clause:

'In trust for the use and benefit of the membership of the Free Methodist Church of North America, incorporated under the name of 'The Free Methodist Church of North America,' subject to the DISCIPLINE, usages, and ministerial appointment of said church as from time to time authorized and declared; and, if sold, the proceeds shall be disposed of and used in accordance with the provisions of said DISCIPLINE, and of the civil law; and in further trust and confidence that in the houses of worship now erected or that may hereafter be erected on said premises hereby conveyed, the seats shall be forever free; and in further trust and confidence that the said trustees and their successors in office shall permit at all times the ministers who may be duly

authorized according to the DISCIPLINE of the said Free Methodist Church, to hold religious services in said houses of worship according to said DISCIPLINE." And,

WHEREAS, the deed to the hereinafter described real property from _____, as grantor, to _____ Free Methodist Church of _____, a _____ corporation, as grantee, dated on the _____ day of _____, 19____, and recorded as Document No. _____, Book _____, Page _____, of deeds records of _____ County, State of _____, failed to include the foregoing trust,

NOW, THEREFORE, it is declared by the _____ Free Methodist Church of _____, a _____ corporation or society, on the _____ day of _____, 19____, that the said corporation or society holds the hereinafter described real property subject to the provisions of said trust.

The hereinbefore described real property as the hereinafter described real property is more particularly described as:

(insert legal description)

Done at a duly and regularly called meeting of the corporation or society on the _____ day of _____, 19____.

We, the undersigned, _____ president, and _____, secretary of the _____ Free Methodist Church of _____, a _____ religious society or corporation, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at the foregoing meeting and that we were instructed and directed to execute this instrument as a declaration of trust and cause the same to be recorded upon the records of the county recorder of the County of _____, State or Province of _____.

President

Secretary

STATE OR PROVINCE OF _____ }
 COUNTY OF _____ } SS

Before me _____, a notary public on this day personally appeared _____ and _____, known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the foregoing instrument and known to me to be the president and secretary respectively of the _____ Free Methodist Church of _____, _____, a _____ religious society or corporation and acknowledged to me that they executed said instrument for the purposes therein expressed and as the act of said corporation or society.

GIVEN under my hand and seal this _____ day of _____, 19____.

 Notary Public in and for the above
 County and State or Province

4. Articles of Incorporation (Suggested)

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
 OF
 _____ FREE METHODIST CHURCH
 KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That we, the undersigned, residents of the State or Province of _____, have this day voluntarily associated ourselves together for the purpose of forming a corporation under the laws of the State or Province of _____.

AND WE HEREBY CERTIFY:

FIRST

The name of the corporation shall be:
 _____ FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

SECOND

That the primary purposes for which it is formed are

religious, charitable, benevolent, and educational, and especially:

To conduct religious services, to cultivate social intercourse among its members, and to assist in improving and ameliorating the moral and social conditions of humanity; to purchase, own, sell, or dispose of the same, mortgage and lease real estate and other property as may be necessary for the purposes of this corporation; to receive donations, to receive, manage, take, and hold real and personal property by gift, grant, devise, or bequest, and to sell or dispose of the same, and to do every thing necessary, suitable, or proper for the accomplishment of any of the purposes herein enumerated, or which shall at any time appear conducive or expedient for the protection or benefit of this corporation.

THIRD

That the principal office for the transaction of business of said corporation is to be located in the County _____

_____, State or Province of _____.

FOURTH

That the term for which said corporation is to exist is perpetual.

FIFTH

That it is a corporation which does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit to the members thereof, and therefore there shall be no capital stock.

The property is irrevocably dedicated to religious, charitable, or scientific purposes and upon liquidations, dissolution or abandonment of the corporation, ownership will not inure to the benefit of any private person except a fund, foundation, or corporation organized and operated for religious, scientific, or charitable purposes. The directors shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or obligations of the corporation.

SIXTH

The ecclesiastical affairs of the corporation shall be subject to the rules, regulation, and DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church of North America, as from time to time adopted by the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America, insofar as the same do not contravene or conflict with the laws of the State or Province of Incorporation.

SEVENTH

That the number of directors of said corporation shall be three and that the names and addresses of the persons who are to act in the capacity of directors until the selection of their successors, and who shall be known as trustees, are

NAMES

ADDRESSES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

That the number of directors may be changed by a bylaw duly adopted or amended by the members, authority for which is hereby expressly conferred.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Do not try to use this form without the aid of an attorney of your state or province. If you desire to form a corporation, take this form to an attorney for his information.

Following the above will have to be the regular certification either by individual, incorporators, or by the president and secretary of the unincorporated society being incorporated. They must follow the requirements of the local civil law. (JURAT)

5. Bylaws (Suggested)

BYLAWS

of

(Corporate name of church)

ARTICLE I

SECTION I:

The members of the _____ shall constitute the members of this corporation.

SECTION II:

The annual meeting of this corporation shall be held at any time within three months prior to the convening of the _____ of the

(name of the annual conference)

Free Methodist Church of North America, and may be called by the pastor or the president of said corporation by giving notice as provided in the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

SECTION III:

Special meetings may be called at any time for any purpose or purposes whatsoever by the president of the corporation or the pastor, pursuant to the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

SECTION IV:

Notice of special meeting may be given as provided in the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

SECTION V:

The entry in the minutes of the notice of any annual or special meeting, if read and approved at such meeting or subsequent meeting, shall be conclusive proof on the question of such notice.

SECTION VI:

When all the members are present at any meeting, however called or notified, and signify their consent thereto by the roll call showing their presence, and those not present consent in writing at the time of such meeting or subsequent thereto, and such consent is made a part of the records of such meeting, the

proceedings had at such meeting are valid, irrespective of the manner in which the meeting was called or the place where it was held.

SECTION VII:

At any meeting of the members, those present shall constitute a quorum to transact business.

SECTION VIII:

The pastor of the church, or in his absence his appointee or the president of the corporation shall preside at all meetings.

Section IX:

Any regular or called meeting may adjourn from day to day or from time to time, without further notice until its business is completed.

SECTION X:

The DISCIPLINE, rules and regulations of the Free Methodist Church of North America, shall at all times constitute the rules for admission, expulsion, withdrawal, and the disciplining of members of this corporation.

ARTICLE II**Directors of Trustees****SECTION I:**

The secular affairs of this corporation shall be exercised and conducted by a board of directors or trustees as directed by the society of the _____

SECTION II:

The qualifications of all such directors or trustees shall be as provided in the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church of North America, and the Articles of Incorporation.

SECTION III:

Their term of office shall be for one year or until their successors are elected and qualified.

SECTION IV:

Any vacancy occurring in the office of director or

trustee shall be filled by an election at a meeting of the membership or society, and any director or trustee so elected shall hold office for the unexpired term.

SECTION V:

Immediately after the annual meeting, the board of directors or trustees shall meet and organize by electing a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, or secretary-treasurer.

SECTION VI:

All meetings of the directors or trustees shall be held as directed from time to time or at the call of the president or pastor.

SECTION VII:

The duties of the several officers shall be as provided in the DISCIPLINE of the Free Methodist Church of North America, or as prescribed by the society of the _____

ARTICLE III

Amendments

SECTION I:

The bylaws of this corporation may be amended at any annual meeting of the members by a majority vote of those present except as to Article I, Section X.

Adopted by resolution of the members of the corporation this _____ day of _____, 19____

6. Form of Bequest

Form of bequest of money or other personal property:
 "I give and bequeath to the Free Methodist Church of North America the sum of _____ dollars, to be used

and appropriated by that body to religious, charitable, missionary, or educational purposes.”

Real estate:

“I grant and devise (full description of the land).”

LICENSES

¶ 1021. 1. Local Preacher's License

This certifies that _____ is authorized to officiate as a LOCAL PREACHER in the FREE METHODIST CHURCH for one year, provided h_____ spirit and practice are such as become the gospel of Christ, and h_____ teachings correspond with the established doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as held by the Free Methodist Church.

Done by order of the Official Board of the _____ Society, _____ Conference.

Done at _____ this ____ day of _____, 19____

_____ *President*
 _____ *Secretary*

2. Renewal of Local Preacher's License

The license of _____ as a LOCAL PREACHER in the FREE METHODIST CHURCH is hereby renewed for one year, subject to the requirements of the DISCIPLINE.

Signed by order of the Official Board of _____ society, of the _____ District, of the _____ Annual Conference, this _____ day of _____, 19____

_____ *President*
 _____ *Secretary*

3. Lay Minister's License

This certifies that _____ is authorized to officiate as a LAY MINISTER in the FREE METHODIST CHURCH for one year provided h_____ spirit and practice are such as become the gospel of Christ, and h_____ teachings

correspond with the established doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as held by the Free Methodist Church.

Done by order of the Official Board of the _____
Society, _____ Conference.

Done at _____ this _____ day of _____, 19____

President
Secretary

4. Renewal of Lay Minister's License

This certifies that the license of _____ as a LAY
MINISTER in the FREE METHODIST CHURCH is hereby
renewed for one year, subject to the requirements of the
DISCIPLINE.

Done by order of the Official Board of the _____
Society, _____ Conference.

Done at _____ this _____ day of _____, 19____

President
Secretary

5. Annual Conference Evangelist's License

This certifies that _____ is authorized to
officiate as an EVANGELIST in the FREE METHODIST
CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA, so long as h____ spirit and
practice are such as become the gospel of Christ, and
h____ teachings correspond with the established doc-
trines of the Holy Scriptures as held by the Free
Methodist Church.

By order of the _____ Annual Conference of
the Free Methodist Church.

Done at _____, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

President
Secretary

RECOMMENDATIONS

¶1022. Recommendation for Status of Ministerial Candidate

This certifies that _____, a local preacher and member of the _____ society of the _____ Conference, is hereby recommended as a suitable person to be admitted as a ministerial candidate of the FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

Done by order of the Board of Ministerial Education and Guidance of the _____ Conference in session at _____ this _____ day of _____ 19_____.

_____ *President*

_____ *Secretary*

RESTORATION OF PARCHMENTS

¶1023. Recommendation for the Restoration of Parchments

To the president and members of the _____ Annual Conference, to be held at _____ commencing on the _____ day of _____, 19_____.

We, the members of the (district or annual) conference, hereby recommend the restoration of the parchments of _____, who has been received as a local preacher on the _____ Society (or admitted as a ministerial candidate in the _____ Annual Conference).

Done in the regular session at _____, this day of _____, 19_____, and signed by order and in behalf of the _____ Conference.

_____ *President*

_____ *Secretary*

(The foregoing recommendation should be presented to the conference having the custody of the forfeited parchments, or to which the candidate belonged when the parchments were forfeited.)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

¶ 1024. 1. Ministerial Candidate — Annual Conference Certificate

This is to certify that _____, the bearer, a regularly licensed local preacher, has this day been received by the _____

_____ Annual Conference of the FREE METHODIST CHURCH as a ministerial candidate, and is hereby authorized to act in that capacity, according to the DISCIPLINE of said church, provided h_____ spirit and practice are such as become the gospel of Christ, and h_____ teachings correspond with the established doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as held by said church.

Done at _____, the _____ day of _____, 19_____.

_____ *President*

_____ *Secretary*

2. Certificate of Standing (Conference)

This certifies that _____, a _____, is in
(deacon, elder, ministerial candidate)
good standing and of general acceptability in the _____ Conference of the FREE METHODIST CHURCH and is granted this certificate with a view to being transferred to the _____ Conference.

Done by _____
at _____ on _____, 19_____.

_____ *President*

_____ *Secretary*

This certifies that _____
 _____ (deacon, elder, ministerial candidate)
 was received by transfer as a _____ by vote of
 the _____ Conference on _____
 19_____.
 _____ *President*

(A certificate granted by an annual or district conference or conference board of ministerial education and guidance is valid until the ensuing annual conference to which the certificate is given.)

3. Certificate of Standing (Denomination)

This certifies that _____ has been an
 ordained _____ in good standing and of general
 acceptability in the _____ Conference of the **FREE
 METHODIST CHURCH**, and is granted this certificate with
 a view of joining another evangelical denomination.
 Membership in this conference and church is terminated
 upon the issuance of this certificate.

Done by the _____ Conference at _____ on
 _____, 19_____.

_____ *President*
 _____ *Secretary*

(This certificate can be delivered only upon the surrender of
 the minister's parchments, for which the secretary must issue a
 receipt (see Par. 532, Sec. 2).)

4. Certificate of Location

This certifies that _____, an _____ in good
 standing in the _____ Annual Conference of the
FREE METHODIST CHURCH, is given this Certificate of
 Location for the reason checked below:

- ___ At his own request.
- ___ Under Paragraph 420, having been left without
 appointment two years in succession.
- ___ Under Paragraph 421, having been on leave of
 absence two or more years in succession.
- ___ Under Paragraph 421, having been in super-

numery relationship two or more years in succession.

Done in annual session at _____ this _____ day of _____, 19_____

_____ *President*
 _____ *Secretary*

DELEGATES

¶ 1025. Annual Conference Credentials

This certifies that _____ *was*
 duly elected to represent the _____ Pastoral Charge
 at the _____ Annual Conference to be held
 at _____ commencing the _____ day of _____
 A.D., _____.

Lay Delegate _____
Reserve Delegate _____
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
(Circle one to indicate order of election.)

Done at the Annual Meeting held at
 _____ on the _____ day of
 _____, A.D., _____.

_____ *Chairman*
 _____ *Secretary*

TRANSFERS

¶ 1026. 1. Full Membership Transfer

This is to certify that _____, a full member in good standing of the _____ Free Methodist Church, is cordially commended to the Free Methodist Church in _____ or in any other place. When he or she is admitted to another society, membership in this society shall cease. This certificate

must be deposited with another Free Methodist Church within one year, unless renewed.

Member's date of birth _____ and of baptism _____.
 Check where appropriate. Member is licensed local preacher, licensed lay minister, local deacon, local elder.

Dated _____

Pastor's signature _____

2. Acknowledgment of Transfer

You are hereby notified that _____ has been duly enrolled as a member of this society upon a certificate issued by the society of which you are the pastor.

Dated _____

Pastor's Signature _____

3. Transfer of Membership to Another Denomination

This is to certify that _____, who wishes to become a member of another evangelical church, is a member in good standing of the Free Methodist Church in _____ and is cordially commended to the fellowship of _____ or any other such church with which _____ may desire to unite. His membership in the Free Methodist Church ceases when this certificate is given.

Member's date of birth _____ and of baptism _____.

Dated _____

Pastor's signature _____

4. Preparatory Membership Transfer

This is to certify that _____, a preparatory member in good standing of the _____ Free Methodist Church, is cordially commended to the Free Methodist Church in _____ or any other place. When he or she is admitted to another society, membership in this society shall cease. This certificate must be deposited with another Free Methodist Church within one year, unless renewed.

Member's date of birth _____ and of baptism _____.
Date received to preparatory membership ____.
Member has has not been baptized; has completed instruction classes .

Dated _____

Pastor's signature _____

5. Junior Membership Transfer

This is to certify that _____, a junior member in good standing of the _____ Free Methodist Church, is cordially commended to the Free Methodist Church in _____ or in any other place. When he or she is admitted to another society, membership in this society shall cease. This certificate must be deposited with another Free Methodist Church within one year, unless renewed.

Member's date of birth _____ and of baptism ____.
Date received to junior membership _____.
Member has has not been baptized; has completed instruction classes .

Dated _____

Pastor's signature _____

D. HISTORICAL

(The material found in the historical appendix includes sections which have been replaced by actions of the 1969 and 1974 General Conferences.)

¶ 1030.

The Free Methodist Church

A. ORIGIN AND CHARACTER

¶ 1. Dearly Beloved: We think it expedient to give you a brief account of the origin and character of Free Methodism.

The Reverend John Wesley, founder of Methodism, says: "In 1729 two young men in England, reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw, likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out to raise a holy people."

¶ 2. Methodism spread through England and America, and in other countries. From time to time different bodies arose bearing the Methodist name. As they became popular there was more or less departure from the original principles and practice of Methodism.

¶ 3. In the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, about the year 1858, several preachers and many members were excluded from the church on various charges and allegations, but really for their adherence to the principles of Methodism; especially to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification.

¶ 4. Appeals were made to the General Conference which were denied. Those excluded could not join any

other Methodist body, for there was none that agreed with them on the issues on which they were thrust out. Therefore they felt compelled to form a new organization.

¶ 5. The Free Methodist Church was organized by a convention of lay members and ministers, which met at Pekin, Niagara County, New York, on the twenty-third day of August, 1860. The first General Conference met on the second Wednesday of October, 1862, at St. Charles, Illinois.

¶ 6. The Free Methodists are a body of Christians who profess to be in earnest to get to heaven, by conforming to all the will of God, as made known in His Word. They do not believe that either God or the Bible has changed to accommodate the fashionable tendencies of the age. They solemnly protest against the union of the church and the world. The conditions of salvation, as they teach, are the same now as they were in the days of the apostles. He who would be a Christian in reality, as well as in name, must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Jesus. He must come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

¶ 7. In doctrine they are Methodists. They believe in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, in a general atonement, in the necessity of the new birth, in the witness of the Spirit, and in future rewards and punishments. They insist that it is the duty and privilege of every believer to be sanctified wholly, and to be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every one who is received into full connection either professes to enjoy that perfect love which casts out fear or promises diligently to seek until he obtains it.

¶ 8. Free Methodists look upon practical godliness as the never-failing results of a genuine religious experience. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Hence they insist that those who profess to be the disciples of Christ should come out from unbelievers and be separate, abstaining from connection with all secret societies, renouncing all vain pomp and glory, adorning themselves with modest apparel, and not with gold, or pearls, or costly array. We have no right to abolish any of the requirements made by Christ and the apostles; or to make obedience to them a matter of small consequence. The golden rule, they hold, applies equally to all mankind.

¶ 9. The government is democratic with lay members having an equal voice with the ministers in all the councils of the church. The annual conferences are composed of lay delegates and ministers in full relation. Each annual conference delegation to the General Conference is equally divided between lay and ministerial delegates, who have equal voice and vote in all the proceedings. The stationing committee, by which the appointments are made, is composed of the district superintendents and an equal number of lay members chosen for that purpose. The official boards are selected by the members of circuits, and not appointed by the preachers. The district superintendents are elected by the annual conference and may be appointed to circuits the same as the rest of the preachers. The bishops are elected at each regular session of the General Conference; it is their duty to preside at the annual conferences and travel through the connection at large. The rights of the members are carefully guarded.

¶ 10. Free Methodists endeavor to promote spirituality and simplicity in worship. Congregational singing is universal (see Par. 93). They believe in the Holy Ghost. If men are really converted and sanctified, it is through the Spirit of God. When He works there is a

stir. As President Edwards said, "Eternal things are so great, and of such vast concern that there is great absurdity in men being but moderately moved and affected by them." "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The Free Methodists, while they do not believe in any mere formal noise, yet, when the Spirit comes, like "a rushing mighty wind," as on the day of Pentecost, do not dare to oppose the manifestations of His presence. As Edwards says, "Whenever there is any considerable degree of the Spirit's influence upon a mixed multitude, it will produce, in some way, a great visible commotion." To resist His operations is to hinder the work of God.

¶ 11. Free Methodists do not believe in resorting to worldly policy to sustain the gospel. Christ has said that whosoever giveth a cup of cold water in His name shall in no wise lose his reward. But it is the motive, and not the amount done, that secures the divine approbation. There is not more virtue in giving to the cause of God for carnal pleasure than there is in any other purely selfish action. Hence they give no countenance to modern expedients for promoting Christianity, such as renting pews, promoting lotteries, fairs, sales, or other like expedients for raising money. To say that the church cannot be sustained without these contrivances to beguile the world into its support is to confess that professing Christians are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." It is to pronounce Christianity a failure. The gospel possesses an inherent power that will not only sustain itself but make its way through all opposition, wherever its advocates live up to its requirements and rely upon its promises.

¶ 12. Free Methodists believe the church of Christ is a soul-saving institution of divine origin for holy purposes; therefore they prohibit festivals and donation parties, such as include anything in the line of

entertainments contrary to the spirit and letter of our DISCIPLINE, and all other forms of worldly amusements in their church buildings or by their church organizations.

¶ 13. All their churches are required to be as free as the grace they preach. They believe that their mission is two-fold — to maintain the Bible standard of Christianity, and to preach the gospel to the poor. Hence they require that all seats in their houses of worship shall be free. No pews can be rented or sold among them. The world will never be converted to Christianity when the churches are conducted upon the exclusive system. It has always been contrary to the economy of the Christian church to build houses of worship with pews to rent. Such renting of pews is a corruption of Christianity. Free churches are essential to reach the masses. The provisions of the gospel are for all. The "glad tidings" must be proclaimed to every individual of the human race. God sends the true light to illuminate and melt every heart. To savage and civilized, bond and free, black and white, the ignorant and the learned is freely offered the great salvation.

¶ 14. But for whose benefit are special efforts to be put forth? Who must be particularly cared for? Jesus settles this question. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up," and, as if all this would be insufficient to satisfy John of the validity of His claims, He adds, "and the poor have the gospel preached to them." This was the crowning proof that He was the One that should come. In this respect the church must follow in the footsteps of Jesus. She must see to it that the gospel is preached to the poor. Thus this duty is enjoined by the plainest precepts and examples. If the gospel is to be preached to all, then it follows, as a necessary consequence, that all the arrangements for

preaching the gospel should be so made as to secure this object. If it be said that seats would be freely given to those who are unable to pay for them, they answer that this does not meet the case. Few are willing, so long as they are able to appear at church, to be publicly treated as paupers.

¶ 15. You will find in this book the doctrines and form of government of the Free Methodist Church. We do not wish any to subscribe to it unless they believe it will be for the glory of God and the good of their souls. We have no desire to build up simply a large church; but we do hope that our societies will be composed, exclusively, of those who are in earnest to gain heaven and who are determined, by the grace of God, to live up to the requirements of the Bible. It is of the greatest importance that those who come into this organization shall be of one heart and one mind.

B. THE PURPOSE OF FREE METHODISM

¶ 16. To the founders of Free Methodism in 1860, the purpose of the church was to spread scriptural holiness over these lands, and in their generation "scriptural holiness" included such major sectors of truth as:

In doctrine, the standard beliefs of evangelical, Arminian Protestantism, with distinctive emphasis on the scriptural teaching of entire sanctification as held by John Wesley,

In experience, the reality of an inner cleansing and power that attests the doctrine of entire sanctification, both in the inward consciousness of the believer and in his outward life,

In worship, the simplicity and freedom of the Spirit, untrammelled by elaborate ritual,

In piety, a life of daily devotion that springs from inward holiness and separates the Christian from the

world, even in the world,

In stewardship and service, a complete consecration of every power and possession to the service of God and man.

These distinctives of the Free Methodist Church from its origin are still living issues. In every era and every land they are the witnesses of the church, needing utterance clear and strong that they may be heard and heeded amidst the world's confusing and misleading voices.

C. WORLD FREE METHODISM

¶ 16.5 The Free Methodist Church of North America, by 1964, had extended its borders to include many countries on other continents than North America. In some of these countries, Free Methodism had developed to general conference stature,* and in other countries was approaching thereto. It seemed that the time had come to provide for the more speedy evangelization of the world and the extension of scriptural holiness and its fruits through the Free Methodist Church by the firm establishment of general conferences other than the North America General Conference on a basis preserving in each the essentials of Free Methodism.

Accordingly, the 1964 General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America adopted the resolution stated below and revised its constitution to provide for the organization of general conferences in other areas of the world. In order to conserve the essential features of Free Methodism, the resolution provided that in all general conferences a portion of the constitution should be identical and that the remainder should be formulated by each conference to suit local conditions. Following is the statement of resolution adopted:

The Free Methodist Church of North America does hereby extend to its regional and national

subdivisions the privilege to develop general conferences of like powers to its own within various geographic areas, at such time as each may meet the qualifications for the same, and adopt as a part of its discipline or manual of law, Paragraphs 1-16 as herein and heretofore stated, and further adopts as a section of its constitution a declaration of the principles of Free Methodism and methods of protecting the same according to Paragraphs 20-73 following, which Sections, namely 1-16 and 20-73, shall be identical in all general conference constitutions.

* The General Conference of 1960, in connection with plans for a World Fellowship of Free Methodist Churches, defined two national areas outside North America as general conferences, namely, Egypt and Japan.

¶ 1031

The Constitution of the Free Methodist Church of North America

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF FREE METHODISM

PREAMBLE

¶ 20. In order that we may wisely preserve and pass on to posterity the heritage of doctrine and principles of Christian living transmitted to us as evangelicals in the Arminian-Wesleyan tradition, insure church order by sound principles and ecclesiastical polity, and prepare the way for evangelization of the world and the more

effective cooperation with other branches of the church of Christ in the advancement of Christ's kingdom among men, we, the ministers and lay members of the Free Methodist Church of North America, in accordance with constitutional procedure, do hereby ordain, establish, and set forth as the fundamental law or constitution of the Free Methodist Church of North America the Articles of Religion, the Conditions and Rules of Membership, and the Articles of General Organization and Government here following, to wit:

CHAPTER I

ARTICLES OF RELIGION

I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

¶ 21. There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II. Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

¶ 22. The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin so that the two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to be the one mediator between God and man, by the sacrifice of himself both for original sin and for the actual transgressions of men.

III. Of the Resurrection of Christ

¶ 23. Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he returns to judge all men at the last day.

IV. Of the Holy Ghost

¶ 24. The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

V. The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

¶ 25. The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. By the term Holy Scriptures we understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments of whose authority there was never any doubt in the church.

The names of the canonical books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, I, II, and III John, Jude, Revelation.

VI. Of the Old Testament

¶ 26. The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for in both the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God to Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof, of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from obedience to the commandments which are called moral.

VII. Of Original or Birth Sin

¶ 27. Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, as the Pelagians do vainly talk, but it is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness and of his own nature inclined to evil and that continually.

VIII. Of Free Will

¶ 28. The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasing and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ enabling us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

IX. Of the Justification and Regeneration of Man

¶ 29. We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings;

wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort. Concurrently with justification we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, who imparts spiritual life and renews us after the image of him who created us.

X. Of Good Works

¶ 30. Although good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins and endure the severity of God's judgments, yet they are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

XI. Of Works of Supererogation

¶ 31. Voluntary works — besides, over and above God's commandments — which are called works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly, "When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants."

XII. Of Sin After Justification

¶ 32. Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God rise again and amend our lives. Therefore, they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or who deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

XIII. Of Entire Sanctification

¶ 33. Entire sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believer, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, is cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationship is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and is maintained by obedience and faith. Entire sanctification enables the believer to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, and his neighbor as himself, and prepares him for greater growth in grace.

XIV. Future Reward and Punishment

¶ 34. God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel. The righteous shall have in heaven an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

XV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand

¶ 35. It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God and the custom of the primitive church to have public prayer in the church or to minister the sacrament in a tongue not understood by the people.

XVI. Of the Church

¶ 36. The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

XVII. Of the Sacraments

¶ 37. Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but they are also certain signs of grace, and of God's good will toward us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.

XVIII. Of Baptism

¶ 38. Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others who are not baptized, but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church.

XIX. Of the Lord's Supper

¶ 39. The Supper of the Lord is not merely a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death, insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but it is repugnant to the plain word of the Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner; and the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

XX. Of the One Oblation of Christ, Finished upon the Cross

¶ 40. The offering of Christ, once made, is a perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of the masses, in the which it is said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous and dangerous deceit.

XXI. Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

¶ 41. It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the conscience of the weak brethren. We recognize the right of every denomination to ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies so that all things may be done to edification.

XXII. Of Christian Men's Goods

¶ 42. The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor according to his ability.

*XXIII. Of a Christian Man's Oath**

¶ 43. As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James the apostle, so we hold that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may take oath when the magistrate requireth in a case of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching†, in justice, judgment, and truth.

¶ 1032.

GENERAL RULES

(Comment: The General Rules are embodied in a historic document originally prepared by John Wesley under the title, "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies." The text printed here is that adopted by the organizing convention of the Free Methodist Church and published by it in 1860. Although the General Rules properly are covered only in Paragraphs 53 to 56 inclusive, the entire document is here printed for historic completeness.)

(1) Nature and Design

¶ 50. In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come

* This article shall not deprive of membership in our church those who have conscientious scruples against taking an oath.

† Jeremiah 4:1-2.

together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening. For these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them; and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

¶ 51. This was the rise of the UNITED SOCIETY, first in Europe, and then in America. Such a society is no other than "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

¶ 52. That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in a class, one of whom is styled the leader. It is his duty,

1. To see each person in his class once a week at least; in order
 - a. To inquire how their souls prosper.
 - b. To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require.
 - c. To receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the preacher, church, and poor.
2. To meet the minister and the stewards of the society once a week; in order,
 - a. To inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved.
 - b. To pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.

*(2) General Rules**

¶ 53. There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

FIRST, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced; such as,

The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein, or by buying or selling.

Drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

The buying, selling, or holding of a human being as a slave.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil; or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.

The giving or taking things on usury, i.e., unlawful interest.

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or ministers.

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God; as

The putting on of gold or costly apparel.

* Paragraph heading authorized by General Conference of 1964 to show where General Rules actually begin.

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.

Softness and needless self-indulgence.

Laying up treasure upon earth.

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

¶ 54. It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

SECONDLY, by doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible, to all men.

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that "we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to do it."

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business; and so much the more because the world will love its own, and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach

of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.

¶ 55. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

THIRDLY, by attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are:

The public worship of God.

The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.

The Supper of the Lord.

Family and private prayer.

Searching the Scriptures.

Fasting or abstinence.

¶ 56. These are the general rules of our societies, all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul, as they who must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season. But if then he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

SPECIAL RULES

The Special Rules have been adopted at various times subsequent to 1860.

¶ 57. 1. Members shall conform to the scriptural standards of attire, adorning themselves in a meek and quiet spirit, not with gold, pearls, or costly array.

2. The church forbids its members the using, growing, processing, buying, or selling of tobacco; the

habitual use of opiates; and the processing, buying, selling, or using of intoxicating liquors unless for mechanical, chemical, or medicinal purposes, or in any way intentionally and knowingly aiding others so to do.

3. The church condemns secret societies on scriptural grounds and as contrary to the glory of God, and forbids membership in them.

4. The church recognizes no other ground for divorce than that permitted by the Word of God (Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11, 12).

¶ 1033.

CHAPTER X

QUALIFICATIONS AND WORK

THE CALL TO PREACH

¶ 300. Examination of Those Who Think They Are Moved by the Holy Ghost to Preach.

1. The following questions shall be asked the candidates, namely: Do you know God as a pardoning God? Have you the love of God abiding in you? Do you desire nothing but what is the will of God? Do you believe that entire sanctification is the work of God wrought instantaneously upon the heart of the consecrated, believing soul subsequent to justification? Do you believe you are called of God to preach the gospel? Are you called to serve in the itinerant ministry or to serve in a local capacity?

2. The following questions shall be considered by the district conference: Have they gifts as well as grace for the work? Have they in some tolerable degree a clear, sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God, and a just conception of salvation by faith? Has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? Have they fruit? Are they truly convinced of sin, and converted to God by their preaching? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

As long as these marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved by the Holy Ghost.

RULES FOR A PREACHER'S CONDUCT

¶ 301. Be diligent. Never be unemployed; never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

Be serious. Let your motto be, Holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

Converse sparingly and conduct yourself prudently with women (I Timothy 5:2). Take no step toward marriage without first consulting your brethren.

Believe evil of no one without good evidence; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

Speak evil of no one, because your word, especially, would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

Tell every one under your care what you think wrong in his conduct or temper, and that lovingly and plainly as soon as may be; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

Avoid all affectation. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all. Be ashamed of nothing but sin.

Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them, not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

You have nothing to do but to save souls; therefore, spend and be spent in this work; and go always not only to those who need you, but to those who need you most.

Observe, it is not only your business to preach so many times and to take care of this or that society, but to save as many as you can; to bring as many sinners as you can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember that a Free Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Free Methodist DISCIPLINE! Therefore, you will need to

exercise all the sense and grace you have.

Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it is your duty to employ your time in the manner in which we direct; in preaching and visiting from house to house; in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labor with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory.

¶ 302. The following smaller advices may be of use:

Be sure never to disappoint a congregation.

Begin at the time appointed.

Always suit your subject to your audience.

Choose the plainest texts you can.

Take care not to ramble, but keep to the text, and make out what you take in hand.

Avoid everything awkward or affected, in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation.

Do not usually pray more than eight or ten minutes, at most, without intermission.

Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of Scripture; and young preachers should often exhort without taking a text.

Always avail yourself of the great festivals by preaching on the occasion.

Let your deportment be serious, weighty, and solemn.

SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS

¶ 303. A preacher is to be qualified for his charge by walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart, and by understanding and loving discipline, ours in particular.

¶ 304. We should frequently ask each other the following questions:

Do you walk closely with God? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hours of retirement? Do you spend the day in the manner which the conference advises? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely?

¶ 305. To be more particular, you should use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons.

They are either instituted or prudential.

The instituted are:

1. Prayer — private, family, and public; consisting of deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving.

Do you use each of these? Do you forecast daily, wherever you are, to secure time for private devotion? Do you practice it everywhere? Do you ask everywhere, "Have you family prayer?" Do you ask individuals, "Do you use private prayer every morning and evening in particular?"

2. Searching the Scriptures — reading regularly, some part every day; regularly, all the Bible in order; carefully, with notes; seriously, with prayer before and after; fruitfully, immediately practicing what you learn there; meditating, at set times and by rule; hearing the Word at every opportunity, with prayer, before, at, after. Have your Bible always about you.

3. The Lord's Supper. Do you use this at every opportunity? With solemn prayer before? With deliberate self-devotion?

4. Fasting. Do you use as much abstinence and fasting every week as your health, strength, and labor will permit?

5. Christian conference. Are you convinced how important and difficult it is to order your conversation

aright? Is it always with grace, seasoned with salt, meet to minister grace to the hearers? Do you converse too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determined end in view, and pray before and after?

¶ 306. The prudential means we may use either as Christians, as Free Methodists, or as preachers.

As Christians, what particular rules have you in order to grow in grace? What arts of holy living? As Free Methodists, do you never miss your class? As preachers, have you thoroughly considered your duty? Are you conscientious in executing every part of it? Do you meet each society and its leaders?

These means may be used without fruit. But there are some means which cannot; namely, watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and living always as in the presence of God.

Do you steadily watch against the world? Yourself? Your besetting sin? Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, honor? Are you temperate in all things? Instance, in food? Do you use only that kind and that degree which is best both for body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this? Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Are you not heavy or drowsy after dinner? Do you use only that kind and degree of drink which is best both for the body and soul? Do you choose and use water for your common drink? And only take wine medicinally or sacramentally? Wherein do you take up your cross daily? Do you cheerfully bear your cross, however grievous to nature, as a gift of God, and labor to profit thereby? Do you endeavor to set God always before you? To see his eye continually fixed upon you? Never can you use these means but a blessing will ensue. And the more you use them, the more you will grow in grace.

MATTER AND MANNER OF PREACHING

¶ 307. The best general method of preaching is: (1) To convince. (2) To offer Christ. (3) To invite. (4) To build up. (5) To do this in some measure in every sermon.

¶ 308. The most effectual way of preaching Christ is to preach him in all his offices, and to declare his law, as well as his gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches.

E. WHERE TO PREACH

¶ 309. We do not deem it advisable to preach in as many places as we can without forming societies. We have made the trial in various places, and that for a considerable length of time. In all cases the seed has fallen by the wayside. There is scarcely any fruit remaining.

1. We should endeavor to preach most where there is the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers, and where there is most fruit.

2. We ought diligently to observe in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly; and at that time to send more laborers than usual into that part of the harvest.

PASTORAL VISITATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF PRACTICAL RELIGION

¶ 310. We should endeavor to assist those under our care, and to aid in the salvation of souls by instructing them in their own homes. What unspeakable need there is of this!

We can but just touch on a few particulars. How little faith is there among even professing Christians!

How little communion with God! How little living in heaven, walking as for eternity, deadness to every creature! How much love of the world, desire of pleasure, of ease, of getting money! How little brotherly love! What continual judging one another! What gossiping, evil-speaking, tale-bearing! What want of moral honesty! To instance only one particular: Who does as he would be done by in buying and selling?

Family religion is wanting in many branches. And what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels? We must, yea, every traveling preacher must instruct the people from house to house.

¶ 311. Our religion is not sufficiently deep, or universally uniform. It is superficial, partial, uneven. It will be so until we spend half as much time in this visiting as we now do in talking uselessly. Can we find a better method of doing this than Mr. Baxter's? If not, let us adopt it without delay. His whole tract, entitled *The Reformed Pastor*, is well worth a careful perusal. Speaking of this visiting from house to house, he says: "We shall find many hindrances, both in ourselves and the people.

1. "In ourselves there is much dullness and laziness, so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work.

2. "Some of us have a foolish bashfulness. We know not how to begin, and blush to contradict the devil.

3. "But the greater hindrance is weakness of faith. Our whole motion is weak, because the spring of it is weak.

4. "Lastly, we are unskilled in the work. How few know how to deal with men so as to get within them, and suit all our discourse to their several conditions and tempers; to choose the fittest subjects, and follow them with a holy mixture of seriousness, terror, love, and meekness!"

Undoubtedly this private application is implied in

those solemn words of the apostle: 'I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering.'

O brethren, if we could but set this work on foot in all our congregations, and prosecute it zealously, what glory would redound to God. If the common lukewarmness were banished, and every shop and every house were busy in speaking of the Word and works of God, surely God would dwell in our habitations and make us his delight.

¶ 312. It is objected, 1. 'This will take up so much time we shall not have leisure to follow our studies.' We answer, (a) Gaining knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is better. By this very thing you will gain the most excellent knowledge, that of God and eternity. (b) You will have time for gaining other knowledge, too. Only sleep no more than you need; 'and never be idle or triflingly employed.' But, (c) If you can do but one, let your studies alone. We ought to throw by all the libraries of the world, rather than be guilty of the loss of one soul.

It is objected, 2. 'The people will not submit to it.' If some will not, others will. And all the success with them will repay all your labors. Oh, let us herein follow the example of St. Paul! (a) For our general business, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind. (b) Our special work, Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock. (c) Our doctrine, Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (d) The place, I have taught you publicly, and from house to house. (e) The object and manner of teaching, I ceased not to warn every one night and day, with tears. (f) His innocence and self-denial herein, I have coveted no man's silver or gold. (g) His patience, Neither count I my life dear unto myself.

And among all other motives, let these be ever before our eyes: 1. The church which he hath purchased with his own blood. 2. Grievous wolves shall enter in; yea, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things.

Write this upon your hearts, and it will do you more good than twenty years' study. Then you will have no time to spare; you will have work enough. Then, likewise, no preacher will stay with us who is as salt that has lost its savor. For to such, this employment will be mere drudgery. And in order to do it, you will have need of all the knowledge you can procure, and all the grace you can obtain.

¶ 313. The sum is, Go into every house in course, and teach every one therein, young and old, to be Christians, inwardly and outwardly. Make every particular plain to their understandings. Fix it in their minds, write it on their hearts. In order to do this, there must be line upon line, precept upon precept. What patience, what love, what knowledge is requisite for this! We must needs do this, were it only to avoid idleness. Do we not loiter away many hours in every week? Each try himself. No idleness is consistent with a growth in grace. Nay, without exactness in redeeming time, you cannot retain the grace you received in justification.

¶ 314. Why are we not more holy? Why do we not live as for eternity? Why do we not walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all devoted to doing good, breathing the whole spirit of missionaries?

Chiefly because we do not properly use the means. 1. How few wait upon the Lord in secret prayer until his blessing comes on the soul. 2. Do we know the obligation and benefit of fasting and abstinence? 3. How often do we practice it? 4. How little there is of self-denial. 5. How few bring their tithes and offerings into the

storehouse of the Lord. 6. How much there is of consecration to our own wills instead of the will of the Lord. 7. How few manifest a disposition to submit themselves one to another. 8. What a want there is of properly governing the tongue. The neglect of these alone is sufficient to account for our feebleness and faintness of spirit. We should amend from this hour.

¶ 315. How shall we guard against Sabbath breaking, evil speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness or gaiety of apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them?

1. We should preach expressly on each of these heads. 2. Read in every society the sermon on evil speaking. 3. The leaders should closely examine and exhort every person to put away the accursed thing. 4. The preachers should warn every society that none who is guilty herein can remain with us. 5. Extirpate from our church all buying or selling of goods which have not paid the duty laid upon them by government. 6. Extirpate bribery, receiving anything, directly or indirectly, for voting at any election. 7. Strongly advise our people to discountenance all treats given by candidates before or at elections, and not to be partakers in any respect of such practices. Show no respect to persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing.

EMPLOYMENT OF TIME

¶ 316. We advise you to develop and follow as closely as possible a personal schedule which will provide adequate time for prayer, meditation, study, and personal devotion.

Other reasons may concur why the people under our care are not better, but the chief is, because we are not more knowing and more holy.

But why are we not more knowing? Because we are

idle. We forget our first rule, 'Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.' We fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear. Which of us spend as many hours a day in God's work as we did formerly in man's work? We talk — talk or read what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or betray the cause of God. But how? 1. Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. 2. Steadily spend all the morning in this employment, or at least five hours in the four and twenty. 'But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your former employment. 'But I have no books.' Be diligent to spread the books, and you will have the use of them.

UNION AMONG OURSELVES

¶ 317. We should be deeply sensible, from what we have known, of the evil of division in principle, spirit, or practice, and of the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

In order to a closer union with each other,

1. We should be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.
2. Pray earnestly for, and speak freely to each other.
3. When we meet, let us never part without prayer.
4. Take care not to despise each other's gifts.
5. Never speak lightly of one another.
6. Defend one another's character in everything, so far as is consistent with truth.
7. Labor in honor each to prefer the other before himself.
8. We recommend a serious perusal of *The Causes, Evils and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions*.

UNION WITH OTHERS

¶ 318. We have Christian fellowship and love for all persons of whatever denomination who show by their lives that they "follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." We will unite with all well-disposed persons, in an open, Christian manner, in promoting social and civil reforms. But we cannot unite, where we are required to compromise our principles, in holding union meetings with any person, or denomination, whose practical standard of Christian character and church fellowship is obviously below that plainly set forth in the New Testament.

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