

Organization of Provisional Annual Conference

Provisional Annual Conferences of Mission Origin

¶4560+

A. The normal minimum for the organization of a provisional annual conference is five ministers in full membership and 300 lay members within its bounds.

B. All provisional annual conferences of mission origin shall be under the jurisdiction of the Board of Bishops and the overseeing Area Director, except where provisional annual conferences have been organized from an existing annual conference, in which case they shall be administered by the bishop of the originating annual conference.

C. The Board of Bishops, upon the recommendation of the Area Director, approves the formation of a provisional annual conference from a Mission District, it having adopted in principle the Book of Discipline of the Free Methodist Church USA and having filed the appropriate governmental registration documents (Constitution), adapted to local culture and circumstances.

Standing Boards and Committees

Organizational Structure

¶5070

In consultation with the bishop of record, the annual conference may organize itself in ways that more consistently reflect the operational values and desired outcomes of the Free Methodist Church. Organizational structures and function shall be reviewed periodically to insure missional priorities and to assess the conference in light of the benchmarks of conference vitality established by the Board of Bishops and National Oversight Team. When such assessment reveals failure or decline, the conference shall seek help in formulating appropriate strategic responses.

Nominating Committee

The chair shall be elected by the Nominating Committee.

¶5080

- A. Each annual conference will have a standing Nominating Committee approved by the annual conference of not less than six members, giving consideration to equal representation of ministerial and lay members. General considerations in the selection of the Society Nominating Committee shall also apply to the annual conference (see ¶6310). Representation by districts/regions or other appropriate distinctions shall be determined in advance by the conference body.
- B. Nominating Committee members may be elected to rotating terms as determined by the conference. The chair shall be elected by the Nominating Committee.
- C. The Nominating Committee shall:
 1. Prepare for the annual conference a list of nominations for positions vacated by either resignations or expiration of terms; and

2. Review board and committee memberships in light of the standing rules of the annual conference.

Administrative Committee (BOA)

¶5200

- A. Each annual conference shall elect a standing Administrative Committee of not less than four members, giving due regard to clergy/lay balance. It shall act as the standing Administrative Committee of the conference in the interim between annual conference sessions to care for routine business and items specifically delegated to it by the conference within the limits of the Book of Discipline (see ¶6400).
- B. The conference Administrative Committee shall give strategic planning attention to such ministries as world missions, Christian discipleship, church planting, and social action. It may assign individuals, form task forces, and create standing committees to carry out the ministries deemed appropriate for the health and growth of the church.

Superintendent's Cabinet (Not necessary, but helpful)

¶5210

- A. Each annual conference may establish a Superintendent's Cabinet, to meet at the call of the superintendent.
- B. The purpose of the Superintendent's Cabinet shall be:
 1. To serve as a forum for the superintendent, pastors, and laity;
 2. To aid the superintendent in counsel, encouragement, and evaluation; and
 3. To inform the societies concerning the nature and function of the superintendency.
- C. The members of the Superintendent's Cabinet shall be the superintendent and not more than six members elected by the annual conference, two-thirds of whom may be nominated by the superintendent. The superintendent may chair or name a member to chair the Cabinet.

Ministerial Appointments Committee (MEGA) (5 members)

Composed at least of the bishop (AD) as chair, a superintendent as vice-chair, and one lay member.

¶5220

- A. Each annual conference shall elect a standing Ministerial Appointments Committee (MAC) composed at least of the bishop as chair, a superintendent as vice-chair, and one lay member. An annual conference may, as it deems necessary, increase the number of MAC members by electing additional elders and lay members. Each annual conference may define subgroups within the membership of the MAC and may define the scope of responsibility of each group according to that annual conference's structure of regional oversight and the superintendency. Elections may be for three-year terms with provision for rotation and continuity.
The annual conference may ask the Nominating Committee or the Board of Administration to prepare nominations for election of the MAC and to delineate the scope of responsibilities within the MAC membership according to that annual conference's structure of oversight and the superintendency. The slate of nominees is to be brought before the annual conference for election.

When a new conference superintendent(s) is elected, the immediate past superintendent may not serve on the Ministerial Appointments Committee for the succeeding year.

- B. If for any reason a member is unable to serve during the conference session, the Board of Administration may appoint an elder or lay member to serve. No person who is recommended to the annual conference to be received as a Conference Ministerial Candidate, nor a Licensed Pastor (see ¶5640), though acting as a delegate, shall be eligible to serve on the Ministerial Appointments Committee.
- C. The committee shall serve until the close of the following annual Conference.
- D. The committee shall appoint pastors for an indefinite tenure.
The committee shall monitor progress and make changes at each annual conference when deemed necessary.
- E. To assist in the assessment of the work, pastors shall be offered an opportunity to express themselves and shall be given opportunity every three years to participate in a ministry effectiveness evaluation (see ¶5800), which shall be considered by the Ministerial Appointments Committee.
- F. Proposed changes shall be discussed with both pastors and delegates of churches involved.
- G. In the event a change in pastoral leadership becomes necessary between annual conferences, the committee shall have authority to make appointments. Delegates of churches involved shall be consulted, but final authority rests with the Ministerial Appointments Committee.
- H. The Ministerial Appointments Committee report of appointments shall be announced at the annual conference session.
- I. The committee may initiate church planting appointments, either by requesting a Society to sponsor a Church-Planting Project or by creating a new Church-Planting Project by appointing a church planter in consultation with the conference Administrative Committee.
- J. Upon recommendation of the conference superintendent, the committee may appoint an elder as "Conference Associate" to serve in specialized ministry leadership as directed by the superintendent.
- K. The committee shall follow the restrictions regarding divorced ministers or spouses (see ¶5650).
- L. The committee shall have authority to suspend any conference appointee for cause (see ¶7130) according to due process (see ¶7150). This is not to be construed as conflicting with an ordained minister's rights as outlined in chapter 7.
- M. The committee planning to recommend that a pastor not receive a pastoral appointment the ensuing year shall notify that pastor at least 60 days prior to the session of the annual conference.
- N. When a pastor's appointment is concluded at a local Society (e.g., retired, left without appointment, requests release from appointment) he/she, along with his/her immediate family, is to withdraw from the life of that Society. This would include serving in official or unofficial capacities, attending worship services or activities of the Society, or entertaining communication with staff, constituents, or the larger community regarding the Society's leadership, practices, or health. The former pastor and/or family, however, may re-engage with the local Society with the consent of conference superintendent in consultation with the newly appointed pastor.

Ministerial Education and Guidance Board (Combined with MAC)

¶5230

- A. Each annual conference shall have a standing Ministerial Education and Guidance Board, composed of the members of the Ministerial Appointments Committee and additional members as determined by the electing body.
- B. Such additional members may be elected to rotating three-year terms. Members of the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board may be reelected to multiple rotating terms, contingent upon their ongoing, effective service.
- C. The total membership of the Board shall be established by the annual conference with due regard to a proper division between laypersons and ministers and to provide sufficient number of members so that at least four members can convene when needed and where needed to fulfill the responsibilities required by the Book of Discipline.
- D. Each member of the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board, including those elected to the Ministerial Appointments Committee, shall receive training in Free Methodist history and polity.
- E. When a new superintendent is elected, the immediate past superintendent shall not serve on the Board for the succeeding year.
- F. The Board shall be responsible to screen candidates for reception into the conference and/or for ordination.
- G. The annual conference, acting upon the recommendation of the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board, has final responsibility for the approval of Conference Ministerial Candidates in keeping with the standards outlined in ¶5340.
- H. The Board, in consultation with the bishop of record, is the authority on the meeting of the standard criteria for ordination. Requests for waivers regarding any of these standard criteria shall be made to the Board of Bishops (See ¶5410 for these standard criteria).
- I. The Board shall guide and counsel those who are received so that they may be able to meet the demands of pastoral ministry.
- J. For instructions on administration of multiple staff, see ¶¶6700-6730 and the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board Manual.
- K. The Board may grant a certificate of standing with view to transfer to another conference during the interim between annual conference sessions.
- L. The Board shall give consideration to the integrity and Christian discipleship of each ministerial member and the performance of duty of each appointed pastor of the conference and shall present to the annual conference a statement to this effect: "The Ministerial Education and Guidance Board has given due consideration to the integrity and Christian discipleship of each ministerial member of the _____ Conference and affirms the integrity and Christian discipleship of each in accord with ¶5310 of the Book of Discipline (with the exception of _____)" (see ¶5220.L).
- M. The Board shall affirm the integrity and Christian discipleship of Located Deacons and Located Elders, reporting such action to the annual conference as follows: "Upon recommendation by the various pastors and local Boards of Administration of the societies where they are located, the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board reviewed and affirmed the integrity and Christian discipleship of the Located Deacons and Located Elders (except for _____)" (see ¶5220.L).

Finance Board (5 Members)

The conference superintendent and treasurer shall be ex officio members.

¶5240

Each conference shall elect a Finance Board with not less than five members. Its duties may include the preparation and supervision of the conference budget. It shall assist the superintendent in stewardship education and the promotion of the general church budget throughout the conference. The conference superintendent and treasurer shall be ex officio members.

Local Global Partnership Team (Missions)

The annual conference shall designate a person to serve as a liaison to Free Methodist World Missions.

¶5260

- A. The annual conference shall create a Local Global Partnership Team or Board to advocate for engagement in local and global mission. The annual conference shall designate a person to serve as a liaison to Free Methodist World Missions.
- B. Functions of the Local Global Partnership Team may include:
 - 1. Coordinating conference-wide missions activities, advocating for cross-cultural ministry, and partnering with missionaries and national leaders in cooperation with Free Methodist World Missions;
 - 2. Equipping churches to achieve effectiveness in and promotion of missional outreach and consistent promotion of missional outreach by such means as workshops for pastors and lay leaders; and
 - 3. Empowering churches to participate in local, regional, and global missions opportunities. This includes assistance in the recruitment of individuals for long-term missionary service and Volunteers in Service Abroad (VISA) short-term activities and to increase the financial support of worldwide missionary outreach.

Additional ministries organized by the conference shall have boards.

John Wesley Seminary:

Consisting of a President, Academic Dean, and BOT (Junta Directiva)