



**NATIONAL
CONSTITUTION
of the
WESLEYAN METHODIST
CHURCH
of New Zealand**

2014

Note re numbering

The basic unit in the *Constitution* is the paragraph, rather than page, chapter or section. The paragraphs are numbered in order throughout the entire document, but with many numbers skipped, in order to allow for future additions or amendments.

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PART I

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND – Part 1

A. Preamble

1. This is the National Constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. (The “Wesleyan Methodist Church” or “WMCNZ”).
2. It is a unifying document that captures the vision of a united ethnically diverse church in the Wesleyan stream, with a rich variety of expression, and a commitment to plant churches and make disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. It includes both the Constitution of the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Church (paragraphs [80](#) - 199) and the Statutory Law (paragraphs 1 - 79 and [200](#) - 500) as referred to in paragraph [81](#).
4. Amendments to the Statutory Law (paragraphs 1 - 79 and [200](#) - 500) may originate through the National Conference, the National Council or a local church. The amendment shall require the approval of the National Conference to pass.
5. Amendments to the Constitution of the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Church (paragraphs 80 - 199) require the approval of the Regional Conference and / or the International Conference ([80](#)).

B. Name

10. The official name of this Organisation shall be Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand (WMCNZ).

C. Definitions

15. The following definitions shall apply to terms used in The Constitution of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand:
 - (1) **The Handbook.** Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the term “*The Handbook*” is understood to refer to *The Constitution of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand* as currently approved and authorised by the National Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.
 - (2) **Statutory Law.** Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the term “Statutory Law” is understood to refer to paragraphs 1 - 79 and [200](#) - 500 of *The Constitution of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand*.
 - (3) **Partnership.** Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the term “partnership” is understood to refer to “*membership*” referred to in Article IV. Membership (paragraphs [130](#) – [155](#)) of the Constitution of the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Church. See [Part III C Partnership](#) for partnership provisions specific to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.
 - (4) **The National Conference.** Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the term “The National Conference” is understood to refer to the National Conference of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.
 - (5) **The Regional Conference.** Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the term “The Regional Conference” is understood to refer to the South Pacific Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church.

- (6) **The International Conference.** Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the term “The International Conference” is understood to refer to the International Conference of The Wesleyan Church.
- (7) **The General Conference.** Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the term “The General Conference” is understood to refer to the North American General Conference of The Wesleyan Church.
- (8) **General Board of Administration.** Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the term “the General Board of Administration” is understood to refer to the North American General Board of Administration.

D. Introduction

Our place in the Body of Christ

- 20. The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand claims and cherishes its place in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church promised by God in the Scriptures, birthed in history through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, and empowered by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
- 21. We rejoice in the inheritance of the Apostolic Faith and loyally accept the principles of the historic creeds and the Protestant Reformation. So we treasure the heritage of the Church through the ages and recognise that in the Providence of God Methodism was raised up to spread Scriptural Holiness through the land by the proclamation of the evangelical faith and we declare an unfaltering resolve to be true to its divinely appointed mission.

Early Roots

- 24. We especially value our historical roots in the Wesleyan revival of the 18th century when God raised up John and Charles Wesley. John Wesley (1703-1791) was an ordained minister of the Church of England, a graduate of Oxford University and an earnest seeker after inward holiness of heart as well as social transformation. On 24th May 1738 at a house meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, he "felt his heart strangely warmed" by the assurance of faith for his personal salvation. His ministry was ignited by the Holy Spirit and he soon became a travelling preacher ardently pursuing the mission of Jesus Christ.
- 25. The Wesleyan revival spread from England to America with the eventual formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church which by the mid-19th Century was the largest denomination in the United States of America. In 1843 a group of ministers and congregations left that denomination because of their own anti-slavery convictions and their preference for a more democratic form of church government. They adopted the name “Wesleyan Methodist” and in 1881 the church was a founder member of the World Methodist Council. In 1968 the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Pilgrim Holiness Church joined to form The Wesleyan Church. Over the years since, The Wesleyan Church has continued to grow worldwide and now works in more than 90 countries.

The South Pacific

- 28. The Foreign Missions of the British Methodist Conference appointed the Rev Samuel Leigh to New South Wales, Australia, in 1815. Leigh visited New Zealand in 1819 for nine months at the invitation of the Rev Samuel Marsden of the Church Missionary Society (Anglican). The newly formed British Wesleyan Missionary Society established work in the South Pacific, including in 1823 a mission station in New Zealand near Kaeo, in Northland. The Wesleydale mission, consisting of the Rev Samuel Leigh, Rev Nathaniel Turner, Rev William White and their families, was unsuccessful but was soon re-established at Mangungu in the Hokianga. Wesleyan missionaries, along with Anglican missionaries, were instrumental in supporting the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi; partly as a safeguard

for Maori welfare. The largest signing of the treaty was at the Mangungu Wesleyan mission house (which survives today as an historic place) with the Rev John Hobbs acting as translator.

29. Following the British Wesleyans, other branches of the English Methodist family were established in New Zealand: in 1844 the Primitive Methodist Connexion; in 1860 the United Free Methodists and in 1877 the Bible Christians. Mission focus moved from Maori to Pakeha. The 1901 census showed that 11 percent of the population claimed identification with the various branches of Methodism. As in other parts of the world, notably the United States and Australia, Methodism proved highly adaptable and successful in mission, often being the first to commence Christian work in new areas.

Methodism in New Zealand

32. In 1854 the Wesleyan Methodist Missions in Australia, Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), New Zealand, Tonga and Fiji, were formed into "The Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Connexion" and the first Conference was held in Sydney in January 1855. In 1874, a General Conference was formed with four annual Conferences, one of which comprised the Maori and Pakeha work in New Zealand. The other branches of the Methodist family in New Zealand retained their direct links with their respective Conferences in England.
33. In 1896 the United Methodist Free Churches and the Bible Christians joined the Wesleyan Methodists, as part of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia. The New Zealand Conference became an independent National Conference in January 1913 and the following month the Primitive Methodist Church joined with the Wesleyan Methodist Church to form the Methodist Church of New Zealand. The Wesleyan denominational name was not officially used again by a New Zealand church until the forming of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand in July 2000.
34. During the 1930s and after World War II, the Methodist Church of New Zealand progressively adopted a more intellectual style of ministry training, which included a critical historical Biblical teaching method, pastoral counselling emphases and a reduced focus on holiness and evangelical convictions. Pacifism, ecumenism, post-war social turmoil, and an increasingly liberal Conference leadership all influenced promotion of a more liberal theological ethos throughout the church and especially among the ministers.
35. In the 1970s and 1980s mission focus in the Methodist Church of New Zealand significantly changed. Missionaries were no longer sent to the Pacific Islands. Social issues often dominated the church. In addition, discussions with the Presbyterian, Anglican, Congregational Churches and the Associated Churches of Christ failed to achieve a united church in New Zealand but resulted in a large number of towns and suburbs with union parishes or co-operative ventures.
36. This period of Methodist decline saw pluralism in theology, and a deepening disquiet among those who wished to uphold Wesleyan distinctives, including the centrality of the full humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ, his bodily resurrection, the truth of Scripture, the importance of Scriptural holiness and assurance of faith. From 1983 a strong bi-cultural criteria became the benchmark of mission and much decision making within the Church.

Formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand

40. The Charismatic Movement saw many Methodists moving to evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. Many evangelical Methodists sought a place of integrity in the Methodist Revival Fellowship, constituted in 1984 as a standing Committee of conference as the Aldersgate Fellowship, and in 1994 renamed as the AFFIRM movement. Finally, at Conference 1997 the theological discontent deepened with the Conference approving the ordination of a homosexual minister. The decision was declared by the Conference

President in a manner which was in breach of the adopted consensus decision-making processes, with one third of the conference not in favour of the decision.

41. The Wesleyan Methodist Movement (WMM) was soon formed to co-ordinate the work of evangelicals who could not live with the 1997 Conference decision. The Wesleyan Methodist Charitable Trust was incorporated in June 1998. The 1998 Methodist Conference agreed to form an Evangelical Synod "in principle" to provide a place with some autonomy for evangelicals, but the 1999 Conference chose not to implement it due mainly to objections by a small gay/lesbian/bisexual group. Ironically this group invoked the same consensus decision-making procedures rejected in 1997 to override further debate. Intense theological and Biblical conscience issues, disillusionment over ecclesial decision-making inconsistencies, and lack of confidence and trust in national church leadership meant many evangelicals could no longer remain in the Methodist Church. Many people moved to other denominations and some congregations left the Methodist Church and formed Grace Fellowships New Zealand. Several Samoan congregations formed the Samoan Evangelical Wesleyan Methodist Church in early 2000.
42. Due to the unifying work of the Wesleyan Methodist Movement, a group of ministers and congregations decided to stay together as a multi-cultural group in the Wesleyan stream and pursue a renewed evangelical and missional future more in keeping with Scripture and Trinitarian emphases. On 18th March 2000 at a combined gathering at Trinity Methodist Church, Howick/Pakuranga Auckland, the Rev Dr Jim Ridgeway (Assistant National Superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia) led an invited delegation of Australian Wesleyan Methodist leaders which included Wayne McBeth - Pacific Area Director Global Partners of The Wesleyan Church USA). After a time of discussion and prayerful discernment the commitment was made to form the multi-cultural Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. With much celebration and joy this church was inaugurated on 2nd July 2000 at a worship service at St Anne's Catholic Church in Manurewa, Auckland. The new church was soon to include Chinese, English, Fijian, Rotuman and Tongan congregations.
43. In November 2000 the first National Conference of the WMCNZ was held at Bucklands Beach Primary School, Auckland, and a draft constitution was adopted. The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand was an indigenous church with New Zealand leadership including founding National Superintendent the Rev Edgar Hornblow. The decision was made to join the Wesleyan World Fellowship as a national church in a Mission Field Partnership with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. Over the next few years the support and encouragement of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia and in particular that of its National Superintendent, the Rev Stan Baker, was invaluable in helping our network to develop and grow.

The Early Years

46. A significant 5-year partnership was developed by the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand with the West Michigan District of The Wesleyan Church from early 2003 to 2008. This involved church to church and pastor to pastor networking and strategic assistance for church planting. Many fruitful relationships were forged and continue to this day.
47. The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand in its first decade continued to grow through church planting and evangelism. In 2003 the church joined Vision Network New Zealand (later New Zealand Christian Network) as a founding member, and in September 2004 became a member of the National Church Leaders Meeting. At a meeting in Sydney in September 2007 the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand was received as a member of the World Methodist Council (the second full member church in New Zealand).
48. On 25th August 2012 the South Pacific Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church was inaugurated in Brisbane, Australia, having been approved by the North American General Conference and the International Conference of The Wesleyan Church. This Established

Regional Conference was the first of its kind in The Wesleyan Church and brought together those national church bodies in the South Pacific that had originated in or have joined with The Wesleyan Church. The Founding President was the National Superintendent of the New Zealand National Conference the Rev Dr Richard Waugh. The purposes of the Conference are to promote holiness evangelism in the South Pacific in keeping with the mission of The Wesleyan Church; coordinate the activities of The Wesleyan Church in the South Pacific; address South Pacific concerns; promote closer fellowship and mutual understanding; and provide a means for joint planning, consultation, co-operative action, fellowship, worship and celebrate together the collective witness among all parts of The Wesleyan Church in the region. The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand together with The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bougainville and The Wesleyan Methodist Church of the Solomon Islands continues to act as an autonomous member national conference of the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Church.

E. Our Vision

- 49.** Transforming lives, churches and communities through the hope and holiness of Jesus Christ.

F. Our Calling

- 50.** As a Christ-centred Church in New Zealand in the Wesleyan stream we are called to exalt Jesus Christ by:

- (1) Equipping believers;
- (2) Developing leaders;
- (3) Multiplying churches;
- (4) Transforming communities; and
- (5) Discipling across the generations.

- 51.** Substantiation for these includes the following concepts and ideas:

- (1) To Exalt Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is evidenced in both preaching and focus. It is the foundation and focus of our evangelism, discipleship and compassion. Jesus said, "...when I am lifted up ... I will draw everyone to myself." (John 12:32). It is the heartbeat of our worship, both corporately and in the life and service of believers.

- (2) Equipping Believers

We accept the Great Commission's instruction for us to go and make disciples. This includes inviting believers to receive God's gift of the Holy Spirit, enabling them to live holy lives, fulfilling the Great Commandment to love God completely and their neighbours as themselves.

- (3) Developing Leaders

Educated and competent leadership has always been a characteristic of effective Wesleyan work and witness. We equip and empower those called to leadership in the church through an integrated training of head, heart, hand and habits expressed in the paradigm of praxis and preparation (doing and being). The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand strives to have a Godly education for our leaders which enables them to be well equipped and fruitful in ministry.

- (4) Multiplying Churches

We recognise the condition of all persons outside of the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and fully embrace the responsibility of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). This authentically expresses the passion of our Saviour, who came to seek and to save the lost.

We seek to do this by planting new congregations in New Zealand, working with other Christian groups where this will strengthen our Christian witness, as well as by actively participating in Christian mission overseas.

(5) Transforming Communities

We were born in societal reformation and affirm that holy lives bring a holy impact upon culture. This includes both evangelism and compassion. We recognise that the key to the reforming of society is the transformation of persons by the grace of God. We encourage and empower believers to allow God to transform them into new persons (Rom 12:2) and to share the benefits of the gospel with all people everywhere. We seek to influence our local communities with Christian grace and wisdom by working with, and praying for, government and other leaders.

(6) Discipling across the Generations

We value the multi-generational nature of the body of Christ and encourage each generation to disciple those who follow them (Titus 2). We value the participation of all generations including children, youth and younger adults, and are committed to resourcing people as they grow and take their place in the church today.

G. Core Values

55. The following "Core Value" statements describe who Wesleyans are and why they do what they do. They seek to describe the essence of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. They are the core values, because they are at the centre of all we do.

(1) Biblical Authority

The Bible is the highest source of written authority for God's plan and purposes; it reveals how to live out that plan, individually and corporately. Beliefs, practices and priorities are to be *always* anchored in Biblical teaching. The 'Wesleyan Quadrilateral' of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience is not an equal quadrilateral but always has Scripture as the priority.

(2) Christ-Likeness

Jesus Christ is our Saviour and Lord. In him is found the deepest meaning and clearest example for reconciliation and holy living for all humankind. Christ is both example and strength as Wesleyans pursue living lives full of grace and truth.

(3) Grace

God's grace is at the very heart of God's mission. Such prevenient, justifying and sanctifying grace is revealed by Scripture and distilled in these truths:

- a) All need to be saved (the universal need of salvation);
- b) All can be saved (salvation by grace through faith);
- c) All can know they are saved (experience of assurance);
- d) All can be saved to the uttermost (to live sanctified lives of Christlikeness).

(4) Disciple-Making

Making disciples is a clear mandate from Christ. This requires a strong focus on evangelism and training in spiritual growth and holy living. Church history, including the Wesleyan revival, demonstrates that effective small groups are vital for enabling growth and maturity among believers.

(5) The Body Of Christ

The Wesleyan Methodist Church claims and cherishes its place in the Holy Catholic Church which is the Body of Christ. We rejoice in our inheritance of the apostolic faith, accepting the principles of the historic creeds and of the Protestant Reformation.

(6) Mission-Minded Movement

We are a mission-minded movement which places local churches at the heart of mission in their contexts. Our movement is a “connexion” (a connection with the cross at the centre) encouraging one another to love God with all our heart, mind, soul & strength. Our network of local churches is joined together by common beliefs, shared vision and values and accountable practices. Our national leaders are called to equip and empower local congregations for local, national and international mission.

(7) Servant Leadership

Wesleyans respect leadership that is placed over them, while realising that the authority and effectiveness of spiritual leadership is not primarily bestowed, but earned and manifested by a loving and willing heart of obedience that serves God and humanity gladly. Wesleyans desire to be leaders in service to others.

(8) Life and Unity

Wesleyans hold dear the sanctity of life. There is intrinsic value in every human person. Unity becomes all the more important and beautiful in light of the wide ranges of difference in personality, culture, race, gender, age, talents and perspectives. Loving each other eliminates devaluation and deprivation of life.

(9) Contextual Engagement

Wesleyans are called to serve the present age. The Church respects and builds on its past without becoming its slave. Wesleyans are culturally and contextually informed for the sake of reaching people for Christ, but not captive to time or culture in the sense of surrendering core values, beliefs and behaviours. The church is multi-ethnic and respectful of the many cultures within its life and worship.

(10) Means of Grace and Works of Mercy

Wesleyans in their Christian living seek to do no harm, to do good, and to participate in the Means of Grace (Prayer, Searching the Scriptures, Holy Communion, Fasting, Conferencing with others, and Works of Mercy). We minister with the poor in loving our neighbours as ourselves.

H. Collective Conscience Statements

- 56.** These Collective Conscience Statements are a guide to assist members in responding to the issues and challenges of a fallen world which is not acting in accord with the will of God. Members are encouraged to live by these principles in order that they may make a statement to society against social evils and protect themselves and those who are young in age or faith. It must be remembered however that this list does not speak to every issue that has ever been faced, is currently being faced or will be faced and members are encouraged to use the Means of Grace ([55 \(10\)](#)) to seek the will of God for their response to such issues. These statements are listed alphabetically to reflect that there is no implied significance of one over another.
- 57. Alcohol.** The Wesleyan movement has consistently taken a counter-cultural stance on the abuse and misuse of alcohol within society. We affirm that the consumption of alcohol is not in itself sinful but that the Scriptures specifically prohibit drunkenness and the loss of control of the heart, mind, soul and strength which result. We are committed to working for justice and compassion in the areas of alcohol abuse and rehabilitation, alcohol-related legislation, alcohol industry practices and social attitudes to alcohol consumption that are injurious to health, safety and family life. We encourage our Partners to actively exercise their conscience on alcohol consumption within the Christian life including considering total abstinence, embracing Spirit-led convictions to avoid being a stumbling block to others, and boycotting industry suppliers with negative practices.

58. Creation Care and Ecological Sustainability. Wesleyan Methodists take seriously their responsibilities of caring for God's creation. Genesis 1 & 2 provides a Biblical foundation echoed throughout Scripture for such care of the earth where God creates and bestows life and calls humankind to take a stewardship role. Rev John Wesley promoted a view of salvation and healing that encompassed all of creation, including animals and nature and called for redemption and healing of all creation. We encourage individual Christians, families, and congregations to steward and care for the environment in sustainable and healthy ways.

59. Celibacy, Sexuality & Marriage. We recognise and celebrate celibacy as a high life and calling, reflective of the lives of Jesus and Paul. We encourage and celebrate the celibate lifestyle and calling where the path of marriage is not being walked. We dream of Christian community characterised by fulfilling, non-sexual, spiritual and intimate relationships as part of God's design for all people.

God's plan for human sexuality is that it is to be expressed in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage. Such a union reflects the character of God. Sexual relationships outside of marriage and sexual relationships between persons of the same sex do not reflect the scriptural pattern for Christian living and the God-ordained purpose for human sexuality.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church's position on marriage is consistent with the historic Christian perspective that marriage is expressed in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman, is a covenant union made in the sight of God and is part of the divine design for the birth and rearing of children. It is our conviction that marriage is an important foundation for our society, part of the natural order which we see evidenced in the world around us, clearly established in the Christian scriptures and fully realised in the teaching of Jesus on marriage.

60. Culture and Ethnicity. All people are of equal value in the sight of God. We treasure our heritage and culture always recognising that the Biblical principles of the Gospel are the final authority and criteria against which to affirm the appropriateness of cultural expression within our Christian lifestyle. We prioritise strategies for evangelism in ethnic communities, embrace the challenge and mission of reaching multi-generational immigrant populations, and invite every member of our local churches to move beyond traditional comfort zones in living out God's multiethnic and multicultural mandate to live as one people.

61. Domestic Violence. The Great Commandment calls us to minister to the needs of society with the love and spirit of Christ. We cannot ignore, minimise or deny the abuse that occurs in the families of our congregations and of our communities. Without intervention and help, the abuse frequently grows more severe. We must provide resources and refuge for its victims. We must call those who act abusively to accountability, repentance and change. We must engage ourselves in the response of our communities to this issue by cooperating and collaborating with community-based resources, such as refuges, counsellors, police and legal aid. We feed, clothe and weep with those who are suffering. We speak out against evil. We are committed to alleviating domestic violence and all forms of abuse and to providing refuge and care to those who have become its victims. We recognise and accept our Biblical responsibility to offer the redemptive transformation of Jesus Christ to perpetrators of violence and abuse, as well as hope and healing to its victims.

64. Gambling. We oppose gambling as it does not reflect Biblical stewardship and encourages the vice of greed. This includes gambling through the TAB, casinos, lotteries, online gambling outlets and similar services. We encourage Partners to exercise their personal conscience when it comes to community fundraising activities that include an element of chance, for example raffles, and to weigh the opportunity for charity against the

temptation to greed. We are committed to working alongside the victims of gambling and to championing appropriate legislative regulation to mitigate harm within the community.

65. Human Trafficking, Slavery & Exploitation. We are committed to eliminating human trafficking, slavery and exploitation in all its forms. We recognise and accept our Biblical responsibility to those who are weak, oppressed, powerless, helpless and exploited; our duty of advocacy for those who cannot speak for themselves; and the need to raise our prophetic voice in loud protest against the profoundly evil personal and social sin of human trafficking and slavery. We will demonstrate our concern and compassion locally, nationally and internationally by:

- (1) Praying earnestly for the end of human trafficking, slavery and exploitation;
- (2) Becoming aware of what is happening within our own country in these areas;
- (3) Raising awareness about human trafficking, slavery and potential Christian responses, availing ourselves of training materials and providing leadership in this capacity;
- (4) Providing avenues of healing to victims;
- (5) Advocating on the part of the victims as well as for laws that need to be enacted to end human trafficking, slavery and exploitation;
- (6) Raising awareness (including through preaching) on related issues including the demand in sex trafficking for pornography, internet porn, forced or sweatshop labour, entitlements to abuse those of lesser status;
- (7) Supporting the prosecution of buyers and consumers of trafficked and enslaved persons.

66. Leisure and Entertainment. We encourage leisure activities, sport, fun and entertainment that develop a healthy body, mind and spirit. We oppose activities that encourage undue violence or the abuse of the body, mind or spirit, which together are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We encourage our Partners and the parents of youth and children to set life-giving personal boundaries around television, films, literature, computer gaming and social media.

67. Pornography. We affirm the beauty of healthy sexual identity and practice as a God-breathed unifier that strengthens the bond of marriage. The creation, distribution and viewing of pornography is incompatible with the Biblical witness. Pornography is a distortion of healthy sexual identity and practice which can lead to devastating long term psychological and physiological effects. The pornography industry is a commercially motivated degradation of human dignity with a particularly serious impact on women and children many of whom find themselves in trafficked or other coercive circumstances. We stand against pornography, the industry that develops and promotes it and the injustice it perpetuates. We offer support and accountability to those struggling to be free from pornography use and addiction.

68. Responsible Citizenship. We are to be responsible citizens, seeking by example, word and action to lead society towards Christian ideals, both nationally and within the global village. We need to be informed and involved in opposing social evils, social harms, injustice and inequality and in promoting a godly society where people are mutually supportive and live in harmony and respect.

71. Substance Abuse. We oppose the use of illegal drugs. We discourage the use of tobacco as it is injurious to health. We recognise that Kava may be acceptable for ceremonial occasions or on medical advice but not for regular life and practice.

72. Treaty of Waitangi. The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand acknowledges and celebrates the significant role of the early British Wesleyan missionaries in the negotiation, drafting and signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (28). We recognise that the Treaty is a covenant made between the Crown and Maori and continue to call on the Treaty Partners to honour the terms of this covenant.

73. Work and Employment. We seek as a community of faith to ensure that all have an adequate standard of living, not obsessed with the greed of a consumer society, but working towards a community where there is no one in need for the essentials of life. We believe in adequate and fair remuneration for responsible work and co-operation between employer and employee.

PART II

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

Handbook Structure

80. The Constitution. Paragraphs 80-185 of *The Handbook* contain the Constitution of the South Pacific Regional Conference of the Wesleyan Church. Some sections of the Constitution cannot be amended without the approval of the International Conference. Amendments to the Constitution shall be effected in the following ways:

- (1) A proposed amendment may originate through a District Conference, a National Conference, a National Board/Council or the Regional Board. The amendment shall be forwarded to the Regional Secretary through whom it shall be forwarded to each Member National Conference, for vote but not for amendment.

Multi-District Conferences

- (2) Where the National Conference consists of multiple District Conferences, each District Conference shall vote and the amendment shall require a majority vote to pass that Conference.
 - a) The Secretary of each District Conference shall advise the National Secretary in writing of the result of the District Conference vote within fourteen days of the result. Informing subsequent District Conferences of these concluded votes prior to their own vote shall be discouraged.
 - b) A two thirds majority of the several District Conferences shall be required for the amendment to proceed to the National Conference, where a two-thirds majority vote shall be required for approval.

Single-District Conferences

- (3) Where the National Conference does not include multiple Districts, a two-thirds majority vote of the National Conference shall be required for the amendment to pass.

Regional Process

- (4) Once all National Conferences have voted and advised the Regional Secretary of the result, the Regional Secretary shall advise each National Superintendent and National Secretary and the Regional President in writing of the conclusion, including the names of which National Conferences approved and which National Conferences disapproved the amendment.
- (5) The amendment shall require the approval of all Member National Conferences to pass.
- (6) Mission Units shall be governed by their sponsoring National Conference and shall not be required to vote on amendments to the Constitution.

Exceptions

- (7) The amendment shall take effect with the written notification of the Regional Secretary and shall be included in the next publication of *The Handbook*, except where the amendment requires the approval of the International Conference as follows:
 - a) If the amendment seeks to change the Membership Requirements (130-155), it shall require approval of the International Board. The Regional Secretary shall submit proposals for membership changes, duly approved by the Member National

Conferences, to the Secretary of the International Board. Changes shall not be implemented until approval is granted.

- b) If the amendment seeks to change The Essentials, including the Articles of Religion (103-126), it shall require subsequent approval of the several General Conferences worldwide. International approval shall be sought by first forwarding the proposed amendment to the North American General Conference. The Regional Secretary shall submit such proposals, duly approved by the Member National Conferences, to the Secretary of the General Board and the proposed amendment shall not be implemented until approval is granted.

(8) National Conferences are approved to adjust numbering and cross-referencing when publishing the Constitution in their own *Handbook*.

(9) National Conferences are approved to use either of the terms *National Board* or *National Council* when publishing their *Handbook*, or to use the inclusive term *National Board/Council*.

81. Statutory Law. The remaining portions of *The Handbook* from Part I to Part X shall be Statutory Law for the government of the National, District and Local Churches of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and may vary from National Conference to National Conference.

(1) Amendments to Statutory Law shall be achieved by majority vote of the respective National Conference according to the regulations prescribed in The Handbook.

(2) Statutory Law remains in effect until amended, rescinded, or declared unconstitutional. Statutory Law has precedence over all District or National Conference actions or Standing Rules.

82. Ritual and Other.

(1) **Ritual.** The Ritual of the Wesleyan Methodist Church consists of those rites and ceremonies contained in *The Handbook* of the Wesleyan Methodist Church as approved by the National Board/Council.

(2) **Other.** Various other Forms, Standards, Policy Documents and Charters are included as appendices for information.

100. The most recent publication of *The Handbook*, duly authorised by the National Board/Council, has authority for the Wesleyan Methodist Church and supersedes all previous editions of *The Handbook* or any other publications.

A. The Articles of the Constitution

Preamble

101. There shall be an Established Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church in the South Pacific for the purpose of promoting holiness evangelism in the South Pacific in keeping with the mission of The Wesleyan Church, coordinating the activities of The Wesleyan Church in the South Pacific, addressing South Pacific concerns, promoting closer fellowship and mutual understanding, and providing a means for joint planning, consultation, co-operative action, fellowship, worship and generally celebrating together the collective witness among all units of The Wesleyan Church in the region. The South Pacific Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church shall consist of those bodies in the South Pacific that have originated in or have joined with The Wesleyan Church, that have been formally received by vote of the Regional Conference, and that are functioning under the authority of the Regional Constitution. Provision may also be made for Associate Members to be received which have not originated in or joined with The Wesleyan Church, but which are in harmony with The Essentials of The Wesleyan Church.

- (1) The constituent national churches of this Conference at its inauguration were The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand, The Wesleyan Methodist Church of the Solomon Islands and The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bougainville.
- (2) A full list of current members of this Conference is available from the Regional Secretary.

Article I. Name

- 102.** The official name of this Organisation shall be The South Pacific Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church. Recognising the importance and significance of the term “Methodist” in the South Pacific, it shall be referred to as the South Pacific Conference of The Wesleyan Methodist Church in regional communications. Each Member National Conference shall have authority to determine its own name and the name(s) to be used within its constituency.

Article II. Articles of Religion

1. Faith in the Holy Trinity

- 103.** We believe in the one living and true God, both holy and loving, eternal, unlimited in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things. Within this unity there are three persons of one essential nature, power and eternity — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Gen 1:1; Ex. 3:13-15,33:20; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 90:2; Isa. 40:28-29; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; John 1:1-2; 4:24;16:13; 17:3; Acts 5:3-4;17:24-25; I Cor. 8:4, 6; Eph. 2:18; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:16-17; I Tim. 1:17; Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20.

2. The Father

- 104.** We believe the Father is the Source of all that exists, whether of matter or spirit. With the Son and the Holy Spirit, He made man, male and female, in His image. By intention He relates to people as Father, thereby forever declaring His goodwill toward them. In love, He both seeks and receives penitent sinners.

Ps. 68:5; Isa. 64:8; Matt. 7:11; John 3:17; Rom. 8:15; I Peter 1:17.

3. The Son of God

- 105.** We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, truly God and truly man. He died on the cross and was buried, to be a sacrifice both for original sin and for all human transgressions, and to reconcile us to God. Christ rose bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and there intercedes for us at the Father’s right hand until He returns to judge all humanity at the last day.

Ps. 16:8-10; Matt. 1:21, 23; 11:27; 16:28; 27:62-66;28:5-9, 16-17; Mark 10:45; 15; 16:6-7; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; 24:4-8, 23; John 1:1, 14,18; 3:16-17; 20:26-29; 21; Acts 1:2-3; 2:24-31; 4:12; 10:40; Rom. 5:10, 18; 8:34; 14:9; I Cor. 15:3-8, 14; II Cor. 5:18-19; Gal. 1:4;2:20; 4:4-5; Eph. 5:2; I Tim. 1:15; Heb 2:17; 7:27;9:14, 28; 10:12;13:20; I Peter 2:24; I John 2:2; 4:14.

4. The Holy Spirit

- 106.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is of the same essential nature, majesty, and glory, as the Father and the Son, truly and eternally

God. He is the Administrator of grace to all, and is particularly the effective Agent in conviction for sin, in regeneration, in sanctification, and in glorification. He is ever present, assuring, preserving, guiding, and enabling the believer.

Job 33:4; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13-15; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 8:9; II Cor. 3:17; Gal. 4:6.

5. The Sufficiency and Full Authority of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

107. We believe that the books of the Old and New Testaments constitute the Holy Scriptures. They are the inspired and infallibly written Word of God, fully inerrant in their original manuscripts and superior to all human authority, and have been transmitted to the present without corruption of any essential doctrine. We believe that they contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man or woman that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. Both in the Old and New Testaments life is offered ultimately through Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and humanity. The New Testament teaches Christians how to fulfill the moral principles of the Old Testament, calling for loving obedience to God made possible by the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit.

The canonical 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 and Malachi.

The canonical 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 and Revelation.

Ps. 19:7; Matt. 5:17-19; 22:37-40; Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:45; 5:46; 17:17; Acts 17:2, 11; Rom. 1:2; 15:4, 8; 16:26; II Cor. 1:20; Gal. 1:8; Eph. 2:15-16; I Tim. 2:5; II Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 10:1; 11:39; James 1:21; I Peter 1:23; II Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:3-7; Rev. 22:18-19.

6. God's Purpose for Humanity

108. We believe that the two great commandments which require us to love the Lord our God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves, summarize the divine law as it is revealed in the Scriptures. They are the perfect measure and norm of human duty, both for the ordering and directing of families and nations, and all other social bodies, and for individual acts, by which we are required to acknowledge God as our only Supreme Ruler, and all persons as created by Him, equal in all natural rights. Therefore all persons should so order all their individual, social and political acts as to give to God entire and absolute obedience, and to assure to all the enjoyment of every natural right, as well as to promote the fulfillment of each in the possession and exercise of such rights.

Lev. 19:18, 34; Deut. 1:16-17; Job 31: 13-14; Jer. 21:12; 22:3; Micah 6:8; Matt. 5:44-48; 7:12; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:27-29, 35; John 13:34-35; Acts 10:34-35; 17:26; Rom. 12:9; 13:1, 7-8, 10; Gal. 5:14; 6:10; Titus 3:1; James 2:8; I Peter 2:17; I John 2:5; 4:12-13; II John 6.

7. Marriage and the Family

109. We believe that every person is created in the image of God, that human sexuality reflects that image in terms of intimate love, communication, fellowship, subordination of the self to the larger whole, and fulfillment. God's Word makes use of the marriage relationship as the supreme metaphor for His relationship with His covenant people and for revealing the truth that that relationship is of one God with one people. Therefore God's plan for human sexuality is that it is to be expressed only in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage. This is the only relationship which is divinely designed for the birth and rearing of children and is a covenant union made in the sight of God, taking priority over every other human relationship.

Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18, 20, 23, 24; Isa. 54: 4-8; 62:5b; Jer. 3:14; Ezek. 16:3ff.; Hosea 2; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:9; John 2:1-2, 11; I Tim. 5:14; I Cor. 9:5; Eph. 5:23-32; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 19:7-8.

8. Personal Choice

110. We believe that humanity's creation in the image of God included ability to choose between right and wrong. Thus individuals were made morally responsible for their choices. But since the fall of Adam, people are unable in their own strength to do the right. This is due to original sin, which is not simply the following of Adam's example, but rather the corruption of the nature of each mortal, and is reproduced naturally in Adam's descendants. Because of it, humans are very far gone from original righteousness, and by nature are continually inclined to evil. They cannot of themselves even call upon God or exercise faith for salvation. But through Jesus Christ the prevenient grace of God makes possible what humans in self effort cannot do. It is bestowed freely upon all, enabling all who will to turn and be saved.

Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; I Kings 20:40; Ps. 51:5; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Luke 16:15; John 7:17; Rom. 3:10- 12; 5:12-21; I Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1-3; I Tim. 2:5; Titus 3:5; Heb. 11:6; Rev. 22:17.

9. The Atonement

111. We believe that Christ's offering of himself, once and for all, through His sufferings and meritorious death on the cross, provides the perfect redemption and atonement for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual. There is no other ground of salvation from sin but that alone. This atonement is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. It is unconditionally effective in the salvation of those mentally incompetent from birth, of those converted persons who have become mentally incompetent, and of children under the age of accountability. But it is effective for the salvation of those who reach the age of accountability only when they repent and exercise faith in Christ.

Isa. 52:13-53:12; Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16; Acts 3:18; 4:12; Rom. 3:20, 24-26; 5:8-11, 13, 18-20; 7:7; 8:34; I Cor. 6:11; 15:22; Gal. 2:16; 3:2-3; Eph. 1:7; 2:13, 16; I Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 7:23-27; 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:14; I John 2:2; 4:10.

10. Repentance and Faith

112. We believe that for men and women to appropriate what God's prevenient grace has made possible, they must voluntarily respond in repentance and faith. The ability comes from God, but the act is the individual's.

Repentance is prompted by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. It involves a willful change of mind that renounces sin and longs for righteousness, a godly sorrow for and a confession of past sins, proper restitution for wrongdoings, and a resolution to reform the life. Repentance is the precondition for saving faith, and without it saving faith is

impossible. Faith, in turn, is the only condition of salvation. It begins in the agreement of the mind and the consent of the will to the truth of the gospel, but issues in a complete reliance by the whole person in the saving ability of Jesus Christ and a complete trusting of oneself to Him as Savior and Lord. Saving faith is expressed in a public acknowledgment of His Lordship and an identification with His Church.

Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:3; 24:47; John 3:16; 17:20; 20:31; Acts 5:31; 10:43; 11:18; 16:31; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 1:16; 2:4; 10:8-10,17; Gal.3:26; Eph.2:8; 4:4-6; Phil.3:9; II Thess. 2:13; II Tim.2:25; Heb.11:6; 12:2; I Peter 1:9; II Peter 3:9.

11. Justification, Regeneration and Adoption

- 113.** We believe that when one repents of personal sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that at the same moment that person is justified, regenerated, adopted into the family of God, and assured of personal salvation through the witness of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that justification is the judicial act of God whereby a person is accounted righteous, granted full pardon of all sin, delivered from guilt, completely released from the penalty of sins committed, by the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith alone, not on the basis of works.

We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is that work of the Holy Spirit whereby, when one truly repents and believes, one's moral nature is given a distinctively spiritual life with the capacity for love and obedience. This new life is received by faith in Jesus Christ, it enables the pardoned sinner to serve God with the will and affections of the heart, and by it the regenerate are delivered from the power of sin which reigns over all the unregenerate.

We believe that adoption is the act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer becomes a partaker of all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a child of God.

Justification: *Hab. 2:4; Acts 13:38-39; 15:11; 16:31; Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 4:2-5; 5:1-2; Gal. 3:6-14; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil 3:9; Heb. 10:38.*

Regeneration: *John 1:12-13; 3:3; 5-8; 11 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:5, 10, 19; 4:24; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; I Peter 1:3-4; II Peter 1:4; I John 3:1.*

Adoption: *Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5, 7; Eph.1:5.*

Witness of the Spirit: *Rom. 8:16-17; Gal. 4:6; John 2:3; 3:14; 18-19.*

12. Good Works

- 115.** We believe that although good works cannot save us from our sins or from God's judgment, they are the fruit of faith and follow after regeneration. Therefore they are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and by them a living faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

Matt. 5:16; 7:16-20; John 15:8; Rom. 3:20; 4:2, 4:6; Gal. 2:16; 5:6; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10; I Thess. 1:3; Titus 2:14; 3:5; James 2:18,22; I Peter 2:9,12.

13. Sin after Regeneration

- 116.** We believe that after we have experienced regeneration, it is possible to fall into sin, for in this life there is no such height or strength of holiness from which it is impossible to fall. But by the grace of God one who has fallen into sin may by true repentance and faith find forgiveness and restoration.

Mal. 3:7; Matt. 18:21-22; John 15:4-6; I Tim. 4:1, 16; Heb. 10:35-39; I John 1:9; 2:1, 24-25.

14. Sanctification: Initial, Progressive, Entire

117. We believe that sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is separated from sin unto God and is enabled to love God with all the heart and to walk in all His holy commandments blameless. Sanctification is initiated at the moment of justification and regeneration. From that moment there is a gradual or progressive sanctification as the believer walks with God and daily grows in grace and in a more perfect obedience to God. This prepares for the crisis of entire sanctification which is wrought instantaneously when believers present themselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, being effected by the baptism with the Holy Spirit who cleanses the heart from all inbred sin. The crisis of entire sanctification perfects the believer in love and empowers that person for effective service. It is followed by lifelong growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The life of holiness continues through faith in the sanctifying blood of Christ and evidences itself by loving obedience to God's revealed will.

Gen. 17:1; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 130:8; Isa. 6:1-6; Ezek. 36:25-29; Matt. 5:8, 48; Luke 1:74-75; 3:16-17; 24:49; John 17:1-26; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4; 15:8-9; 26:18; Rom. 8:3-4; I Cor. 1:2; 6:11; II Cor. 7:1; Eph.4:13, 24; 5:25-27; I Thess. 3:10, 12-13; 4:3, 7-8; 5:23-24; II Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 10:14; 12:14; 13:12; James 3:17-18; 4:8; I Peter 1:2; II Peter 1:4; I John 1:7, 9; 3:8-9; 4:17-18; Jude 24.

15. The Gifts of the Spirit

118. We believe that the Gift of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit himself, and He is to be desired more than the gifts of the Spirit which He in His wise counsel bestows upon individual members of the Church to enable them properly to fulfill their function as members of the body of Christ. The gifts of the Spirit, although not always identifiable with natural abilities, function through them for the edification of the whole Church. These gifts are to be exercised in love under the administration of the Lord of the Church, not through human volition. The relative value of the gifts of the Spirit is to be tested by their usefulness in the Church and not by the ecstasy produced in the ones receiving them.

Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:38-39; 8:19-20; 10:45; 11:17; Rom. 12:4-8; I Cor. 12:1-14:40; Eph. 4:7-8, 11-16; Heb. 2:4; 13:20-21; I Peter 4:8-11.

16. The Church

119. We believe that the Christian Church is the entire body of believers in Jesus Christ, who is the founder and only Head of the Church. The Church includes both those believers who have gone to be with the Lord and those who remain on the earth, having renounced the world, the flesh and the devil, and having dedicated themselves to the work which Christ committed unto His church until He comes. The Church on earth is to preach the pure Word of God, properly administer the sacraments according to Christ's instructions, and live in obedience to all that Christ commands. A local church is a body of believers formally organized on gospel principles, meeting regularly for the purposes of evangelism, nurture, fellowship and worship. The Wesleyan Church is a denomination consisting of those members within district conferences and local churches who, as members of the body of Christ, hold the faith set forth in these Articles of Religion and acknowledge the ecclesiastical authority of its governing bodies.

Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:41-47; 9:31; 11:22; 12:5; 14:23; 15:22; 20:28; I Cor. 1:2; 12:28; 16:1; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:9-10, 21; 5:22-33; Col. 1:18, 24; I Thess. 1:1; II Thess. 1:1; I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23; James 5:14.

17. The Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

- 120.** We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ and ordained as a means of grace when received through faith. They are 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

We believe that water baptism is a sacrament of the church, commanded by our Lord and administered to believers. It is a symbol of the new covenant of grace and signifies acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ. By means of this sacrament, believers declare their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 3:5, 22, 26; 4:1-2; Acts 2:38-39, 41; 8:12-17, 36-38; 9:18; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom 2:28-29; 4:11; 6:3-4; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27-29; Col. 2:11-12; Titus 3:5.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death and of our hope in His victorious return, as well as a sign of the love that Christians have for each other. To such as receive it humbly, with a proper spirit and by faith, the Lord's Supper is made a means through which God communicates grace to the heart.

Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; John 6:48-58; I Cor. 5:7-8; 10:3-4, 16-17; 11:23-29.

18. The Second Coming of Christ

- 123.** We believe that the certainty of the personal and imminent return of Christ inspires holy living and zeal for the evangelization of the world. At His return He will fulfill all prophecies made concerning His final and complete triumph over evil.

Job 19:25-27; Isa. 11:1-12; Zech. 14:1-11; Matt. 24:1-51; 25; 26:64; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 17:22-37; 21:5-36; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:6-11; I Cor. 1:7-8; I Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11, 23; II Thess. 1:6-10; 2:1-12; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 9:27-28; James 5:7-8; II Peter 3:1-14; I John 3:2-3; Rev. 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:6-7, 12, 20.

19. The Resurrection of the Dead

- 124.** We believe in the bodily resurrection from the dead of all people—of the just unto the resurrection of life, and of the unjust unto the resurrection of damnation. The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of the resurrection which will occur at Christ's Second Coming. The raised body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable.

Job 19:25-27; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 22:30-32; 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 14:14; 24:1-53; John 5:28-29; 11:21-27; 20:1--21:25; Acts 1:3; Rom. 8:11; I Cor. 6:14; 15:1-58; II Cor. 4:14; 5:1-11; I Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 20:4-6, 11-13.

20. The Judgement of All Persons

- 125.** We believe that the Scriptures reveal God as the Judge of all and the acts of His judgment are based on His omniscience and eternal justice. His administration of judgment will culminate in the final meeting of all persons before His throne of great majesty and power, where records will be examined and final rewards and punishments will be administered.

Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 10:15; 25:31-46; Luke 11:31-32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10; II Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27; II Peter 3:7; Rev. 20:11-13.

21. Destiny

- 126.** We believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that there is a conscious personal existence after death. The final destiny of each person is determined by God's grace and

that person's response, evidenced inevitably by a moral character which results from that individual's personal and volitional choices and not from any arbitrary decree of God. Heaven with its eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence is the final abode of those who choose the salvation which God provides through Jesus Christ, but hell with its everlasting misery and separation from God is the final abode of those who neglect this great salvation.

Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:34-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 13:3; John 8:21-23; 14:2-3; II Cor. 5:6, 8, 10; Heb. 2:1-3; 9:27-28; 10:26-31; Rev. 20:14-15; 21:1-22:5, 14-15.

Article III. Observance of Sacraments

127. All persons to be baptised shall have the choice of baptism by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling. Since children are born into this world with natures inclined to sin, and yet the prevenient grace of God provides for their redemption during the period before reaching the age of accountability, those parents who so choose may testify to their faith in God's provision by presenting their small children for baptism, while those who prefer to emphasise baptism as a testimony by believers to their own act of faith may present their children for dedication.

Mark 10:13-16; Acts 2:38-39; 16:15; 18:8.

128. The Lord's Supper shall usually be observed in each local Wesleyan Methodist Church monthly.

Article IV. Membership

130. Preamble. When Jesus finished his ministry on earth he left us with a command. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19,20). These verses emphasise the twin issues of evangelism and discipleship. However, the Church is more than a recruitment and training organisation. What makes us a church is more than what we do – it is that we do it together. The Church is more than an organisation – it is a community. It is a place where people can belong and grow in their relationship with God.

It is our belief and practice that The Wesleyan Methodist Church is not a collection of independent churches unrelated to each other, nor merely an association of churches, but a family of believers connected by our identity in Christ and our relationship with one another. Membership serves as a common bond within our diversity. The commitments of membership contribute to the process of spiritual development, subsequent to conversion and leading to maturity in Christ. To enhance the discipleship process of maturing toward Christ-likeness, membership is used as a means of accountability. The accountability used within the community of faith is based on the primary and final authority of the Scriptures (Luke 17:3; Matt. 18:15), while also acknowledging the role of tradition, experience, and reason in shaping the historic values reflected in the Collective Conscience Statements. Membership becomes the channel whereby people are disciplined and equipped to minister in the Church and as a witness to the world at large.

131. Categories of Membership. While membership by its very nature is covenantal, embracing commitments and affording opportunities, a practical distinction may be made by National Conferences between covenant membership as a full commitment to the Wesleyan Methodist movement, and community membership as a commitment to partnership and participation in a local church.

A. Covenant Membership

132. Covenant Membership commitments. While the Church acknowledges that a personal acceptance of the gift of God's forgiveness and grace incorporates a believer into the family of God, it also acknowledges the need for an ongoing commitment to growth and a set of agreed principles to follow.

In order to become a Covenant Member of The Wesleyan Methodist Church the following requirements must be met. Although a commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord is the beginning of our life as a Christian, the other requirements below are not necessarily sequential. Disregard of the principles embraced in these membership commitments subjects a Member to church discipline.

133. A commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord. Without an acceptance of the consequences of sin (Romans 6:23), and the remedy for it (Acts 3:19), it is impossible to have a relationship with God or be a Member of the Church Universal. Thus these are essential for membership in the local church. Jesus said, "I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3 NLT). When a person turns from sin and receives Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord that person is saved and instantly accepted into the family of God (John 1:12). This is witnessed by the act of baptism, which is an outward demonstration that your life and priorities have changed and that you now belong to Jesus. In The Wesleyan Methodist Church, salvation and baptism are essential for church membership.

134. A commitment to ongoing growth towards Christ-likeness. In the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20) Jesus called his followers to go and make disciples. While this involves evangelism it includes much more. The concept of discipleship was to produce followers who were like their Master – followers who were hard to distinguish from the one they followed. The implication for the Church is profound. It is our goal as a church and as individuals to become progressively more like Christ.

This call to holy living is the substance of sanctification. Sanctification begins at the point of salvation. From that moment there is a gradual or progressive sanctification as the believer walks with God and daily grows in grace. This prepares the believer for the entire sanctification which occurs when the believer presents himself or herself as a living sacrifice and is cleansed from sin and filled with love for God and neighbour (Rom. 6:3-11; Eph. 2:4-6; Gal. 5:16-25; Col. 3:1, 2; Rom. 8:2-4, 13). This emphasis on growth includes a commitment to live in obedience to the Bible and to be accountable to the community of faith.

The following are some measurable ways to demonstrate growth towards Christ-likeness, and are minimal commitments for membership in The Wesleyan Methodist Church:

- (1) To regularly attend church to worship and glorify God, to live in fellowship with those who attend, and to be encouraged and challenged in your spiritual growth. This often includes involvement in a small group within your local church.
Gen 2:3; Ex. 20:3, 7-11; Deut. 5:11-15; Isa. 58:13-14; Mark 2:27; Acts 2:42-47; 20:7; Heb. 4:9; 10:25.
- (2) To use your God-given talents and spiritual gifts to minister in and through the church so that the congregation may be built up.
Rom 12:3-8; 1Cor 12:4-11; Heb 2:4; Eph 4:11-13.
- (3) To use your time carefully and responsibly in order to maximise your spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical well-being, including the principle of one day's rest in seven.
Gen 2:3; Isa. 58:13-14; Eph. 5:16; Col. 3:17.
- (4) To use your material wealth wisely, giving due consideration to the Biblical principle of tithing into the work of the local church and to giving to those in need.

Prov. 3:9; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 23:53; 25:34-40; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7; James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17

- (5) To do all you can to advance the kingdom of God. To be willing to both receive and give help so that as believers we can grow in our relationship to God and each other.
Rom. 15:1-2; Eph. 4; 1 Thess. 5.
- (6) To read and study the Bible, worship God, take the Lord's Supper, pray, and to fast when necessary.
Mark 2:18-20; Acts 13:2-3; 14:23; Rom. 12:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 10:25; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18.
- (7) To abstain from all forms of spiritism, such as witchcraft, astrology and the like, and membership in any secret society.
Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deut. 18:10-14; Acts 19:18-19; Gal. 5:19-20.
- (8) To abide by the Scriptural teaching regarding marriage. This includes the affirmation that heterosexual monogamy is God's plan for marriage and that sex outside of marriage – including adultery, bestiality, incest and homosexual practice is sinful. We believe however that the grace of God is sufficient to overcome both the practice of such activity and the propensity leading to such practices.
Lev. 20:10-16; 1 Cor. 6:9-10.
- (9) To minister to the poor, the vulnerable and those otherwise disadvantaged as mandated in the Scriptures and modelled by Christ.
Deut. 10:17-18; Job 31:13-23; Prov. 14:31; Mic. 6:8; Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 3:13; 10:23-25; James 1:27.

135. A commitment to a life guided by the Holy Spirit's power and the Word of God.

To assist people in holy living and to enable a lifestyle of growth, the following set of filter questions will help guide you in your decisions about what is appropriate for a Spirit-guided Christ-like life. Further assistance can be found by reading the section entitled Collective Conscience Statements.

- (1) Is the action Helpful, beneficial or constructive for me? Does the action contravene any clear teaching of Scripture? Does the Scripture speak to the issue at hand to offer me protection from harm (2 Tim 2:16)? Does it cause me to grow spiritually or help others grow (1 Cor. 6:12a; 10:23)? Does the action pull me away from God or draw me to him (Matt. 15:8; Heb. 3:7-19; James 1:14, 15)? Does the action make me less interested in spiritual things?
- (2) Is the action a Habit? Is it an addictive behaviour? Does it hold me in its power? Do I feel that I need this to be happy and fulfilled? Does it control my thoughts or actions (1 Cor. 6:12b)? Does the action keep me from being fully engaged as a human being? Does it impair my judgement? Does it cloud my thinking? Does it stop me being in charge of all my faculties (1 Cor. 5:12, Eph 5:18)? Does it control me or am I in control?
- (3) Is the action Hurtful for myself or for another Christian who is young in age or faith? Does the action violate what I experience as my conscience? Do I feel that it is wrong in my spirit (Rom. 2:15, 13:5, 1 Cor. 8:7, 1 Tim. 1:5, 1 Tim. 4:2)? If it passes the test of my own conscience, will doing it hurt someone else and cause them to be tempted to go against their conscience? Is it hurtful for a non-Christian? Could my behaviour cause a non-Christian to ignore the gospel or disregard Christ (1 Cor. 8:13; 10:24-11:1)?
- (4) Is the action Honouring to God? Glorifying God means to give God his rightful place, to please him by seeking his interests. In doing it, would I bring glory to God or dishonour to him (1 Cor. 10:31)? Does the action identify you as a follower of Christ or

of the world? Will it make you more “of the world” rather than simply “in the world” (John 17)?

Susanna Wesley proposed a definition of sin that is helpful in determining the kind of actions that may be detrimental to spiritual well-being and may also be helpful in determining actions that are appropriate or inappropriate. She said, “Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, that thing is sin to you however innocent it may be of itself.”

The answers to these filter questions and the careful reading of the following Scriptures are designed to test any activity as to whether that activity draws us closer to God or away from Him.

Scriptures helpful in determining what actions are in step with the Spirit:

Matt. 5:1-7:29, John 15:1-17, Rom. 12:1-15:13 particularly 14:22,23, 1 Cor. 6:19,20; 8:1-13, 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, Gal. 5:16-24; 6:1-4,7,8, Eph. 4:1-5:21, Phil. 1:27-2:16; 4:4-9, Col. 2:16-3:17, 1 Thess. 4:1-12; 5:12-22, Heb. 13:1-17, James 3:13-18, 1 Peter 1:13-2:3, 2 Peter 1:1-15.

A commitment to living a life guided by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, in the light of the filter questions and the Collective Conscience Statements, is at the heart of covenant membership.

136. Acceptance of the Articles of Religion, Elementary Principles and the authority of *The Handbook* in matters of Church Government. In any organisation there is a need for some uniformity – some commonly held beliefs. In The Wesleyan Methodist Church these include our Mission and our Articles of Religion. The Mission states our purpose as a Church, and the Articles state our core beliefs and doctrines.

(1) **Articles of Religion.** The Articles of Religion (103-126) of The Wesleyan Methodist Church are our commonly held doctrines and beliefs. Candidates for covenant membership shall affirm the Articles of Religion as summarised in the following statement:

- a) We believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus Christ the Son suffered in our place on the cross, that he died but rose again, that he now sits at the Father’s right hand until he returns to judge all men at the last day.
- b) We believe in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God.
- c) We believe that by the grace of God every person has the ability and responsibility to choose between right and wrong, and that those who repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified by faith.
- d) We believe that God both counts and makes the believer righteous; that at conversion God frees the believer from the dominion of sin, purifies the heart by faith and perfects the believer in love at and through sanctification, and that God provides for the believer’s growth in grace at every stage of their spiritual life, enabling the believer through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to live a victorious life.

(2) **Elementary Principles.** These are the basic principles of The Wesleyan Methodist Church:

- a) Christ is the only Head of the Church, and the Word of God the only rule of faith and conduct.
- b) No person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and obeys the gospel of God our Saviour, ought to be deprived of church membership.

- c) The pastoral or ministerial office and duties are of divine appointment, and all Ordained Ministers in the Church of God are equal; but Ministers are forbidden to be lords over God's heritage, or to have dominion over the faith of the saints.
- d) It is the duty of all Ministers and members of the Church to maintain godliness and oppose all moral evil.
- e) It is obligatory upon Ministers of the gospel to be faithful in the discharge of their pastoral and ministerial duties, and it is also obligatory upon the members to esteem Ministers highly for the works' sake, and to render them a righteous compensation for their labours.
- f) The Church has a right to form and enforce such rules and regulations only as are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and may be necessary or have a tendency to carry into effect the great system of practical Christianity.
- g) All persons have an inalienable right to private judgement in matters of religion, and an equal right to express their opinions in any way which will not violate the laws of God or the rights of their fellowman.
- h) All church trials should be conducted on gospel principles only; and no Minister or Member should be dismissed or removed except for immorality, the propagation of unchristian doctrines, or for neglect of duties enjoined by the Scriptures.
- i) Whatever power may be necessary to the formation of rules and regulations is inherent in the Ministers and members of the church; but so much of that power may be delegated from time to time, upon a plan of representation, as they may judge necessary and proper.
- j) Members should not hold membership in any other church and must not hold membership in any secret society (152:2). We regard secret societies as quasi-religious in nature. Belonging to such organisations divides the Christian's loyalty and their secret nature contravenes the Christian's open witness. *Ex. 20:3; Matt. 5:34-36; John 18:20; Acts 4:12; James 5:12.*

Acceptance of the Articles of Religion, Elementary Principles and the authority of *The Handbook* in matters of church government is a commitment expected of covenant membership.

138. Summary of Covenant Membership conditions.

- (1) Confession of a personal experience of salvation, and a commitment to grow in grace and heart holiness.
- (2) Christian baptism.
- (3) Acceptance of the Articles of Religion as summarised in [136:1](#), the Membership Commitments ([132-135](#)), the Elementary Principles ([136:2](#)), and the authority of *The Handbook* in matters of church government.
- (4) A covenant to support the local church, to live in fellowship with the members thereof, and to seek God's glory in all things.
- (5) The approving vote of the members of the receiving church as provided for in Statutory Law.

140. The rights of Covenant Membership are:

- (1) The fellowship of the saints and the encouragement, admonition, and spiritual guidance of the ministry.
- (2) The access to the sacraments and means of grace of the Church.
- (3) The right to vote and the eligibility to hold any office for which a person in covenant membership is eligible, if not under discipline.

- (4) The right to trial and appeal if charged with failure to maintain the conditions of membership, with the specific provision that joining another religious body shall of itself sever membership in the church.
- (5) Members in good standing in any Wesleyan Methodist Church are entitled to membership privileges in any other Wesleyan Methodist Church to which they may wish to transfer their membership, subject to [138:5](#).
- (6) Any Covenant Member charged with failure to uphold the Articles of Religion or to observe the membership Commitments must be dealt with by judicial process as given in The Handbook.

141. Termination of Covenant Membership. Covenant membership in The Wesleyan Methodist Church may be terminated only by one or more of the following:

- (1) Voluntary withdrawal.
- (2) Joining another religious body, or joining a secret order.
- (3) Expulsion after proper trial and conviction.
- (4) Persistent neglect of church relationship as defined in [154:5-6](#).
- (5) Death.

For records of termination, see [154](#).

142. Reception of Covenant Members.

Persons who have been duly accepted for covenant membership should be formally received in a public service, in which they shall make their confession and vows public, according to the manner given in the Rituals, and be given the right hand of fellowship by the Pastor or the Pastor's representative.

B. Other Categories of Membership

143. National Conferences may choose to implement additional categories of membership at their discretion, provided they do not conflict with the provisions of the Constitution (see 131). Such categories may include community membership, custodial membership, or other forms of membership when adopted by the National Conference as Statutory Law.

C. General Regulations for Membership

149. Means of Reception. Members may be received as Covenant Members by confession of faith or by letter.

- (1) Those that are received as Covenant Members shall usually be considered as having joined on confession of faith, this being their initial application for church membership. The Pastor and the Local Board/Council shall be responsible to provide membership training classes for all candidates, training them in the Biblical doctrines and standards of the church, acquainting them with the history and organisation of The Wesleyan Methodist Church, and explaining to them the meaning of the vows and of church membership ([138](#)).
- (2) Those who present letters of recommendation from other denominations shall be examined by the Pastor and the Local Board/Council. If it is discovered that they have indeed been previously converted and are fully committed to the doctrines and standards of The Wesleyan Methodist Church, they may be received as by letter. However, if it is discovered that they have only recently made their commitment to Christ and are seeking after a full knowledge of the truth, they shall be encouraged to prepare for covenant membership like any other convert.

150. Transfer of Membership. When any Covenant Member shall request a letter of transfer to another Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Pastor and Local Church Secretary

shall grant it on the proper form as given in *The Handbook*, providing the member is neither under discipline nor under charges. Both Pastor and Secretary shall sign the letter, and shall send it by registered or certified mail to the Pastor and Local Church Secretary of the church to which the member is transferring. The letter shall be presented to the Local Board/Council of the receiving church at its next session, but not later than thirty days from the date of issuance, and acted upon in the manner indicated in 151. When the member has been duly received, the second part of the form shall be completed by the receiving church and forwarded to the church granting the transfer. The date the return letter is received shall mark the expiration of membership in the church granting the letter, and in the official membership record the Local Church Secretary shall enter opposite the Member's name, the date, and *Withdrawn by letter of transfer*.

151. The receiving church shall handle transfers as follows:

- (1) Covenant Members shall be received, subject to the approving vote of the Local Church Conference, unless the Local Church Conference shall have delegated this right to the Local Board/Council ([138:5](#)). The transfer of covenant membership may be questioned by the receiving church if it is evident that the person involved is not in a state of grace or is living in open violation of the Articles of Religion or the Membership Commitments.
- (2) The membership of a Pastor, Senior Pastor, or Associate Pastor, and of such members of the Pastor's family as so desire and have the proper credentials, shall be automatically transferred to the church to which appointed, or if the pastoral charge consists of more than one church, to the church of the Pastor's choosing. The Secretary of the church from which the Pastor is moving, shall forward the proper forms for the Pastor's membership and that of family members who so desire, to the Secretary of the receiving church who shall record them without any further action by the Local Church Conference or Local Board/Council. The membership of an Assistant Pastor shall be transferred in the same manner as that of a lay member.
- (3) A Member of The Wesleyan Methodist Church transferring from one local church to another shall not be required to be involved in a public service of reception.

154. Record of termination.

- (1) When any Member requests a letter of recommendation to some other denomination, the Pastor and Local Church Secretary shall grant it on the proper form provided in *The Handbook*, if the Member is neither under discipline nor under charges. Such a person's membership in the local church granting the letter shall cease immediately, and the Secretary shall enter opposite the Member's name, the date, and *Withdrawn by letter of recommendation*.
- (2) When any Member requests a letter of withdrawal, the Pastor and Local Church Secretary shall grant it on the proper form provided in *The Handbook*. The Secretary shall enter on the record book, ([155](#)), opposite the Member's name, the date the letter was granted, and *Withdrawn by letter of withdrawal*. If the Member's withdrawal occurs during the course of a judicial investigation, the Secretary shall note on the membership record, *Withdrawn under accusation*; and if withdrawal occurs during the course of a trial, *Withdrawn under charges*.
- (3) When any Member joins another denomination, or other religious body exercising the functions of a church, or a secret society, no trial is necessary to remove such a Member. The Pastor, having investigated and ascertained the facts, shall report the same to the next session of the Local Board/Council, and upon the Board's order the Local Church Secretary shall enter opposite the Member's name the date of the session, and *Withdrawn through having joined another body*.

- (4) When any Member moves away from the church of which he is a Member, and it is evident that distance will not permit his full and regular participation in the life of the church, the Pastor shall encourage him to transfer his membership to The Wesleyan Methodist Church nearest his new residence. To that end, the Pastor shall notify the National Secretary of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of the name and address of the Member.
- (5) When any Member moves away from the church of which he is a Member, and does not leave a forwarding address, or fails to report his spiritual standing or to send his financial support, or to transfer his membership to the nearest Wesleyan Methodist Church, after one year he may be dropped from the roll provided that every effort has been made to contact him and notify him of such an intention. His name shall be dropped upon the recommendation of the Local Board/Council and the majority vote of the Local Church Conference, unless the Local Church Conference shall have delegated full responsibility in such matters to the Local Board/Council. The Secretary shall enter opposite the Member's name the date of the vote, and Discontinued by vote.
- (6) When any Member fails to attend the services of his church for one year without a reason deemed justifiable by the Local Board/Council, or to support his church financially as he is able, the Pastor and Local Board/Council shall seek to restore him to active fellowship, but if unable to do so, his name may be dropped upon the recommendation of the Local Board/Council and the majority vote of the Local Church Conference, unless the Local Church Conference shall have delegated full responsibility in such matters to the Local Board/Council. The Secretary shall enter opposite the Member's name the date of the vote, and Discontinued by vote for persistent neglect.

155. Record of Membership. Each local church shall have a permanent record maintained by the Local Church Secretary, in which shall be recorded all the names of the Members, the time when received and whether by profession of faith or by letter, the time and manner of termination of membership, whether by some manner of withdrawal, or by discontinuance for neglect, dismissal, or death; and all baptisms, marriages, pastoral terms, and other information essential to a permanent written record of the life and ministry of the local church.

Article V. The Ministry

157. The National Conference shall from time to time enact provisions for the training, qualification, and ordination to the ministry. Every Wesleyan Methodist Minister must be a Member of some Wesleyan Methodist Church, and each Ordained Minister must be a Member of a District. An Ordained Minister is a Minister of the gospel fully vested with all the functions of the Christian ministry.

On Women in Ministry: Given the equality of men and women established in the creation account and maintained in the ministry of Jesus and the fact that Jesus came to represent and redeem all humankind there is no apparent inadequacy inherent in the female sex which would deem a person unsuitable for ministry. On these grounds The Wesleyan Methodist Church does not withhold any ministerial position or office from any person on the basis of sex but encourages both women and men to follow God's call on their lives. The Wesleyan Methodist Church believes that the creation accounts given in Genesis teach that men and women were created as equals, both bearing the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). This equality was damaged and women were subordinated as a consequence of the fall (Gen. 3:16; cf. 110). It is apparent from the Bible that God frequently chose to use women to minister. Notable Old Testament examples include Miriam who was both a

prophetess (Ex. 15:20) and a leader (Mic. 6:4), Deborah who was a prophetess and a judge (Judges 4:4ff), and Huldah who was a prophetess (2 Kings 22:14ff; 2 Chron. 34:22ff). New Testament examples include Anna (Luke 2:36) and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) who are named as prophetesses, Phoebe who is named as a deacon of the Church (Rom. 16:1), Junia who is mentioned by Paul as one of the noteworthy apostles (Rom. 16:7), and Priscilla, who ministered with her husband Aquila, is described as Paul's fellow worker (Rom. 16:3), and was involved in correcting the teaching of Apollos (Acts 18:26) and many other ministries (e.g. 1 Cor. 16:19). These specific examples are supported by general descriptions of the ministry and equality of women in the New Testament (Acts 2:17-18; Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 11:5; Phil. 4:2-3) and Jesus' kind treatment of women and the admittance of them into his group of disciples which was counter to the culture of his day (John 4:7ff, Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-3). In light of this Biblical evidence it is the position of The Wesleyan Methodist Church that any prohibitions placed on the ministry of women in the New Testament (1 Cor. 14:33-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-15) were most likely in response to specific situations and do not stand as timeless nor universal restrictions.

See also: Gen. 1 :26-28; 2;3; Judges 4-5; Ruth 1-4; 1 Sam. 1-2:21; 2 Kings 22; Joel 2:28-29; Matt. 22:23-33; 27:55-28:10; Mark 5:21-43; 15:40-16:13; Luke 1:26-56; 7:36-50; 8:1-3; 10:38-42; 13:10-17; 23:55-24:27; John 4:1-42; John 8:1-11; 11:1-44; 12:1-8; 20:1-18; Acts 1:12-14; 2:14-21; 9:36-43; 16:11-15; 18:24-28; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 11:5; Gal. 3:26-28; Col. 4:15; 1 Tim. 5:3-16.

158. The constitutional rights of Ministers in The Wesleyan Methodist Church if not under discipline shall include the following:

- (1) To preach the gospel and in the case of Ordained Ministers to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, to perform all aspects of divine worship, and to solemnise the rite of matrimony.
- (2) To be eligible, in the case of Ordained Ministers, for election to any office in the Church for which Ordained Ministers are eligible.
- (3) To contract the pastoral relationship with local Wesleyan Methodist Churches subject to the other provisions of this Constitution (158:6; [163:1-2](#)).
- (4) To enjoy the use for religious meetings of the church building or buildings of the pastoral charge to which appointed by the District Conference.
- (5) To serve the assigned pastoral charge without interference by unauthorised activities of another Minister of The Wesleyan Methodist Church.
- (6) To transfer in the manner prescribed by The Handbook from one District to another, subject to the concurrence of the National Superintendent and the District Superintendent of the District to which the transfer is sought.
- (7) To have recourse, even if under discipline, to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters involving complaint against the Minister's character or ministerial conduct and to appeal the decision of such court.

Article VI. Organisation and Government

A. Local

160. Pastoral Charges. The members of the denomination shall be grouped into local churches. The following are the constitutional rights of each local church:

- (1) To receive, remove or discontinue members subject to the provisions of The Handbook. This right vests severally in each local church.
- (2) To call its own Pastor, subject to confirmation by the District or National Conference.

- (3) To grant or revoke licences for local church ministry as provided in The Handbook. This right may be delegated to the church board.
- (4) To recommend persons for various ministries to the District or National Conference. This right may be delegated to the church board.
- (5) To elect its own Officers and to remove the same for cause. No Pastor or other Official has any right to appoint an Officer or declare an office vacant. This right belongs to the church alone, and vests severally in each local church.
- (6) To elect a Property Committee and through that Committee to supervise, control, and maintain its property for the use and benefit of the ministry and members of The Wesleyan Methodist Church and subject to its regulations and appointments as from time to time legislated and declared. All church property shall be held in the name of The Wesleyan Methodist Church.
- (7) To be represented in the voting membership of its District or National Conference, subject to the provisions of paragraphs 162 and 165, if not under discipline.
- (8) To have recourse to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters of controversy between itself and other Local, District, or National Units or Agencies of the denomination.

B. District

162. A National Conference may divide the work under its jurisdiction into Districts. The regulations for those Districts shall be contained in Statutory Law and shall be governed by these constitutional principles:

- (1) All Ordained, Commissioned and Licensed Ministers in good standing in the District shall have full voting rights at the District Conference.
- (2) Other voting members of the Conference shall be selected according to The Handbook provisions, with care to maintain the principle of equal representation of ministerial and lay delegates in the District Conference.

163. The constitutional rights of each District shall include the following:

- (1) The right to take charge of all the Ministers and Churches within its bounds (except those serving the National, Regional or International Conference who shall be amenable to the National Board/Council for their official conduct and to their Districts for their moral character, and except the District Superintendent who shall be amenable both to the District and to the National Board/Council) and subject to the right of the Ministers and Churches to enter into pastoral engagements.
- (2) To alter the agreement entered into by any Pastor and charge, or veto the action of the church and appoint another Pastor on said charge when it deems this to be for the best interest of the charge or Pastor involved or when the general interest of the work of the District would be better served by such change; and the said church or charge shall receive the Pastor appointed by the District Conference, provided that any such alteration of a previous arrangement between a Pastor and Church shall be separately reported and passed by vote of the District Conference to be effective.
- (3) To elect and ordain Ministers and to receive Ordained Ministers from other Denominations subject to the restrictions of The Handbook.
- (4) To receive or decline persons recommended to it for various ministries by the pastoral charges within its bounds.
- (5) To organise and receive local churches within the boundaries of the territory assigned to it by the National Conference, and to fix the boundaries of its Circuits and Churches.
- (6) To elect its own Officers as outlined in The Handbook and to dismiss them for cause.
- (7) To be represented in the lay and ministerial voting membership of the National Conference, if not under discipline.

- (8) To have recourse to a proper court of jurisdiction in any matters of controversy between itself and other District, Local, or National Units or Agencies of the denomination.

C. National

165. The National Conference. The regulations for National Conferences shall be contained in Statutory Law of the respective handbooks, under these constitutional principles:

- (1) Voting membership of the Conference shall be established according to The Handbook provisions, with care to maintain the principle of equal representation of Ministerial and Lay delegates in the National Conference.
- (2) The Lay delegates shall be Covenant Members in full relation within the bounds of the Conference they represent.
- (3) Each National Conference shall determine its own form of government, structure, means of decision making, means of reporting, subsidiary bodies and institutions provided they do not conflict with the provisions of the Constitution.

167. Powers and Restrictions. The National Conference shall have power:

- (1) To recommend to the Regional Secretary, by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting, an amendment to the Constitution (80).
- (2) To designate a criterion for parliamentary procedure for itself.
- (3) To elect its Officers and National Officials as provided for in The Handbook and to define duties and responsibilities.
- (4) To amend the Statutory Law in its own Handbook or make other rules and regulations subject to the Constitution and the Statutory Law.

D. Regional

170. Criteria for Member National Conferences. The South Pacific Region of the Wesleyan Church shall include those National Conferences which have qualified as Member National Conferences and those Conferences which are listed as Mission Units of a Member National Conference. A Mission Unit shall progress to the status of Member National Conference when it satisfies the following criteria in addition to the general requirements of paragraph 101.

- (1) The Mission Unit shall show evidence of being **self-propagating**. This shall include
 - a) Evidence of sustained evangelism, discipleship and church growth.
 - b) An established programme of ministerial training.
 - c) A commitment to missions.
- (2) The Mission Unit shall show evidence of being **self-supporting**. This shall include
 - a) A history of supporting its Pastors and denominational leaders.
 - b) The presence of missionary personnel in the Mission Unit for specialised ministries shall not be deemed to conflict with the principle of self-support.
- (3) The Mission Unit shall show evidence of being **self-governing**. This shall include
 - a) Adequate qualified National leadership.
 - b) A commitment to the regional witness and the Regional Conference.
 - c) Capacity to self-govern shall be evidenced by a minimum of twelve Ordained Ministers in good standing and 750 Covenant Members.

171. A Mission Unit shall require the recommendation of its sponsoring Member National Conference and a majority vote of the Regional Conference to be received as a Member National Conference.

175. Powers and Restrictions. The Regional Conference is under the jurisdiction of the International Conference of the Wesleyan Church, and in the interim of its sessions, the International Board. The Regional Conference shall serve as the primary venue for fellowship and consultation for The Wesleyan Methodist Church of the South Pacific, subject to the Constitution and the following restrictions:

- (1) The Regional Conference shall not have authority to amend its constitution or the Statutory Laws of any Member National Conference.
- (2) The Regional Conference shall not have authority to intervene in the operations of any Member National Conference except by invitation.

177. Specifically the Regional Conference exists to advance the following objectives:

- (1) To create a formal venue for fellowship, reporting and consultation for Wesleyan Methodist National Conferences in the South Pacific;
- (2) To establish a platform of influence as the evangelical Methodist/Wesleyan movement in the South Pacific;
- (3) To serve as a point of contact for other denominations of Methodist tradition;
- (4) To coordinate opportunities and standards for theological education, ministry training and development of leaders in the Wesleyan tradition;
- (5) To provide a unified regional body to coordinate missionary ventures in the South Pacific region;
- (6) To nurture an ongoing relationship with Global Partners (Wesleyan World Missions of North America) and the General Conferences of North America, the Philippines, the Caribbean and Japan in the pursuit of mutual mission opportunities;
- (7) To maximise and fulfil the potential of the South Pacific area towards maturity and autonomy;
- (8) To participate in the internationalisation of the Wesleyan Church worldwide.

178. Regional Conference arrangements.

- (1) **Membership.** The Regional Conference shall be a venue for fellowship and consultation. Church members from across the region shall be encouraged to attend and the program shall provide for times of inspiration, reporting and networking. Within the Conference, time shall be given to a business session at which elected delegates shall meet. The delegates shall be elected as follows:
 - a) Each Member National Conference shall be entitled to send the National Superintendent plus three ministerial and four lay delegates – a total of eight voting delegates.
 - b) Each Mission Unit shall be entitled to send the National Church Leader plus one ministerial and two lay delegates – a total of four voting delegates.
 - c) All currently serving members of the Regional Board who are not members of the Regional Conference by some other right (178:1a, b) shall be ex-officio voting members of the Regional Conference.
 - d) The Regional Board shall assign extra delegates as necessary to maintain the balance of ministerial and lay delegates.
 - e) The Regional Board shall invite other non-voting guests from Wesleyan Conferences outside of the region and from other Methodist/Wesleyan groups located within the bounds of the region.
 - f) The Secretary of each Member National Conference and Mission Unit shall provide a complete list of their delegates to the Regional Secretary.
- (2) **Regular Sessions.** The Regional Conference shall meet quadrennially at a date set by the Regional Board. This shall usually be timed to coincide with another Regional event or National Conference.

- (3) **Advisory Forums.** The Conference shall establish advisory forums as needed.
- (4) **Conference Program.** The Conference shall receive reports from countries, advisory forums and visiting delegations according to a program established by the Regional Board.

179. Regional Board. The Regional Board carries out the will of the Regional Conference, promotes the interests of the Regional Conference and serves as its chief governing body in the interim of Regional Conference sessions.

- (1) **Membership.** The Regional Board shall consist of members elected by the respective National Conferences:
 - a) Two members from each Member National Conference: the National Superintendent and one lay person.
 - b) The National Church Leader from each Mission Unit.
- (2) **Meetings.** The Regional Board shall meet annually at a time and date set at its previous meeting, either at an agreed venue or by electronic means. The meeting arrangements may be changed or a special meeting of the Board may be called, through action of the Chair. Arrangements for such meetings shall require twenty-one days' notice, unless written consent is obtained from all Board members to a shorter period of notice.
- (3) **Duties.** The duties of the Regional Board shall include:

Regional Officers

- a) To appoint the Regional President and Regional Vice President for the conference quadrennium from the Superintendents of Member National Conferences ([170-171](#)). The Regional President shall Chair the Regional Conference and the Regional Board and shall represent the Regional Conference at ceremonial and fraternal events, including National Conferences of other Methodist/Wesleyan Denominations. Should the Regional President not be able to complete the full term the Regional Vice President will assume the position for the remainder of the quadrennium, and the Regional Board shall appoint a new Vice President. A Regional President or Regional Vice President shall not serve two terms in succession. An exception may occur should the Regional Vice President assume the Presidency during the quadrennium.
- b) To appoint a Board Secretary from among its Board Members, who shall also serve as Regional Secretary and Secretary of the Regional Conference.
- c) To appoint the Regional Treasurer.

Regional Budget

- d) To adopt an annual budget prepared by the Regional Treasurer to meet the expenses of board meetings, the Regional President's itinerary and other expenses.
- e) To assign the share of the Regional budget due from each National Conference and Mission Unit.

Regional Management

- f) To establish the date, venue and arrangements for Regional Conference.
- g) To investigate and mediate a dispute within a National Conference upon invitation from the National Conference or its National Board/Council or its National Superintendent. The Regional Board shall have no authority to prescribe disciplinary measures.

- h) To recommend such bylaws for the Regional Conference as it deems suitable, on the condition that these bylaws do not violate any provision of the Constitution.
- i) To initiate a memorial to the several District/National Conferences for the purpose of changing the Constitution, subject to the provisions of paragraph 80.

International Relations

- j) To appoint representatives to the International Conference giving due consideration to representation from across Member Conferences and Mission Units.
- k) To recommend to the International Board, by the process detailed in paragraph 80:7a, an amendment to the membership commitments or the conditions of membership in *The Handbook*.
- l) To recommend to the North American General Conference, by the process detailed in paragraph [80:7b](#), a change in the Essentials of the International Conference, including the Articles of Religion and the Statements of Practice and Relationship.

Article VII. Judiciary

181. Regional Board of Review. Each National Conference shall provide for its own judicial processes and it is expected that all disputes that can be settled through those internal processes, shall be so directed. Nonetheless, the Regional Conference shall provide for a Regional Board of Review, which shall have authority:

- (1) To hear and determine any appeal from the decisions of the Regional Board, its Officers or any other Regional representative, as to the constitutionality of the decision.
- (2) To settle questions in dispute between National Conferences.
- (3) To hear and determine the constitutionality of any action by a National Conference within the region. The National Conference's internal appeal process shall be followed, or shown to have failed, before an appeal to the Regional Board of Review shall be considered.

182. Regulations.

- (1) An appeal to the Regional Board of Review may be initiated by any National Board or Council within the region or by the International Board upon a majority vote of the Board or Council. Mission Units may initiate an appeal in the same manner as a Member National Conference.
- (2) Appeals to the Board of Review shall be directed to the Chair of the Board. The Chair shall call a meeting of the Board at such time and in such location as facilitates good process, giving a minimum of three weeks' notice to all Members. During that time National Conferences and the International Board shall ensure that full representation is available.
- (3) A decision of the Regional Board of Review shall be final.

183. Membership.

- (1) Each Member National Conference shall provide two members to the Board of Review; one Ordained or Commissioned Minister and one lay person.
- (2) Each Mission Unit shall provide one lay person as a member to the Board of Review.
- (3) A member of the Board of Review may not at the same time be a member of the Regional Board or of a National Board or Council. All members of the Board of Review shall be covenant or full members of The Wesleyan Methodist Church at the time of their service.
- (4) The International Board shall be invited to appoint their own representative to the Board of Review on a case by case basis, with voting privileges.

- (5) The names of all members of the Board of Review and the names of subsequent alternate members shall be submitted in writing to the Regional Secretary and to the Chair of the Board of Review, with such authorisation attested to by their National Church leader, or by a General Superintendent in the case of the International Board. No member shall participate on the Board of Review without receipt of such written notification.
- (6) A member of the Board of Review shall be recused for a particular case when the member is personally interested or involved in the case, closely related to any parties involved, or has been active for or against either party in the matter being heard by the Board of Review. Any member of the Board of Review may be challenged for such reasons or for other reasons, and the allowance of such challenge shall be decided by the remaining members of the Board of Review. Whenever a member is disqualified, the appointing body shall provide an alternate for the hearing of the particular case.

184. Organisation and procedure for the Board of Review.

- (1) **Meetings.** The full list of members appointed to the Board of Review shall be submitted to the Regional Secretary at the rise of Regional Conference. The Board shall organise itself and shall elect, from among its own members, a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and such other Officers as considered necessary.
- (2) **Procedure.** The Board of Review shall decide on its own methods and rules of procedure and shall adopt such bylaws as considered necessary, provided such do not go beyond, ignore or circumvent provisions of The Handbook. All parties shall file their briefs and arguments and shall present evidence under such rules as the Board of Review shall adopt from time to time.
- (3) **Quorum.** Two thirds of the members of the Board of Review shall constitute a quorum. A decision of the Board of Review shall require a majority vote of all members of the Board.
- (4) **Records.** The Board of Review shall see that complete and accurate minutes are kept of all proceedings, testimonies, evidence, documents, and findings, certified copies of which shall be forwarded promptly after each session to the Regional Secretary. An official summary of the Board's decisions shall be distributed promptly to all National Boards and Councils within the Region.
- (5) **Finances.** Expense allowance for members of the Board of Review shall be the same as for members of the Regional Board, when the members of the Board of Review are engaged in official business, and payment therefore shall be by the Regional Treasurer. The party making appeal shall be responsible for their own expenses involved in attending to the appeal.

Article VIII. Authority of the Constitution

185. Regional Constitution. The Constitution is agreed upon by all National Conferences in the South Pacific Regional Conference. The Constitution is that body of laws that sets forth fundamental doctrines and practices, the basic laws, principles and restrictions by which the Regional Church is governed, and guarantees certain rights to its members and Ministers.

- (1) **Relationship to Statutory Law.** The Constitution takes precedence over statutory law, ritual and all other laws and official actions of the governing bodies and Officers within its jurisdiction. It is the law to which all statutory law, ritual, and other legislative or official actions must conform.
- (2) **Relationship to The Essentials.** The Essentials of The Wesleyan Church consist of an historic statement of faith and practice and are set forth in the International Charter

of The Wesleyan Church. Each member of the International Conference must subscribe to the Essentials and must not contravene any of its provisions in its Constitution, Articles of Religion or Discipline/Handbook. The South Pacific Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Methodist Church does so subscribe. The Articles of Religion and other statements of faith and practice which are a part of the Constitution of The Wesleyan Methodist Church are in accord with the Essentials of The Wesleyan Church and are not intended to contravene or contradict them at any point.

(3) The process for amending the Constitution is contained in paragraph [80](#).

Part III

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND – Part 2

A. Preamble

- 200.** The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand is a Member National Conference of The South Pacific Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church.
- 201.** The Wesleyan Methodist Church seeks to promote world missions.
- 202.** The Wesleyan Methodist Church subscribes to the Wesleyan Essentials, a historic doctrinal statement that unites Wesleyans in over 90 countries worldwide.
- 203.** The Wesleyan Methodist Church is a member of the World Methodist Council.
- 204.** The Wesleyan Methodist Church is an approved and gazetted Church to recommend ministers as marriage celebrants for approval by the Registrar General.

B. Local Church Classification

- 211.** In order to promote the growth of healthy local churches ([160](#)) four stages of local church development are recognised and celebrated:
- (1) Project.
 - (2) Foundation Church.
 - (3) Pioneer Church.
 - (4) Established Church.
- 212. Criteria for Projects** A project is a form of missional activity which does not yet meet the requirements for a Foundation church but is being undertaken within a recognised and accountable relationship to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. Projects do not have any votes at National Conference but are entitled to send lay observers.
- (1) Project status is granted by the National Executive on the recommendation of any National Officer.
 - (2) The National Executive will appoint a National Officer to oversee the project.
 - (3) A project's funds will be held by the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand and administered by the National Treasurer on the authorisation of the overseeing National Officer (212 (2)).
 - (4) Project status will be reviewed by the National Executive at least annually and will not usually be held for more than 2 years.
 - (5) A Project shall, with the agreement of the overseeing National Officer (212 (2)), be entitled to reference their membership of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand on signage, letterheads, websites and in wider communications so as to clearly communicate such membership in publicity and communication media.
 - (6) A project may apply at any time for Foundation Church status.
- 213.** In order to be recognised as a member church of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand a local church shall:
- (1) Be committed to this Constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand and to ordering its life by it;
 - (2) Have an approved local Church Constitution.
- 214.** All member churches of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand

- (1) Shall have the right to reference their membership of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand on signage, letterheads, websites and in wider communications and shall endeavour to clearly communicate such membership in publicity and communication media;
- (2) Are entitled to send lay observers to the National Conference.

216. Criteria for Foundation Churches A formative group or local church that is working towards meeting the requirements of a Pioneer Church may apply to the National Council to be classified as a Foundation Church within the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. Foundation Churches do not have any votes at National Conference but are entitled to send lay observers – one (1) of whom shall be entitled to be a member of the conference ([402](#)).

- (1) The National Superintendent shall, following consultation with the local congregation, appoint a Minister or Lay Pastor to lead the church ([355](#)).
- (2) Where Servant Leaders have not been appointed ([300](#)) the National Superintendent in conjunction with the Minister or Lay Pastor appointed to the church ([355](#)) will act in their place.

217. Criteria for Pioneer Churches. A local Church may apply to the National Council to be classified as a Pioneer Church. The following criteria in addition to the general requirements of paragraph 212 shall be met:

- (1) Evidence of a commitment to being **self-propagating**. This shall include:
 - a) Evidence of a commitment to sustained evangelism, discipleship and church growth;
 - b) Evidence of a commitment to missions;
 - c) A commitment to the development of an effective Partnership programme.
- (2) Evidence of being **self-supporting**. This shall include:
 - a) A history of financially and pastorally supporting its Minister. This will usually mean that
 - i) There is an agreed and signed Terms of Call (in accordance with the policy of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand) between the church and the Minister;
 - ii) The Minister is receiving at least a 20% stipend and all allowances etc. (in accordance with the policy of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand).
 - b) A history of meeting its financial obligations to the National Church.
- (3) Evidence of being **self-governing**. This shall include:
 - a) An appointed Minister ([355](#));
 - b) An effective leadership team which will normally consist of the overseeing Minister or Lay Pastor together with at least 3 other leaders. This could be the Servant Leaders appointed in accordance with paragraph [301](#);
 - c) A commitment to and participation in the life and witness of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand;
 - d) A regular worshipping attendance of at least 20 adults;
 - e) An agreed local Vision.

218. Where a Pioneer Church does not have Servant Leaders appointed in accordance with paragraph [301](#) the National Superintendent shall, following consultation with the local congregation, appoint a Minister or Lay Pastor to lead the church ([355](#)).

219. A Pioneer Church is entitled to one (1) lay voting representative at National Conference.

221. Criteria for Established Churches. A local Church may apply to the National Council to be classified as an Established Church. The following criteria in addition to the general requirements of paragraph [212](#) shall be met:

- (1) Evidence of being **self-propagating**. This shall include:
 - a) Evidence of sustained evangelism, discipleship and church growth;
 - b) Evidence of a commitment to missions;
 - c) An established effective and regularly held Partnership programme.
- (2) Evidence of being **self-supporting**. This shall include:
 - a) A history of financial and pastorally supporting its Minister. This will usually mean that
 - i) There is an agreed and signed Terms of Call (in accordance with the policy of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of NZ) between the church and the Minister;
 - ii) The Minister is receiving at least a 50% stipend and all allowances etc. (in accordance with the policy of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand);
 - b) A history of meeting its financial obligations to the National Church.
- (3) Evidence of being **self-governing**. This shall include”
 - a) An appointed Minister ([355](#));
 - b) Adequate qualified servant leadership. This will usually mean 3-7 Servant Leaders (including the Minister) appointed in accordance with paragraph [301](#);
 - c) A commitment to the national witness and to the National Conference;
 - d) 25 partners;
 - e) A history of meeting its statutory obligations.

222. An Established Church is entitled to two (2) lay voting representatives at National Conference.

226. Reclassification of Churches. The National Council may reclassify a church where it decides that it no longer meets the specified criteria.

C. Partnership

230. Partnership is the means by which people are recognised as “members” ([130](#) – 155) of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand. Partnership

- (1) Reflects proactive relationships and ministry – when we partner together we make a commitment to be accountable to one another;
- (2) Affirms the role of the local church as the primary forum for ministry to our community;
- (3) Affirms those who seek to identify as Wesleyans in New Zealand but are unable to worship in a local Wesleyan Methodist church;
- (4) Celebrates our togetherness as a multi-cultural church in New Zealand.

231. Partners of the church will (in addition to the requirements of paragraphs [130](#) – 138)

- (1) Be in Partnership with their local Wesleyan Methodist Church and supportive of local leadership, vision and mission or
- (2) Where no local Wesleyan Methodist Church exists be in Partnership with the National Church and supportive of this constitution.

232. The minimum age for partnership is sixteen (16) years.

D. Ministry

Definition of Minister

- 237.** We believe that God, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit:
- (1) Assigns to each Christ follower a vital part in the corporate ministry of the body of Christ;
 - (2) Calls some into specialised, sacrificial ministry.
- 238.** It is the Church's responsibility to discern and affirm God's call to those called into specialised, sacrificial ministry and to offer nurture and accountability in training and development.
- 239.** Ministers are men and women:
- (1) Called by God to exercise specialised, sacrificial ministry in the Church;
 - (2) Trained in accordance with the guidelines determined by the Church;
 - (3) Called into ministerial service by affirmation of the National Council or National Conference;
 - (4) Serving in the context appropriate to their call; and
 - (5) Accountable to the Church for their ministerial conduct.

Receipt of Ministers

- 242.** Ministers are received into the Church by
- (1) Application to the National Board of Ministerial Development and affirmation of the National Council or National Conference ([436 \(4\)](#) & [470 \(5\)](#)), or
 - (2) Transfer from another denomination on application and acceptance by the National Board of Ministerial Development.
- 243.** Every Minister to serve in the Church shall be approved by the National Council or National Conference as being a person who is
- (1) Committed to Christ as Saviour and Lord ([133](#)) as shown in baptism;
 - (2) Committed to ongoing growth towards Christ-likeness ([134](#));
 - (3) Committed to a life of holy living and a lifestyle of growth ([135](#));
 - (4) Committed to supporting the church ([138](#));
 - (5) Accepting of the authority of this Constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.
- 246.** Ordinations will take place at National Conference unless extenuating circumstances exist ([401 \(9\)](#)).
- 247.** Ministerial licensing and commissioning will normally take place in the local setting where the ministry will occur.

Ministerial Categories

- 250.** The Wesleyan Methodist Church recognises three categories of Minister:
- (1) Ordained Minister.
 - (2) Licenced Minister.
 - (3) Commissioned Minister.

Ordained Minister

- 251.** An **Ordained Minister** is a person with an abiding call to ministry who has been trained and set apart for ministerial service by the church and who
- (1) Has held a ministerial license for 2 years or other suitable period as determined by the National Council or National Conference; or

(2) Who having been ordained in another denomination is received by transfer.

252. An Ordained Minister shall be a partner of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

Licensed Minister

255. A **Licensed Minister** is a person who is engaged in supervised ministry in preparation for the ordained ministry. Licensed Ministry is not a permanent order of ministry. Licensed Ministry is

- (1) A preparatory category leading to ordained ministry for those engaged in study and development; and
- (2) A probationary category for those who have completed required courses of study and development.

256. A Licensed Minister shall:

- (1) Receive regular ministerial supervision as approved by the National Board of Ministerial Development;
- (2) Be subject to annual review by the National Board of Ministerial Development;
- (3) Complete agreed courses of study and development as determined in consultation with the National Board of Ministerial Development;
- (4) Be a partner of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

257. A Ministerial Licence shall normally be held for a maximum period of eight (8) years but may be extended by the National Board of Ministerial Development.

258. The National Board of Ministerial Development may, after receiving the affirmation of the National Council to its decision:

- (1) Remove a Ministerial Licence if
 - a) It determines that the candidate is no longer suitable for ministry or
 - b) It determines that progress towards ordination is not being maintained
- (2) Transfer a Licensed Minister to Commissioned Minister status if progress towards ordination becomes unattainable.

Commissioned Minister

261. A Commissioned Minister

- (1) Is a person who is engaged in effective and recognised ministry of a seasonal or particular nature;
- (2) Is covenanted to engage in ministry within a specified context for a period or season which may vary in duration;
- (3) Cannot be ordained unless he/she applies, and is approved by the National Board of Ministerial Development, to enter the ordained ministry track;
- (4) Is covenanted to complete concurrent training as appropriate to their specific ministry context under the direction of the National Board of Ministerial Development.

262. Commissioned ministry covenants are subject to review 3 yearly by the National Board of Ministerial Development and may be renewed as appropriate to the particular season or context.

263. A Commissioned Minister shall be a partner of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

Categories of specialised ministerial service

266. The Church recognises the following categories of specialised ministerial service:

- (1) **Pastors** – ministers serving the local church as senior/sole pastor or in the role of associate or assistant pastor.
- (2) **Missionaries** – ministers serving in a local or global context who are sent by the church into a mission’s role, including para-church ministries, mission organisations, community ministries or other appropriate forum.
- (3) **Educators** – ministers employed in educational establishments providing ministry education.
- (4) **Evangelists** – ministers who travel and preach the gospel without specific pastoral assignment.
- (5) **Chaplains** – ministers whose primary role is chaplaincy to an approved organisation.
- (6) **Administrators** – ministers who are primarily called by the church to serve in an official or administrative capacity.

267. A Minister whose credentials are lodged with another denomination (whether in New Zealand or overseas) may make application to be recognised and received as a Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

The National Board of Ministerial Development shall

- (1) Determine the application and assessment process;
- (2) Designate the appropriate Ministerial Category ([250](#)) of the applicant or appoint the applicant as a “Minister in process of transfer;”
- (3) Determine the training and education required to be completed prior to recognition and reception;
- (4) Determine any continuing training and education requirements it deems appropriate.

Ministerial Conduct

269. No Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand, including a Supply Minister, shall officiate in (whether as a celebrant or not) or take an official part in any marriage or blessing ceremony which seeks to affirm a relationship other than a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage.

Discipline of Ministers

273. The National Superintendent has oversight of the discipline of Ministers as part of their apostolic function and shall be responsible for determining the process to be followed to resolve such matters. The process shall be guided by Biblical principles and be worked through with grace and in a spirit of repentance and reconciliation. All parties involved should be consulted where appropriate.

274. Where the matter remains unresolved the National Superintendent may appoint a mediator to deal with the issues in dispute.

276. Where a Minister disputes a disciplinary decision or where the matter has not been resolved under paragraph 274 they may appeal to the National Council whose decision shall be final.

277. Where the National Superintendent or a member of the National Council is the subject of discipline under this section, such person shall not be eligible to participate in the process.

E. Property

282. Property may be held through trusts instituted at National or Local Church level.

- 283.** Any National Trust purporting to be associated with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand shall follow the draft form of Charitable Trust Deed approved by the National Council and shall include the commitment that activities associated with a Wesleyan Methodist Charitable Trust shall agree with the Constitution and further the purposes of the said Church.
- 284.** Where a congregation has established a Charitable Trust to hold and administer property on behalf of the congregation, it is desirable that a majority of the Trustees shall be Servant Leaders and that the Servant Leaders' Meeting shall be consulted in all major matters of policy regarding Church property.
- 285.** Where any congregation is planning to engage upon a major property development, the persons responsible (Servant Leaders and Trustees) are encouraged to consult with the National Council.
- 288.** The Servant Leaders shall be responsible to see that all property, whether in the name of the Church or in the name of a Trust instituted by the Church, shall not be used for any purpose contrary to the intention of the Constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.
- 289.** Any local congregational Trust purporting to be associated with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand shall include the commitment in its Charitable Trust Deed that activities associated with a Wesleyan Methodist Charitable Trust shall agree with the Constitution and further the purposes of the said Church. The trust deed shall be implemented in accordance with the terms of paragraph [291](#).
- 290.** No property whether in the name of the Church or in the name of a Trust instituted by the Church shall be used for any use associated with any marriage or blessing ceremony which seeks to affirm a relationship other than a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage.
- 291.** In the event of the dissolution of the church the assets of the church, whether in the name of the Church or in the name of a Trust instituted by the Church, shall be distributed to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand for such charitable purposes as the National Council of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand shall determine, following consultation with the remaining congregation if any.

A. Organisation & Governance

Local

A. Servant Leaders

Introduction / Establishment

- 300.** Every Established Church shall appoint Servant Leaders.
- 301.** The Servant Leaders shall consist of:
- (1) The Local Church Minister appointed to the Church ([355](#)) who will usually be the chair and
 - (2) An appropriate number of other partners of the church (usually 3-7 at any one time) for the size of the congregation.
- 302.** Other Ministers attending or serving the Church, and paid staff will not usually be Servant Leaders.
- 303.** It is recommended that no two persons from the same household be appointed to the Servant Leaders at any one time.
- 304.** The Servant Leaders may be called by another name as determined by the local church.

Function

- 308.** The Servant Leaders, including the Local Church Minister, are responsible for governance of the church and the exercise of spiritual accountability for the church. Servant Leaders have the following specific responsibilities:
- (1) Guardians and Nurturers of the Vision, Mission and Values of the church;
 - (2) Spiritual "eldership" of the church providing spiritual accountability for the ministry of the church;
 - (3) Listening for and discerning the needs and aspirations of the church and its wider communities;
 - (4) Responsible for employment, accountability and well-being of staff, including:
 - a) Initiating the process for the appointment of a Local Church Minister;
 - b) Establishment of Terms of Call and ministry covenants with Ministers;
 - c) Establishment of Employment Contracts with all other paid staff;
 - d) Annual staff reviews;
 - e) Accountability and discipline of staff, including ceasing of employment after following statutory and national church processes.
 - (5) Responsible for appointing, on the recommendation of the Local Church Minister, ([355](#)) other ministry staff and leaders such as
 - i) Associate Ministers ([350 \(3\)](#));
 - ii) Assistant Ministers ([350 \(4\)](#));
 - iii) Youth Ministers;
 - iv) Children's Ministers;
 - v) Lay Pastors ([350 \(5\)](#));
 - vi) Lay Preachers – being those recognised as having preaching gifts;
 - vii) Ministry Leaders;so as to ensure that the various ministries of the church are led by those called to the task and gifted appropriately by the Holy Spirit.
 - (6) Playing a Governance role with the following specific responsibilities:

- a) Assessment of progress towards vision and mission;
- b) Development of major strategy initiatives;
- c) Approval of annual budget;
- d) Ensuring accurate financial records are kept;
- e) Stewardship of property and assets which have been acquired whether held in the name of the Church or in the name of a Trust instituted by the Church;
- f) Compliance with all statutory and legal requirements;
- g) Compliance with the Constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand and all policies and procedures of the National Conference or National Council.

309. The Servant Leaders shall conduct regular reviews to encourage the health and mission of the local church making use of national church personnel and resources in doing so.

310. The Servant Leaders shall encourage suitable persons to prayerfully consider training for Ordained, Commissioned or Licensed Ministry by participating in National Board of Ministerial Development processes.

Decision Making

315. The Servant Leaders shall ensure that the following records are kept:

- (1) Minutes of all meetings including all decisions;
- (2) Baptisms;
- (3) Weddings;
- (4) Pastoral Roll;
- (5) Financial Accounts.

316. The Servant Leaders shall establish guidelines or standing orders for their meetings, which shall be in harmony with those of the National Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand, for the conduct of their business.

317. Decision-making shall normally be by prayerful discerned consensus and a record of decisions kept. If, in the judgment of the Chairperson, a consensus approach to a decision is likely to be impractical or otherwise unsuitable the Chairperson may determine alternative decision-making methods including but not limited to:

- (1) Majority vote of Servant Leaders;
- (2) Delay the decision;
- (3) Referral to a resource group for further investigation;
- (4) Request for wisdom and assistance from National Church leaders.

Appointment Process

320. The appointment of Servant Leaders rests on the principle of decision-making by a discernment and affirmation approach that blends congregational consultation, a focus on gifts, calling and maturity and the role of wise leaders in making actual appointments.

321. Servant Leaders shall normally be appointed for a two year term and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

I. Appointing the first Servant Leaders

322. The Assistant National Superintendent - Church Development will provide guidance on the process for appointing the first Servant Leaders

II. Subsequent appointments

- 330.** Prior to the conclusion of the agreed term existing Servant Leaders shall be asked to prayerfully consider continuing in their current roles. The publication of these names shall start the process.
- 331.** Partners shall be invited to prayerfully offer any additional names for consideration as Servant Leaders over a 2 week period. Nominees must be Partners ([230](#) – [232](#)) of the church and so must be:
- (1) Committed to Christ as Saviour and Lord ([133](#)) as shown in baptism;
 - (2) Committed to ongoing growth towards Christ-likeness ([134](#));
 - (3) Committed to a life of holy living and a lifestyle of growth ([135](#));
 - (4) Committed to supporting the church ([138](#));
 - (5) Accepting of the authority of this Constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.
- 332.** A Preparation Group consisting of 3 people (the Minister, one Servant Leader and one partner who is not a Servant Leader) will meet and discuss with candidates their gifts, calling and readiness to assume this role. If the candidate does not wish to proceed, their name will not be put forward. An emphasis on development and affirmation is to be at the forefront of this process.
- 333.** The names of those who wish to offer themselves as candidates, along with those continuing as Servant Leaders, will be put before the congregation. Partners and attenders will be invited to reflect and pray on the names and bring affirmations or concerns to the Preparation Group over the following 2 weeks.
- 336.** The Preparation Group will, if appropriate, discuss any concerns raised with the respective candidates. Names may be withdrawn at this point with the consent of the candidate.
- 337.** The Preparation Group will report to the Servant Leaders at the conclusion of this 2 week period. The Servant Leaders shall make the final appointments, usually for a 2 year term.
- 338.** If there is no common mind within the Servant Leaders concerning the appointment of Servant Leaders or if there are continuing reasonable concerns from partners, then the Servant Leaders shall determine an appropriate process for resolution. The process may include:
- (1) Mediation/consultation with National Officers;
 - (2) A Vote

III. Recognition and Blessing

- 339.** A Ceremony of recognition and blessing shall be arranged for the Servant Leaders for the new term.

Retirement / Resignation

- 343.** A Servant Leader may choose to resign if unable to fulfil that role for any reason.
- 344.** If a majority of Servant Leaders agree that a Servant Leader (other than the Minister) is unable to fulfil the role of a Servant Leader, they may with grace, sensitivity, and prayer discuss with the person the issues involved, in an effort to encourage the Servant Leader to fulfil the role effectively.
- (1) The Servant Leader in question may seek a person to support them during this conversation.
 - (2) If a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved the Minister may request a National Officer to mediate.

- (3) If the issue still remains unresolved, the National Executive shall have the power to make a final decision.

B. Local Church Ministry

350. The Wesleyan Methodist Church recognises these categories of local church ministerial service:

- (1) **Sole Minister** – the only Ordained, Licensed or Commissioned Minister appointed to the role of Local Church Minister ([355](#)).
- (2) **Senior/Lead Minister** – an Ordained, Licensed or Commissioned Minister appointed to the role of Local Church Minister with other Ordained, Licensed, Commissioned or recognised lay ministerial staff reporting to him/her.
- (3) **Associate Minister** – an Ordained, Licensed or Commissioned Minister with similar responsibility levels to the Senior/Lead Minister but who does not have the responsibilities as Local Church Minister.
- (4) **Assistant Minister** – an Ordained, Licensed or Commissioned Minister with lesser responsibilities and a narrower focus.
- (5) **Lay Pastor** – a lay person with lesser responsibilities and narrower, normally pastoral, focus.

Supply Minister

351. A **Supply Minister** is a minister serving a local church from another denomination or from another Conference of The Wesleyan Church. A supply ministry will not normally be for a period beyond one (1) year. A supply minister shall:

- (1) Be accepted by the National Board of Ministerial Development as coming within the guidelines for supply ministry established by the National Board of Ministerial Development having regard to ministerial experience, ministerial qualifications, theological alignment and contextual fit ([470 \(10\)](#));
- (2) Accept the content and authority of the Constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand;
- (3) The approval of the National Board of Ministerial Development may be sought to extend the period of supply under such terms as shall be agreed between the National Board of Ministerial Development and the church.

C. Local Church Minister

355. The **Local Church Minister** (“the Minister”) is an ordained, commissioned or licensed Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand, or Supply Minister, or Lay Pastor who is called of God and appointed by the church (or the National Superintendent ([216 \(1\)](#) and [218](#))) to serve as the senior leader of, and provide executive leadership to, the church.

356. The Minister shall be responsible for equipping and empowering congregation members for their role in the body of Christ by ensuring that:

- (1) The Word is preached;
- (2) The sacraments are administered;
- (3) The mission of God is advanced;
- (4) People are given opportunities to receive the saving grace of God;
- (5) Believers are disciplined, nurtured, instructed, and released for ministry and mission;
and
- (6) The worship is organised.

- 357.** The Minister shall have primary responsibility, accountability and oversight:
- (1) For spiritual leadership (the office of Apostle - Eph 4:11);
 - (2) For pastoral oversight (the office of Pastor - Eph 4:11);
 - (3) For Biblical teaching (the office of Teacher - Eph 4:11);
 - (4) As chief theologian (the office of Teacher - Eph 4:11); and
 - (5) For the development of staff, the Servant Leaders and Ministry Leaders ensuring they are appropriately equipped, empowered and supported to fulfil their roles.
- 360.** The Minister is encouraged to delegate the operational leadership of the church's ministries in these areas by identifying and recommending to the Servant Leaders those who should be appointed as Ministry Leaders so as to ensure that the various ministries of the church are led by those called to the task and gifted appropriately by the Holy Spirit.
- 361.** The Minister will:
- (1) Ensure that the sacrament of Holy Communion is administered at least monthly;
 - (2) Ensure that the sacrament of Baptism is administered regularly;
 - (3) Usually be the Chair of the Servant Leaders ([301 \(1\)](#));
 - (4) Serve as a voting member of all trusts, boards and committees established by the church;
 - (5) Have access to all buildings of the church for those purposes which are necessary to enable their responsibilities as senior leader of the Church to be fulfilled.
- 362.** The Minister is expected to be actively engaged in ministry and mission in, and with, the community which the church is called to impact for the Kingdom of God.
- 363.** It is the responsibility of the Minister to determine who will preach and teach in the church. In doing so the Minister is required to ensure that preaching and teaching is anchored in the Word of God and is expressive of Wesleyan theology.

D. Local Church Minister Appointment

Local Church Ministers

- 370.** Our collective vision is for local churches to be pastored by high quality Ministers who are called to mission contexts that fit congregational needs and expresses the minister's call faithfully.
- 371.** The appointment of the Local Church Minister shall involve both the local and national church working together recognising that:
- (1) The Local Church provides the call to a minister assessed against the local mission context and congregational fit;
 - (2) The National Board of Ministerial Development (NBMD) provides a framework for training and affirmation of ministerial candidates and ongoing certification of good standing;
 - (3) The National Superintendent provides integrity and support to the process of ministerial appointment as provided for in the Constitution and under decision of National Council or National Conference.

Local Church's Role

- 375.** The Local Church is responsible for:
- (1) Initiating the call process ([308 \(4\) a\)](#));
 - (2) Liaising with the National Superintendent on process and potential appointees ([381 \(2\) b\)](#));

- (3) Issuing a call to a Minister after obtaining
 - a) National Board of Ministerial Development certificate of good standing;
 - b) National Board of Ministerial Development approval of supply arrangement (if applicable); and
 - c) A recommendation from the National Superintendent (if applicable) ([381 \(2\) c](#));
- (4) Preparing the Terms of Call that will meet the needs of the minister, congregation and mission context in accordance with national church guidelines;
- (5) Conducting a triennial review of ministry in accordance with national church guidelines;
- (6) Calling Associate ([350 \(3\)](#)) or Assistant Ministers ([350 \(4\)](#)) in accordance with national guidelines and subject to certification by the National Board of Ministerial Development that a minister is in good standing or approved as a supply ministry ([308 \(5\) i](#) & [ii](#)).

National Church Role

- 380.** The National Board of Ministerial Development is responsible for providing certification of ministerial good standing for ministers entering a call process with a local church (whether Senior, Associate or Assistant Minister).
- 381.** The National Superintendent exercises 2 primary roles in relation to local church ministers:
- (1) The National Superintendent serves as a shepherd to ministers
 - a) Providing encouragement and guidance to ministers in the processing of vocational call;
 - b) Providing support to ministers and families in times of pastoral challenge;
 - c) Providing correction and restoration where issues of ministerial conduct arise.
 - (2) The National Superintendent serves as an apostle to local churches
 - a) Providing facilitation of call process for the calling of the Local Church Minister;
 - b) Providing guidance on national church processes;
 - c) Providing recommendations on suitable candidates and appointment of the Local Church Minister;
 - d) Coordinating the availability of resources from the wider church to assist in the process;
 - e) Providing for ministerial oversight where no Local Church Minister is appointed;
 - f) Providing guidance on process where a review of the Local Church Minister is requested by a local church or the Minister.

National

A. National Conference

Organisation

- 400.** There shall be a National Conference held annually.
- 401.** The purposes and responsibilities of the National Conference shall include:
- (1) To celebrate the life, worship and witness of the Wesleyan Methodist Church;
 - (2) To further the agreed national strategy for advancing the mission of the church;
 - (3) To provide opportunities for education and training;
 - (4) To ordain candidates for ordained ministry where appropriate;
 - (5) To consider such business or issues referred to the National Conference by the International Conference of the Wesleyan Church, The South Pacific Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church, the National Council and Local Churches;
 - (6) To consider such other matters it shall deem appropriate to promote the mission of the church;
 - (7) To prayerfully elect by ballot:
 - a) The National Officers ([440](#) - 447) for a four (4) year term;
 - b) Five National Council members for a two (2) year term;
 - (8) To prayerfully confer by ballot, the status of National Superintendent Emeritus in accordance with paragraphs [450](#) – [457](#);
 - (9) Ordinations will take place at National Conference unless extenuating circumstances exist. Ministerial licensing and commissioning will normally take place in the local setting where the ministry will occur ([246](#)).
- 402.** Membership of the National Conference (with speaking rights) shall be:
- (1) All ordained, licensed and commissioned Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of NZ;
 - (2) All Supply Ministers appointed under paragraph [351](#);
 - (3) All sole charge Lay Pastors;
 - (4) Lay representatives and lay observers from each church as provided for in this Constitution ([216](#), [219](#) and [222](#)); and
 - (5) All currently serving members of the National Council who are not members of the National Conference by some other right.
- 403.** Each Foundation, Pioneer and Established Church shall forward to the National Secretary the names of their representatives no later than one week (7 days) prior to the convening of the National Conference.
- 406.** The National Superintendent shall chair the National Conference except during Conference deliberations in relation to the election of the National Superintendent or at any other time during conference where it is necessary for the National Superintendent to vacate the chair.
- 407.** The National Conference shall establish guidelines or Standing Orders for the conduct of its business.
- 408.** Decision-making (with the exception of elections and the conferring of the status of National Superintendent Emeritus ([415](#))) shall normally be by prayerful discerned consensus but, if in the judgment of the National Superintendent or Chairperson of the Conference, a consensus approach to a decision is likely to be divisive, impractical or otherwise unsuitable, the National Superintendent or Chairperson may determine alternative decision making methods including, but not limited to:

- (1) Majority vote of Conference representatives;
- (2) Delay the decision.
- (3) Referral to a resource group for further investigation.

Voting

410. Whenever a vote (in whatever form) is taken:

- (1) Only those present at the time of the vote shall be entitled to vote;
- (2) Each of the following shall be entitled to one vote each:
 - a) All ordained, licensed and commissioned Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of NZ;
 - b) All Supply Ministers appointed under paragraph [351](#);
 - c) All sole charge Lay Pastors;
 - d) Pioneer and Established Church lay representatives ([219](#) and [222](#)); and
 - e) All currently serving members of the National Council who are not members of the National Conference by some other right.

Elections

415. All elections shall be by secret ballot with a simple majority of votes cast being sufficient to determine the outcome with the exception of the election of the National Superintendent which shall require a 2/3rds majority of the votes cast to determine the outcome.

416. In order to provide continuity the terms of the Assistant National Superintendent Church Development and National Secretary shall be offset by two years from those of the National Superintendent, Assistant National Superintendent Pastoral Care and Director Ministerial Development.

417. Re-election is possible at the end of the term.

420. The conferring of the status of National Superintendent Emeritus shall require a 2/3rds majority of the votes cast to determine the outcome.

421. All nominees for positions to be elected at National Conference shall be partners of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

422. Nominations for positions to be elected at National Conference:

- (1) May only be made by member churches ([212](#)) or members of conference ([402](#));
- (2) Shall be submitted to the National Secretary:
 - a) In the case of nominations for National Officers ([440](#)) no later than two (2) months before the Conference is convened.
 - b) In the case of all other nominations no later than one (1) month before the Conference is convened.

or as otherwise provided for in the Standing Orders of Conference.

423. The election of National Officers rests on the principle of decision-making by a discernment and affirmation approach that blends denominational consultation, a focus on gifts, calling and maturity and the role of National Conference in determining the final outcome.

424. The National Council shall appoint a Preparation Group consisting of 3 people (one National Officer (usually the National Superintendent), one other member of the National Council and one partner who is not a member of the National Council). The Preparation Group will meet and discuss with those who have accepted nomination their gifts, calling and readiness to assume the role for which they have been nominated. In the case of the National Secretary the nominee's knowledge and skills as they apply to the role description

and expectations will also be discussed. An emphasis on development and affirmation is to be at the forefront of this process.

If a nominee does not wish to proceed, their name may be withdrawn at this point.

- 425.** The names of those who still wish to offer themselves as candidates, will be placed before the National Council. National Council will be invited to reflect and pray on the names and bring affirmations or concerns to the Preparation Group over the following 2 weeks.
- 426.** The Preparation Group will, if appropriate, discuss any concerns raised with the respective candidates. Names may be withdrawn at this point with the consent of the candidate.
- 427.** The names of those who still wish to offer themselves as candidates, will be placed before the National Council along with a report from the Preparation Group which:
- (1) Assesses each candidate in terms of their gifts, calling and readiness to assume the role for which they have been nominated, along with,
 - (2) Its recommendations as to the names of the candidate(s) it believes the National Council should nominate for each of the National Officers to be elected by the National Conference.
- National Council shall not be bound by the recommendations and may submit nominations (428) from the entire pool of those who still wish to offer themselves as candidates.
- 428.** The National Council will present to the members of conference ([402](#)) one or more nominations for each of the National Officers to be elected by the National Conference, no later than 2 weeks before the Conference is convened, for member's prayerful consideration.
- 429.** The Preparation Group will, if appropriate, meet with any candidate not being nominated by the National Council to discuss the reasons why they have not been nominated. This shall be done in a pastorally sensitive manner and before the names of the nominees (428) are publicised.

B. National Council

- 430.** There shall be a National Council which shall:
- (1) Carry out the will of the National Conference between National Conferences;
 - (2) Promote the interests of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand; and
 - (3) Be responsible for governance of the church between National Conferences.
- 431.** The membership of the National Council shall be:
- (1) The National Officers ([440](#));
 - (2) The National Treasurer ([436 \(3\) a](#)); and
 - (3) Five (5) partners of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand elected by the National Conference, who have leadership giftings and strategic ability with the intention that the combined membership of the National Council shall comprise a cross-section of those called to national leadership roles from across the Church including from the different ethnic groups and geographical areas as well as the ordained ministry and laity.
- 432.** The National Council shall have power to co-opt such other members or advisors as it may deem necessary.
- 435.** The primary focus of the National Council shall be the development and strengthening of mission capacity within and across the denomination by equipping and empowering

congregations for the Great Commission (Matthew 28, 18-20) in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39).

436. Its responsibilities shall include:

- (1) Oversight of the development and implementation of the national strategy for advancing the mission of the church;
- (2) To appoint, on the recommendation of the Director Ministerial Development, the members of the National Board of Ministerial Development ([447 \(1\)](#));
- (3) To appoint the:
 - a) National Treasurer;
 - b) National Children's Ministry Leader;
 - c) National Missions Ministry Leader ;
 - d) National Youth Ministry Leader;

from amongst the partners of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand;

- (4) To approve, on the recommendation of the National Board of Ministerial Development, the licensing, commissioning and ordination of ministry candidates ([470 \(5\)](#));
- (5) Oversight of denominational training and educational initiatives;
- (6) Recognition and approval of member churches ([216](#), [217](#), [221](#) and [226](#));
- (7) Approving changes in the status of local churches including the dissolution of churches where it believes this is in the best interests of the church ([216](#), [217](#), [221](#) and [226](#));
- (8) Advocacy and empowering of church planting initiatives;
- (9) Fostering the belonging of existing non-affiliated churches to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand network;
- (10) Oversight of the development and implementation of all national policies required to give effect to the constitution and to meet the statutory obligations incumbent on the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand, its churches and partners;
- (11) Oversight and review of the National Constitution.

437. Decision-making shall be in accordance with the procedures as set out in paragraph [408](#).

C. National Officers

440. The National Officers are:

- (1) National Superintendent;
- (2) Assistant National Superintendent (Pastoral Care);
- (3) Assistant National Superintendent (Church Development);
- (4) National Secretary;
- (5) Director Ministerial Development.

441. The National Superintendent:

- (1) Is the general spiritual and executive leader of the Church;
- (2) Is responsible for official communications and relationships with other denominations and churches within New Zealand and overseas, the South Pacific Regional Conference of The Wesleyan Church and the International Conference of the Wesleyan Church;
- (3) Is responsible for dealing with the media about major policy statements or issues affecting the church;
- (4) Shall be an Ordained Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

442. The Assistant National Superintendent (Pastoral Care):

- (1) Works to encourage local church leaders in their care of Ministers and to harness a range of people across the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand network who have helpful skills in this area;
- (2) Shall be an Ordained Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

443. The Assistant National Superintendent (Church Development):

- (1) Has primary responsibility for encouraging Church health, Church ministry consultancy, Leadership Development and the strategic encouragement of Church planting;
- (2) Shall be an Ordained Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

446. The National Secretary:

- (1) Is the chief administrative officer of the church with secretarial, communication and compliance responsibilities;
- (2) Shall be a partner of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

447. The Director Ministerial Development:

- (1) Leads the recruitment, training and support of all ministers serving in the network of Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand churches and chairs the National Board of Ministerial Development;
- (2) Shall be an Ordained Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand.

D. National Superintendent Emeritus

450. The status of National Superintendent Emeritus:

- (1) Is an honour that may be conferred on a past National Superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand who has provided outstanding service to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand network;
- (2) Is conferred by the National Conference ([420](#)) on the recommendation of the National Council.

451. In making its recommendation the National Council shall consider such factors as:

- (1) That the nominee has served at least one complete term as National Superintendent;
- (2) Evidence of extraordinary and meritorious contributions to the fulfilment of the mission of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand;
- (3) Recognition from outside The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand of noteworthy contributions to the mission of the church.

452. The duties of the National Superintendent Emeritus may include:

- (1) Providing wisdom and counsel to the National Superintendent and National Officers;
- (2) Chairing/convening meetings and task groups;
- (3) Officiating at the installation of the National Council.

455. The status of National Superintendent Emeritus is conferred for life provided that they continue to meet the requirements for an Ordained Minister within the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand ([251](#))

456. There may be more than one National Superintendent Emeriti at any time.

457. The status of National Superintendent Emeritus may be removed by resolution of the National Conference with a simple majority of the votes cast by secret ballot required for the resolution to pass.

E. National Executive

- 460.** The National Officers ([440](#)) shall act as the National Executive between National Council meetings with the same powers as the National Council for any matters deemed urgent by the National Superintendent.
- 461.** Decisions made by the National Executive pursuant to paragraph 460 shall be reported to the National Council as soon as practicable and must be reported to the next meeting of the National Council for ratification.

F. National Board Of Ministerial Development

- 470.** There shall be a National Board of Ministerial Development (NBMD) led by the Director Ministerial Development ([447](#)) which shall have responsibility for:
- (1) Planning and approving ministry training and curriculum including continuing education;
 - (2) Overseeing ministry training;
 - (3) Acting on behalf of the National Church in discussions about ministry training with theological and ministry training providers;
 - (4) Recognising ministry students who are exploring a call to ministry including overseeing their:
 - a) Study towards ministry qualifications;
 - b) Preparation for ministry;
 - (5) Recommending candidates for licensing, commissioning and ordination to the National Council ([242 \(1\)](#));
 - (6) Providing certification of ministerial good standing for ministers entering a call process with a local church (whether senior, associate or assistant minister);
 - (7) Providing a process of recruitment and selection by which a call to ministry can be discerned, developed and encouraged;
 - (8) Providing supervision of licensed and commissioned ministers as they study, prepare for, and exercise, ministry;
 - (9) Providing guidelines for the transfer of ministers from other denominations;
 - (10) Providing guidelines for the provision of supply ministry ([351](#)).