

THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

Preamble

¶5300 It is biblical for the church to set apart particular persons for special tasks of leadership. These persons bear witness to an inward call of the Holy Spirit. They are examined and set apart by public ordination, including the laying on of hands after the pattern of the early church.

These men and women ordained by the church are characterized by both gifts and graces. Gifts are special endowments of abilities. Graces are special qualities of character. Both have their source in the enabling Holy Spirit. Although the church must discern and cultivate those who have such endowments, ordination is always first and foremost an act of God's calling and anointing. In each assignment, the ordained minister follows the model of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep (John 10:1-18; Ezekiel 34), served willingly and selflessly (1 Peter 5:1-4) and commanded the under shepherds to feed the sheep (John 21:15-17).

Free Methodist ministers may carry out their task under appointment as pastors of particular congregations or they may be given other assignments. In either case, they are called to provide Spirit-filled leadership in the church to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. A healthy church, reproducing more and better disciples as well as new churches, will be characterized by vital worship, evangelistic and social action, Christian nurture and fellowship.

Ordained ministers commit themselves to equipping the whole body of believers to these ends. Biblically and historically, they are set apart for the study and proclamation of the Word of God, intercessory prayer, the winning of persons to Christ, the administration of the sacraments and the defense of the gospel.

Free Methodist ministers under appointment as pastors of churches are called to be leaders of God's people. Leadership requires vision, daring, moving people to action and living with the turbulence change brings. Pastoral leadership is rooted in a deep love for Christ and His compassion for human need. God's resources are abundantly available for all who embrace this task in courageous and radical obedience.

Ordained elders may be elected to lead the church at large as bishops or superintendents. Under the direction of the bishop they may also be given

other assignments, such as those of general church administrators, chaplains, missionaries, evangelists or theological teachers in universities or seminaries.

Qualifications for Pastoral Ministry

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- A. A person called by God enters a vocation which through biblical tradition and Methodist heritage carries significant responsibilities. Dealing with the souls of people and leading the church in making disciples requires these qualities and skills: spiritual qualifications, personal characteristics, pastoral care, communication and leadership.

- B. These qualities are intended to assist the church. Ordained ministers should examine themselves in light of these; conferences should publicly review these when designing evaluation and reporting instruments for pastors; ministerial education and guidance boards should consider these qualities and skills when interviewing and guiding ministers.
 1. Spiritual Qualifications. The candidate:
 - a. is committed to Jesus Christ as Lord;
 - b. shows evidence of integrity through holiness of heart and life;
 - c. displays the fruit of the Holy Spirit;
 - d. receives and gives forgiveness;
 - e. possesses healthy self-esteem and maintains a positive attitude;
 - f. demonstrates faith, creativity and initiative;
 - g. respects people regardless of race, gender or economic status; and
 - h. models a teachable spirit.

 2. Personal Characteristics. The candidate:
 - a. is called to ministry;
 - b. practices spiritual disciplines;
 - c. is gifted for leadership;
 - d. models a balanced life and a healthy self-discipline;
 - e. maintains freedom from addictions;
 - f. engages in life-long learning;
 - g. submits biblically to authority;
 - h. seeks professional and personal accountability; and
 - i. has the support of his/her spouse, if married.

3. Pastoral Care. The candidate:
 - a. loves his/her family as Christ loves the church;
 - b. responds appropriately and warmly to people;
 - c. embodies a passion for making disciples;
 - d. ensures appropriate care for the people of God;
 - e. builds up people and inspires hope;
 - f. demonstrates interpersonal skills; and
 - g. resolves conflict effectively.

4. Communication. The candidate:
 - a. handles the Word of God correctly;
 - b. calls people to faith in Christ;
 - c. understands the culture, community and congregation;
 - d. utilizes effective means of communication;
 - e. affirms and articulates Wesleyan theology;
 - f. prepares thoroughly for public presentation;
 - g. persuades people to make godly, life-changing decisions;
 - h. challenges the status quo in love, when necessary; and
 - i. facilitates an environment of holy worship.

5. Leadership. The candidate:
 - a. leads out of personal and corporate prayer;
 - b. articulates a vision from God;
 - c. sets strategic goals to accomplish the vision;
 - d. instills congregational ownership of vision and goals;
 - e. mobilizes resources to fulfill the vision;
 - f. practices sound principles in accomplishing change;
 - g. identifies, attracts and equips leaders;
 - h. fosters a positive atmosphere;
 - i. participates in the denomination's mission; and
 - j. promotes involvement in world evangelization.

Steps Leading Toward Ordination.

¶5320 There are four steps to becoming an ordained minister in the Free Methodist Church.

- A. The person sensing the call of God and the church to pastoral ministry is first licensed as a local ministerial candidate (see ¶6500).
- B. Step two involves acceptance by the annual conference as a conference ministerial candidate.
- C. Conference ministerial candidates, upon recommendation of the ministerial education and guidance board, are received into annual conference membership and elected to elders orders.
- D. Ordination as elder completes the process.