

GENESEE CONFERENCE
of
Free Methodist Church of North America

POLICY MANUAL
May 8, 2004

I. OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of the Genesee Conference is to call to service, to equip, send, and mobilize clergy and laity for leadership and fulfilling the mission of the Free Methodist Church within our geographic area; we are called to be participants in the worldwide ministry of the Free Methodist Church and to carry out other initiatives appropriate as an Annual Conference in advancing the Kingdom of God.

II. STANDING RULES AND PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL POLICIES

1. No person may serve in any elected position for more than six consecutive years except the area Bishop, Conference Superintendent, Conference Secretary, Conference Treasurer, and Ministerial Appointments Committee. In the event that a member of the Board of Administration, Ministerial Education and Guidance Board, or Ministerial Appointments Committee is not able to finish one's term, the Board of Administration is authorized to appoint a replacement until the next Annual Conference at which time the Conference body will elect a person to fill the term.
2. The Superintendent shall be an ex-officio member of all conference committees and task groups.
3. An attempt will be made to keep a balance of lay and clergy in elected positions.
 4. Amendments to this Policy Manual must first be approved by the Genesee Conference Board of Administration with final approval by the Annual Conference.

B. FINANCIAL POLICIES

1. Conference boards, committees, and task groups shall organize without a treasurer except for the Board of Administration.
2. The fiscal year for the Genesee Conference and its churches shall be the calendar year.
3. Conference funds shall not be made available to support non-Free Methodist ministries and agencies.
4. Any matter presented on the floor of the Annual Conference involving finances shall be referred to the Board of Administration with power to act.
 5. An annual offering shall be made throughout the Conference for the Retired

Ministers Fund. The offering will be held around the time of Thanksgiving. It is recommended that each local church give the equivalent of the pastor's weekly pay package. The BOA & Conference Administrator will be responsible for the appeal.

6. The Conference Treasurer and Conference Administrator are designated as authorized signatories for signing Conference checks.
7. All Conference records are to be audited by the Conference appointed auditor(s) annually.
8. The MEG Board will negotiate payment of moving expenses in pastoral transitions based on the circumstance of the transition, the financial ability of the local church, and the availability of funds in the Conference budget.
9. It is required of churches that for any Conference approved project requiring financing 10% of the loan will be offered to the Genesee Conference Foundation.

C. GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL SUPPORT

These guidelines are to be viewed as a beginning point for pastoral support (i.e. "the floor and not the ceiling") and are applicable for full-time pastors. A full-time pastor is defined as one who is working 45 hours or more per week for the church.

The financial support package for full-time pastors will include:

1. Health Insurance for pastor and his/her family
2. Life Insurance, disability insurance, and accidental death & dismemberment insurance (These are available as a group policy through the Conference. Local church is responsible for making timely premium payments to Conference.)
3. Workers' Compensation Insurance
4. Pension – pension payments are part of the monthly WAVE Fair Share
5. Future Retirees' Healthcare – for pastors retiring after 2015. A Roth IRA plan is provided through Conference. Local churches are to pay at least \$300 annually into the pastor's Roth IRA.
6. Professional Expense Allowance – for reimbursement of "on-the-job" expenses and mileage plus continuing education
7. Paid Continuing Education – 1 week per year-to attend a conference or other training event
8. Paid Study Leave – 1 week per year – for purpose of study and reading (Distinct from vacation weeks and any continuing education)
9. Paid Vacation
 - The local church will assume the cost of pulpit supply.
 - Pastors with up to 10 years of service are entitled to 3 weeks vacation per year.
 - Pastors with 11 or more years of experience are entitled to 4 weeks vacation per year.

- Vacations must be taken within current conference year (July 1-June 30).
10. Paid Holidays – Recognized holidays are: New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, another day of the week will be Designated as a paid holiday.
 11. Paid Sick Leave – Up to 10 days of paid sick leave per year. Unusual circumstances requiring extended sick leave are to be reviewed by local church board and MEG Board.
 12. M.I.N.E. – Minister’s Institute of the Northeast – annual event – Churches are to pay registration cost for pastor and spouse.
 13. Annual Minimum Support Package of \$45,000 to include salary, housing (or fair market value of parsonage), Medicare and Social Security, utilities, health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, accidental death & dismemberment insurance, and professional expense allowance for continuing education / business expenses / mileage.
 - *The per item breakdown of the total salary package shall be at the discretion of the pastor.
 - *For compensation purposes, the pastor’s work week will begin on Monday and end on Sunday.
 - *In establishing an annual salary for the pastor, churches are encouraged to pay their pastor(s) generously, comparable to other professionals in their community.
 - *If a local church does not meet the minimum financial support guidelines, the pastor will be considered part-time and free to pursue additional employment for additional compensation.
 14. It is noted: Churches and pastors are to comply with current Federal & State Tax regulations and also Clergy Salary guidelines including:
 - Appropriate designation of housing allowance portion of annual salary
 - Actual reimbursement for professional expenses
 - Quarterly reporting and payment of withholding & self-employment taxes
 - Taking advantage of savings through items such as Roth IRA

D. RETIRED PASTOR BENEFITS

1. Applicant must be a member of the Conference and of an age eligible for Medicare at the time of retirement to be eligible for retirement benefits.
 2. Applicant must have served as a full-time pastor within the Free Methodist Church for 15 years.
 3. Applicant must have served the Genesee Conference full-time for ten or more years during their active ministry.
 4. Applicant must have served the Genesee Conference full-time within the last five years of retirement.
 5. Surviving spouse qualifications are based on the pastor’s qualifications.
 6. Qualifications can be waived by the Administrative Team in extenuating

circumstances.

7. Benefits include supplemental Medicare health insurance and annual Christmas gift.

E. SURVIVING SPOUSE OF AN ACTIVE APPOINTED PASTOR

1. Health insurance will be provided the surviving spouse of an active appointed pastor as follows:
 - a. The qualifying pastor's spouse must be in good standing with the Free Methodist Church.
 - b. The qualifying pastor's spouse will be covered fully under health insurance at Conference expense for a reasonable period of time as determined by the Board of Administration.
 - c. If insurance is available from another source, the Conference will reimburse the surviving spouse up to the cost of the Conference plan.
 - d. Each and every case will be reviewed by the Board of Administration.
2. The Conference will cover the moving costs of the surviving spouse of an appointed pastor who passes away while under conference appointment
3. In the event an appointed pastor dies, the Conference Superintendent will work with the local church to assist the surviving spouse with the provision of housing for up to six months

F. ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Annual Conference expense is to be paid for all members of Annual Conference in Conference connection as follows:

1. Ordained clergy and conference members, including those in special relationship and their spouses
2. Active supply pastors and their spouses
3. Lay delegates
4. Those having official business at the conference including Conference Treasurer, Conference Secretaries, and others determined by the agenda committee and the Conference Superintendent.

G. ABANDONED PROPERTY

The Board of Administration shall have authority to dispose of abandoned properties at their discretion for the best use of the conference and in conjunction with the guidelines specified in the *Book of Discipline*.

H. SPECIAL CHALLENGE LOAN FUND

1. The Board of Administration will establish a Special Challenge Loan Fund.

2. The monies from the Special Challenge Loan Fund shall come from the sale of Conference / church properties.
3. Any churches that are to be granted loans from the Special Challenge Fund must be approved by the Board of Administration.
4. Churches receiving such loans will be monitored by the Board of Administration.
5. The interest earned on these funds may be used by the Board of Administration for conference approved ministries.
6. Designated funds shall be placed in this fund as soon as they become available.

I. GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL CHURCHES

1. Every local church must carry fire, general liability, sexual abuse coverage, medical, and general comprehensive insurance.
2. Each local church is responsible for studying the need for tenant insurance, workers compensation, disability insurance, New York State Unemployment Insurance. **Local churches will provide Workers Compensation Insurance for their pastoral staffs.**
3. Each local church is responsible for making monthly WAVE Fair Share payments, a portion of which is for pastoral pensions.
4. Local treasurers will submit all reports on giving as specified in the WAVE Policy.

J. EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS IN MINISTRY BY LOCAL CHURCHES

The MEG Board is required by Discipline to pass on the character of ministers each year. Some churches employ non-appointed people for ministry assignments. These people are also required to undergo MEG Board approval. In order to assist the MEG Board annual approval process, the following procedures have been adopted:

1. Local church ministry employees will file an annual written report with the MEG Board.
2. The senior pastor will file an annual evaluation with the MEG Board which will outline the value of the individual's ministry within the local church and give input as to the character of the local church ministry employee.

K. MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

When considering an appointment or a change of appointments to a local church, the MAC will be guided by the criteria specified in the WAVE Policy.

L. GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES HIRING AN ASSISTANT PASTOR

When considering hiring an assistant pastor, the local church will work in accord with the MEG Board and under the guidelines of the WAVE Policy.

TO M. GUIDELINES FOR MAKING IMPROVEMENTS AND/OR CHANGES

LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTIES

When a local church in the Genesee Conference plans to purchase, remodel, or alter properties and the cost for such a project will exceed 10% of its annual income, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. Contact the Board of Administration (BOA) to advise them of the intentions of the church. Complete, send, and present to the BOA a Building Project / Loan Application. This will allow the Board of Administration opportunity to dialog with the local board, committee, (or other designated group) if deemed necessary. The Conference Administrator shall advise the pastor in writing regarding the time for presentation by the church to the BOA.
2. At the time of the formal presentation to the Board of Administration, the following persons from the local society will be present when the presentation is made—pastor, trustee chairperson, and any other representative involved in property improvement, unless waived by BOA.
3. When the presentation is made, written evidence of the vote of the society or the governing body (in instances where the society has transferred power to act for them) will be presented, including the society's or governing body's vote, written material regarding the number of eligible voting members, number of those members actually present, and the numbers casting yes and no votes on a project.
4. Working drawings and plans must be presented for proposed new structures and for alterations to existing structures.
5. If changes involve purchasing property, written evidence of equal property values must be presented (local realtor, bank appraiser, etc.).
6. Evidence of the local society's ability to secure needed finances and its ability to repay, along with the impact of same on the local budget, and the Conference obligation will be shown.
7. History of average worship attendance and finances for past two years plus current year's attendance and income/expenses and performance against budget to see growth trends and church health will accompany application.
8. Application to sell property:

Application to sell property should include written appraisal of value, rational for sale and disposition of funds so received. Local churches must present written evidence of vote to sell as to how many eligible to vote, number actually voted, and number voting yes and no. Approval for the sale must come from the Genesee Conference, Free Methodist Church of North America in Indianapolis, and from the New York State Attorney General and Local Supreme Court Judge.

N. **PARSONAGE GUIDELINES**

The nature of pastoral work includes the joy and need to often entertain guests in the home for meals, group meetings, and sometimes overnight. The nature of the pastorate in the Free Methodist Church is itinerant (traveling, subject to being moved from place to place) meaning that a parsonage should not be designed to meet the needs of one particular pastoral family, but should be prepared for any reasonable eventuality. Specific guidelines follow:

1. A parsonage should contain a minimum of 1700 square feet of living space.
 2. The following rooms should be regarded as minimal:
 - a. Kitchen - of adequate size
 - b. Dinette - for family meals
 - c. Dining room - of formal size
 - d. Living room - capable of entertaining groups
 - e. Family room - relaxing area for pastoral family
 - f. Three bedrooms
 - g. Two bathrooms
 - h. Two car garage - preferable attached to house
 3. Parsonage should contain the following items:
 - a. Stove
 - b. Refrigerator
 - c. Dishwasher
 - d. Garbage disposal
 - e. Hookups for washer and dryer
 - f. Traverse and curtain rods
 - g. Carpet as deemed appropriate by local church official board
 - h. Other items as deemed appropriate by local church official board

III. **ORGANIZATION**

A. **Elected Conference Officers**

1. Conference Superintendent
2. Conference Treasurer
3. Conference Secretary

B. **Conference Leadership Team**

1. **Board of Administration**

A. Responsibilities

1. Develops and approves annual budget to provide for financial support and financial administration of all conference ministries
2. Develops and administers policies related to conference

- churches and ministries
- 3. Serves as the Board of Trustees and oversees all legal issues related to the conference
- 4. Annually appoints and evaluates ad hoc task groups to coordinate specific tasks
- 5. Prepares agenda for annual conference meetings and other related activities
- 6. Serves as the Annual Conference between sittings with power to act including sale or purchase of property
- 7. Hires and directs administrative services staff with the approval of the Conference Superintendent
- 8. Appoints auditor to annually audit conference financial records
- 9. Develops and monitors standards for pastoral salary, housing, insurance, and related issues

B. Composition

- 1. Nine members elected by the Annual Conference to rotating three year terms plus the Conference Superintendent or representative.
- 2. At Annual Conference, the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board will present two nominations for each open BOA position.
- 3. At Annual Conference, the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board will present a nomination for Conference Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer.
- 4. Conference Secretary and Treasurer shall be ex-officio members (with vote). Assistant Treasurer shall be an honorary member with voice but without vote except in absence of Treasurer.
- 5. Conference Administrator shall be an honorary member with voice but without vote.
- 6. A representative from the Board of the Genesee Conference Foundation will be a member with a voice but without vote.

C. Accountable to Annual Conference

2. Ministerial Education & Guidance/Ministerial Appointments Committee (MEG / MAC)

A. Responsibilities of the MEG Board

- 1. Recruiting and overseeing the professional development of Conference Clergy
- 2. Work with pastors and churches in problem resolution when referred by the Superintendent

3. Monitor and pass on the character of appointed clergy and ministry staff in local churches as required by the Book of Discipline
4. Oversee the development of those wishing to enter into itinerant ministry
5. Provide financial assistance for those pursuing ordination based on need and availability of funds

B. Responsibilities of the MAC

1. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, work with the local church, Superintendent, and District Leader in identifying and appointing a pastor
2. Review appointments annually
3. In conjunction with the Superintendent and District Leaders, work with churches and pastors who are in conflict

C. Composition

1. MAC: Two laypersons and one elder elected to three year terms at Annual Conference are to serve with the Conference Superintendent as the Ministerial Appointments Committee. The terms of the elected MAC members will be staggered.
2. Ministerial Education & Guidance (MEG) Members: Two elders and two lay people elected to three year terms at Annual Conference will assist the MAC in ministerial education and guidance tasks. The terms will be staggered.
3. At Annual Conference, the Conference Board of Administration will present two nominations for each open position on the MEG Board.

D. Accountable to the Annual Conference

3. District Leaders

A. Responsibilities

1. Meet with the Superintendent and other District Leaders for a time of learning, encouragement, accountability, and dreaming
2. Meet with District Pastors and pastors in training at least monthly for a time of learning, encouragement, accountability, and dreaming
3. Involve the District in identifying and correcting problems with a pastor or a church at an early stage
4. Work with the Superintendent and MEG/MAC when issues

involve District pastors and churches

5. Perform other tasks as designated by the Superintendent

B. Composition

1. District Leaders are stationed pastors who are appointed by the
MAC
2. District Leader appointments are renewed annually

C. Accountable to the Superintendent

Approved by Board of Administration 4/15/04

Approved by Annual Conference 5/8/04