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## **What is a Ministerial Education & Guidance (MEG) Board?<sup>1</sup>**

The MEG Board (also known in this document as “the MEG” or “the Board”) consists of between four and 12 people who possess gifts of wisdom and discernment that allow them to assist people in discovering, developing, and living out God’s calling on their lives. MEG members may be elected by their annual conferences to an unlimited number of three-year terms, contingent upon their effective service. Some on the MEG also serve on the Ministerial Appointments Committee (MAC), a group tasked with both appointing pastors to lead local churches/church plants and overseeing their proficiency in ministry. MACs work in tandem with MEGs in situations involving clergy discipline.

MEGs should reflect the demographics of their conferences; to this end, Nominating Committees should present ballots that ensure that the Board includes not only an equal balance of lay and clergy members but also representation beyond the token level of women and racial/ethnic minorities. They should also consider the conference’s make-up in terms of age, geography, developed environment (urban/suburban/rural), education level, and socioeconomic status. To compensate for demographic gaps, MEGs are encouraged to invite members of under- or unrepresented groups to consult with the MEG in areas of their expertise. Although these consultants are not allowed to vote, contributing their voices in MEG discussions helps create richer dialogue and deeper understanding. Furthermore, engaging individuals in this manner allows conferences to develop a pipeline for future MEG leadership.

## **What does a MEG do?**

The Book of Discipline lays out the primary responsibilities of the MEG as follows:

1. To screen and recommend candidates for reception into the conference and/or for ordination.
2. To guide and counsel those who are received so that they may be able to meet the demands of pastoral ministry.
3. To annually affirm the integrity and Christian discipleship of all credentialed ministers
4. To assist with various credential transfers, including those involving FM ministerial candidates and ordained clergy transferring between conferences and credentialed clergy from other denominations seeking to transfer into the FMC

<sup>1</sup> See Book of Discipline ¶5230 for additional information

The purpose of the MEG is to assist the local church in identifying, developing, and deploying people for healthy, effective, long-term ministry in the Free Methodist Church.

### **Assisting the local church.**

Local churches are both the launching pad and the landing site for our elders/ministers. Most of our new ministers will surface in the context of volunteer work in local churches, will incubate within them, and, when credentialed, will be appointed to serve through them. Healthy collaboration with the local church is vital to the MEG work.

### **Identifying.**

Part of the MEG's job is to "see" candidates and to help them to discern God's direction for their lives. While God calls all people to minister, not all people are called to ministry! Oftentimes the strongest candidates are those who are shoulder-tapped by existing leaders who see in them the early signs of grace to lead. While not always the case, some who self-identify are compelled to ministry by a need to be needed or by the thought that they will heal their own brokenness vicariously by becoming a pastor. Having the courage to redirect candidates to other, non-credentialed avenues of ministry is one of the most important jobs of the MEG.

### **Developing.**

A one-size-fits-all, check-the-boxes approach to ministerial development has its advantages in that it ensures standardization and consistency. At the same time, it can turn the credentialing process into little more than hoop-jumping. To promote a life-giving, transformative experience, MEGs create tailor-made Formation Plans<sup>2</sup> for ministerial candidates that are designed to cultivate their gifts and shape them according to the desired outcomes for clergy. Such an approach ensures both accountability to high standards and flexibility to accommodate inspired anomalies.

### **Deploying.**

Ministry in our increasingly post-modern society requires clergy equipped to serve in entrepreneurial ways. This includes not only appointment to traditional brick-and-mortar societies but also innovative church plants, bi-vocational service, and myriad other expressions of church. MEGs work with the MAC to ensure appropriate placement for both developing ministers and credentialed candidates that will optimize their gifts and graces.

<sup>2</sup> Formation Plans will be discussed at length later in this manual.

**People.**

The Free Methodist church's history affirms the value of all people: the denomination's founding freedoms emphasized release for the enslaved and full participation in the Body of Christ by the poor. Since 1974, we have advocated for gender equity at all levels of church leadership. MEGs come alongside men and women of all ages, races, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds. This requires a continual reassessment of our credentialing policies and practices to ensure that they do not privilege any one group over another. The methods must serve the mission.

**Healthy.**

The health of a church body is inextricably tied to the health of its leader. As such, MEGs have a moral and ethical responsibility to ask hard questions to ensure that those who are credentialed are mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and relationally healthy. These questions continue throughout the pastor's ministry life, with the MEG providing guidance to address areas in need of remediation.

**Effective.**

Growth is typically a sign of health: Healthy fruit trees typically produce an ample harvest. At the same time, growth is about more than numbers: A tree that produces bushel-loads of diseased fruit is not healthy! MEG boards resource candidates and clergy to lead ministries that demonstrate both quantitative and qualitative growth.

**Long-term.**

Ministry is a marathon, not a sprint. MEGs equip candidates and clergy for the long haul by engraining patterns of sustainability throughout the developmental process and promoting ongoing formation post-credentialing. An intentional focus on healthy habits from the get-go should reduce instances of burn-out and misconduct.

**Ministry.**

As was mentioned earlier, connecting with a post-modern world requires an entrepreneurial mindset. MEGs serve on the front line of envisioning what "church" and the ministries of Word, sacrament, and order could look like. In so doing, MEGs have the freedom to contextualize ministerial formation accordingly.

**In the Free Methodist Church.**

The FMC possesses a distinct set of core values: We hold to the authority of Scripture. We run to the margins of society. We practice egalitarianism. We partner across denominational lines for the sake

of the Kingdom. Passive acceptance of these values is insufficient for leaders credentialed within the denomination. MEGs have the responsibility to ensure candidates and transfers from other denominations both know and embrace who we are as a family.

MEGs carry significant responsibility in the Church. Local churches rely on the MEG to certify that their credentialed leaders have both the gifts and graces for ministry leadership. MEGs are gatekeepers for the FMC's future: Today's ministerial candidates are tomorrow's pastors, superintendents, and bishops.

## **Confidentiality**

MEGs also have a responsibility to the individuals they serve. In doing their work, MEGs walk in sacred spaces with clergy and candidates. As such, guarding confidentiality in all aspects of MEG work is a non-negotiable. Failures to do so can cause significant harm.

The Office of Ministerial Development & Credentialing (MD&C) urges conferences to include discussion of confidentiality at annual training events and to include reminders regularly throughout the year. MEG members and anyone who consults with the MEG should sign a Confidentiality Pledge as a concrete indication of his/her understanding in this area. A sample Confidentiality Pledge appears in the Appendix of this manual; conferences are welcome to adapt this document for their purposes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A.

## What is Outcomes-Based Ordination (OBO)?

MD&C has developed a list of 15 attributes that align with healthy, effective, long-term ministry in the FMC. Candidates who the MEG recommend for elder ordination should:

1. Be characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry. They are shaped by the spiritual disciplines, root their identity and calling firmly in Christ, and model a Spirit-led life of holiness.
2. Demonstrate a high level of self-awareness. They understand and articulate their strengths and weaknesses, build teams around their blind spots, and know how their leadership and communication style impacts others both positively and negatively.
3. Live a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry. They attend adequately to their physical, emotional, and mental needs; schedule regular time for play and recreation; and live simple lives free of unhealthy addiction and compulsion.
4. Live a life shaped by love for others. Those who are married and/or raising children prioritize their families. They build and maintain healthy, close relationships with people inside and outside of the church. In addition, they cultivate relationships for both confession and accountability.
5. Model humility. They remain teachable and accept correction when given; maintain a non-defensive posture toward leaders, followers, and peers; and willingly seek the perspective of others.
6. Exhibit biblical understanding. They possess holistic biblical knowledge, have a Wesleyan hermeneutic that accepts the authority of Scripture, and demonstrate their ability to root their Wesleyan worldview in the Bible.
7. Demonstrate a Wesleyan theological integration. They know and embrace the history, polity, Articles of Religion, and core values of the FMC. They articulate Wesleyan distinctives compellingly, and they understand and embrace a Wesleyan relational theology.
8. Have a theological education commensurate with ordained ministry. They have completed an undergraduate degree and some graduate work in theology. Additionally, they model and promote life-long learning.
9. Hold an ecumenical posture toward the Church and the world. They actively seek to build and maintain bridges among fellow Christian groups.

They demonstrate an appreciation for the contribution of other Christian traditions while wholeheartedly embracing that of the FMC. They also exhibit a growing appreciation for humanity and value all people regardless of their belief systems.

10. Possess the ability to practically apply learning. They model an ability to make complex theology understandable to all, to find God's redemptive activity in daily life, and to deepen faith through real-life experiences.
11. Demonstrate fruitfulness in ministry. They have a track record of transformational preaching, teaching, and leading; engage in personal and corporate evangelism; and are able to build and maintain healthy and diverse faith communities.
12. Embrace ministries of justice and compassion. They challenge injustice and discrimination wherever it is found, engage local and global needs of the broken and poor, and continually focus ministry on the margin, seeking to emancipate all who exist within enslaving systems.
13. Operate as servant-leaders. They promote the development of others; serve the local and global church, demonstrating cross-cultural competency in so doing; and create healthy ministry environments characterized by safety and non-judgment.
14. Empower others to discover and function within their God-given design. They demonstrate wholehearted support of women in leadership; facilitate and promote multicultural community and staff; and actively help others discover their brilliance.
15. Lead with creativity and vision. They seek best practices of contextual and culturally relevant ministry; envision alternatives and successfully lead others towards more creative and effective outcomes; and cast compelling vision and develop strategic plans to accomplish it.

These are the standards for elder ordination. MD&C developed these thoughtfully, collaboratively, and intentionally over a multi-year period. Adherence to these qualifications should equip those who are ordained for healthy, effective, long-term ministry in the FMC and should also position the denomination well for the future. A more complete discussion on expected outcomes for local licensed pastors and deacons follows later in this manual.

## Heart, Head, & Hands

MD&C has grouped the aforementioned qualifications for ordained ministry into three categories. These align with the different developmental stages of the credentialing process: heart, head, and hands.

To provide additional clarity about educational standards for ordination, MD&C has created the following Preamble and Proviso, which appear in the 2015 Book of Discipline.

*Preamble: In the Free Methodist Church we are committed to preparing elders and leaders who will serve effectively in any context. Preparing for ministry with a solid education is a rich part of our heritage as Free Methodists and an integral part of developing leaders. A baseline of a Bachelor's degree (B.S./B.A. or equivalent) and some graduate work in theology is what we envision. We hope our candidates will entrust this part of their journey to one of our AFMEI schools. We understand that this may not always be possible or practical. Nonetheless, we see our colleges and universities as essential partners in the future of the Free Methodist Church.*



<b>HEART</b>	<b>HEAD</b>	<b>HANDS</b>
<p><b>Characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry</b></p> <p>Shaped by the spiritual disciplines</p> <p>Roots identity &amp; calling firmly in Christ</p> <p>Models a Spirit-led life of holiness</p>	<p><b>Demonstrates biblical understanding</b></p> <p>Possesses holistic biblical knowledge</p> <p>Has a Wesleyan hermeneutic that accepts the authority of Scripture</p> <p>Demonstrates ability to root their Wesleyan worldview in the Bible</p>	<p><b>Demonstrates fruitfulness in ministry</b></p> <p>Has a track record of transformational preaching/teaching/leading</p> <p>Personally and corporately engages in evangelism</p> <p>Able to build and maintain healthy and diverse faith communities</p>
<p><b>Demonstrates a high level of self-awareness</b></p> <p>Understands and articulates their strengths and weaknesses</p> <p>Builds teams around blind spots</p> <p>Knows how their leadership/communication style impacts others both positively and negatively</p>	<p><b>Demonstrates a Wesleyan theological integration</b></p> <p>Knows &amp; embraces the history, polity, Articles of Religion, and core values of the FMC</p> <p>Articulates Wesleyan distinctives compellingly</p> <p>Understands and embraces Wesleyan relational theology</p>	<p><b>Embraces ministry of justice and compassion</b></p> <p>Challenges injustice and discrimination wherever it is found</p> <p>Engages local &amp; global needs of the broken and poor</p> <p>Continually focuses ministry on the margin, seeking to emancipate all who exist within enslaving systems</p>
<p><b>Lives a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry</b></p> <p>Attends adequately to physical, emotional, and mental needs</p> <p>Schedules regular time for play and recreation</p> <p>Lives a simple life free of unhealthy addiction and compulsion</p>	<p><b>Has a theological education commensurate with ordained ministry</b></p> <p>Has completed an undergraduate degree</p> <p>Has completed some graduate work in theology</p> <p>Models &amp; promotes life-long learning</p>	<p><b>Operates as a servant-leader</b></p> <p>Promotes the development of others</p> <p>Serves the local and global church, demonstrating cross-cultural competency</p> <p>Creates healthy ministry environments characterized by safety and non-judgment</p>
<p><b>Lives a life shaped by love for others</b></p> <p>Prioritizes spouse and children (if applicable)</p> <p>Builds and maintains healthy, close relationships with people inside and outside of the church</p> <p>Cultivates relationships of confession and accountability</p>	<p><b>Has an ecumenical posture toward the Church and the world</b></p> <p>Actively seeks to build and maintain bridges among fellow Christian groups</p> <p>Demonstrates an appreciation for the contribution of other Christian traditions while wholeheartedly embracing our own</p> <p>Demonstrates a growing appreciation for humanity &amp; value for all people regardless of their belief system</p>	<p><b>Empowers others to discover and function within their God-given design</b></p> <p>Demonstrates wholehearted support of women in leadership</p> <p>Facilitates and promotes multicultural community and staff</p> <p>Actively helps others discover their brilliance</p>
<p><b>Models humility</b></p> <p>Remains teachable and accepts correction when given</p> <p>Maintains a non-defensive posture toward leaders, followers, and peers</p> <p>Willingly seeks the perspective of others</p>	<p><b>Possesses the ability to practically apply learning</b></p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to make complex theology understandable to all</p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to find God's redemptive activity in daily life</p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to deepen faith through real-life experiences</p>	<p><b>Leads with creativity and vision</b></p> <p>Seeks best practices of contextual and culturally relevant ministry</p> <p>Envisions alternatives and successfully leads others toward more creative and effective outcomes</p> <p>Casts compelling vision and develops strategic plans to accomplish it</p>

*This HEART, HEAD, AND HANDS chart set standards. Where the MEG board needs to determine equivalency to satisfy these standards, they have the authority and flexibility to do so.*

The next several sections of this manual correspond to the four stages of the credentialing process: discernment, development, deployment, and continuing development.

## **Stage One: Discernment**

The primary focus of the discernment stage is the heart: exploring healthy patterns of relationships, falling in love with the call and the church, and addressing the big questions about life, identity, vocation, and balance. Those in this stage will be exposed to a variety of assessment tools and experiences in order to help them understand who they are and how God has gifted them.

The MEG plays a peripheral role in this stage until it is completed. MD&C has included details about this stage in this manual to assist conference MEG Coordinators in their work with local church pastors and ministerial candidates. In addition, MEG members will benefit from understanding what work candidates have done prior to formally applying for CMC status.

The local pastor (or his/her designee) plays a crucial role in this stage as a mentor for the potential candidate. The following is a step-by-step guide to the Discernment Stage of the ministerial credentialing process.

1. The potential candidate and local church pastor speak about a possible call to vocational ministry. This conversation may be initiated by either the individual (self-identification) or the pastor (shoulder-tap). Together they identify an appropriate individual to walk alongside the potential candidate during this discernment process. This need not be the lead pastor; rather, this mentor could be another credentialed clergyperson within or outside of the potential candidate's local church who could regularly meet with, advocate for, and direct him/her. Whoever this mentor may be, the potential candidate will need someone involved who can open doors for him/her to gain ministry experience.

How does someone know if God is calling him/her to vocational ministry? Edmondson (2015)<sup>4</sup> provided four attributes of such a call that may be helpful in identifying it. First, the call is irresistible. Saying "no" produces a nagging and pervasive soul-turmoil. Second, it's irreplaceable. Individuals who follow

<sup>4</sup> Edmondson, R. (2015, April 20). *4 realities to help discern a vocational call to ministry*. Retrieved from [www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5974/4-realities-to-help-discern-a-vocational-call-to-ministry](http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5974/4-realities-to-help-discern-a-vocational-call-to-ministry)

other vocational paths report feeling empty in these other pursuits. Third, God's call is irrevocable. It persists despite seasons of victory and struggle. Finally, it's immediate. One who is truly called of God will engage in faithful, surrendered service right away, regardless of whether they get a paycheck. They can't NOT serve God wholeheartedly.

2. The potential candidate assembles a prayer team to provide him/her with prayer support throughout the discernment process and, if applicable, beyond. This step must not be skipped! The prayers of this team have sustained more than one candidate during the ups and downs of this process.
3. If s/he is not already a member of a local FM congregation, become one.
4. At a local church Board of Administration meeting, the potential candidate shares his/her spiritual journey and sense of ministry calling. The Board considers the individual's gifts and graces for ministry as evidenced by his/her service thus far. In response they may:
  - a. Approve him/her to continue in the discernment process and award him/her a Local Ministerial Candidate (LMC) license. Mentors are encouraged to present this license at a congregational gathering as a way to both celebrate the candidate and to educate the broader church about credentialed ministry leadership.
  - b. Redirect him/her, with appropriate feedback given about why as well as recommendations for his/her growth and health.
5. Upon approval as an LMC, s/he registers with the MD&C at [insert website link].<sup>5</sup> As part of this process, provide evidence of clean background check.
6. Using the template available on the website, the LMC and his/her mentor will establish and upload a Formation Plan built around the outcomes under the "Heart" heading.<sup>6</sup> Regular (at least monthly) meetings revolve around the LMC's progress on these outcomes.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix B for screen shots of the registration page. Please note that all forms and documents associated with the credentialing process are regularly revised and updated. The latest versions will be on the MD&C website; please direct candidates to these.

<sup>6</sup> Both a blank and a sample LMC Formation Plan appear in Appendix C.

### **Steps 7-15 may be completed concurrently**

7. LMCs who have experienced divorce or are married to someone who has experienced divorce complete the Divorce Clearance process. Information about this may be found on p \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. The candidate enrolls in and completes a course on the history and polity of the FMC. S/he uploads the final project from the class to his/her online portfolio.
9. S/he uploads copies of either official or unofficial transcripts from all post-high school institutions attended and copies of certificates from technical or other programs.
10. The LMC completes the StrengthsFinder assessment, debriefs the results with his/her mentor or conference-approved alternate, and uploads them to his/her portfolio.
11. S/he also completes an LMC Theological Proficiency assessment, available through the MD&C website.<sup>7</sup>
12. The LMC provides Conference MEG Coordinators with contact information for three or more potential references. These individuals must include his/her mentor and at least two of the following: a lay leader, a ministry peer, an employer/work supervisor, and someone to whom the LMC has ministered.<sup>8</sup>

Conference MEG Coordinators assist LMCs to identify a contracted professional who will conduct a mental-health screening interview. In preparation for this interview, the LMC completes a Personal History document, which s/he submits directly to the clinician.<sup>9</sup> Following the interview, the clinician submits a confidential report that becomes a part of the LMCs portfolio.<sup>10</sup>

13. A candidates who is married or engaged, ask his/her significant other to complete the Spouse Questionnaire.<sup>11</sup>
14. While working on his/her Formation Plan, the LMC compiles the necessary additional components of the portfolio. The MD&C website provides a way for candidates to track what materials remain to be uploaded in order for it

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix G.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix H.

to be complete. These are materials the MEG will be able to access as a way to get acquainted with the candidate. At minimum, portfolios at this stage consist of:

- a. LMC Formation Plan
- b. Testimony, including call to ministry (max 2 pages or 5-10 minutes video)
- c. Completed reference forms
- d. Results from any pertinent assessment tools, including the StrengthsFinder profile
- e. Capstone project from the History & Polity course
- f. LMC Theological Proficiency Assessment
- g. Report from conference-approved mental health professional (or equivalent)
- h. Spouse questionnaire (for married or engaged candidates)

Conferences may also request items such as:

- a. Samples of sermons, Bible Studies, or devotionals that demonstrate healthy theological perspective integrated with clear and practical life questions. These may be written manuscripts, outlines, or digital recordings.
- b. A list of the most influential books, classes, seminars, or training events on ministry and/or leadership in which the candidate has engaged over the past year
- c. Photos of significant people, places, and events in the LMC's life, together with a brief description of each.

Candidates may also submit additional materials that might prove helpful to the MEG in the discernment process.

15. When the LMC has adequately fulfilled the goals of the Formation Plan and the mentor believes the candidate is ready to progress in the process, the mentor submits a Request for OBO Assessment document on behalf of the LMC to the conference MEG coordinator.<sup>12</sup>
16. If the mentor's feedback seems to indicate the candidate is ready for this interview, the MEG coordinator will send him/her the Pre-OBO Assessment

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix I.

Interview Questionnaire.<sup>13</sup> Upon receiving these back, the coordinator will schedule the interview.

## The Outcomes-Based Ordination Assessment Interview

The OBO Assessment interview is a critical component of discerning call with LMCs. While conferences have the option of completing this interview in conjunction with a formal MEG interview, MD&C recommends that this be a separate event. Ideally the candidate and two or three specially trained assessors (MEG members, consultants, or some combination thereof) would meet in a comfortable setting for this interview, which typically lasts for 2-3 hours. Appropriate efforts should be made to ensure that at least one of the interviewers shares significant demographics in common with the LMC as these similarities can help create rapport and set the candidate at ease.

For candidates with whom there may be a language barrier, it would be appropriate to ask them to bring a translator with them, someone they trust to accurately represent their thoughts and feelings. While some MEGs may be understandably concerned that a translator of the candidate's choosing may "massage" responses in certain ways to benefit a friend, please recall that the intention of this interview is more intuition and less information-gathering. The goal is to "see" LMCs and to discern God's calling on their lives, not to "grill" them. As such, creating an environment where the candidate feels at ease is vitally important.

Prior to the interview, the assessors should read through all components of the LMC's portfolio, paying particular attention to his/her references and his/her responses to items on the Pre-OBO Assessment Interview Questionnaire. A thorough review of these documents will prove crucial as there is no way to cover all 15 outcome areas in one conversation. For this interview, questions covering Heart Formation take precedence; experience has shown that issues that would preclude movement forward from the discernment stage often show up as concerns about the candidate's health. Without a solid foundation of Heart health, any Head and Hand development will prove suboptimal.

A copy of the OBO Assessment Interview Guide may be downloaded at \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>14</sup> MD&C has recommended some questions assessors may choose to ask that can help trigger conversation around the different outcome areas. Assessors are not limited to these questions nor should they anticipate asking all of them. The art of this type of assessment involves allowing the interview to unfold and trusting the Holy Spirit to lead it where it needs to go. Between the portfolio materials and the live interview, the assessors should have

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix J.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix K.

a good sense of what to recommend to the MEG in terms of next steps for the candidate. If there are insight gaps, the MEG may choose to fill these in either by asking the candidate to respond to additional questions by e-mail, having a representative follow-up on these areas by phone, or inquiring about them in the CMC interview.

At the end of the interview, the OBO Assessment team provides a recommendation to the MEG Board about the candidate's fit for credentialed ministry and, for those for whom continuation seems appropriate, suggests an expanded Formation Plan to assist the candidate in his/her growth in the 15 OBO areas. This information should appear on the OBO Assessment Report that should be uploaded to the candidate's portfolio.<sup>15</sup>

### **MEG Interview**

After the OBO Assessment Report has been completed and uploaded, the conference MEG Coordinator sets up an interview for the candidate. (Conferences with many LMCs may opt to forego this interview, relying instead on the OBO Assessors' report to make a determination about next steps for the candidate. Alternatively, conferences should consider subdividing into smaller groups to conduct these interviews, with these mini-MEGs providing a report to the larger MEG upon which they would act.) Conferences may choose to invite a candidate's spouse and/or mentor to this interview. For many spouses, including them validates his/her role as a key supporter for the candidate. Involving the mentor helps to cement the partnership between the local church and the MEG.

The primary purpose of this interview is to fill in any gaps needed to make a determination about appropriate next steps for the candidate. The MEG has four different options with the LMC at this point:

1. Redirect him/her toward non-credentialed service with feedback about why and recommendations for growth and health
2. Recommend that s/he spend additional time in the discernment process to address specific areas that lack clarity
3. Direct him/her to the deacon track
4. Approve him/her as a provisional Conference Ministerial Candidate (pCMC), with full CMC-status conferred upon an affirmative vote from the annual conference.

The following is meant to inform both the counsel MEGs should give to the LMC and the action the MEG Board should take.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix L.

## Determining Next Steps

Sometimes individuals are approved as LMCs because of a local church's inability to say the difficult "no." The pastor or local church board may not want to hurt someone's feelings or push back against what has been presented as a call from God. Fear may play a role in this: "We really love Jordan's family and are afraid that if we tell Jordan that ministry leadership isn't the right fit, they might get mad and leave the church." Furthermore, conference cultures that elevate reproducing large numbers of leaders may unintentionally sabotage leadership quality by putting pressure on local church pastors to be "successful" by presenting someone – ANYONE! – who could be added to the list of ministerial candidates.

An outcome of such local church challenges can be that the MEG is put in the position of being the bearers of bad news. Some candidates simply will not demonstrate effectiveness in ministry as LMCs, and considering the responsibility that the MEG has for the health and vitality of the local church, redirecting these individuals out of the credentialing track is the most appropriate response. Conversely, sometimes LMCs have not been given adequate opportunities to demonstrate effectiveness. Perhaps they were placed in a ministry role that didn't fit their gifts and passions simply to fill a hole or because of gender stereotypes. In these cases, MEGs may recommend that they stay in the discernment phase for a longer period of time and work with their mentors to ensure that they have chances to tangibly explore how God may be leading. In some cases, the fit between a mentor and a candidate or between an LMC and his/her local church may not be optimal; MEGs have the freedom to come up with alternative arrangements to fulfil the purpose of helping to discern God's leading.

During the Discernment phase, the candidate has focused on health and discipleship through his/her Formation Plan. If the MEG has concerns about these areas of the candidate's life, they should advise him/her to remain an LMC and continue to discern God's calling and their capacity for healthy, effective, long-term ministry in the FMC. If there are glaring deficiencies that will require significant and lengthy remediation, the MEG should consider out-counseling him/her from the credentialing process.

Assuming a baseline level of health and effectiveness, the MEG then considers what might be the appropriate developmental track for the candidate: the deaconate, licensure, or eldership? A couple of factors play in to this determination. The first is the type of ministry service that proves to be the best "fit" for the LMC's gifts, graces, and passions. Some derive their greatest joy from and demonstrate their greatest ability in providing hands-on, front-line ministry to others. They may gravitate toward a very specific subset of ministry within a local church, like



facilitating recovery groups, teaching classes, or leading worship. While they may have the capacity to oversee others in these ministries, their preference is to continue to do the work themselves instead of raising up new leaders to replace them. Their gifts are most suited for a support role in the Church, complementing the work of ordained elders. For those for whom this is the case, the deaconate would be appropriate to pursue.

Others are compelled to accept the responsibility to study and proclaim the Word, to appropriately administer the sacraments, and to ensure order in the Body. They couple front-line ministry effectiveness with the desire and ability to identify, develop, and deploy others in ministry service. At the LMC level, these capacities are often in nascent form, hence the need for development as a Conference Ministerial Candidate.

The second factor for the MEG to consider in guiding LMCs involves itineracy. Assuming a candidate possesses the gifts and graces to oversee Word, sacrament, and order, the MEG should explore the roles and contexts in which the candidate feels compelled to serve. If an LMC has deep roots to pastor within their local church or community and desires to stay there indefinitely, licensure may be an appropriate credentialing pathway. The licensure track allows the MEG to create a developmental plan tailor-made to promote healthy, effective, long-term ministry in one particular setting. Conversely, the ordination track necessitates broader and more rigorous formation to ensure proficiency across all 15 of the aforementioned outcome areas. Such training allows elders to function in a variety of roles and contexts, which is crucial given that during their ministry lifetime they may be appointed to serve the denomination in multiple communities and in capacities ranging from local church pastor to superintendent, chaplain to missionary, and academician to bishop.

At this stage in the credentialing process, the MEG and the candidate may not have clarity about itineracy. This may come with time and experience. At this point, approving the LMC for provision Conference Ministerial Candidacy and creating his/her CMC Formation Plan is all that needs to take place. A determination about licensure versus ordination can be made later.

At the next Annual Conference, the MEG will present all pCMCs to the delegates to be considered for approval as CMCs. Under the previous model for ordination, MACs routinely appointed CMCs to specific local churches at Annual Conference so that the denomination could track their years of appointed service. With the shift to an outcomes-based model, this type of tracking is no longer necessary; therefore, CMCs need not be appointed. The only exception to this would be in the event a conference has an open lead pastor position and the MAC determines a CMC is the best fit for it. In these cases, a CMC may be appointed and awarded the full sacramental authority of an elder. Care should be taken to ensure that

these pastors have the support necessary both to thrive and to complete their credentialing process.

## **Stage Two: Development**

The primary focus of this stage is to assist the candidate in gaining the knowledge and practical skills needed for healthy, effective, long-term ministry in the ministry track most appropriate to his/her calling and capacity.

### **For CMCs**

The guidance function of the MEG increases in this stage as the MEG Board begins to oversee Formation Plans that include development in the Head, Hands, and Heart columns. Conferences may find it helpful to access the expertise of various MEG members or outside consultants in shaping these plans. For example, gifted ministry practitioners from the MEG could offer their wisdom on Hand formation while lay leaders on the Board with social work/mental health/human resources training could spearhead the Heart outcomes. Outside consultants who teach at one of the FMC's partner schools could speak into components of candidates' Head formation.

Conferences have latitude in the specifics of these Formation Plans, directed by the objective of assisting the candidate to develop appropriate proficiency in the 15 outcome areas. For those on a licensing track, proficiency would be linked to the specific context in which they would be serving. For those on the ordination track, their proficiency would need to be broad enough to encompass the responsibilities and demands of itinerate ministry. Preparing for ministry with a solid education is a rich part of our Free Methodist heritage and is integral to leadership development. As was stated earlier, the MD&C envisions that all elder candidates will hold at least a Bachelor's degree (B.S., B.A., or equivalent) and show evidence of graduate-level work in theology. Though not mandated, completing one's schooling at a Free Methodist college, university, or seminary will ensure that candidates will receive both a rigorous and thoroughly Wesleyan education. Limited funding for graduate theological education is available through the John Wesley Seminary Foundation. See \_\_\_\_\_ for more information. Students requesting these loan/grant funds require annual approval from their superintendent and MEG.

A template for the CMC Formation Plan document may be downloaded from the MD&C website at \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>16</sup> This plan may include coursework, guided readings, experiences, counseling/coaching, or an internship. Appendix N provides a list of options compiled from various conferences to address various candidate growth areas. A more up-to-date list of options will appear on the MD&C website; conferences are encouraged to submit their best practices to add to this list for the benefit of all.

Candidates should have a mentor or a coach who will walk with them throughout this stage. While this person may be a lead or staff pastor at the candidate's church, the MEG may determine that a different arrangement may be optimal for the candidate. For example, candidates who are deployed to internship sites may have an on-site supervisor who could mentor them. Some candidates may be part of cohorts; the leader of this cohort could be their coach. Others may have co-coaches who work in tandem: two or more people with specific contributions to make to the candidate's development. What matters most is that candidates are matched with seasoned, mature leaders who can appropriately support and challenge them in their development, that they have access to hands-on ministry opportunities with suitable supervision, and that they be in community with other ministers, whether as part of a church staff, a cohort of ministerial candidates, or another type of peer network.

Mentors should also invest in their candidates' overall level of professionalism as shortcomings in this area can undermine their credibility in the congregation and the marketplace. Before receiving their credentials, candidates should demonstrate proficiency in honoring confidentiality, managing their time, and communicating in both written and verbal form. They should show an ability to dress appropriately for a variety of contexts and to adapt their speech accordingly. Mentors should help candidates develop a proper work ethic that avoids both the excesses of workaholism and the abuses of ministerial schedule autonomy. They should assist their apprentices in managing their social media presence appropriately and in treating subordinate staff and ministry volunteers respectfully. Finally, mentors should ensure candidates understand and abide by the denomination's sexual harassment policy, which can be found on p. \_\_\_\_\_ of this manual and on the FM website at \_\_\_\_\_.

Candidates will progress through this stage of their formation at different speeds depending upon factors like their maturity, ministry experience, educational background, and life circumstances. Bi-vocational candidates may move through the process at a different pace than those working full-time in a paid ministry position. Individuals with small children may opt to progress more slowly in order to maintain a healthy life balance.

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix M.

The MD&C recognizes that attaching time frames to these stages can create a sense of stigma for those who take longer. In addition, presenting an average number of years from start to finish can prompt some candidates to place an artificial timeline on their process; this could inhibit their growth toward proficiency. Part of the art of MEGging involves determining when a candidate is ready to move ahead; readiness cannot be attached to an arbitrary date placed on a calendar. However, candidates should be made aware that completing both Stage One and Stage Two in less than two years would be highly unusual. Time not only allows a candidate to develop but also provides those around him/her the opportunity to properly observe and assess his/her gifting, calling, and brilliance. Again, depending upon one's unique circumstances, candidates should anticipate a multi-year process designed not to frustrate or artificially slow them down but to position them well for healthy, effective, long-term ministry in the Free Methodist Church.

Mentors will provide quarterly updates to the MEG Coordinator detailing their candidates' progress on their Formation Plans. It may become necessary during this stage for the MEG to revisit either the candidate's Formation Plan or the ministry track upon which s/he is progressing. The need for such action would likely arise from reports from the candidate's coach. Based on feedback from mentors, the MEG will recommend that candidates who have not completed their Formation Plan items prior to Annual Conference either be continued or discontinued as CMCs. A candidate may be discontinued either by his/her choice to withdraw from the process or through the MEG determining that s/he is not making sufficient progress toward credentialing. A CMC may ask for a leave of absence from the process of up to one year if needed; the MEG has the authority to approve or deny this request. Both continuation and discontinuation require formal MEG action and should be reported on the Annual Conference MEG Report. When a candidate has completed the Formation Plan action items, his/her coach will submit a Request for Credentialing Interview document to the MEG Coordinator.<sup>17</sup> The coordinator will direct the candidate to assemble an updated portfolio detailing how s/he has fulfilled the Formation Plan and will instruct him/her to complete the CMC Theological Proficiency Assessment, found at \_\_\_\_\_, if s/he has not already done so.<sup>18</sup> The candidate will provide the MEG coordinator with updated contact information for references: his/her mentor, and at least two other individuals who are lay leaders, ministry peers, work/internship supervisors, or someone to whom s/he has ministered.

As with the original interview at the end of the Discernment Stage, MEGs have the option to have a team of OBO Assessors meet with the candidate for an in-depth follow-up interview or to enfold that into a meeting with the MEG. Volume of candidates may play a role in dictating how conferences proceed. Utilizing "mini-

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix O.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix P.

MEG” teams would also be an option for conferences to consider. The purpose of this interview is to assess the candidate’s readiness for credentialing. A thorough review of the candidate’s portfolio should assist the interviewers in knowing what areas to highlight from the OBO Assessment Interview Guide. Assuming that this team is separate from the MEG, they will make a recommendation to the MEG on appropriate next steps. These may include one or more of the following:

1. Presenting the candidate to the annual conference for consideration as an ordained elder
2. Approving the candidate as a Licensed Pastor
3. Meeting with the MEG/regional MEG
4. Revising the candidate’s Formation Plan to address additional areas not previously included
5. Spending additional time as a CMC to focus on areas of the existing Formation Plan that were not sufficiently addressed

Whatever the recommendation(s), the OBO Assessment Team should provide detailed feedback to the MEG about strengths and growth areas for the candidate. For those who will be credentialed, these comments can help as they develop their Ongoing Formation Plans.

## Deacon development

Formation for the diaconate is overseen by the LMC’s mentor and his/her church’s Board of Administration. The goal of this process is to develop and deploy individuals for healthy and effective front-line service in specialized ministries within the local church. Conferences are encouraged to provide resources that local churches can use to equip these individuals<sup>19</sup> and to include recognition of deacons at Annual Conference. These efforts can help to combat the perception that deacons are “junior varsity” or “not good enough” to be elders. The calling they follow and the service they provide is vital to the Kingdom.

The FMC considers deacons to be laity because their membership remains in the local church. As such, they may serve on their local church’s Boards of Administration and as Annual Conference lay delegates.

<sup>19</sup> The FMC published a Deacon handbook in 2004 that offers some tools that may be of assistance in this area. Please note that this particular resource does not reflect the updated language or process being used by MD&C. In the future this resource may be updated; in the meantime, conferences are welcome to develop their own training materials and to draw from the collective wisdom of other conferences. For example, Martin & Adams (2012) have developed a Consecrated Deacon Manual for the North Central Conference. Again, please note that this resource does not reflect the updated language or process used by MD&C, especially as it pertains to divorce clearance.

MEG involvement with LMCs directed to the deacon track ends when the mentor and local church board step in. MEG Coordinators are responsible to include an updated list of all credentialed deacons as part of the MEG Report to their Annual Conference. MEG Coordinators can work in tandem with the MD&C office to ensure this list is accurate.

### **Stage Three: Deployment**

MEG feedback assists the MAC in their work of appointing pastors. Licensed Pastors are always appointed to a specific local church. The MEG must renew their licenses annually and note this action in the minutes; this provides an official record in the event a licensed pastor needs formal documentation of his/her ministerial status for tax purposes.

Ordained elders may be appointed to a variety of roles beyond the local church. Elders appointed to denominational service include bishops, superintendents/assistant superintendents (although some may be stationed in a local church as well), denominational executives/ministry leaders, conference personnel, and professors at FM-affiliated educational institutions. Some elders may be appointed to serve as FM missionaries while others may be chaplains in places like hospitals, prisons, the military, the VA, and the police or fire department. FM missionaries undergo a rigorous screening process by the denomination that may require reporting from the MEG. The MD&C advises obtaining a signed release from the elder before disclosing any confidential information. The same applies for those pursuing endorsement as FM chaplains. The MEG may also approve an elder to serve as an evangelist; the MAC would complete such an appointment.

At times elders will request a leave of absence. Reasons for needing such a leave are myriad: going to school, recovering from an illness, addressing personal matters, and many others. Granting a leave of absence assumes that the elder intends to return to appointed service in the FMC. If someone is stepping out of the denomination to serve in another ministry context, like a parachurch/non-profit organization or a counseling agency, MEGs designate them as "Released for Ministry outside the Denomination." At other times, an ordained FM pastor may secure work in another denomination; in these cases, the elder should contact the MEG Coordinator and request a Certificate of Standing with a View to Transfer to the denomination/church in which they are serving. All of these designations require formal MEG action and should be noted on the Annual Conference report. Per the Book of Discipline, the reason for leaves of absence should also be published on this report.

In the event an appointment is not available to an ordained elder, the MEG designates him/her as “awaiting appointment.” The MAC will recommend to the annual conference that any elder who is not appointed after two years be deemed as “located” at the local FM church s/he is attending. The same time frame applies to those on leave of absence, although they may request one additional two-year extension. Located elders in good standing may serve as lay delegates to Annual and General Conference. Any located elder wishing to return to itinerate status must have his/her request approved by the annual conference via the MEG and the MAC.<sup>20</sup> While located, the elder remains under the care and oversight of the conference MEG.

Ordained elders who leave ordained ministry to pursue secular employment should deposit their credentials with their conference secretary. They will be listed on the annual MEG Report as “Released for Secular Work.” Should one wish to return to active pastoral ministry in the FMC, s/he would need to ask that his/her credentials be restored; the MEG Board determines whether or not to approve this request.

At times itinerate elders may wish or need to relocate to another annual conference. The elder is responsible to request a certificate of standing with a view to transfer from the MEG currently overseeing his/her ministry. If the elder is in good standing with the conference, the MEG votes to issue this document; the MEG Coordinator sends it to the MEG Coordinator of the conference into which the elder is seeking to move.<sup>21</sup> If the elder is not in good standing, the MEG may still grant a certificate of standing with a view to transfer but should disclose to the potential receiving MEG the reasons why the elder is not in good standing. Upon obtaining the certificate of standing, the receiving MEG votes on whether or not to approve the transfer. Their decision should be noted in their minutes and on their Annual MEG Report, and should be communicated to both the sending conference and the elder. The same protocols should be followed for CMCs who relocate. Located elders who move into the boundaries of another conference should approach the MEG Board and request that their membership be received. Upon approval by the MEG, the MAC would locate him/her to a local church.

The general expectation is that all credentialed ministers — including those who have retired — will establish and maintain active participation in the life of a

<sup>20</sup> For many years the FMC had a two-step process for ordination in which a ministerial candidate was ordained a deacon, accrued years of service, and then was ordained an elder. This process reflected a different understanding of the diaconate than is currently in operation in the FMC. A small number of ordained deacons remain in the denomination; these individuals are typically located in local churches. The MD&C has opted not to discuss ordained deacons in the body of this manual in an attempt to prevent confusion. For the purposes of the MEG, protocols for working with located ordained deacons are the same as those for located ordained elders.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix Q.

nearby Free Methodist congregation when not serving in ministry elsewhere, and will make themselves available for ministry as time/health permit and the pastor requests. At times, however, such engagement is not possible, such as when a Free Methodist church is not located within reasonable driving distance. At other times, circumstances arise that require feedback from the MEG on a minister's possible deployment to a non-FM church:

1. When a retired minister lives in the community of the church in which s/he served. The MEG will need to determine if and how long this retiree should attend a different congregation in order to allow the new pastor time and space to get established.
2. When the local FM church does not meet a non-appointed pastor's personal or family needs. For example, the local church's building is not reasonably accessible and the minister has limited mobility, or the minister has teen-age children and the local church offers no discipleship opportunities for youth.
3. When a non-appointed minister has a personality clash or negative history with the nearby local FM church or pastor and the congregation/pastor would prefer that s/he not attend. The MEG will need to discern how to facilitate healing to this rift, if such a resolution is possible.
4. When a minister has longstanding unresolved issues with the conference or denomination. The MEG will need to find ways to work toward forgiveness and peace.
5. When a minister is depleted and needs renewal that s/he cannot find in a congregation where s/he is "known" and viewed as a ministry-giver.

While the official policy states that credentialed FM ministers need to be engaged with a local FM congregation, the MEG has freedom to apply this policy with grace. In each case, the MEG should work with ministers and local churches to resolve any outstanding conflicts inhibiting fellowship (if they are present) and to find creative ways to promote connection and continued service within the denomination.



## Stage Four: Ongoing Formation

The MEG's work with clergy does not end when credentials are conferred. Each year the Board affirms the following statement as part of its Annual Conference Report:

The Ministerial Education and Guidance Board has given due consideration to the integrity and Christian discipleship of each ministerial member of the conference and affirms the integrity and Christian discipleship of each in accord with ¶15310 of the *Book of Discipline*.

The MEG makes a similar statement about located elders. The scope of responsibility inherent in this statement is sobering.

To assist the MEG in promoting the health and growth of the credentialed ministers they oversee, each of these individuals should upload an annual Ongoing Formation Plan to their portfolios. This tool enables the MEG to know how clergy are continuing to develop their hearts, heads, and hands for healthy, effective, long-term service. The first of these Ongoing Formation Plans should be uploaded within a month of the MEG's decision to award credentials and should include the feedback given during the final credentialing interview.

Presenting this exercise as an expected part of being a minister in the conference helps to promote a culture of continuing formation. Such a requirement should not surprise ministers as many professions mandate continuing education in order to retain one's license or certificate. Accountants, doctors, lawyers, nurses, electricians, welders, among others log continuing education credits as a way to ensure their ongoing growth. Ministers should expect nothing less from themselves in this area; MEGs can support them in fulfilling this expectation for life-long learning.

Conferences may wish to establish a regular rhythm with their ministers in which a prompt to upload this document accompanies other annual reports used for appointment or assessment purposes. Ministers are welcome to structure this Ongoing Formation Plan in whatever form is most useful for them; however, it should include a section detailing progress on the previous year's plan and specific goals related to the 15 Outcome Areas for the upcoming year. MEGs should either follow-up on these plans themselves or designate another entity with gifts in pastoral care to do so.

## Transfer Clergy

Credentialed clergy from other denominations and non-denominational churches become a part of FM societies in a number of different ways. Sometimes they are appointed by the MAC for open lead pastor positions. At other times they are hired by local churches to fill staff pastor roles. Finally, some clergy from other traditions wish to become Free Methodists because they have relocated and become a part of an FM church or they have found resonance with the denomination's theology.

The FMC does not require pastors who have already been ordained to be re-ordained. However, prior to granting ministerial credentials to those asking to transfer in, these individuals must:

1. Meet the requirements for lay membership listed in ¶151 and give satisfactory responses to the adult membership questions in ¶18800. These responses may be given to their local church pastor or representatives of the MEG.
2. Respond appropriately to the questions for admission to annual conference membership provided in ¶18720. These responses may be given to representatives of the MEG.
3. Register with MD&C and build a transfer portfolio, starting with an updated resume, copies of their current ministerial credentials, and documentation from their denomination/church indicating that they are a minister in good standing
4. Complete the Divorce Clearance process, if applicable
5. Participate in classes or a cohort to complete Free Methodist History & Polity (or equivalent) and Wesleyan Theology (or equivalent). Capstone projects from these courses should be uploaded to their portfolio.
6. Complete an Outcomes-Based Ordination Assessment or equivalent interview with the MEG to ensure their health and theological compatibility with the FMC. Interviewers should probe transfer candidates' perspectives and practices related to the following Critical Distinctives of the FMC:
  - a. To what extent does the candidate accept the key tenets of Wesleyan theology regarding salvation, which include unlimited atonement (all may be saved); resistible grace (humans are free moral agents); salvation that is conditioned upon continued obedience and faith as opposed to being

an arbitrary decree of God that stands regardless of one's journey back into sin and potential hardness of heart leading to apostasy; and radical grace that brings freedom from the guilt of past sin, but also releases one from the self-centeredness with which we are born, so that we may become self-sacrificing servants who love God and others deeply?

- b. To what extent does the candidate endorse and practice the belief that Christ gives spiritual gifts without reference to gender, thus allowing both men and women to serve equally at all levels of leadership within the church?
- c. To what extent does the candidate understand and accept itineracy, connectionalism, and serving under the authority of other elders?
- d. To what extent is the candidate willing to support and practice multiple forms of baptism – immersion, sprinkling, or pouring – based on the preference of the adult being baptized or the parent/guardian of a to-be-baptized child? Will s/he honor the right of parents/guardians to choose infant baptism or dedication?

MEGs are encouraged to have transfer candidates complete the CMC Theological Proficiency Assessment as part of probing their theological compatibility with the FMC.

7. Meet with a conference-approved Mental Health Professional capable of assessing their emotional, mental, relational, and marital (if applicable) health. MEGs may ask that potential transfer candidates to complete the Personal Health History document used by LMCs and provide it to the clinician prior to the interview. The MEG Coordinator should upload the report from the clinician to the transfer's portfolio.
8. Demonstrate proficiency in the 15 Outcome Areas at the level expected of ordained elders. No person may be ordained more easily by transfer from another denomination than they would as a candidate moving through the FM credentialing process.
9. Receive the recommendation of the MEG Board and approval by the annual conference.

Where an immediate transfer of credentials is necessary for professional purposes but not possible due to one or more of the above steps being incomplete, the MEG has the option to issue a one-year license to the individual and report him/her as a Licensed Pastor. Pursuing this option assumes that the transfer candidate has

a baseline level of ministry proficiency and compatibility with the FMC such that eldership or continuation as a Licensed Pastor would be reasonable to assume. The MEG may renew this license as needed to allow time for the candidate to fulfill the requirements for a transfer and to get properly acclimated to the conference and the FMC.

## **Divorce Clearance Process**

Marriage is intended to reflect the covenant made between God and humanity and to be characterized by lifelong love, honor, and faithfulness. Divorce is never part of God's perfect plan; that stated, some marriages will dissolve, even among committed Christ-followers. Having experienced a divorce or being married to one who has experienced divorce does not automatically disqualify someone from credentialed ministry in the Free Methodist Church. Care must be taken to understand the circumstances surrounding the divorce and to ensure that those involved have experienced healing from it.

Divorce both reflects and produces brokenness. Brokenness undergirds the attitudes and actions that can culminate in marital dissolution, including infidelity, abandonment, abuse, addiction, and neglect. At the same time, divorce produces brokenness. Scripture describes the covenant of marriage as two individuals becoming one flesh; divorce breaks that bond and produces pain akin to being physically torn apart. This pain ripples out from the couple to impact their families, friends, and church community.

The church has a unique opportunity to speak grace and truth in response to individuals who have walked through in the past or are currently walking through divorce. The church, and the MEG as an extension of the church, is encouraged to be mindful of the language they use around this painful experience. That being stated, fear of saying the "wrong" thing cannot keep the church from speaking truth into these situations. Healing can only take place when those who have sinned confess it, ask for forgiveness from those they have harmed, and commit to the hard work of walking in wholeness. The same standard applies to those who have been sinned against in a divorce situation: to find healing, they must courageously ask God to reveal any brokenness or sin in their lives that contributed to the marriage's demise and extend unconditional forgiveness to the one who wronged them. Often those experiencing divorce must do both: forgive and request forgiveness.

The MEG works in tandem with the Board of Bishops to consider divorce clearance requests for LMCs and clergy seeking to transfer their credentials into the FMC.

To prepare to navigate these scenarios, MEGs should read both Bishop Kendall's article, "Pastoral Responses to Marital Failure" (Appendix R) and ¶13311C-E of the Book of Discipline. These pieces present the Biblical and theological basis for the FMC's approach to divorce and are foundational to the processes described below.

1. The candidate recommends a Divorce Clearance Advocate (DCA) to act as a liaison to the MEG. This could be an LMC's local ministry mentor, a transferring staff pastor's senior pastor, or a conference-level official working with the transfer pastor being considered for a lead role. If the candidate's spouse has experienced divorce, s/he should recommend someone who serves in a formal leadership capacity within the local church or the denomination to act as his/her advocate. The conference superintendent will assess the appropriateness of the individual(s) being recommended and will either approve or recommend an alternate for this role.
2. The candidate/spouse unpacks the story of the marriage and divorce with the DCA. For those with multiple divorces, they should describe each. These conversations should take place in a private setting where the candidate/spouse will feel comfortable. The DCA will likely need to take notes throughout the conversation; this should be disclosed in advance.
3. The DCA composes a letter to the MEG in which s/he provides the following information for each divorce:
  - a. Former spouse's name
  - b. Date of the marriage, separation (if applicable), and divorce
  - c. Key factors contributing to the dissolution
  - d. Major lessons learned and steps taken to heal from the divorce

S/he should also provide a subjective assessment of the candidate's/spouse's healing and health in light of the following questions:

- e. Does the candidate have clear understanding of what contributed to the demise of the marriage?
- f. Is there ownership of the part s/he played? Is there a pattern of blaming the former spouse or casting oneself as victim? Is there a denial of personal responsibility or a lack of self-awareness?
- g. Does the candidate have any addictions/habits such as overworking, overeating, gambling, pornography, or alcohol/drug abuse? If so, what recovery process is s/he in and who is his/her accountability partner?

- h. Did the candidate seek help to restore the brokenness in the relationship? If so, what are the names of those who helped them and how long were they in this peer or professional counseling relationship?
- i. How has the divorce affected the candidate psychologically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually? What lingering effects does s/he identify and what steps is s/he taking to address them?
- j. Is there evidence of healing, correction, and wisdom in the candidate's life? Is this affirmed by other people with whom the candidate works, worships, and recreates?
- k. Are there sinful or unhealthy relational patterns that remain? Can the candidate name those patterns and is s/he in a recovery process with peer and professional counselors to find forgiveness and healing? Is the candidate developing positive, Spirit-directed, Christ-centered patterns?
- l. Does his or her current dating or marriage relationship demonstrate a healthy and holy life? What are the growing edges now being experienced and how is s/he assuring this development?

The DCA sends this letter to the MEG Coordinator to be uploaded as a confidential component of the candidate's portfolio, meaning that the candidate should not have access to it. Knowing this should free the DCA to be completely honest in what s/he writes. If the DCA has concerns about the candidate's/spouse's health related to either current or former marriages, the MEG should encourage him/her to share these directly with the couple. While such a conversation might be difficult, it is most appropriate for the DCA to initiate it as one who is both known and trusted by the couple.

4. The candidate/spouse composes a written response to the following questions and uploads it to the candidate's portfolio:
  - a. What is your viewpoint regarding marriage and divorce?
  - b. How would you counsel an individual or couple in your church who approached you for help with their struggling marriage?
5. The MEG (or a designated subgroup) reviews the advocate's letter, the candidate's/spouse's responses, and the Mental Health Professional's report looking for indications that the one who experienced the divorce has gained an awareness of his/her personal responsibility related to it

and received God's grace for healing and transformation. They should look for health in his/her current marriage (if applicable) and ascertain the appropriateness of his/her viewpoint on marriage and divorce and approach to working with struggling couples.

6. The MEG may ask for additional information/documentation or request a formal interview with the candidate and spouse to address any questions or concerns. This may include obtaining a release to speak with any clinicians with whom the candidate/spouse processed the divorce.
7. If there are no hesitations, the MEG would vote to authorize Divorce Clearance. The MEG Coordinator forwards this information, together with the appropriate portfolio components, to the area bishop for review. The Bishop may request additional information/documentation; the MEG Coordinator works with the DCA and candidate to fulfill this. If the Bishop approves Divorce Clearance, the MEG Coordinator uploads documentation from the Board of Bishops to the candidate's portfolio and communicates this news to both the candidate and the DCA.
8. If the MEG or Bishop do not believe divorce clearance is appropriate, they should articulate the reasons why in written form. If the issues preventing clearance are insurmountable, the MEG should counsel the candidate from the credentialing process. Representatives from the MEG should have this conversation face-to-face with the candidate and spouse if possible, with the DCA present to provide support. The MEG Coordinator will upload any pertinent documentation related to this decision to the candidate's portfolio with appropriate layers of confidential access applied.
9. If the MEG or Bishop do not believe divorce clearance is appropriate at this time but may be later, the MEG should provide a rationale for this decision in written form. Representatives of the MEG should meet with the candidate, spouse, and DCA to discuss the decision. If the candidate/spouse is willing to address the issues preventing divorce clearance, the MEG develops a Remediation Plan for Divorce Clearance that becomes part of the candidate's portfolio. This plan may include input from the DCA and the candidate/spouse. For LMCs, the Remediation Plan becomes an addendum to the LMC Formation Plan; the candidate must successfully complete the components of this plan and receive Divorce Clearance before being considered as a CMC. For transfer candidates, receiving divorce clearance for those for whom it applies is already listed on the requirements to be considered for FM credentialing. Members of

both groups would stay in contact with the MEG while working on their Remediation Plans and would provide documentation of their progress in their portfolios.

## **Sexual Harassment**

It is the policy of the Free Methodist Church that all people be treated with respect and dignity, as discussed in the Book of Discipline ¶¶3220, ¶3221, ¶3230, and ¶3231. Sexual harassment of or by an employee of the FMC is not tolerated. A valid complaint of sexual harassment may lead to strict disciplinary action, including termination and/or legal action. Any form of retaliation will not be tolerated. This policy is in keeping with the spirit and intent of various local, state, and federal legal prescriptions. In addition, the FMC believes that sexual harassment is a violation of Biblical principles.

At the same time, the FMC believes that a false accusation of sexual harassment is as devastating as sexual harassment and therefore is not tolerated.

Harassment can be defined as:

1. any unwelcomed touching;
2. demands for sexual favors;
3. any sexually oriented behavior or comments that create a hostile or offensive work environment;
4. the display of sexually explicit or otherwise offensive posters, calendars, pictures, etc.;
5. inappropriate or offensive looks, gestures, touches, or other physical conduct;
6. comments or jokes based on gender, age, race, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, religion, national origin, ethnic background, military service, marital status, citizenship, or any other protected class; and,
7. any use of the above means of sexual harassment to intimidation or to be a condition of new or continued employment.

Any report of sexual harassment or false accusation of sexual harassment will be addressed pursuant to the policies and procedures of Chapter 7 of the *Book of Discipline*.

Any sexual harassment should immediately be reported to the local pastor, conference superintendent, or the Human Resources office of the FMC.



## Clergy Discipline and Restoration

The following is adapted from *Restoration Process—A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education & Guidance Boards*, 2006. It includes updates and revisions from seasoned denominational and MEG leaders. Additional resources that may be of assistance to MEGs in navigating clergy discipline issues include the *Superintendent's Manual*, the *Review Board Court of Appeals Manual*, and *Restoration Manual: A Workbook for Restoring Fallen Ministers and Religious Leaders* (Thomas L. Pedigo).

When a minister has confessed to or been accused of grievous sin, the entire church comes alongside to take responsibility for his/her repentance, restitution, and restoration as well as the restoration of any victims of that sin. The initial response of the church is entrusted into the hands of any elder to whom the minister voluntarily confesses, and in certain cases to the superintendent and the MEG Board.

In such a situation the elder or superintendent who receives a confession begins the process of healing. This process focuses not only on the minister, but also on his/her family, others harmed by the minister's sin, the congregation the minister serves, and the larger Christian community.

The following process will be useful in all cases, even though each restoration case will be unique. When we follow these principles of healthy biblical community, then God's guidance through God's church maintains a consistent pattern of wholeness and holiness in each unique situation.

### Preparation

**Spiritual.** As leaders, we begin with prayer. Being involved in the restoration of a fallen sister/brother puts us in a vulnerable spiritual place where we have to keep ourselves free of judgment and self-deception. Paul warns us: "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Galatians 6:1-3).

Before beginning this restoration process take extensive time to pray. Pray for protection, humility, wisdom and insight. Ask the Holy Spirit to come alongside you as you come alongside all those who suffer because of this alleged failure. Pray for those you will be restoring and comforting. Pray for every person affected by this confessed or accused wrongdoing. Pray for the truth to be clear and each person to be humble and open. Pray for God's protection over the church and willing spirits within everyone.

Discern whether you are in a place of spiritual health to be the one who accepts responsibility for either hearing a private confession with the responsibility to direct the restoration, or investigation of an accusation. The danger to be permissive rather than merciful, or punitive rather than holding accountable, is greater when we are personally struggling with similar sin. If in your meditations and prayers you discern this is not something you should do then find another leader to do this spiritual work in your place.

## First actions

We respond differently to a confession of grievous sin than to an accusation or discovery of such sin.

## Confession

“The confession of one elder to another is an inviolate confidence, unless the conduct is both ongoing and unrepentant” (*Book of Discipline*, ¶7170B). The opportunity to bring an end to wrong behavior through the confidential care of another elder is a healthy biblical opportunity within the community of the church. Thus, when a minister confesses the truth of his/her sin and repents from that behavior such that s/he turns away from that behavior to do what is right, then such a confession is confidential and need not be reported to any other person or to any official body.

Private counsel must be set aside when the charges of sin against an elder/pastor involve the victimization of individual(s) and have been substantiated by witnesses or by the confession of the sin to the overseer by the perpetrator. Once the sin has been substantiated, be it past or present, the matter can no longer be considered private. The victim(s) and/or their advocate must be included (in so far as they are able, or willing) in any and all further processes. Depending on the severity and the type of sin, it may be necessary to involve the police. Ascertain what the victim's/victims' needs are in relation to what type of abuse has been suffered. Discover whether the victim needs to process a police report or go to the hospital for a rape kit, or other medical or psychological needs.

A private confession to another elder will require a restoration process and accountability that is guided by the elder to whom the confession is made. A clear statement of confession needs to be written by the penitent minister and must include a pledge stating exactly how the behavior will be changed.<sup>22</sup> Though

<sup>22</sup> For additional guidance, see Pedigo, pp. 15-36.

confidential, this process still deals with all the areas a formal restoration would cover. The questions provided by Pedigo hold the person accountable to his/her own confession and pledge to changed behavior.

In cases that involve victimization of individual(s), the clear statement of confession and pledge that has been written by the penitent minister must be sent to the victim and/or their advocate along with a written apology. This may take time to complete as the penitent minister may be unable to see the ramifications of their actions until they have completed the restoration steps. The guiding leader/counselor must approve that the material is appropriate before sending it to the victim/advocate. However, there must be open communication to the victim/advocate by the leader/counselor regarding the timeline of when the confession/pledge/apology can be expected.

This private restoration process can be delegated to a professional counselor or pastoral counselor with the agreement of the penitent pastor. When such a referral occurs, the counselor must agree to follow the Pedigo categories and to work with the minister in providing a full restoration in all stipulated areas, agreeing to report to the confidential leader when the work is complete. If the confidential leader is trained to provide this counsel and chooses to do so, it is understood by the confessing minister that the confidential leader will be seeking confidential supervision from a pastoral counselor or professional counselor for both accountability in the process as well as transference issues. This will not be the confessing elder's superintendent or bishop but a trained pastoral counselor or professional counselor.

The accountability to assure that the offending conduct is not ongoing or unrepentant rests on both the confessing minister and the one to whom the confession is made. Repentance requires a consistent change in behavior. When this change has occurred, then completion of the restoration focuses on the future life of the minister. These include such topics as vocational, volitional, physical, and personal/recreational life.<sup>23</sup>

In cases that involve victimization of individual(s), the victim's advocate must be kept in communication to help ascertain whether the offending conduct has truly stopped. Cases that involve child sexual abuse or Orders of Protection must be referred to the police if there is suspicion that the conduct has not stopped.

If the penitent minister is unable to maintain a consistent change of behavior, then the confidential listening leader is responsible to negotiate a voluntary withdrawal from ministry. Both have responsibility to see that this step is taken. Withdrawal from ministry allows the offending pastor to be free from the weighty responsibilities

<sup>23</sup> See Pedigo, pp. 37-64.

and pressures of ministry, to focus on recovery, and to focus on his/her own and the family's spiritual well-being. S/he may request a leave of absence from the MEG in order to focus greater attention to his/her private restoration plan. If this proves ineffective in bringing about the necessary transformation, voluntarily escalating the matter to the conference level and developing a Covenant of Restoration with them would be appropriate.

When a minister's confession is not followed by a change in behavior, and s/he is unwilling to voluntarily withdraw, then the confidential listening leader must alert the offending pastor that his/her confession is no longer confidential. The offending elder is now abusing the ministry position. This action is therefore evidence of "... a request to be helped to stop this abuse and removed from the temptations and responsibilities of his/her position until repentance and healing occurs" (*Book of Discipline*, ¶17170B). It is to the detriment of the minister, others involved in the wrongdoing, and the congregation as a whole if grievous sin is allowed to be ongoing behavior in a minister's life. If the use of confidentiality becomes a way a pastor attempts to protect his/her sinful behavior, then the leader to whom the confession is made is responsible to contact the superintendent, who then informs the MEG Board. The individual now moves to the Restoration Process outlined below.

## Accusation

An accusation usually arises through the complaint of a spouse, a member, or an informer, either from inside or outside the church. Word may come while the wrongdoing is occurring or some time after the fact. The passing of time does not ease the necessity of careful attention. The individual overseeing the investigation – a bishop, superintendent, or another appropriate designee – must carefully consider the substance of the allegations, taken into account the following questions:

1. What is the accusation?
2. Who brought the accusation? When? How?
3. Is the accusation made in writing, signed, witnessed and dated?
4. Is the accusation precise and clear? If not, why not?
5. Is the accusation true? How do you know? What is the evidence?
6. Is the accusation, by its nature, conduct that is unbecoming to a Christian? Why?
7. Is the behavior a pattern? How is this verified?
8. Are there other witnesses? Who? Are they willing to give testimony?
9. Is there written documentation? Are there video or audio recordings? Other electronic support?
10. Are there letters, phone calls or other data that support the accusation?

The overseer must pay special attention to identify any victims of the complaint. His/her initial communication with the victim(s) is intended as pastoral and should take place with a pastoral counselor or professional counselor present. In instances of abuse, ascertain what the victim's needs are in relation to what type of abuse has been suffered. Discover whether the victim needs to process a police report or go to the hospital for a rape kit, or other medical needs. Discover when the last contact was with the alleged abuser. Determine whether the victim has sought and found counseling, been offered an advocate, and read the Book of Discipline, Chapter 7 so that they are aware of the procedures that will be followed as well as their rights as a victim. If not, follow through with that process and then offer to make this moment of initial contact one of apology and sympathy before God. Explain the rights of victims:

1. To be treated with fairness and respect
2. To receive counseling by counselors trained in victimization psychology
3. To have a trained advocate assigned to help
4. To be notified of all hearings and changes in his/her case
5. To talk to the MEG Board
6. To make a statement to the Review Board
7. To be notified if the accused pastor/elder is expelled, suspended, released or reinstated
8. To be protected from the offending pastor/elder before, during, and after the review
9. To be present at hearings or have an advocate present.

The victim(s) and/or their advocate must be included (in so far as they are able, or willing) in any and all processes.

In the event that an accusation is denied, the person bringing the accusation and/or any victims must be informed of the denial, be told that an investigation is underway, and be informed of what the expected timeline will be. Consistent, compassionate communication will go a long way towards keeping the victim from being marginalized.

Those accused of wrongdoing also have rights. First among these is confidentiality: the investigation of alleged misconduct is to be kept confidential. This confidentiality extends to those requested to participate in the investigation. Second, this principle must be kept clearly in mind: Every pastor is innocent until proven otherwise. The respectful exploration of the accusation must establish

wrongdoing beyond any reasonable doubt. Hearsay is never evidence. Third, any accused pastor has the right to answer the accusations in the presence of the MEG in the event rumor has tarnished his/her reputation.

When an accusation has been shown to be true and the minister is involved in grievous sin, then the Restoration Process is begun for both the pastor and the victim. The victim must be assigned an advocate/counselor who understands the type of wrong that has been committed and can guide him/her through the process of Restoration. If the wrongdoing is considered by the investigators to be unfounded, the person bringing the accusation must be informed that the investigation has been completed and the accusation unfounded. Reasons must be provided by the investigators as to their conclusions.

## **Restoration Process**

Following the first step of Confession, there are three additional steps in the Restoration Process: communication, repentance, and recovery.

### **Communication**

The first communication is with the minister in need of restoration. The overseer's initial communication with the minister takes place with a pastoral counselor or professional counselor present. The focus is pastoral. The overseer should ascertain whether the elder has sought and found pardon from God through Christ. If not, offer to make this moment of initial contact one of contrition and confession before God.

Discover whether the minister has also been reconciled to other persons and made restitution, to the degree possible and appropriate, to persons who have been victimized by his/her sin. Explore ways this could be accomplished.

Explain clearly what his/her rights are as a Free Methodist minister and what the Restoration Process entails. Note the accusation that has been made against him/her and show how this is an inappropriate behavior as described in ¶7130 of the *Book of Discipline*. State that the meeting currently taking place is explained in Chapter VII of the *Book of Discipline* titled Church Order and sets forth the purpose and goals, response to disorder, and processing of complaints. Make clear that anything s/he says in this or subsequent meetings, including any written communication, will become a part of the report to the MEG Board.

State the following:

You have the right to consult with another elder and with the *Book of Discipline* before speaking with us. You have the right to have another elder with you during this meeting. You also have the right to voluntarily "withdraw under charges." Do you understand?

If you decide to continue this meeting now without another elder present, you will have the right to stop at any time and have another elder present with you. Do you understand?

The content of this meeting is held within the confidentiality of the MEG Board unless there is risk of imminent bodily harm to another person present, or if the allegations are required to be reported by law, such as sexual abuse of a child or abuse of the elderly. Private counsel must be set aside when the charges of sin against an elder/pastor involve the victimization of individual(s) and have been substantiated by witnesses or by the confession of the sin to the overseer by the elder/pastor. Once the sin has been substantiated, be it past or present, the matter can no longer be considered private. The victim(s) and/or their advocate, must be included (in so far as they are able, or willing) in any and all further processes.

Knowing and understanding these rights as they have been explained to you, are you willing to continue this meeting without either having another elder present or consulting with Chapter VII of the *Book of Discipline*?

Clarify that the desire for the process is sincere *repentance* as verified by a consistent change in behavior; and that the MEG Board will form a Restoration Team to seek a full recovery from the sin and a restoring to ministry.

The second communication is with the area bishop. This communication is in writing and explains that a Restoration Process has begun with this minister and the victim(s). This communication seeks counsel and wisdom as well as possible resources beyond the conference.

The third communication is with the MEG Board. This communication is done in a meeting of the Board with confidentiality by all members. The overseer should describe conversations with both the offending minister and the victim(s). The Board should designate a Restoration Team for both the minister and the victim(s). If an investigation into allegations is ongoing, the MEG should designate the minister as "Leave of Absence -- Under Review," with notation of said action made in the MEG Minutes. If the allegations have been substantiated or the minister has confessed to the misconduct and if the pastor has agreed to enter into a restoration process, the MEG should designate him/her as "Leave of Absence – Covenant of Restoration."

The fourth communication is with the victim and/or the victim advocate. The victim should be kept in communication as the process proceeds so that they are aware of the timeline and progress of the restoration process as well as their rights in that process. They should be connected with the Restoration Team designated to walk alongside of the victim(s).

The fifth communication is with the church and conference. This communication is at the discretion of the superintendent in consultation with the bishop and MEG Board and may be made later in the restoration process when recovery is well underway. The public statement made at the time of the removal from ministry may simply say: "Pastor \_\_\_\_ has asked for a leave of absence to work on personal issues in his/her life." Or: "Pastor \_\_\_\_ is being relieved from pastoral responsibilities to work on personal issues in his/her life. We ask that you respect his/her privacy and when appropriate, Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ will speak to you of his/her journey." If the minister's grievous sin is public knowledge then a statement may be made: "Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ has been relieved from pastoral responsibilities to enter a process of restoration to God and recovery to ministry. We ask that you pray for him/her and ask for God's care during this difficult time."

## Repentance

The process of restoration requires a time of recovery measured by transformation and fresh empowerment to reenter ministry. Pastoral and professional counseling explores the power of a grievous sin's hold over a person, not only enslaving but damaging to one's character and self-awareness. Denial and self-deception are two psychological defenses that make it difficult for a person to be aware of his/her sin and its power over them. Hypocrisy and deceit are also forms of self-protection which humans tend to use in order to escape from accountability.

The spiritual and emotional support of the minister's family, the victim(s), and the congregation will require a time of recovery as well. This recovery may necessitate the provision of counseling and group healing to deal with trust and grief issues. This care for the congregation is the responsibility of the superintendent in cooperation with the Restoration Team.

The process of restoration requires accountability procedures. These procedures involve the creation of a "Restoration Team" for both the elder and the victim by the MEG Board, as mentioned earlier.<sup>24</sup> This team should consider the following:

<sup>24</sup> Pedigo describes the formation of this team and the accountability procedure on pp. 9-14. In addition, Pedigo treats "Scriptural Instruction Regarding God's Grace in Restoring and Reinstating Fallen Leaders" on pp. 86-94 and provides an extensive bibliography on pp. 95-99. To the Restoration Team with accountability, Pedigo has several additional pages of helpful reference: Initial Meetings Purpose Planner (pp. 75-76); Guidelines for Restoration Team (pp. 77-78); Accountability Questions (p. 79); and John Wesley's Questions (partial) (p. 80). Also helpful is a Checkpoint Rating



1. Financial care of the minister and minister's family due to the life changes restoration requires (see Pedigo, pp. 39-40). Working with the superintendent and the local board of administration, the Restoration Team will help the minister work out a plan to financially care for his/her family. Care should be taken in this difficult task to make sure that the family is not put further at risk by the crisis of lost income. The goal is financial stability during the transition and expert assistance toward alternate employment.
2. Care should be taken to ensure that the victim has access to counseling and that the costs that are not covered by the victim's insurance are covered by the church.
3. Spiritual care of the minister and his/her family. The question of continued participation in the local church or finding another congregation to host the minister and his/her family during the restoration is discussed in Pedigo, pp. 73-74. Working with the superintendent and the local board of administration, the Restoration Team will help the minister work out a plan to spiritually care for his/her family.

The process of restoration also requires the minister to surrender his/her ministerial credentials, without ornamental frames, to the conference secretary until restoration is complete. The pastor's membership is then placed with a local church to provide spiritual care for the elder and his/her family.<sup>25</sup> When restoration is complete and the pastor is restored to ministry, a celebration of his/her credentials can be held as the parchments are returned and ministry restored.

A sample Covenant of Restoration for ministers appears in Appendix S. This document may be adapted as needed according to the specifics of the situation. A signed and dated copy should be uploaded to the minister's portfolio. Continuing relationship with both minister-in-restoration and victims is an important part of the healing process. Healthy biblical communities are those that reach out to those in restoration, inviting them to personal and public gatherings, offering love and grace in our Lord's name. This is made more feasible if the conference provides prevenient care in supportive groups so that personal relationships are enhanced and ongoing love is expressed.

## Recovery

When the restoration process has been followed, giving ample time for the minister to establish a trustworthy pattern of Christian character and conduct, the Restoration Team reports this completion to the superintendent and MEG

Scale so the Restoration Team can assess their own process in an ongoing way (pp. 66-67).

<sup>25</sup> See Pedigo's "Pastor-in- Residence Program" pp. 73-74.

Board. The MEG Board may then interview the minister and the victim/advocate and determine whether the time has come to return the minister's credentials and restore him/her to ministry, or whether additional restoration is necessary. It is important that the victim/advocate is included in the discernment process, if willing and able. When the MEG Board determines that the restoration process is complete, they recommend to the conference or its board of administration the return of credentials and a restoring of ministry.

The recovery of an elder is a cause for celebration. The conference or its board of administration may publicly rejoice with the pastor and his/her family by restoring his/her credentials in a way that brings dignity to the minister, the victim, and the church. It is important that the victim is not disenfranchised by this event.

A crucial component of recovery is ensuring the restored pastor has the systems and structures in place to promote healthy, effective, long-term ministry. To that end, the MEG should work with the pastor on an Ongoing Formation Plan to provide the support s/he needs to continue to live and work in wholeness. This document should be uploaded to his/her portfolio.

## Suspension

Ministers who continue to deny wrongdoing despite evidence to the contrary and the testimony of at least two witnesses may be immediately suspended from ministry by his/her overseer per the *Book of Discipline* (§7130, B5). In a similar way, the MEG Board may suspend a minister if s/he fails to complete the Covenant of Restoration. Any time an elder's membership is suspended there shall be a review by a regional Review Board (*BOD*, §7140). Protocols for such reviews may be found in the *Review Board Court of Appeals Manual*.

## Debrief

A sample format for a moral failure debriefing appears in Appendix T. Reflecting upon the way a pastoral misconduct process was handled provides a valuable opportunity for the MEG Boards to sort through what can often be difficult feelings associated with the case. In addition, such debriefs highlight both strengths and weaknesses in the process and can inform future revisions to it.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Confidentiality Pledge**

**Confidentiality Pledge**

I realize that the work of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference Ministerial Education and Guidance Board and its subcommittees is highly confidential and that failure on my part to recognize this may result in harm to those whom we seek to serve.

Therefore, I, \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby pledge myself to hold in strict confidence, both now and in the future, all information, written or verbal, which comes to me as a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference Ministerial Education and Guidance Board and/or its subcommittees.

This pledge refers to specific personal information received in connection with those interviewing with the MEG Board or MEG subcommittees, any discussion of which outside of MEG-related duties is clearly a violation of confidence.

It is understood that this pledge covers unnecessary discussion on my part with fellow MEG Board or MEG subcommittee members, and any discussion with personal friends or family in private, semi-private or public settings.

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**  
**LMC Registration**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Interest

**Church Information**

Conference

Church Name

Church Contact

Church Contact Address

Church Contact Email

Church Contact Phone Number

**Local Mentor Information**

Local Mentor Name

Local Mentor Email Address

Local Mentor Phone Number

Local Mentor Job Title

## Transfer Of Credentials

Complete this section if you are transferring pastoral credentials in from another FMC Conference or from another Denomination.

Transferring from another FMC Conference? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Transferring FMC Conference:

Transferring from another Denomination? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Transferring Denomination:

Nature of transferred credentials:

### Local Ministerial Candidate Check List

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Local Free Methodist Church \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference \_\_\_\_\_

I. Date or note when each section has been completed: Pastor's Initials

\_\_\_\_\_ Member of local Free Methodist Church \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Declared a call to ministry and discussed this with the pastor \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Assembled a prayer team to support through this process \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Shared spiritual journey with local board of administration \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Register with the National MEG Network \_\_\_\_\_

[\(http://fmcusa.org/leadership/mcs-signup/ \)](http://fmcusa.org/leadership/mcs-signup/)

\_\_\_\_\_ Send Transcripts of any college credits/courses \_\_\_\_\_

(To your Conference Office)

\_\_\_\_\_ Divorce Clearance (when applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Establish LMC Formation Plan:

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete History & Polity Course \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Meet monthly with mentor following the Formation Plan (attached) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Respond to LMC questions from FMC-Book of Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
 (par. 8700) before local church board

Pastor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:

Rev. Arlene Weigand,  
 Coordinator for Ministerial Development & Credentialing  
 Free Methodist World Ministry Center  
[Arlene.weigand@fmcusa.org](mailto:Arlene.weigand@fmcusa.org);  
 1-317-244-3660 X308

## APPENDIX C

### LMC Formation Plan

#### Formation Plan

In keeping with the discernment stage's heart-development focus, the Local Church Mentor and the LMC will put together a Formation Plan consistent with bolstering the five areas cited under the Heart column of the Outcomes-Based Ordination framework.

Characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry

1. Shaped by the spiritual disciplines
2. Roots identity and calling firmly in Christ
3. Models a Spirit-led life of holiness

Demonstrates a high level of self-awareness

1. Understands and articulates their strengths and weaknesses
2. Builds teams around blind-spots
3. Knows how their leadership/communication style impacts others both positively and negatively

Lives a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry

1. Attends adequately to physical, emotional and mental needs
2. Schedules regular time for play and recreation
3. Lives a simple life free of unhealthy addiction and compulsion

Lives a life shaped by love for others

1. Prioritizes spouse and children (if applicable)
2. Builds and maintains healthy, close relationships with people inside and outside of the church
3. Cultivates relationships of confession and accountability

Models humility

1. Remains teachable and accepts correction when given
2. Maintains a non-defensive posture towards leaders, followers, and peers
3. Willingly seeks the perspective of others



### Sample LMC Formation Plan (Focused on Heart Development)

<p><b>Characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry</b></p> <p>Shaped by the spiritual disciplines Roots identity and calling firmly in Christ. Models a Spirit-led life of holiness.</p>	<p>Read four chapters of <i>Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice</i> (Willard &amp; Johnson, 2006) per week. Write a paragraph-long reflection after each experiment describing how the reading and experience shaped you.</p>
<p><b>Demonstrates a high level of self-awareness</b></p> <p>Understands and articulates their strengths and weaknesses. Builds teams around blind-spots. Knows how their leadership/communication style impacts others both positively and negatively.</p>	<p>Complete StrengthsFinders assessment &amp; debrief. Discuss implications of this in mentoring meeting, including identifying the profiles of individuals you need to work with to complement your strengths.</p>
<p><b>Lives a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry</b></p> <p>Attends adequately to physical, emotional, and mental needs. Schedules regular time for play and recreation. Lives a simple life free of unhealthy addiction and compulsion.</p>	<p>Participate in Financial Peace University, develop plan to address debt.</p> <p>Continue to walk at least 30 minutes, 4 times a week.</p>
<p><b>Lives a life shaped by love for others</b></p> <p>Prioritizes spouse and children (if applicable). Builds and maintains healthy, close relationships with people inside and outside of the church. Cultivates relationships of confession and accountability.</p>	<p>Take daughters out to breakfast once a month and be home at least three evenings a week.</p> <p>Continue to meet weekly with Steve for mutual confession and accountability.</p>
<p><b>Models humility</b></p> <p>Remains teachable and accepts correction when given. Maintains a non-defensive posture towards leaders, followers, and peers. Willingly seeks the perspective of others.</p>	<p>Receive a 360-degree evaluation of work at the church; process with Mentor</p> <p>Continue to work with Mentor on decreasing reactivity</p>

## APPENDIX D

### LMC Theological Proficiency Assessment

#### LMC Theological Proficiency Assessment

1. List 7-10 significant Old Testament events, in chronological order, and briefly explain why each is important.
2. List 7-10 significant New Testament events and briefly explain why each is important.
3. In 100-200 words, explain what Christians mean when they describe the Bible as "God's inspired Word."
4. What genres, or types of literature, do we find in Scripture? Why does knowing this matter?
5. Below are statements future congregants might say to you. Please write a 100-200 word response to each.
  - a. Jews, Muslims, and Christians all serve the same God.
  - b. If someone isn't healed, it's because they lack faith.
  - c. Although the Old Testament provides useful background for the New Testament, it isn't relevant today.
  - d. Since Jesus said the poor will always be with us and most of them are poor because of bad choices they've made, I shouldn't bother with them.
  - e. Jesus was a really good person, or maybe a prophet, but he wasn't the Son of God.
  - f. Scripture forbids baptizing infants.
  - g. The Bible prohibits women from leading in the Church unless they have the covering of a man.
  - h. Speaking in tongues is proof that someone has received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
  - i. The King James Version is the only accurate version of the Bible.

- j. If I make a decision to accept Christ, I am certain to go to heaven regardless of how I live my life.
  - k. If my good works outweigh my sins, God will accept me into heaven.
6. In 100-200 words, how would you explain salvation to someone who asked about it?
  7. In 100-200 words, how would you explain the role of the Holy Spirit to someone who asked?
  8. In 100 words or less (each), explain why the following groups/people are important to our history as Free Methodists:
    - a. The Early Church
    - b. Martin Luther
    - c. John Wesley
    - d. B.T. Roberts
  9. In addition to those listed in #5, what are some other common false beliefs you have heard, inside or outside of the Church? How would you respond to them?
  10. What two sacraments does the Free Methodist Church recognize?
  11. How would you explain the following theological terms to your (future) congregation? If you quote another source, please cite it.
    - a. Salvation
    - b. Justification
    - c. Regeneration
    - d. Sanctification
    - e. Glorification
  12. Why does it matter to know what these terms mean?

**APPENDIX E**  
**Reference Form**

**Ministerial Candidate Reference for:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Your name and title:

How long and in what capacity have you known the candidate?

In what roles/situations does this person shine? What seems to bog him/her down?

From your vantage point, what do you think would be important for this candidate's development in order for him/her to be able to engage in healthy, effective, long-term ministry?

What ministries are currently led or served by the candidate?

How would describe this person's effectiveness in these ministries?

Please describe the candidate's maturity and skill level in the following areas. If you do not know, indicate "Unknown" in the comments section.

<b>Candidate is characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
No clear sense of ministry call. No consistent practice of spiritual disciplines. Little evidence of the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, etc.) Little sense of personal holiness.	Able to articulate vague call to ministry. May pray and read the Bible sporadically, but little discipline beyond this. Spiritual fruit seen by others as present but inconsistent. Sense of identity developing.	Articulates increasingly clear call to ministry. Disciplines practiced but may be limited to basics (i.e., prayer, Scripture reading/study). Spiritual fruit is increasingly consistent. Growing sense of personal holiness and firm identity.	Anchors identity and calling in Jesus. Does not need to be needed. Engages in an intentional plan to grow deeper, including regular use of spiritual disciplines. Evidences mature spiritual fruitfulness and personal holiness.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate demonstrates a high level of self-awareness</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Testing and observation show lack of self-awareness. Ignores how their leadership and decisions impact others. Places blame and has a tendency to go it alone. Unaware of weaknesses and unable to talk about them.	Developing sense of strengths and weaknesses. Beginning to take ownership of blind spots and how their leadership impacts others. Developing ability to build a diverse team to compliment weaknesses.	Strong sense of self-awareness. Able to see strengths and weaknesses. Accepts how they impact others but limited experience building teams to compliment strengths/weakness profile.	Deep sense of self-awareness. Able to articulate clearly both strengths and weaknesses and use that rationale to build teams around blind spots. Knows how their leadership impacts others positively and negatively.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate lives a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Physical health seems disconnected from ministry. Emotional and mental health are not clearly understood as integral to spirituality. Little attention given to balance, play and recreation. Some evidence of unhealthy addiction.	Physical, emotional and mental health are beginning to get some needed attention. Occasional rest, Sabbath, play and recreation observed. Addiction and compulsion beginning to surface in the context of mentor and/or confessor.	Plan in place to address the balance of physical, emotional and mental health. Healthy margins beginning to make room for regularly observed rest, Sabbath, play and recreation. Addictions and compulsions losing their stronghold.	Physical, emotional and mental health are considered integral to life and ministry. Healthy and sustained attention given to Sabbath, retreat, play, and recreation. No evidence of addiction or unhealthy compulsion.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate lives a life shaped by love for others</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Demonstrates a troubling sense of self-absorption. Unaware of others. Little care given to family and loved ones. No track record of building and maintaining close relationships. Unaware of the need to confess and be accountable to others.	Emerging sense of the importance of personal relationships. Family is seen as important but does not receive the best of the candidate's time and attention. Confession and accountability is only experienced when "caught".	Family and loved ones take priority over self and ministry. Some healthy relationships can be pointed to in the life of the candidate. Sporadic confession and accountability. Growing attention given to relationships outside the church.	Family and loved ones are prioritized over self. Strong track record of healthy life-giving relationships. Regular confession and accountability are seen as essential for life and ministry. Healthy relationship both inside and outside the church are understood as crucial.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate models humility</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Appears arrogant and/or has issues with authority. Bristles when criticized or corrected. Places blame and gives excuses when corrected or challenged. Seems uninterested in the perspective of others.	Shows basic respect for authority but fails to internalize constructive criticism completely. May react defensively when challenged and sometimes implodes when corrected. Does not actively seek the perspective of others.	Works hard to be non-defensive and respects authority. Willing to listen to leaders, peers and followers and resists imploding when corrected. Welcomes the input of others.	Maintains a posture of non-defense towards leaders, peers and followers. Actively seeks the perspective of others and internalizes constructive criticism without imploding
Comments:			

<b>Candidate demonstrates biblical understanding</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Exhibits weak biblical knowledge. Unable to locate Wesleyan theology in scripture. Tends to hold propositional views of particular passages while failing to balance them with the greater biblical witness.	Somewhat narrow biblical awareness. Struggles to completely locate Wesleyan theology in the scriptures. Beginning to integrate theology and practice.	Strong biblical knowledge without major gaps. Moderate ability to root Wesleyan worldview in scripture. Moderate integration of theology and practice.	Possesses holistic biblical knowledge. Able to deal with the whole of scripture with integrity. Is able to locate Wesleyan theology in the scriptures. Total integration of theology and practice.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate demonstrates a Wesleyan theological integration</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Shows little understanding of our History, Polity, Articles and core values. Unable to articulate the Wesleyan distinctive and unaware of our relational theology. Weak theological integration.	Rudimentary understanding of the Wesleyan distinctive. Rudimentary understand and/ or embrace of our History, Polity, Articles and core values. Developing theological integration.	Growing understanding and embrace of Wesleyan theology. Beginning to articulate with a sense of ownership our theological distinctive and relational orientation.	Demonstrates deep understanding and enthusiastic embrace of Wesleyan theology. Knows and embraces our Polity, History, Articles and cores values. Embraces wholeheartedly our relational theology. Strong theological integration.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate has a theological education commensurate with ordained ministry</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Has little or no education. Displays a reticence to take advantage of the opportunities they have making little use of books, online courses and other ways of gaining knowledge and experience. Intellectually lazy.	Has begun their formal education but does not readily connect the importance of it to ministry. Shows moderate effort when challenged to read, study and learn. Does the minimum to get by.	Has completed or nearly completed an undergraduate degree. Seems willing but reluctant to embark on graduate work in theology due to a less than full integration of education and ministry.	Displays a deep passion for life-long learning. Has completed an undergraduate degree as well as some graduate work in theology. Fully integrates the importance of education and ministry.
Comments:			



<b>Candidate has ecumenical posture towards the Church and the world</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Unable and unwilling to value and affirm other Christian traditions. Remains dogmatic and defensive of their particular experience. Doesn't see the need for building bridges with people of other Christian traditions.	Growing awareness of the value of other Christian traditions, but numbers few people of other traditions among their friends. Still mostly comfortable among people of similar belief system.	Strong sense of the interconnectedness of the Body of Christ. Increasing action towards building bridges to other Christian traditions. A growing ability to articulate our tradition in spaces where others are present.	Values and affirms other Christian traditions while enthusiastically embracing our own. Builds and maintains bridges with people of other traditions and embraces the humanity of all regardless of belief system.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate possesses the ability to practically apply learning</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Seems unable or unskilled at connecting book/head learning to everyday situations. Experiences a language barrier when trying to communicate theological/biblical truths to regular people. Struggles to connect life experience with faith.	Is beginning to see connections between complex theology and everyday life. Has an increasing awareness of the distance between their theological language and the masses. Is beginning to see connections between faith and everyday life.	Works hard to make complex theological concepts accessible to others. Sees a connection between everyday life and the theology they are studying, but still struggles to span the gap between everyday experiences where people live and deep truth.	Has an ability to communicate deep and complex truth in ways that everyone can understand. Finds evidence of the redemptive activity of God in normal everyday things. Sees a strong connection between normal life and deep faith.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate demonstrates fruitfulness in ministry</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Has no real track record of transformational teaching/preaching/leading. Awkward when doing personal evangelism and inexperienced at building healthy diverse faith communities.	Has led someone to Christ, but struggles to point to real lasting fruit when it comes to leading faith communities towards health and diversity. Personal engagement of evangelism is sporadic and lacking in passion. Beginning to find their voice in teaching/preaching/leading.	Has limited but promising experience in teaching/preaching/leading others towards healthy and diverse communities. Has some limited experience in personal and corporate evangelism.	Has a strong track record of transformational teaching/preaching/leading. Effective and fruitful at personal and corporate evangelism. Track record of building healthy and diverse faith communities.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate embraces wholeheartedly the ministry of justice and compassion</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Struggles to see where social injustice and discrimination impact people in the real world. Unaware of local and/or global need. Fails to understand the connection between ministry and the margin of society.	Beginning to see injustice and discrimination but unable to put a local face on it. Aware of international/global needs, but unable to see those who suffer within enslaving structures right around the corner. No sense of personal connection to the enslaving systems.	Growing awareness of people who exist in enslaving structures. Increasingly sees the local broken and poor as central to mission. Willing to address injustice and discrimination, while just beginning to understand the systemic implications.	Strong sense of connection between injustice, discrimination and the systems that uphold them. Willing to challenge every kind of institution that enslaves, seeing this as a natural and necessary concern of ministry.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate operates as a servant leader</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Has a self-serving attitude when it comes to ministry. Spends the majority of their effort promoting self instead of others. Only serves the local church to see what they can gain. Creates competitive and unsafe spaces around ministry tasks. Is judgmental towards others.	Is beginning to see the need to serve selflessly but struggles to focus on others. Still hesitates when asked to do tasks that will not advance their personal agenda. Tries to develop others but mostly ends up calling them to embrace their vision, not the vision of the person being developed. Is beginning to deal with being judgmental.	Serves the local church with increasing passion and selflessness, and is willing to serve and develop others as needed with moderate success. Actively learning how to create opportunities for others to unfold and develop. Increasingly moving away from judgment and blame.	Sees the development, advancement and deployment of others as primary to their personal mission. Serves the local church by actively seeking to develop others. Creates healthy and safe space for others to unfold in. Leads without judgment and blame.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate empowers others to discover and function within their God-given design</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Sees women and minorities as complementary but not essential to the ministry and call of white men. Fails to embrace a multicultural mandate when building the local church. Fails to recognize the brilliance in others.	Is beginning to see the value of women and minorities in roles of leadership. Appreciates multiculturalism but does not understand how to foster it. Sees brilliance in others but does not know how to identify and release it.	Understands and embraces the value of women and minorities in senior leadership roles but has a thin personal track record of developing and releasing them personally. Appreciates multiculturalism. Sees the brilliance in others and sometimes makes room for it to shine.	Enthusiastically promotes women and minorities in senior leadership roles. Embraces and promotes multiculturalism in the local church. Sees the brilliance in others and understands that one of the key roles of a leader is to see it, say you saw it, and open up a pathway for that brilliance to shine.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate leads with creativity and vision</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Ministry approach antiquated and stuck. Runs the same old ministry plays whether they continue to work or not. Speaks often of a "gilded age" when people knew how to obey God. Is unable to articulate a compelling future for the church.	Adapts some ministry techniques but remains unable to see how some contexts have changed. Lacks creativity and vision when talking about the future of the church. Has few strategic plans that motivate people to move forward.	Has a growing sense of what works and what doesn't. Is willing to change approaches and adapt models to accommodate changing contexts. Can envision a better future and has begun to motivate others towards that vision.	Remains flexible and creative when developing ministry. Can always see an alternative to an old style or model that no longer works. Casts vision with passion and develops strategic and practical plans that motivate people to accomplish that vision.
Comments:			

Please provide any other insights that you think might be helpful in understanding this candidate's strengths and growth areas.

Return this document as either a Word document or a scanned .pdf file to

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**NOTES**

## APPENDIX F

### Personal History Form

#### Personal History Form

The Free Methodist Church is committed to supporting emotional, relational, and mental health for those who serve the church. To this end, we are asking you to meet with a conference-approved counselor or psychologist for a brief interview to help identify issues that may need further exploration as part of your formation plan. The following form will provide helpful background information so that the clinician will be able to make the most of his/her time with you. Some of these questions may feel personal. Answer as completely as you feel comfortable, knowing that everything written here will be held in the highest confidence. Do not return this document to the conference office; please send it directly to the clinician prior to your meeting.

Name:

Birthdate:

Current ministry position (volunteer or staff, primary area(s) of responsibility):

Where have you seen growth in these areas since you started serving?

If you have a resume, please attach to this form. Otherwise, list any jobs you have held in the past five years:

List three areas you consider to be strengths and three you believe to be weaknesses.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

**Activities and interests**

What are some of your hobbies?

What do you do for recreation?

**Religious background**

At approximately what age did you decide to follow Jesus?

Did you attend a Christian church when you were growing up?

If yes, what church(es) did you attend, how old were you when you attended, and what was the approximate size of the congregation?

If no, to the best of your knowledge indicate why you did not attend.

Please describe what experience, if any, you have in religions other than Christianity.

Describe your most significant religious experiences and why they were meaningful to you.

Describe a person you know who you consider to be an outstanding example of Christian life.

Describe a time when you struggled spiritually. What happened?

Everyone has experienced what could be termed a failure, a time when an event we planned, a ministry we spearheaded, or a person in whom we invested imploded. Write about a failure you experienced. What happened? What did you learn from it?

Why are you interested in pursuing ministry credentials?

### **Educational background**

What post-high school training have you started and/or completed? What certificates or degrees do you hold? In what areas of concentrations? (You may skip this if this information appears on your resume.)

### **Relationship background**

Marital/relational status:

If married or in a serious relationship:

What three words would you use to describe your marriage/relationship?

What is your spouse's/significant other's religious background?

How does s/he feel about your decision to explore vocational ministry?

What does s/he do vocationally?



If you have experienced a divorce(s):

Date of previous marriage(s) and date terminated.

What factors contributed to the end of this relationship/these relationships?

If you are married, has your spouse been previously married?

If yes, please provide the date of previous marriage(s) and the date terminated.

What factors contributed to the end of this relationship/these relationships?

Briefly describe other significant romantic relationships or intimate encounters that you have had, including live-in boy/girlfriends.

If you have children, please list their names and ages:

### **Family background**

Name of biological/adoptive father:

How would you describe his health?

If he has passed away, of what did he die and when?

Provide three words to describe your relationship with your biological/adoptive father.

Name of biological/adoptive mother:

How would you describe her health?

If she has passed away, of what did she die and when?

Provide three words to describe your relationship with your biological/adoptive mother.

Are your biological/adoptive parents still together?

If yes, please select three words to describe their relationship.

If no, please respond to the following:

What is the status of their relationship? (i.e., one or both deceased, never married, separated, divorced)

Approximately how old were you when their relationship ended?

What is your biological father's current relationship status?

What is your biological mother's current relationship status?

Do you have a significant relationship with a step-parent(s)?

If yes, please provide their name(s) and their relationship to you.

What conditions do you have currently that are being treated with medication?

Provide three words to describe each of these relationships, if applicable.

Do you have siblings?

If yes, please list their names and the nature of your relationship with them (i.e., biological, adopted, half-, step-, foster).

Provide three words to describe your relationship with each in childhood.

How would you describe each relationship now?

### **Health Information**

How would you describe your physical health?

Please describe any health conditions you have that may impact you in ministry.

How would you describe your activity level?

How would you describe your diet?

How would you describe your emotional health?

How would you describe your relational health?

How would you describe your spiritual health?

Have you had experience with counseling before? When, how long, and for what?

Please describe, to the extent you are able, any significant traumas you've experienced, such as military combat, physical/emotional/sexual abuse, criminal victimization, death of a loved one.

**Relational Health**

To whom are you accountable, both personally and professionally? How did these relationships come to be?

Describe any relationships you currently have in which you can be completely honest with both your victories and your struggles.

Describe any significant support/accountability relationships you have had in your past.

Describe a time when you experienced conflict in an important relationship. What happened? How did you contribute to the conflict? How did the other person? What did you learn from it?

What else would you like the clinician to know before you meet?

**APPENDIX G****Confidential Mental Health Professional Report****Mental Health Professional's Report (Confidential)**

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview date: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name and title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number and e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

What were your overall impressions of the candidate?

In what areas of the candidate's life did you observe mental/emotional/relational health?

On page 2, please indicate which of the following statements best describes your perspective after reviewing the candidate's Personal Health History and meeting with him/her.

1. I have no concerns about the candidate's mental/emotional/relational fitness for ministry leadership. (Green light)
2. I observed some minor areas that could be strengthened as part of their ongoing development. (Yellow light)
3. I would recommend further assessment to gather additional information. (Orange light)
4. I do not believe vocational ministry is appropriate for this candidate. (Red light)

\_\_\_ Green light. Please explain your determination.

\_\_\_ Yellow light. Please specify these areas and provide recommendations for steps the candidate could take to address them.

\_\_\_ Orange light. Please specify areas that need further evaluation and provide your recommendation for how to conduct this assessment.

\_\_\_ Red light. Please explain your determination.

Additional comments/observations:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this document to: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX H

### Spouse Questionnaire

#### Spouse Questionnaire

Vocational ministry affects the entire family. Because of this, the MEG Board would like for you to respond to the following items so we can get to know you better and understand your perspective on both your spouse and his/her ministry calling.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you and your spouse meet? How long have you been together?
2. What are a few things you admire about your spouse? What are a few things that you think s/he admires about you?
3. How do you and your spouse protect your marriage? (Be specific)
4. Describe a recent struggle you experienced as a couple. What happened? What did you learn from it?
5. On a 1-10 scale (with 10 being high), how satisfied are you with your marriage? Why?
6. How did you come to faith? How have you seen God at work in your life recently?
7. In what ways have you served in ministry, whether individually or as a couple? What are your passions?
8. Describe your support system. How might these relationships be impacted if your spouse were to be credentialed?
9. Explain your spouse's call to ministry in your own words.
10. What do you see as your spouse's gifts and skills? How do these play out in ministry?



11. In what types of ministry have you seen your spouse serving effectively? In what other positions/settings do you think s/he would thrive? What positions/settings would not be a good fit for him/her?
12. What do you see as two or three growth areas for your spouse? How have you seen these growth areas impacting his/her ministry? How might the MEG Board help him/her in these areas?
13. How do you and your spouse balance ministry, work, and family life? Be specific.
14. In the Free Methodist Church, ordained elders accept what is known as itineracy. This means that if they are asked, they will relocate to fill an open pastoral position. These ministry appointments are made prayerfully and in conversation with the local church and leader—please don't think that your spouse is going to get a call out of the blue telling him/her to pack up and move! What are your thoughts and feelings about itineracy?

*Thank you for responding to these questions. Please know that we value you as a partner in ministry.*

## APPENDIX I

### Request for OBO Assessment Interview

#### Request for OBO Assessment Interview

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ LMC's name \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been meeting with the candidate? \_\_\_\_\_ How often? \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacities has the LMC served in ministry leadership?

Please respond to the following:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Y | N | I have seen evidence of God's call to vocational ministry in this LMC's life.<br>Please describe what you have seen.   |
| Y | N | The candidate has demonstrated fruitfulness as a leader.<br>Please describe with specific examples.  |
| Y | N | The candidate has shown faithfulness in his/her service.<br>Please describe.   |
| Y | N | The candidate has demonstrated a teachable spirit.   |
| Y | N | I have spoken with the candidate about his/her physical health, including his/her diet and exercise patterns.  |
| Y | N | I have spoken with the candidate about his/her use of pornography.   |
| Y | N | I have spoken with the candidate about his/her use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, other drugs, and prescription medications.                                |
| Y | N | I have spoken with the candidate about his/her financial situation, including his/her outstanding debt, understanding of stewardship, and tithing practices. |
| Y | N | I have spoken with the candidate about time-management, including the discipline of Sabbath-keeping.   |
| Y | N | I have concerns related to the LMC in some of the above areas. If yes, please explain.   |
| Y | N | I believe the candidate is ready to be considered for Conference Ministerial Candidacy.  |

## APPENDIX J

### Pre-OBO Assessment Interview Questionnaire

Please supply the following information for your Outcomes-Based Ordination Assessment team. Thorough responses to these items will enable them to get the most out of their face-to-face time with you. If you have a current resume, please include it when you submit this document.

#### Household

1. Name those with whom are you currently living and describe the nature of your relationship (i.e., roommates, spouse and kids, parents).
2. What are 3-5 words you would use to describe your household?
3. For those who are married/engaged/in a long-term relationship: How long have you been together? What are 3-5 words you would use to describe your relationship?
4. What thoughts and feelings have your significant other expressed about you exploring vocational ministry?
5. Describe at least three ways your family of origin has impacted your current life and relationships.

#### Background

1. In what ways has your previous work experience prepared you for vocational ministry? How about your educational experience?
2. Have you served in the military? If so, what branch, how long, and in what capacity?
3. In what languages are you fluent? How did you gain fluency?

**Ministry calling**

1. What has led you to explore vocational ministry?
2. Why now?
3. Why the Free Methodist Church?
4. How would having a formal ministry credential change how you serve?
5. Who has influenced you in this discernment process? How have they impacted you?
6. In what capacities do you envision yourself serving in ministry?
7. What are 3-5 significant discoveries you have made about yourself since becoming an LMC?
8. How have your previous and current ministry experiences shaped both your call and your approach to ministry leadership?

**Personal Life**

1. What is your current level of indebtedness? In what ways might this impact your ministry involvement?
2. How would you describe your physical health? Your activity level? Your diet? How might these impact you in ministry?
3. What words would you use to describe your current stress level? What made you pick these? How does stress affect you?
4. What else would be helpful for the Assessors to know before you meet?

## APPENDIX K

### Outcomes-Based Ordination Assessment Interview Guide

#### Outcomes-Based Ordination Assessment Interview

Candidate name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assessors' names \_\_\_\_\_

#### HEART FORMATION

*How specifically do you care for your soul? What practices keep you most connected to God?*

*How have your ministry experiences as an LMC shaped your understanding of God's call on your life? Why pursue credentialing now?*

<b>Candidate is characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
No clear sense of ministry call. No consistent practice of spiritual disciplines. Little evidence of the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, etc.) Little sense of personal holiness.	Able to articulate vague call to ministry. May pray and read the Bible sporadically, but little discipline beyond this. Spiritual fruit seen by others as present but inconsistent. Sense of identity developing.	Articulates increasingly clear call to ministry. Disciplines practiced but may be limited to basics (i.e., prayer, Scripture reading/study). Spiritual fruit is increasingly consistent. Growing sense of personal holiness and firm identity.	Anchors identity and calling in Jesus. Does not need to be needed. Engages in an intentional plan to grow deeper, including regular use of spiritual disciplines. Evidences mature spiritual fruitfulness and personal holiness.
Comments:			

*What ministry tasks come easily for you and which are a struggle?*

*Describe the people you would pursue if you were to build a ministry team that would capitalize on your strengths and compensate for your weaknesses.*

<b>Candidate demonstrates a high level of self-awareness</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Testing and observation show lack of self-awareness. Ignores how their leadership and decisions impact others. Places blame and has a tendency to go it alone. Unaware of weaknesses and unable to talk about them.	Developing sense of strengths and weaknesses. Beginning to take ownership of blind spots and how their leadership impacts others. Developing ability to build a diverse team to compliment weaknesses.	Strong sense of self-awareness. Able to see strengths and weaknesses. Accepts how they impact others but limited experience building teams to compliment strengths/weakness profile.	Deep sense of self-awareness. Able to articulate clearly both strengths and weaknesses and use that rationale to build teams around blind spots. Knows how their leadership impacts other positively and negatively.
Comments:			

*What do you do for fun? How does stress affect you, and how do you respond to this? How do you maintain balance between work and play?*

*What is your current level of indebtedness? What is your plan for addressing this, if necessary?*

*If the enemy of your soul were to target an area/areas where you struggle, what would that look like? What structures do you have in your life to deal with temptation in this area/these areas?*

<b>Candidate lives a life that is balanced for the demands of ministry</b>			
<b>1 - 2 - 3</b>	<b>4 - 5 - 6</b>	<b>7 - 8 - 9</b>	<b>10 - 11 - 12</b>
Physical health seems disconnected from ministry. Emotional and mental health are not clearly understood as integral to spirituality. Little attention given to balance, play and recreation. Some evidence of unhealthy addiction.	Physical, emotional and mental health are beginning to get some needed attention. Occasional rest, Sabbath, play and recreation observed. Addiction and compulsion beginning to surface in the context of mentor and/or confessor.	Plan in place to address the balance of physical, emotional and mental health. Healthy margins beginning to make room for regularly observed rest, Sabbath, play and recreation. Addictions and compulsions losing their stronghold.	Physical, emotional and mental health are considered integral to life and ministry. Healthy and sustained attention given to Sabbath, retreat, play and recreation. No evidence of addiction or unhealthy compulsion.
Comments:			

*How do you balance the needs of your family with the other demands of your life?*

*Aside from your spouse (if married), who do you have in your life with whom you can be completely honest about the struggles you face personally and in ministry?*

*Tell us about three people you would consider friends.*

<b>Candidate lives a life shaped by love for others</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Demonstrates a troubling sense of self-absorption. Unaware of others. Little care given to family and loved ones. No track record of building and maintaining close relationships. Unaware of the need to confess and be accountable to others.	Emerging sense of the importance of personal relationships. Family is seen as important but does not receive the best of the candidate's time and attention. Confession and accountability is only experienced when "caught".	Family and loved ones take priority over self and ministry. Some healthy relationships can be pointed to in the life of the candidate. Sporadic confession and accountability. Growing attention given to relationships outside the church.	Family and loved ones are prioritized over self. Strong track record of healthy life-giving relationships. Regular confession and accountability are seen as essential for life and ministry. Healthy relationship both inside and outside the church are understood as crucial.
Comments:			



*All of us have failed at one point or another, whether it was having a project we worked hard on fall flat or coming up short on a goal we had set. Tell us about a recent time when you experienced a personal or professional failure. What happened? What did you learn from it?*

*Who are your personal and professional advisors, and how do you utilize them?*

<b>Candidate models humility</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Appears arrogant and/or has issues with authority. Bristles when criticized or corrected. Places blame and gives excuses when corrected or challenged. Seems uninterested in the perspective of others.	Shows basic respect for authority but fails to internalize constructive criticism completely. May react defensively when challenged and sometimes implodes when corrected. Does not actively seek the perspective of others.	Works hard to be non-defensive and respects authority. Willing to listen to leaders, peers and followers and resists imploding when corrected. Welcomes the input of others.	Maintains a posture of non-defense towards leaders, peers and followers. Actively seeks the perspective of others and internalizes constructive criticism without imploding
Comments:			

## HEAD FORMATION

*Tell us about something you have learned recently from the Scriptures.*

*What are some concepts or passages from the Bible that are a struggle for you? How do you wrestle with these?*

<b>Candidate demonstrates biblical understanding</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Exhibits weak biblical knowledge. Unable to locate Wesleyan theology in scripture. Tends to hold propositional views of particular passages while failing to balance them with the greater biblical witness.	Somewhat narrow biblical awareness. Struggles to completely locate Wesleyan theology in the scriptures. Beginning to integrate theology and practice.	Strong biblical knowledge without major gaps. Moderate ability to root Wesleyan worldview in scripture. Moderate integration of theology and practice.	Possesses holistic biblical knowledge. Able to deal with the whole of scripture with integrity. Is able to locate Wesleyan theology in the scriptures. Total integration of theology and practice.
Comments:			

*How does being Wesleyan impact how we approach Scripture?*

*What are some of the unique core values of Free Methodism, both from our history and from the present? What is your understanding of what it means to be “connectional”?*

<b>Candidate demonstrates a Wesleyan theological integration</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Shows little understanding of our History, Polity, Articles and core values. Unable to articulate the Wesleyan distinctive and unaware of our relational theology. Weak theological integration.	Rudimentary understanding of the Wesleyan distinctive. Rudimentary understand and/or embrace of our History, Polity, Articles and core values. Developing theological integration.	Growing understanding and embrace of Wesleyan theology. Beginning to articulate with a sense of ownership our theological distinctive and relational orientation.	Demonstrates deep understanding and enthusiastic embrace of Wesleyan theology. Knows and embraces our Polity, History, Articles and cores values. Embraces wholeheartedly our relational theology. Strong theological integration.
Comments:			

*What have you done in the past year to develop your mind?*

*What are your plans for your continued learning in the next year?*

<b>Candidate has a theological education commensurate with ordained eldership</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Has little or no education. Displays a reticence to take advantage of the opportunities they have making little use of books, online courses and other ways of gaining knowledge and experience. Intellectually lazy.	Has begun their formal education but does not readily connect the importance of it to ministry. Shows moderate effort when challenged to read, study and learn. Does the minimum to get by.	Has completed or nearly completed an undergraduate degree. Seems willing but reluctant to embark on graduate work in theology due to a less than full integration of education and ministry.	Displays a deep passion for life-long learning. Has completed an undergraduate degree as well as some graduate work in theology or equivalent. Fully integrates the importance of education and ministry.
Comments:			

*Tell us about your experiences working with people or organizations that are not Free Methodist.*

<b>Candidate has ecumenical posture towards the Church and the world</b>			
<b>1 - 2 - 3</b>	<b>4 - 5 - 6</b>	<b>7 - 8 - 9</b>	<b>10 - 11 - 12</b>
Unable and unwilling to value and affirm other Christian traditions. Remains dogmatic and defensive of their particular experience. Doesn't see the need for building bridges with people of other Christian traditions.	Growing awareness of the value of other Christian traditions, but numbers few people of other traditions among their friends. Still mostly comfortable among people of similar belief system.	Strong sense of the interconnectedness of the Body of Christ. Increasing action towards building bridges to other Christian traditions. A growing ability to articulate our tradition in spaces where others are present.	Values and affirms other Christian traditions while enthusiastically embracing our own. Builds and maintains bridges with people of other traditions and embraces the humanity of all regardless of belief system.
Comments:			

*How would you explain the Gospel message to a 10-year-old who has never been to church?*

*Describe a recent example in which you saw God at work in an everyday situation.*

<b>Candidate possesses the ability to practically apply learning</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Seems unable or unskilled at connecting book/head learning to everyday situations. Experiences a language barrier when trying to communicate theological/biblical truths to regular people. Struggles to connect life experience with faith.	Is beginning to see connections between complex theology and everyday life. Has an increasing awareness of the distance between their theological language and the masses. Is beginning to see connections between faith and everyday life.	Works hard to make complex theological concepts accessible to others. Sees a connection between everyday life and the theology they are studying, but still struggles to span the gap between everyday experiences where people live and deep truth.	Has an ability to communicate deep and complex truth in ways that everyone can understand. Finds evidence of the redemptive activity of God in normal everyday things. Sees a strong connection between normal life and deep faith.
Comments:			

### Hand Formation

*What opportunities have you had to preach or teach? What have these looked like? What did you preach/teach about?*

*Tell us about a time recently when you had a faith conversation with someone who was not yet fully committed to Christ. What happened?*

*What is the demographic breakdown of your church and/or the ministry that you lead?*

<b>Candidate demonstrates fruitfulness in ministry</b>			
<b>1 - 2 - 3</b>	<b>4 - 5 - 6</b>	<b>7 - 8 - 9</b>	<b>10 - 11 - 12</b>
Has no real track record of transformational teaching/preaching/leading. Awkward when doing personal evangelism and inexperienced at building healthy diverse faith communities.	Has led someone to Christ, but struggles to point to real lasting fruit when it comes to leading faith communities towards health and diversity. Personal engagement of evangelism is sporadic and lacking in passion. Beginning to find their voice in teaching/preaching/leading.	Has limited but promising experience in teaching/preaching/leading others towards healthy and diverse communities. Has some limited experience in personal and corporate evangelism.	Has a strong track record of transformational teaching/preaching/leading. Effective and fruitful at personal and corporate evangelism. Track record of building healthy and diverse faith communities.
Comments:			

*Who would you describe as the marginalized people in your community?*

*What is your understanding of why they are in the situations they are in?*

*How are you personally involved in ministries of justice and compassion?*

<b>Candidate embraces wholeheartedly the ministry of justice and compassion</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Struggles to see where social injustice and discrimination impact people in the real world. Unaware of local and/or global need. Fails to understand the connection between ministry and the margin of society.	Beginning to see injustice and discrimination but unable to put a local face on it. Aware of international/global needs, but unable to see those who suffer within enslaving structures right around the corner. No sense of personal connection to the enslaving systems.	Growing awareness of people who exist in enslaving structures. Increasingly sees the local broken and poor as central to mission. Willing to address injustice and discrimination, while just beginning to understand the systemic implications.	Strong sense of connection between injustice, discrimination and the systems that uphold them. Willing to challenge every kind of institution that enslaves, seeing this as a natural and necessary concern of ministry.
Comments:			



*In whom are you personally investing? How did you get connected with them?*

*Who have you identified and “shoulder-tapped” recently as someone with ministry and/or leadership potential?*

<b>Candidate operates as a servant leader</b>			
<b>1 - 2 - 3</b>	<b>4 - 5 - 6</b>	<b>7 - 8 - 9</b>	<b>10 - 11 - 12</b>
Has a self-serving attitude when it comes to ministry. Spends the majority of their effort promoting self instead of others. Only serves the local church to see what they can gain. Creates competitive and unsafe spaces around ministry tasks. Is judgmental towards others demonstrating a lack of cross-cultural competency.	Is beginning to see the need to serve selflessly but struggles to focus on others. Still hesitates when asked to do tasks that will not advance their personal agenda. Tries to develop others but mostly ends up calling them to embrace their vision, not the vision of the person being developed. Is beginning to deal with being judgmental.	Serves the local church with increasing passion and selflessness, and is willing to serve and develop others as needed with moderate success. Actively learning how to create opportunities for others to unfold and develop. Increasingly moving away from judgment and blame with an emerging sense of cross-cultural competency.	Sees the development, advancement and deployment of others as primary to their personal mission. Serves the local church by actively seeking to develop others. Creates healthy and safe space for others to unfold in. Leads without judgment and blame demonstrating a high level of cross-cultural competency.
Comments:			

*How have you crossed the gender-barrier to invest in people who are different from you? How about the racial/ethnic-barrier?*

<b>Candidate empowers others to discover and function within their God-given design</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Sees women and minorities as complimentary not essential to the ministry and call of white men. Fails to embrace a multicultural mandate when building the local church. Fails to recognize the brilliance in others.	Is beginning to see the value of women and minorities in roles of leadership. Appreciates multiculturalism but does not understand how to foster it. Sees brilliance in others but does not know how to identify and release it.	Understands and embraces the value of women and minorities in senior leadership roles but has a thin personal track record of developing and releasing them personally. Appreciates multiculturalism. Sees the brilliance in others and sometimes makes room for it to shine.	Enthusiastically promotes women and minorities in roles of senior leadership. Embraces and promotes multiculturalism in the local church. Sees the brilliance in others and understands that one of the key roles of a leader is to see it, say you saw it, and open up a pathway for that brilliance to shine.
Comments:			

*Consider the ministries of your church that you lead or are involved in. What is working well and what isn't? What are your criteria for determining effectiveness?*

*What is the short- and long-term vision for the ministries you lead or are involved in? What would need to happen practically in order for this vision to be fulfilled?*

<b>Candidate leads with creativity and vision</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Approach to ministry is antiquated and stuck. Runs the same old ministry plays whether they continue to work or not. Speaks often of a "gilded age" when people knew how to obey God. Is unable to articulate a compelling future for the church.	Adapts some ministry techniques but remains unable to see how some contexts have changed. Lacks creativity and vision when talking about the future of the church. Has few strategic plans that motivate people to move forward.	Has a growing sense of what works and what doesn't. Is willing to change approaches and adapt models to accommodate changing contexts. Can envision a better future and has begun to motivate others towards that vision.	Remains flexible and creative when developing ministry. Can always see an alternative to an old style or model that no longer works. Casts vision with passion and develops strategic and practical plans that motivate people to accomplish that vision.
Comments:			

Additional questions:

*If the MEG's goal is to prepare you for healthy, effective, long-term ministry in the Free Methodist Church, what do you think you need? What gaps do you see in yourself, whether personal, intellectual, or practical?*

*Ordained elders accept itineracy, meaning that they are willing to relocate to serve another church if needed there. What are your thoughts and feelings on this? (If married) How do you think your husband/wife (and children, if applicable) would respond to this?*

## APPENDIX L

### Outcomes-Based Ordination Assessment Report

#### Outcomes-Based Ordination Assessment Report

Candidate name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assessors' names \_\_\_\_\_

#### HEART FORMATION

<b>Candidate is characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
No clear sense of ministry call. No consistent practice of spiritual disciplines. Little evidence of the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, etc.) Little sense of personal holiness.	Able to articulate vague call to ministry. May pray and read the Bible sporadically, but little discipline beyond this. Spiritual fruit seen by others as present but inconsistent. Sense of identity developing.	Articulates increasingly clear call to ministry. Disciplines practiced but may be limited to basics (i.e., prayer, Scripture reading/study). Spiritual fruit is increasingly consistent. Growing sense of personal holiness and firm identity.	Anchors identity and calling in Jesus. Does not need to be needed. Engages in an intentional plan to grow deeper, including regular use of spiritual disciplines. Evidences mature spiritual fruitfulness and personal holiness.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate demonstrates a high level of self-awareness</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Testing and observation show lack of self-awareness. Ignores how their leadership and decisions impact others. Places blame and has a tendency to go it alone. Unaware of weaknesses and unable to talk about them.	Developing sense of strengths and weaknesses. Beginning to take ownership of blind spots and how their leadership impacts others. Developing ability to build a diverse team to compliment weaknesses.	Strong sense of self-awareness. Able to see strengths and weaknesses. Accepts how they impact others but limited experience building teams to compliment strengths/weakness profile.	Deep sense of self-awareness. Able to articulate clearly both strengths and weaknesses and use that rationale to build teams around blind spots. Knows how their leadership impacts others positively and negatively.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate lives a life that is balanced for the demands of ministry</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Physical health seems disconnected from ministry. Emotional and mental health are not clearly understood as integral to spirituality. Little attention given to balance, play and recreation. Some evidence of unhealthy addiction.	Physical, emotional and mental health are beginning to get some needed attention. Occasional rest, Sabbath, play and recreation observed. Addiction and compulsion beginning to surface in the context of mentor and/or confessor.	Plan in place to address the balance of physical, emotional and mental health. Healthy margins beginning to make room for regularly observed rest, Sabbath, play and recreation. Addictions and compulsions losing their stronghold.	Physical, emotional and mental health are considered integral to life and ministry. Healthy and sustained attention given to Sabbath, retreat, play and recreation. No evidence of addiction or unhealthy compulsion.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate lives a life shaped by love for others</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Demonstrates a troubling sense of self-absorption. Unaware of others. Little care given to family and loved ones. No track record of building and maintaining close relationships. Unaware of the need to confess and be accountable to others.	Emerging sense of the importance of personal relationships. Family is seen as important but does not receive the best of the candidate's time and attention. Confession and accountability is only experienced when "caught".	Family and loved ones take priority over self and ministry. Some healthy relationships can be pointed to in the life of the candidate. Sporadic confession and accountability. Growing attention given to relationships outside the church.	Family and loved ones are prioritized over self. Strong track record of healthy life-giving relationships. Regular confession and accountability are seen as essential for life and ministry. Healthy relationship both inside and outside the church are understood as crucial.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate models humility</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Appears arrogant and/or has issues with authority. Bristles when criticized or corrected. Places blame and gives excuses when corrected or challenged. Seems uninterested in the perspective of others.	Shows basic respect for authority but fails to internalize constructive criticism completely. May react defensively when challenged and sometimes implodes when corrected. Does not actively seek the perspective of others.	Works hard to be non-defensive and respects authority. Willing to listen to leaders, peers and followers and resists imploding when corrected. Welcomes the input of others.	Maintains a posture of non-defense towards leaders, peers and followers. Actively seeks the perspective of others and internalizes constructive criticism without imploding
Comments:			

## HEAD FORMATION

<b>Candidate demonstrates biblical understanding</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Exhibits weak biblical knowledge. Unable to locate Wesleyan theology in scripture. Tends to hold propositional views of particular passages while failing to balance them with the greater biblical witness.	Somewhat narrow biblical awareness. Struggles to completely locate Wesleyan theology in the scriptures. Beginning to integrate theology and practice.	Strong biblical knowledge without major gaps. Moderate ability to root Wesleyan worldview in scripture. Moderate integration of theology and practice.	Possesses holistic biblical knowledge. Able to deal with the whole of scripture with integrity. Is able to locate Wesleyan theology in the scriptures. Total integration of theology and practice.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate demonstrates a Wesleyan theological integration</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Shows little understanding of our History, Polity, Articles and core values. Unable to articulate the Wesleyan distinctive and unaware of our relational theology. Weak theological integration.	Rudimentary understanding of the Wesleyan distinctive. Rudimentary understand and/or embrace of our History, Polity, Articles and core values. Developing theological integration.	Growing understanding and embrace of Wesleyan theology. Beginning to articulate with a sense of ownership our theological distinctive and relational orientation.	Demonstrates deep understanding and enthusiastic embrace of Wesleyan theology. Knows and embraces our Polity, History, Articles and core values. Embraces wholeheartedly our relational theology. Strong theological integration.
Comments:			



<b>Candidate has a theological education commensurate with ordained eldership</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Has little or no education. Displays a reticence to take advantage of the opportunities they have making little use of books, online courses and other ways of gaining knowledge and experience. Intellectually lazy.	Has begun their formal education but does not readily connect the importance of it to ministry. Shows moderate effort when challenged to read, study and learn. Does the minimum to get by.	Has completed or nearly completed an undergraduate degree. Seems willing but reluctant to embark on graduate work in theology due to a less than full integration of education and ministry.	Displays a deep passion for life-long learning. Has completed an undergraduate degree as well as some graduate work in theology or equivalent. Fully integrates the importance of education and ministry.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate has ecumenical posture towards the Church and the world</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Unable and unwilling to value and affirm other Christian traditions. Remains dogmatic and defensive of their particular experience. Doesn't see the need for building bridges with people of other Christian traditions.	Growing awareness of the value of other Christian traditions, but numbers few people of other traditions among their friends. Still mostly comfortable among people of similar belief system.	Strong sense of the interconnectedness of the Body of Christ. Increasing action towards building bridges to other Christian traditions. A growing ability to articulate our tradition in spaces where others are present.	Values and affirms other Christian traditions while enthusiastically embracing our own. Builds and maintains bridges with people of other traditions and embraces the humanity of all regardless of belief system.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate possesses the ability to practically apply learning</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Seems unable or unskilled at connecting book/head learning to everyday situations. Experiences a language barrier when trying to communicate theological/biblical truths to regular people. Struggles to connect life experience with faith.	Is beginning to see connections between complex theology and everyday life. Has an increasing awareness of the distance between their theological language and the masses. Is beginning to see connections between faith and everyday life.	Works hard to make complex theological concepts accessible to others. Sees a connection between everyday life and the theology they are studying, but still struggles to span the gap between everyday experiences where people live and deep truth.	Has an ability to communicate deep and complex truth in ways that everyone can understand. Finds evidence of the redemptive activity of God in normal everyday things. Sees a strong connection between normal life and deep faith.
Comments:			

### Hand Formation

<b>Candidate demonstrates fruitfulness in ministry</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Has no real track record of transformational teaching/preaching/leading. Awkward when doing personal evangelism and inexperienced at building healthy diverse faith communities.	Has led someone to Christ, but struggles to point to real lasting fruit when it comes to leading faith communities towards health and diversity. Personal engagement of evangelism is sporadic and lacking in passion. Beginning to find their voice in teaching/preaching/leading.	Has limited but promising experience in teaching/preaching/leading others towards healthy and diverse communities. Has some limited experience in personal and corporate evangelism.	Has a strong track record of transformational teaching/preaching/leading. Effective and fruitful at personal and corporate evangelism. Track record of building healthy and diverse faith communities.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate embraces wholeheartedly the ministry of justice and compassion</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Struggles to see where social injustice and discrimination impact people in the real world. Unaware of local and/or global need. Fails to understand the connection between ministry and the margin of society.	Beginning to see injustice and discrimination but unable to put a local face on it. Aware of international/global needs, but unable to see those who suffer within enslaving structures right around the corner. No sense of personal connection to the enslaving systems.	Growing awareness of people who exist in enslaving structures. Increasingly sees the local broken and poor as central to mission. Willing to address injustice and discrimination, while just beginning to understand the systemic implications.	Strong sense of connection between injustice, discrimination and the systems that uphold them. Willing to challenge every kind of institution that enslaves, seeing this as a natural and necessary concern of ministry.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate operates as a servant leader</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Has a self-serving attitude when it comes to ministry. Spends the majority of their effort promoting self instead of others. Only serves the local church to see what they can gain. Creates competitive and unsafe spaces around ministry tasks. Is judgmental towards others demonstrating a lack of cross-cultural competency.	Is beginning to see the need to serve selflessly but struggles to focus on others. Still hesitates when asked to do tasks that will not advance their personal agenda. Tries to develop others but mostly ends up calling them to embrace their vision, not the vision of the person being developed. Is beginning to deal with being judgmental.	Serves the local church with increasing passion and selflessness, and is willing to serve and develop others as needed with moderate success. Actively learning how to create opportunities for others to unfold and develop. Increasingly moving away from judgment and blame with an emerging sense of cross-cultural competency.	Sees the development, advancement and deployment of others as primary to their personal mission. Serves the local church by actively seeking to develop others. Creates healthy and safe space for others to unfold in. Leads without judgment and blame demonstrating a high level of cross-cultural competency.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate empowers others to discover and function within their God-given design</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Sees women and minorities as complimentary not essential to the ministry and call of white men. Fails to embrace a multicultural mandate when building the local church. Fails to recognize the brilliance in others.	Is beginning to see the value of women and minorities in roles of leadership. Appreciates multiculturalism but does not understand how to foster it. Sees brilliance in others but does not know how to identify and release it.	Understands and embraces the value of women and minorities in senior leadership roles but has a thin personal track record of developing and releasing them personally. Appreciates multiculturalism. Sees the brilliance in others and sometimes makes room for it to shine.	Enthusiastically promotes women and minorities in roles of senior leadership. Embraces and promotes multiculturalism in the local church. Sees the brilliance in others and understands that one of the key roles of a leader is to see it, say you saw it, and open up a pathway for that brilliance to shine.
Comments:			

<b>Candidate leads with creativity and vision</b>			
1 - 2 - 3	4 - 5 - 6	7 - 8 - 9	10 - 11 - 12
Approach to ministry is antiquated and stuck. Runs the same old ministry plays whether they continue to work or not. Speaks often of a "gilded age" when people knew how to obey God. Is unable to articulate a compelling future for the church.	Adapts some ministry techniques but remains unable to see how some contexts have changed. Lacks creativity and vision when talking about the future of the church. Has few strategic plans that motivate people to move forward.	Has a growing sense of what works and what doesn't. Is willing to change approaches and adapt models to accommodate changing contexts. Can envision a better future and has begun to motivate others towards that vision.	Remains flexible and creative when developing ministry. Can always see an alternative to an old style or model that no longer works. Casts vision with passion and develops strategic and practical plans that motivate people to accomplish that vision.
Comments:			

List of candidate strengths:

List of candidate growth areas:

Using the candidate's Formation Plan as a starting point, identify steps for the candidate to take to address growth areas.

Recommendation for action to the MEG Board:

Recommendation for action to the MAC (if applicable)

Additional comments:

**APPENDIX M**  
**CMC Formation Plan**

**CMC Formation Plan**

**Name:**

**Date:**

Using the outcomes listed on the following page, please develop a Formation Plan for the candidate that will address identified growth areas.

<b>Outcome Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Anticipated Completion Date</b>

## CMC Formation Plan

<b>HEART</b>	<b>HEAD</b>	<b>HANDS</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry</b></p> <p>Shaped by the spiritual disciplines</p> <p>Roots identity &amp; calling firmly in Christ</p> <p>Models a Spirit-led life of holiness</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry</b></p> <p>Shaped by the spiritual disciplines</p> <p>Roots identity &amp; calling firmly in Christ</p> <p>Models a Spirit-led life of holiness</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Demonstrates fruitfulness in ministry</b></p> <p>Has a track record of transformational preaching/teaching/leading</p> <p>Personally and corporately engages in evangelism</p> <p>Able to build and maintain healthy and diverse faith communities</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Demonstrates a high level of self-awareness</b></p> <p>Understands and articulates their strengths and weaknesses</p> <p>Builds teams around blind spots</p> <p>Knows how their leadership/communication style impacts others both positively and negatively</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Demonstrates a Wesleyan theological integration</b></p> <p>Knows &amp; embraces the history, polity, Articles of Religion, and core values of the FMC</p> <p>Articulates Wesleyan distinctives compellingly</p> <p>Understands and embraces Wesleyan relational theology</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Embraces ministry of justice and compassion</b></p> <p>Challenges injustice and discrimination wherever it is found</p> <p>Engages local &amp; global needs of the broken and poor</p> <p>Continually focuses ministry on the margin, seeking to emancipate all who exist within enslaving systems</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lives a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry</b></p> <p>Attends adequately to physical, emotional, and mental needs</p> <p>Schedules regular time for play and recreation</p> <p>Lives a simple life free of unhealthy addiction and compulsion</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Has a theological education commensurate with ordained ministry</b></p> <p>Has completed an undergraduate degree</p> <p>Has completed some graduate work in theology</p> <p>Models &amp; promotes life-long learning</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Operates as a servant-leader</b></p> <p>Promotes the development of others</p> <p>Serves the local church wholeheartedly</p> <p>Creates healthy ministry environments characterized by safety and non-judgment</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lives a life shaped by love for others</b></p> <p>Prioritizes spouse and children (if applicable)</p> <p>Builds and maintains healthy, close relationships with people inside and outside of the church</p> <p>Cultivates relationships of confession and accountability</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Has an ecumenical posture toward the Church and the world</b></p> <p>Actively seeks to build and maintain bridges among fellow Christian groups</p> <p>Demonstrates an appreciation for the contribution of other Christian traditions while wholeheartedly embracing our own</p> <p>Demonstrates a growing appreciation for humanity &amp; value for all people regardless of their belief system</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Empowers others to discover and function within their God-given design</b></p> <p>Demonstrates wholehearted support of women in leadership</p> <p>Facilitates and promotes multicultural community and staff</p> <p>Actively helps others discover their brilliance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Models humility</b></p> <p>Remains teachable and accepts correction when given</p> <p>Maintains a non-defensive posture toward leaders, followers, and peers</p> <p>Willingly seeks the perspective of others</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Possesses the ability to practically apply learning</b></p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to make complex theology understandable to all</p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to find God's redemptive activity in daily life</p> <p>Demonstrates an ability to deepen faith through real-life experiences</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Leads with creativity and vision</b></p> <p>Seeks best practices of contextual and culturally relevant ministry</p> <p>Envisions alternatives and successfully leads others toward more creative and effective outcomes</p> <p>Casts compelling vision and develops strategic plans to accomplish it</p>

## APPENDIX N

### Resources for Candidate Formation

#### Resources for Candidate Formation

##### **Characterized by spiritual maturity and a strong sense of call to ministry.**

*They are shaped by the spiritual disciplines, root their identity and calling firmly in Christ, and model a Spirit-led life of holiness.*

*Invitation to a Journey.* Robert Mullholland, Jr.

*After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters.* N.T. Wright

*God's Call to Be Like Jesus.* David Kendall

*Celebration of Discipline.* Richard Foster

*Sacred Rhythms.* Ruth Haley Barton

*Prayer: Finding Your Heart's True Home.* Richard Foster

*The Great Omission.* Dallas Willard

*A Long Obedience in the Same Direction.* Eugene Peterson

*The Pastor.* Eugene Peterson

*Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration of Vocational Holiness.* Eugene Peterson

*Let Your Life Speak.* Parker Palmer

##### **Demonstrate a high level of self-awareness.**

*They understand and articulate their strengths and weaknesses, build teams around their blind spots, and know how their leadership and communication style impacts others both positively and negatively.*

*The Wounded Healer.* Henri Nouwen

*The Leadership Ellipse: Shaping How We Lead by Who We Are.* Robert Fryling.

*Wounds that Heal.* Stephen Seamands.

*Changes that Heal.* Henry Cloud.

*Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership.* Ruth Haley Barton

##### **Live a well-balanced life that can sustain the demands of ministry.**

They attend adequately to their physical, emotional, and mental needs; schedule regular time for play and recreation; and live simple lives free of unhealthy addiction and compulsion.



*Replenish.* Lance Witt  
*Reframing Your Ministry.* Anthony Headley  
*Margin.* Richard Swenson  
*Boundaries.* Henry Cloud & John Townsend  
*Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time.* Stephen Arterburn  
 "Financial Peace University." Dave Ramsey

### **Live a life shaped by love for others.**

*Those who are married and/or raising children prioritize their families. They build and maintain healthy, close relationships with people inside and outside of the church. In addition, they cultivate relationships for both confession and accountability.*

*Boundaries in Marriage.* Henry Cloud  
*The Second Half of Marriage.* David & Claudia Arp  
*The Love List.* Les & Leslie Parrott

### **Model humility.**

*They remain teachable and accept correction when given; maintain a non-defensive posture toward leaders, followers, and peers; and willingly seek the perspective of others.*

*Cultivating a Life for God.* Neil Cole  
*Spiritual Mentoring.* Keith Anderson & Randy Reese.  
*Christ-Centered Coaching: 7 Benefits for Ministry Leaders.* Jane Creswell.  
*The Call to Be Like Jesus.* David Kendall.

### **Exhibit biblical understanding.**

*They possess holistic biblical knowledge, have a Wesleyan hermeneutic that accepts the authority of Scripture, and demonstrate their ability to root their Wesleyan worldview in the Bible.*

*Eat this Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading.* Eugene Peterson  
*The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible.* Scot McKnight  
*Nelson's Introduction to the Christian Faith: What Christians Believe and Why.*  
*The New Joy of Discovery in Bible Study.* Oletta Wald  
*Bible Study that Works.* David Thompson  
*The Old Testament Story.* John Tullock & Mark McEntire  
*A Survey of the New Testament.* Robert Gundry

### **Demonstrate a Wesleyan theological integration.**

*They know and embrace the history, polity, Articles of Religion, and core values of the FMC. They articulate Wesleyan distinctives compellingly, and they understand and embrace a Wesleyan relational theology.*

*Responsible Grace.* Randy Maddox

*John Wesley Sermons.* Albert Outler (ed.)

*Recapturing the Wesley's Vision.* Paul Wesley Chilcote

*Postmodern and Wesleyan?* Jay Richard Akkerman, Thomas Jay Oord, & Brent Peterson (eds.)

*Grace, Faith, and Holiness.* H. Ray Dunning

*God's Great Salvation.* Wesley Duewel

*A Theology of Love.* Mildred Bangs Wynkoop

*The Radical Wesley.* Howard Snyder

*Basic Beliefs: An Introduction Guide to Christian Theology.* Donald Demaray

*Cross Purposes—Exploring the Crossroads of Justice and Reconciliation.* Mark Miler

*Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology.* Mildred Bangs Wynkoop

*Introduction to the History of Christianity.* Tim Dowley

*Christian Theology (3 volumes).* H. Orton Wiley

**Marston Memorial Historical Center.** <http://fmcusa.org/historical/>

"Nine Strategies." <http://fmcusa.org/uniquefyfm/>

"Free Methodist Distinctives." <http://fmcusa.org/uniquefyfm/>

"Free Methodist Doctrine." <http://fmcusa.org/uniquefyfm/doctrine/>

"Papers from the FM Study Commission on Doctrine." <http://fmcusa.org/scod/>

"Free Methodist History." <http://fmcusa.org/uniquefyfm/history/>

*The Book of Discipline.* <http://fmcusa.org/bookofdiscipline/>

*Pastors Handbook.* [http://fmcusa.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/45/files/2011/07/PCLMan\\_Web.pdf](http://fmcusa.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/45/files/2011/07/PCLMan_Web.pdf)

### **Have a theological education commensurate with ordained ministry.**

*They have completed an undergraduate degree and some graduate work in theology. Additionally, they model and promote life-long learning.*

Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions. Listed at <http://fmcusa.org/leadership/colleges-and-universities/>

MD&C Correspondence, J-Term, and Approved Courses. Listed at <http://fmcusa.org/leadership/courses/>

### **Hold an ecumenical posture toward the Church and the world.**

*They actively seek to build and maintain bridges among fellow Christian groups. They demonstrate an appreciation for the contribution of other Christian traditions while wholeheartedly embracing the FMC's. They also exhibit a growing appreciation for humanity and value all people regardless of their belief systems.*

*Everything Belongs.* Richard Rohr.

*Theology in the Context of World Christianity.* Timothy Tennett

### **Possess the ability to practically apply learning.**

*They model an ability to make complex theology understandable to all, to find God's redemptive activity in daily life, and to deepen faith through real-life experiences.*

*Creative Bible Teaching.* Lawrence Richards & Gary Bredfeldt

*The Language of Love.* Gary Smalley & John Trent.

### **Demonstrate fruitfulness in ministry.**

*They have a track record of transformational preaching, teaching, and leading; engage in personal and corporate evangelism; and personally and corporately engages in evangelism build and maintain healthy and diverse faith communities.*

*Mobilizing for Compassion.* Robert Logan & Larry Short

*Growing a Healthy Church.* Dann Spader & Gary Maryes

*Hit the Bullseye.* Paul D. Borden

*An Introduction to Homiletics.* Donald Demaray.

*Understanding Church Growth.* Donald McGavran & C. Peter Wagner

### **Embrace ministries of justice and compassion.**

*They challenge injustice and discrimination wherever it is found, engage local and global needs of the broken and poor, and continually focus ministry on the margin, seeking to emancipate all who exist within enslaving systems.*

*Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion.* Gregory Boyle

*Same Kind of Different as Me.* Ron Hall & Denver Moore

*When Helping Hurts.* Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert

*Toxic Charity.* Robert Lupton

**Set Free Movement.** <http://setfreemovement.com/>

**Empowering Lives International.** <http://empoweringlives.org/>

**Clear Blue Water Project.** <http://clearblueproject.com/>

**The Eden Projects.** <http://www.edenprojects.org/>

**Olive Branch Mission.** <http://www.obmission.org/>

**Operate as a servant-leader.**

*They promote the development of others; serve the local and global church, demonstrating cross-cultural competency in so doing; and create healthy ministry environments characterized by safety and non-judgment.*

*The Emotionally Healthy Church.* Peter Scazzero

*What Every Church Member Should Know about Poverty.* Bill Ehlig & Ruby Payne

*The Road to Reality.* K.P. Yohannan

**Empower others to discover and function within their God-given design.**

*They demonstrate wholehearted support of women in leadership; facilitate and promote multicultural community and staff; and actively help others discover their brilliance.*

*Why Not Women?* Loren Cunningham & David Joel Hamilton

*The Black Swan Effect.* Felicity Dale

*The Resignation of Eve.* Jim Henderson

*The Other 80 Percent.* Scott Thumma & Warren Bird

*The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player.* John Maxwell

*The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork.* John Maxwell

**Lead with creativity and vision.**

*They seek best practices of contextual and culturally relevant ministry; envision alternatives and successfully leads others towards more creative and effective outcomes; and cast compelling vision and develop strategic plans to accomplish it.*

*Spiritual Leadership.* Henry & Richard Blackaby

*Courageous Leadership.* Bill Hybels

*Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice, and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God's People.* George Barna

## APPENDIX O

### Request for Credentialing Interview

#### Request for Credentialing Interview

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's name \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been meeting with the candidate? \_\_\_\_\_ How often? \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacities has the candidate served in ministry leadership?

Please respond to the following:

Y      N      I have seen evidence of the gifts and graces for vocational ministry in this candidate's life. Please describe what you have seen.

Y      N      The candidate has demonstrated proficiency in all 15 outcome areas.

Y      N      The candidate has completed the items on his/her CMC Formation Plan.

-      -      The candidate has demonstrated professionalism in the following areas:

Y      N      Confidentiality

Y      N      Time management

Y      N      Oral communication

Y      N      Written communication

Y      N      Dress, grooming, appearance

Y      N      Work ethic

Y      N      Social media presence

Y      N      Attitude toward subordinate staff and volunteers

Y      N      If I had an open position at my church/in my ministry for which this person qualified, I would want to hire him/her. Please explain your response.

Y      N      I would feel comfortable referring a close friend to a church/ministry led by this individual. Please explain your response.

Y      N      I believe the candidate is ready to be considered for:

\_\_\_ Licensure

\_\_\_ Elder ordination

Please explain your response.

## APPENDIX P

### CMC Theological Proficiency Assessment

#### CMC Theological Proficiency Assessment

The purpose of these questions is to provide an opportunity for you to articulate your understanding of some of the basic tenets of Wesleyan theology and their implications for ministry. Using Holy Scripture, Wesley's sermons, and the teachings of the Free Methodist Church, please respond as fully and clearly as possible in 500-1000 words per item.

For each of the following categories, please select and respond to either A or B. Include at least one A and at least one B in your final submission. In other words, please do not respond to only As or only Bs.

When you have completed this assessment, please upload it to your portfolio.

#### Category 1: The Nature of Scripture

- A. The teaching of the historic church regarding the nature of Jesus Christ as the revealed/living Word is that he is fully God and fully human. The church has also taught that Scripture is the written Word, and, analogously, is also fully divine and fully human. Reflect on the nature of Scripture as *fully* divine and *fully* human. In your response, be sure to include your thoughts on at least the following items:
1. the sufficiency of Scripture to reveal the way of salvation;
  2. the dangers of those understandings of the nature of Scripture that over-emphasize either the divine or human aspects; and,
  3. how this understanding of Scripture informs the practice of ministry.
- B. You have just settled into your new pastoral appointment and receive an invitation to the monthly ecumenical clergy gathering that meets in your town. Thankful for the opportunity to meet other pastors, you decide to attend. Over lunch, a rather passionate discussion about the nature of Scripture ensues that reaches an awkward conclusion with the following exchange:

*Susan: Well, the truth is that every religious tradition has its own scriptures or sacred texts to which they look for the teachings of their own faith. But all of them are essentially the same: they are all expressions of the basic human impulse to name and understand the divine. It doesn't ultimately matter which sacred texts one follows; what matters is whether one's interpretation and practices lead to the common good of all people.*

*Jim: Really?! Why would anyone ever want come to your church, Susan? In our church, we believe that the Holy Bible, comprised of books of the Old and New Testaments, was dictated by God to human authors who wrote precisely what God told them to write. The Bible is fully inerrant and is the only true Scripture. The so-called sacred texts of other religions contain no truth and are only an instrument of Satan to deceive to keep people from coming to living faith in Christ.*

*Juan: Our church teaches that the Scriptures include the books of the Old and New Testaments, but also include additional sacred writings often called the Apocrypha. All of these are means through which we learn God's truth. But, in addition to the Holy Scriptures, we firmly believe that God authoritatively guides the church through the passing on of Sacred Tradition.*

At this point, your new colleagues turn to you and ask, so what does the Free Methodist Church teach about the nature of Holy Scripture?

Write a response in which you articulate to your new friends the helpfulness of an incarnational model that sees Scripture as both fully divine and fully human. In your response, be sure to include your thoughts on at least the following items:

1. the sufficiency of Scripture to reveal the way of salvation;
2. the dangers of those understandings of the nature of Scripture that over-emphasize either the divine or human aspects; and,
3. how this understanding of Scripture informs your practice of ministry.

## **Category 2: The Way of Salvation**

- A. Sketch as clearly as possible your understanding of the key tenets of a Wesleyan theology of salvation. While your response may include more, it must include a discussion of prevenient grace, justifying grace, regeneration, and sanctifying grace. What is involved in each component? How does Wesleyan theology make a difference in your practice of ministry?
- B. Your new ministry is going well and you are grateful to have several new people in your newcomers' class. During a session on the church's understanding of the biblical teaching about salvation, you ask the group to share any teaching they've had in the past or perspectives they may currently hold. Among the responses are the following:

*Jamal: I was always taught that some people are chosen by God for salvation and some people are not. I think they called it the doctrine of election or predestination . . . or something like that. I have to admit that it never seemed very fair to me, but the people were genuinely loving and Christ-like, and truly had a beautiful sense of comfort from knowing in their hearts that they had been chosen by a sovereign God for eternal salvation.*

**Madeline:** *I'm really not so sure about the whole idea of salvation. I mean, what is it salvation for or from? What I really get when I come to church is encouragement and support to be a good person. It's so good to hear stories about the real-life struggles of people in the Bible and, especially, the example of Jesus who just amazes me every time I learn more about him. He really shows us how to live a good life that truly pleases God and helps others.*

**Natasha:** *For me, salvation was firmly connected to being a part of the church. In fact, as a child I was consistently taught that being a part of the church was an act of faith and trust that would ultimately lead to an eternity with God. I'm not sure whether I still believe this, but it does trouble me that so many branches of Christianity really seem only to emphasize an individual relationship with a personal Jesus with or without the church as Christ's Body on the earth.*

**Jaden:** *It seems like all I ever heard was legalism. It was either about a particular set of beliefs one had to hold or about a holy life a person had to achieve. Either way, the message was clear: if you failed, you were surely doomed to an eternity in hell, a place of fire and everlasting torment. None of it seemed very loving to me, so I just walked away from it all.*

Write a response in which you seek to articulate a Wesleyan understanding of the doctrine of salvation and how it might bring clarity to the broad range of perspectives in your newcomers' class. Be sure that your response includes a presentation on prevenient grace, justifying grace, regeneration, and sanctifying grace, and what is involved in each component.



### Category 3: The Sacraments

- A. Wesley understood the *means of grace* as those outward signs, words, or actions that are ordained by God to be the normal channels through which God conveys prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. In your response, discuss the nature, role, and efficacy of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, including the place of infant baptism and believer's baptism, the significance of the Lord's Supper, and the implications of a Free Methodist understanding of the sacraments for local church ministry and practice.
- B. A young couple in your church asks you if they could schedule a time to meet with you to talk about baptizing their new baby. You are excited about the opportunity and schedule a time to visit them in their home the following week. During the meeting, they ask for your pastoral perspective on a dilemma in which they find themselves. Having come to a recommitment in their faith while attending your church, they both would like the baby to be baptized as an infant. Javier is far more comfortable with infant baptism due to his Roman Catholic background, but because of his newly recovered personal faith in Christ he doesn't want it to be merely perfunctory. Makayla would also prefer that the baby be baptized but has already begun to experience resistance from her father who insists that infant baptism is not valid because the baby cannot possibly have faith in Christ for herself. Further, Makayla's father argues that the whole notion of "sacraments" is a religious myth very much akin to magic. There are no sacraments, he says; rather, baptism and the Lord's Supper should be called ordinances because they are nothing more than human responses to God's grace. Because they were commanded by Christ, our obligation is simply to obey as a sign of our response. Javier and Makayla feel trapped: both families live in the area and will certainly be present on the Sunday of the baptism. They ask you to help them understand the church's theology of the sacraments in hopes that they will be able to respond to their family members on both sides.

Write out the main lines of your response to Javier and Makayla, noting the nature, role, and efficacy of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Free Methodist Church. In your discussion, include the church's understanding of the place of infant baptism and believer's baptism, the significance of the Lord's Supper, as well as implications for local church practice.

### Category 4: The Ministry

- A. Discuss your understanding of the church's teaching regarding the general ministry of all believers by virtue of faith in Christ/baptism and the representative ministry of some believers by virtue of ordination. What are the similarities and differences of focus between these two aspects of the ministry of Christ's church? What are the particular roles and functions of each? Describe your sense of calling and what ordination means for the ministry to which you feel called. Your discussion should include your understanding of the place and function of ordained ministry in the Free Methodist Church and what it means to submit to the authority and guidance of the church with regard to pastoral appointments and ministerial service.
- B. Tamika is a member of your congregation who is home from college on spring break. She tells you that she is really wrestling with a call to ministry and asks if you would be willing to give her some pastoral and vocational guidance to help her discern her calling. As a pre-med major, she was surprised when she began to feel an internal nudging toward ordained ministry. She now wonders whether her desire to be a medical doctor was in reality a calling to help people become spiritually whole. She asks you if you could clarify the differences between the general ministry of all believers by virtue of faith in Christ/baptism *and* the representative ministry of some believers by virtue of ordination.

Write a reply in which you articulate how you would respond to Tamika's struggle. Seek to help clarify her understanding of the nature of ministry, as well as what ordained ministry in the Free Methodist Church might mean for her, should the Lord lead in that direction.

### Category 5: Human Equality

- A. Articulate your understanding of the teaching of Scripture on the full equality of all humanity as created in the image of God, with particular attention to the roles of women in church, home, and society. In your discussion, include your thinking on how the teachings of Scripture and the Free Methodist Church reflect your own perspectives, as well as some of the implications there might be for your own practice of ministry.
- B. After several pastoral conversations with Tamika and much soul searching on her own, she has come to a place of confidently affirming God's call upon her life to pursue ordained ministry. When she comes to tell you the news, you are able to sense both the clarity of her calling as well as a troubling overtone of concern in her voice. Asking her if everything is okay, she begins

to explain that several of her friends and family members—people she deeply respects—have told her in no uncertain terms that Scripture is crystal clear in its teaching that only men can be ordained to Christian ministry. They tell her that they certainly believe in the equal rights of all people, but that even though men and women are equal in the eyes of God, they were never created to be equivalent in the area of roles and responsibilities. They argue that it is radical feminism that has caused some branches of the church to stray from a biblical view of manhood and womanhood. Tamika’s family and friends firmly believe Scripture teaches that men were created to be leaders in the church and in the home. Women, on the other hand, were intended to be supportive and to function in their God-given, complementary roles in relation to men as leaders. Moreover, as an African American woman, Tamika shares privately with you that she is deeply troubled by what appears to her to be yet another chapter in a long journey of feeling oppressed by people in power. She tearfully asks, “Is there really a place for a person like me in the Free Methodist Church?”

Write a response in which you seek to help Tamika understand the teaching of Scripture on the full equality of all humanity, with particular attention to the roles of women in church, home, and society. Be sure to include a direct response to Tamika’s poignant question in which you are honest both about the warts and aspirations of the Free Methodist Church with regard to women in ministry.

**APPENDIX Q**  
**Certificate of Standing**

**Certificate of Standing**

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_, a/an \_\_\_\_\_, (elder, deacon, conference ministerial candidate), is in good standing and of general acceptability in the \_\_\_\_\_

Conference of the FREE METHODIST CHURCH and is granted this certificate with a view to being transferred to the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference.

Done by \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ (President)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Secretary)

\* \* \* \* \*

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ was received by transfer as a/an \_\_\_\_\_ (elder, deacon, conference ministerial candidate) by vote of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference on \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ (President)

A certificate granted by an annual or district conference or conference board of ministerial education and guidance is valid until the ensuing annual conference to which the certificate is given.

## APPENDIX R

### Pastoral Responses to Marital Failure

#### Pastoral Responses to Marital Failure

David W. Kendall, 2012

In the gospel records, the opponents of Jesus attempt to drag him into the controversy over grounds of divorce. They put the question to Jesus, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason? (Matthew 19:3). Clearly these Pharisees, conservative by bent, observing what they perceive to be Jesus' rather low or liberal view of law based on His treatment of people and apparent violation of the traditions of the elders, put the question in terms of the liberal interpretive view: Are they correct to say that any offense can be grounds for failing to keep the marriage covenant?<sup>26</sup> Jesus refuses to go there. He cites the Genesis-Creative design and supports the permanence of the marriage covenant. He does so over against the liberal view of the law. But Jesus does not stop with a critique of the liberal view. He implies that even the conservative view may be suspect. He does so when the Pharisees respond by citing the Mosaic provision for a certificate of divorce. Why did Moses make this provision, if not to be used? Jesus answers that

26 The members of Jesus' community were not to be legalists. Instead, they called for new life from above under God's rule. The Kingdom was at hand, present and accessible, and those who entered began to live a new life. This new life sharply contrasted with the other ways and strategies for living identified by people of God in the first century world.

As represented in the New Testament those other strategies were rooted in an understanding of Torah as interpreted by the various communities of teachers. Separated from the live connection to a covenant-keeping God, their applications became legal rather than relational in orientation. Life in first century Judaism was guided by the commands, as understood by the leading teachers. The popular dilutions of this basic orientation "on the street" led to more or less rigorous application of the law. In the case of divorce, a marriage might well be dissolved under certain circumstances. Moses provided for this possibility (Deuteronomy 24) but his provisions were open to varied interpretation. If a man finds something amiss in his wife—some mortal threat to the integrity of the bond of marriage—he may dismiss his wife, but not without a certificate of divorce. The certificate certified to the community that the two were no longer married, no longer one flesh, and were now free to marry another. It is critical to bear in mind this socio-legal intent—the certificate signaled to the community that the partners were no longer bound by the marriage and therefore at least potentially available to (re)marry.

The provision in Torah for dissolving a marriage was understood in narrow and broad ways. At the extremes, the narrow (Rabbi Shammai) held that only the worst offenses of sexual impropriety warranted the wife's dismissal. Those of a more liberal mind (Rabbi Hillel) held that a man could end a marriage over most any failure or shortcoming he saw in his wife. This controversy provides the setting for the questions directed to Jesus about the so-called conditions for divorce. Can one get out of a marriage for most any disappointing thing a spouse might do, or only in response to a grievous sexual offense? However the question of grounds for divorce was answered, no one believed that a divorce properly executed precluded one from remarriage and full participation within the community.

Moses conceded to the hardness of human hearts. The provision was made to clean up the relational and social mess created by hard-hearted refusal to keep covenant in relation to wife and God. But it was never God's intent that marriages should end. So, Jesus concludes that one who divorces his wife forces her to commit adultery, except in cases where the wife has already violated the covenant on moral grounds. Furthermore, a man who marries another woman than the wife of his youth is in fact an adulterer, even if he gave his former wife a certificate.

In other words, in His ministry-setting Jesus refused to be drawn into the controversy and side with one interpretive school over another. Hardness of heart leads people to break their covenants and dissolve their marriages. This is always wrong, whatever the particular reasons for it. Those who simply want out of the marriage over trivial matters **as well as** those who dismiss a wife/husband over more serious offenses **both** find themselves in violation of God's plan.

Given the context of His day and the background of the question, Jesus would suggest that there simply **were** no grounds for rejecting one's covenant promises to one's spouse. That is, disdaining the covenant to pursue another person violates God's plan. The disciples understood the absoluteness of Jesus' statements and conjectured that it might be better never to marry at all (Matthew 19:10). But they missed the main point, as have most of their successors.

### **Remarriage?**

Note what Jesus does not say or imply. Namely, divorced persons become pariah and may never again marry. No, Mosaic legislation had provided against such an outcome, which would have frightening consequences for women especially. No, a certificate must be given declaring to the community that the divorced one is no longer bound to the marriage. She may remarry, if a partner can be found.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes a similar comment about divorce (Matthew 5:31). There it is in the context of lust and adultery in the heart, and Jesus' elaboration of a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. There is some question whether this verse represents a discreet antithesis (you have heard it said ... but I say to you) or continues that of the preceding verses which speak of adultery. In any event, this passage focuses more on the definition of adultery.

In Mark's gospel, in a parallel passage, Jesus responds to a slightly different question, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife (see Mark 10:1-12)? Jesus answers by inviting them to recall what Moses commanded. He may have hoped they would go to Genesis, but they cited the Deuteronomy passage where Moses

permits a certificate of divorce. Jesus then responds as in the Matthew text by citing Genesis but in more absolute terms: anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man she commits adultery. This is striking: against the same background as in Matthew 19 but in response to the question put in a different way, Jesus refuses to offer any justifiable basis for dissolving the marriage bonds.

Again, it is important to note what Jesus does not say. He is **not** saying there can never be divorce. He **is** saying, every divorce reflects the tragic result of hardness of heart and stands in violation of God's plan for human life.

In Luke 16:18, in a section of teaching materials, Jesus simply asserts, anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. This saying also is absolute in nature but is lacking specific context in the Lukan story. It seems right to assume the same religious and social context, and the same clashing interpretive understandings of these issues, as in the other texts. Thus, Jesus likely speaks of those who use divorce procedures in order to exchange a current spouse for another (take the two clauses as a two-fold act: divorcing and marrying or divorcing in order to marry). This is adultery.

In the letters of Paul, the teachings of Jesus are reflected. That is, marriage covenants are meant to be kept, even when a new convert finds herself married to an unbeliever. (On the one hand, believers should not marry unbelievers. Yet, a Christian who converted after marrying and now finds herself married to an unbeliever must still honor the covenant she made to her spouse, as long as possible even if he never converts.) In those same letters, the spirit of Jesus and His approach to ministry is also reflected. There are situations when the intent of God for marriage simply cannot be sustained. In such cases, other courses of action are prescribed.

What I am contending is this: *The concern to identify "grounds" that legitimize the divorce and permit remarriage, or re-entry into the life of the church, or leadership—is itself alien to the way of Jesus as reflected in the gospel record.*

## Grace

Indeed, as important as specific texts are which show Jesus' responses to the issues of marriage and divorce, it is as important to consider the entire ministry of Jesus, its focus, orientation and spirit. Among other considerations, Jesus acknowledges unpardonable sin, but divorce and the sins related to it are not unpardonable. We must note how the record portrays Jesus acting toward and speaking to people broken by relational misadventures. We must note His message to them and His call to them. We must never interpret and apply a word from Jesus in a way that leads us to treat people contrary to Jesus' way and spirit, especially when we have reports of actual responses Jesus made.

Yet that is precisely what the church has done in responding to the complex realities of sexual misadventure, broken marital vows, divorce, and remarriage. Much of conservative evangelicalism in North America reads the New Testament as good Pharisees would—in order to identify rules or principles that are then imposed on dynamic and complex human situations. Divorce is a case in point.

The church looked for all the statements Jesus and His followers made and attempted to live by them. Such statements became the new rules the church would not violate. The orientation has been legal and impersonal, and not fundamentally relational, redemptive and kingdom based. The church's primary approach flows from her best attempts to do what Jesus said on a few occasions about divorce, rather than living as Jesus lived and responding to the real life circumstances of people in the way Jesus did.

Whereas once the church may have played the legalist heroically or not, on this issue, inevitably the church landed in the condition of all persons and communities that are legal in orientation. A legal orientation breeds pride and rebellion. For those who conform to the law there can be pride. For those unable or unwilling to conform there can be rebellion. Rebellion often leads the community to accommodation, if the "right people," or a critical mass of people, are out of compliance. Therefore, the community can rail against the ungodliness of the culture and liberal sister-churches, while failing to note its own actual condition of noncompliance. Thus, it is common in the United States church for congregations to be full of people who have divorced, before and after their conversion to Christ. Most churches are "against" divorce and "for" marriage. Once divorce occurs however the two most common fallback positions are either to assess the divorce and the persons who experience it according to "the rules," questioning whether there are grounds and allowing or permitting a future on the basis of the answer. Or, lest the church appear to be legalistic or condemning or losing too many of its members or would-be members, the church slips into a kind of denial offering no



substantive response other than perhaps comforting the hurting. Neither fallback position honors the spirit of Jesus and the intentions of Jesus for His people. What we propose is a clear, consistent, and strong affirmation of God's good idea—from the beginning, a man leaves ... cleaves to wife ... and become one flesh for life. Then we propose an acknowledgement that almost from the beginning this plan experienced failure because of human sin and hard heartedness. Moses recognized this and consented to processes that certified the failure and provided protection for marriage partners, especially women. A divorce properly processed was in itself freedom to remarry. Among the people of God some tried to work the system, to bend the rules, the law, to accomplish their own desires. Perhaps all have this tendency.

In contrast, Jesus' saving work includes grace and power to redeem human sin in all of its manifestations. Jesus offered no less and much more than is explicitly affirmed in the first covenant. Marriages fail, for several typical reasons, but always involving some measure of the hard-heartedness Moses recognized. That heart condition often prevents people from seeking help for their broken lives and marriages. The grace and power of God can bring healing to any relational brokenness when hearts are open. Jesus welcomed the broken and battered, whether their injuries resulted from personal choice or the abuse of others. Jesus acted to heal and restore them. Jesus wanted them to have new lives. Within that redemptive intent all the blessings God planned from the beginning once again came within reach, including marriage. Divorce—certainly divorce processed under the provisions of the first covenant but also divorce tracing to strategies of sinful abuse, is not unpardonable and does not in itself disqualify one from God's plan for human life, which includes the possibility of (re)marriage. Divorced persons are to receive pastoral care, healing grace, and whatever future God may grant them. The church must exercise godly discernment in guiding divorced persons from brokenness to wholeness.

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Our responses to marital threat, failure and recovery include the following features:

1. Affirm the intention of God from the beginning.
2. Affirm that human sin and rebellion has frequently led to marital failure.
3. Affirm that all divorce is first a violation of God's intention, involving some element of human hard-heartedness, and often leading to various attempts to cast blame and justify self (which itself is another manifestation of hardness of heart).
4. Affirm that marital failure—for whatever reason—leaves the family broken and wounded and calls for the church's healing ministries in Jesus' name.
5. Affirm that marital failure—for whatever reason—can be the occasion for divine power and transforming grace to redeem the relationship, which the church should seek and support as its **first** and **sustained** response to the failure.
6. The church welcoming divorced persons into the family of God and its own fellowship as any other sinners. Their relational brokenness in all its complexity, including the sinful choices and responses they made and the sinful wounding they have sustained from others, should be on the discipling agenda as they continue to follow Jesus.
7. The church treating its own members whose marriages fail by holding them accountable for any breaches of their membership covenant that has occurred, and by offering them the same ministries of care, healing, and discipleship as persons receive who were divorced prior to their conversion to Christ.
8. Persons who have experienced marital failure may remarry with the Lord's blessing and the church's providing: they have understood how the earlier failure(s) occurred, identified ways in which they contributed, repented of all sinful complicity in the failure, experienced healing for their wounds and transforming grace that empowers Christ-centered relationships in their lives, and intend to marry in the Lord and honor God's intention for their marriage.
9. The church must be a community of accountability and healing for persons broken by marital failure and must resource them to become all God created and redeemed them to be.

## APPENDIX S

### Covenant of Restoration

#### COVENANT OF RESTORATION

This agreement is entered into as a Covenant by and between \_\_\_\_\_, a(n) \_\_\_\_\_, who is currently under suspension in the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference of the Free Methodist Church, and the MEG Board.

The subject and the Board enter into this covenant for the purpose of repentance and forgiveness of the subject, seeking wholeness of life and restoration of relationships.

It is therefore hereby agreed before God that:

#### **Authority**

The subject accepts the authority of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference and the MEG Board, and understands that growth and restoration requires submission to the guidance and counsel of the Board, which retains the discretion to determine satisfaction of the agreements in this Covenant.

#### **Goal of Restoration**

The parties agree to pursue every effort to assure restoration to wholeness of life and an appropriate level of service within the Free Methodist Church.

#### **Ordination Credentials**

The subject agrees to leave his/her ordination credentials voluntarily submitted in trust with the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference.

#### **Restoration Committee**

The MEG Board will establish a restoration committee that will work closely with the subject through the restoration process. Members of this committee include:

## Personal Growth and Development

In order to assure continued personal growth and development, the subject agrees to the following (mark all that apply):

1. To meet regularly with the restoration committee for counsel and accountability.
2. To receive specialized counseling during the term of this covenant with a counselor approved by the restoration committee and with regular status reports from the counselor to the restoration committee.
3. To seek continued growth in his/her marriage, dealing with spouse and children in ways that fosters their spiritual growth and well-being.
4. To avoid situations in which temptation to the same misconduct might be present, maintaining strict boundaries in relationships until such a time as this process is complete. The subject will also commit to continued strict boundaries at the successful conclusion of the restoration process.
5. To offer and to seek forgiveness and reconciliation (at an appropriate time and under the guidance of the restoration committee) between the subject, the offended parties, the church and the conference.
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Steps to Restoration

1. Attendance in a Free Methodist Church in the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference in consultation with the restoration committee.
2. Cooperation with the senior pastor of the church (or appropriate designee), who will be asked to assist the subject and the restoration committee by serving as a mentor. The pastor/mentor will be asked to provide quarterly reports to the restoration committee regarding the subject's lay involvement in the church as well as the subject's personal and spiritual growth.

3. Agreement to meet as often as requested, and at least quarterly with the restoration committee for counsel, accountability, and a review of progress towards restoration. This process will continue for a minimum of two years.
4. Approval by the restoration committee before approaching the local board of administration for recommendation to the MEG Board.
5. Interview with the conference MEG Board and their recommendation to the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference regarding whether the subject's credentials will be restored, and suggesting an appropriate level of ministry.
6. Opportunity for the subject to speak to the annual conference in regards to the recommendation of the MEG Board.
7. Restoration to ministry approved upon the action of the conference.

#### Restoration Time Line

If the subject has not submitted to the restoration process as outlined above, or become actively involved in a Free Methodist Church prior to the 20\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference, s/he agrees to request to be withdrawn from the conference and denomination under complaint.

In witness thereof, the parties agree in the presence of God to abide by and fulfill this covenant of restoration.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
MEG Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX T

### Moral Failure Debriefing

#### **MORAL FAILURE DEBRIEFING** **Suggested Sample Format**

The following is an outline for a debriefing by MEG Boards and superintendents in cases of moral failure. The intention in carrying out this check-up is to learn from the experience. With regard to process, this agenda may also be useful to outline important elements to follow as the case is treated.

Define the situation in one sentence in professional language.

How did church authorities learn of the problem?

Were there legal/civil charges?

Was there confession, contrition, and repentance? How would you describe it (i.e., complete and remorseful; reluctant; resistant, forced)?

Describe the attitude of spouse, family, etc.

Was the bishop promptly informed?

Describe the action of conference leadership relating to the minister involved, the other person(s) involved, and the local congregation:

1. What did the superintendent do?
2. What actions did the MEG Board take for both discipline and restoration? How were these decisions/actions communicated?
3. Was there counsel from the bishop?
4. Was a detailed record kept of all interactions and communications in the case, such as telephone conversations, face-to-face interviews, written correspondence?

What were the initial reactions to the superintendent/MEG Board actions by the minister involved? By the other person(s) involved? By the congregation? By the conference?

To what extent was the minister cooperative with the MEG Board in receiving discipline and participating in the process for restoration to ministry/leadership?

A year after the event, what seems to be the outcome? What have been the identifiable effects on the local congregation? What have been the effects on the individual involved and his/her ministry?

What did you learn from this situation? What did you do right? What went well?

Has a debriefing report been filed with the area bishop?

If you had to handle this situation again, what would you do differently?