



# **DISCIPLINE OF THE BETHEL METHODIST CHURCH**

**Revision H**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b>	-----	v
<b>LIST OF REVISIONS</b>	-----	vi
<b>SECTION 1 – HISTORICAL STATEMENT</b>	-----	1-1.1
<b>SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION</b>		
Chapter 1.    Articles of Religion	-----	2-1.1
Chapter 2.    Articles of Faith	-----	2-2.1
Chapter 3.    General Rules	-----	2-3.1
Chapter 4.    Founding Principles of the Denomination	-----	2-4.1
Chapter 5.    Amendments to Constitution	-----	2-5.1
<b>SECTION 3 – BY-LAWS</b>		
Chapter 1.    Definition	-----	3-1.1
<b>SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH</b>		
Chapter 1.    Purpose	-----	4-1.1
Chapter 2.    Membership	-----	4-2.1
Chapter 3.    Church Affiliation	-----	4-3.1
Chapter 4.    Annual Church Conference	-----	4-4.1
Chapter 5.    Special Church Conference	-----	4-5.1
Chapter 6.    Special Church Conference on Pastoral Relations	-----	4-6.1
Chapter 7.    Board of Stewards	-----	4-7.1
Chapter 8.    Board of Trustees	-----	4-8.1

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS, cont.**

### **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH, cont.**

Chapter 9.	Annual Committees/Officers -----	4-9.1
Chapter 10.	Auxiliary Groups -----	4-10.1
Chapter 11.	Church Staff -----	4-11.1

### **SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL**

Chapter 1.	Purpose -----	5-1.1
Chapter 2.	Responsibility -----	5-2.1
Chapter 3.	Composition -----	5-3.1
Chapter 4.	Interchurch Council Meetings -----	5-4.1

### **SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

Chapter 1.	Composition -----	6-1.1
Chapter 2.	Elections -----	6-2.1
Chapter 3.	Special Session -----	6-3.1
Chapter 4.	General Boards, Committees and Officers -----	6-4.1
Chapter 5.	Guidelines for Camp Counselors -----	6-5.1

### **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

Chapter 1.	Investigation and Trial of Ministers -----	7-1.1
Chapter 2.	Investigation and Trial of Lay Members -----	7-2.1
Chapter 3.	Investigation and Trial of a Local Church -----	7-3.1
Chapter 4.	Conference Investigation Committee -----	7-4.1
Chapter 5.	General Directions -----	7-5.1
Chapter 6.	Appeals -----	7-6.1

## TABLE OF CONTENTS, cont.

### SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

Chapter 1. The Call to Preach .....	8-1.1
Chapter 2. The Matter and Manner of Preaching .....	8-2.1
Chapter 3. The Preacher in Charge .....	8-3.1
Chapter 4. The General Superintendent .....	8-4.1
Chapter 5. Ministerial Relations .....	8-5.1
Chapter 6. Termination of Ministerial Relations .....	8-6.1

### SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

Chapter 1. Order of Worship .....	9-1.1
Chapter 2. Calls to Worship .....	9-2.1
Chapter 3. The Sacraments .....	9-3.1
Chapter 4. Receiving Persons into the Church .....	9-4.1
Chapter 5. Receiving Persons by Transfer .....	9-5.1
Chapter 6. Wedding Ceremony .....	9-6.1
Chapter 7. Funeral Service .....	9-7.1
Chapter 8. Dedication of Infants and Children .....	9-8.1
Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders .....	9-9.1

### APPENDIX A

Preface .....	A-1
A1 – <i>Our Vision</i> .....	A1-1.1

### APPENDIX B

Preface .....	B-1
B1 – Ministerial Scholarship Fund .....	B1-1.1

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS, cont.**

B2 – Ineligibility to Serve .....	<a href="#">B2-1.1</a>
<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b> .....	<a href="#">G-1.1</a>
<b>INDEX</b> .....	<a href="#">I-1.1</a>

## **PREFACE**

Work on the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church began with Discipline Committees at the local level in 1988. At the 1991 Bethel Methodist General Conference, the Board of Discipline Revision was formed. The original issue of the Discipline was approved by the General Conference on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

It is the purpose of the Board of Discipline Revision to develop, and revise, as needed, a discipline specific to the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination. The Board has stayed true to its charter as Revision H was approved by the General Conference held on May 2<sup>nd</sup> through May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

The pages contained herein are the result of many prayerful hours of work by the ministers and laymen of the Hill Country, North Texas, Port Neches and Robinson Bethel Methodist Churches, as revised and assimilated by the Board of Discipline Revision. It is the sincere prayer of all who have participated in the writing of this Discipline that it may serve God through the Bethel Methodist Church until our Lord's return.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Discipline Revision, 2018-2019

## LIST OF REVISIONS

### ORIGINAL ISSUE

March 24, 1995

THE LOCAL CHURCH  
JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Created  
Created

### REVISION A

April 18, 1997

PREFACE  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
HISTORICAL STATEMENT  
CONSTITUTION  
BY-LAWS  
THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL  
THE GENERAL CONFERENCE  
Document Format

Revised  
Revised  
Created  
Created  
Created  
Created  
Created  
Revised

### REVISION B

April 20, 2001

PREFACE  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
LIST OF REVISIONS  
CONSTITUTION – Modified to include:  
    Articles of Religion  
    Articles of Faith  
THE MINISTRY  
RITUAL AND WORSHIP  
Document Format

Revised  
Revised  
Created  
  
Created  
Created  
Created  
Created  
Revised

### REVISION C

April 9, 2005

PREFACE  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
LIST OF REVISIONS  
LOCAL CHURCH – Church Affiliation  
GENERAL CONFERENCE – Elections  
GENERAL CONFERENCE –  
    General Boards, Committees and Officers  
GENERAL CONFERENCE –  
    Guidelines for Camp Counselors

Revised  
Revised  
Revised  
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Revised  
  
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Created

## **LIST OF REVISIONS, cont.**

### **REVISION D**

April 11, 2008

April 24, 2009

PREFACE	Revised
TABLE OF CONTENTS	Revised
LIST OF REVISIONS	Revised
CONSTITUTION – Church Government	Revised
LOCAL CHURCH – Annual Church Conference	Revised
LOCAL CHURCH – Annual Committees/Officers	Revised
INTERCHURCH COUNCIL – Composition	Revised
GENERAL CONFERENCE – Composition	Revised

### **REVISION E**

May 4, 2012

PREFACE	Revised
LIST OF REVISIONS	Revised
LOCAL CHURCH – Board of Stewards	Revised
LOCAL CHURCH – Annual Committees/Officers	Revised
INTERCHURCH COUNCIL – Responsibility	Revised
INTERCHURCH COUNCIL – Composition	Revised
INTERCHURCH COUNCIL – Interchurch Council Meetings	Revised
GENERAL CONFERENCE – Elections	Revised
GENERAL CONFERENCE – General Boards, Committees and Officers	Revised
GENERAL CONFERENCE – Guidelines for Camp Counselors	Revised

### **REVISION F**

May 3, 2014

PREFACE	Revised
TABLE OF CONTENTS	Revised
LIST OF REVISIONS	Revised
LOCAL CHURCH – Annual Church Conference	Revised
GENERAL CONFERENCE – General Boards, Committees and Officers	Revised
APPENDIX A – Documents Addressing Theological Issues	Created
APPENDIX B – Documents/procedures created by various General Conference Boards	Created



## LIST OF REVISIONS, cont.

### REVISION G

April 29, 2017

PREFACE	Revised
TABLE OF CONTENTS	Revised
LIST OF REVISIONS	Revised
LOCAL CHURCH – Church Affiliation	Revised
GENERAL CONFERENCE –	
Guidelines for Camp Counselors	Revised
THE MINISTRY – Ministerial Relations	Revised
APPENDIX A1 – <i>Our Vision</i> Issues	Revised
APPENDIX B1 –	Revised

### REVISION H

May 4, 2019

PREFACE	Revised
LIST OF REVISIONS	Revised
GENERAL CONFERENCE –	
Guidelines for Camp Counselors	Revised
THE MINISTRY – Ministerial Relations	Revised

## SECTION 1 – HISTORICAL STATEMENT

### Chapter 1.

¶1.1.1 In the mid 1970's, a group of ministers and laymen grew increasingly disturbed by a trend in the Evangelical movement of the Church. The Church appeared to be de-emphasizing the importance of objective, biblical truth in order to accommodate the wishes of men rather than the desire of God to reveal Himself and His will as purely and completely as possible. This trend was typified by a widening tolerance of many different beliefs regarding the nature of God, man, angels, sin, salvation, sanctification and heaven.

¶1.1.2 The Church is ordered by God to “come to the unity of the faith,” yet it seemed any attempt to clarify or reconcile divergent views on such basic tenets was deemed unnecessary and “divisive.” After a final attempt, it was apparent the trend was irreversible.

¶1.1.3 On August 16, 1988, five Evangelical Methodist ministers met in Hico, Texas, to seek God's will regarding the Methodist denomination. The five were Reverend Arthur L. Slye, Jr., Reverend Dennis Barrett, Reverend John Swift, Reverend Tim Hicke, and Reverend Jerry Slye. After much discussion and prayer, the five men agreed on three points:

1. God needed and desired a new Methodist denomination which had a clear purpose; a rational, consistent and comprehensive theology in total accord with all revealed truth; and honest, godly leadership.
2. God wanted them to commence immediately with its foundation and organization.
3. It would be named “The Bethel Methodist Church.”

¶1.1.4 To begin the organization process, an Interchurch Council was founded. Composed of one ministerial representative and two lay representatives from each prospective church, each delegation on the Interchurch Council had a voice in how and when the new denomination would be organized and whether the local church it represented would be willing to join and help build a new denomination. Three churches expressed positive interest. They were located in Irving, Port Neches, and Robinson, Texas.

¶1.1.5 Each local church voted to become a part of the Bethel Methodist Church and sent a delegation to the Organizational Conference at Irving, Texas. Documents of Incorporation were filed with the State of Texas on February 27, 1989. On Easter weekend, the Organizational Conference was convened. The Bethel Methodist Church was founded by 40 lay and ministerial delegates from three charter churches on March 24, 1989. Reverend Arthur L. Slye was elected the first General Superintendent.

## **SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION**

### **Chapter 1. Articles of Religion.**

¶2.1.1 In order that we may maintain our historical connection to early Methodism we include Dr. Adam Clarke's principles as recorded in Volume Six of his commentaries.

#### **PRINCIPLES**

¶2.1.2 Which, on carefully reading and studying the sacred writings, I think I find unequivocally revealed there.

1. That there is but one uncreated, unoriginated, infinite, and eternal Being; the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things.
2. That there is in this Infinite Essence a plurality of what are commonly called persons, not separately subsisting, but essentially belonging to the Godhead; which persons are commonly termed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or God, the Logos, and the Holy Spirit: and these are generally named the Trinity, which term, though not found in the New Testament, seems properly enough applied, as we never read of more than three persons in the Godhead.
3. That the sacred Scriptures, or holy books which form the Old and New Testaments, contain a full revelation of the will of God in reference to man; and are alone sufficient for every thing relative to the faith and practice of a Christian; and were given by the inspiration of God.
4. That man was created in righteousness and true holiness, without any moral imperfection or any kind of propensity to sin; but free to stand or fall.
5. That he fell from this state, became morally corrupt in his nature, and transmitted his moral defilement to all his posterity.
6. That, to counteract the evil principle, and bring man into a salvable state, God, from his infinite love, formed the purpose of redeeming man from his lost estate by Christ Jesus, and in the interim sent his Holy Spirit to enlighten, strive with, and convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
7. That in due time the Divine Logos, called afterwards Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour, etc., became incarnated, and sojourned among men, teaching the purest truth, and working the most stupendous and beneficent miracles.
8. That this Divine Person, foretold by the prophets, and described by evangelists and apostles, is really and properly God; having, by the inspired writers, assigned to him every attribute essential to the Deity; being one with him who is called God, Jehovah, etc.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 1. Articles of Religion, cont.

9. That he is also perfect man in consequence of his incarnation, and in that man or manhood dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; so that his nature is twofold--- Divine and human, or God manifested in the flesh.
10. That his human nature is derived from the blessed Virgin Mary, through the creative energy of the Holy Ghost; but his Divine nature, because God, infinite and eternal, is uncreated, underived, and unbegotten; which, were it otherwise, he could not be God in any proper sense of the word; but as he is God, the doctrine of the eternal Sonship must be false.
11. That, as he took upon him the nature of man, he died for the whole human race, without respect of persons; equally for all, and for every man.
12. That on the third day after his crucifixion and burial he rose from the dead; and after showing himself many days to his disciples and others, he ascended to heaven, where, as God manifest in the flesh, he continues and shall continue to be the Mediator of the human race, till the consummation of all things.
13. That there is no salvation but through him; and that throughout the Scriptures his passion and death are considered as sacrificial, pardon and salvation being obtained by the shedding of his blood.
14. That no human being since the fall either has or can have merit or worthiness of or by himself, and therefore has nothing to claim from God, but in the way of his mercy through Christ; therefore pardon, and every other blessing promised in the Gospel, have been purchased by his sacrificial death, and are given to men, not on account of any thing they have done or suffered, or can do or suffer, but for his sake, or through his merit alone.
15. That these blessings are received by faith, because not of works, nor of sufferings.
16. That the power to believe, or grace of faith, is the free gift of God, without which none can believe; but that the act of faith, or actually believing, is the act of the soul, under the influence of that power. But this power to believe, like all other gifts of God, may be slighted, not used, or misused; in consequence of which is that declaration, “He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
17. That justification, or the pardon of sin, is an instantaneous act of God’s infinite mercy in behalf of a penitent soul, trusting only in the merits of Jesus Christ; that this act is absolute in respect of all past sin, all being forgiven where any is forgiven.

## **SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION**

### **Chapter 1. Articles of Religion, cont.**

18. That the souls of all believers may be purified from all sin in this life; and that a man may live under the continual influence of the grace of Christ, without sinning against his God, all evil tempers and sinful propensities being destroyed, and his heart filled with pure love both to God and man.
19. That unless a believer live and walk in the spirit of obedience, he will fall from the grace of God, and forfeit all his Christian privileges and rights; in which state of backsliding he may persevere, and, if so, perish everlastingly.
20. That the whole period of human life is a state of probation, in every part of which a sinner may repent and turn to God, and in every part of it a believer may give way to sin and fall from grace; and that this possibility of rising, and liability to falling, are essential to a state of trial or probation.
21. That all the promises and threatenings of the word of God are conditional, as they regard man in reference to his being here and hereafter; and that on this ground alone the sacred writings can be consistently interpreted or rightly understood.
22. That man is a free agent, never being impelled by any necessitating influence either to do evil or good, but has it continually in his power to choose the life or death that is set before him; on which ground he is an accountable being, and answerable for his own actions; and on this ground also he is alone capable of being rewarded or punished.
23. That his free will is a necessary constituent of his rational soul, without which man must be a mere machine, either the sport of blind chance, or the mere patient of an irresistible necessity; and, consequently, not accountable for any acts to which he was irresistibly impelled.
24. That every human being has his freedom of will, with a sufficiency of light and power to direct its operations; and that this powerful light is not inherent in any man's nature, but is graciously bestowed by Him who is the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.
25. That, as Christ has made, by his once offering himself upon the cross, a sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and that, as his gracious Spirit strives with and enlightens all men, thus putting them in a salvable state; therefore every human soul may be saved, if it be not his own fault.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 1. Articles of Religion, cont.

26. That Jesus Christ has instituted, and commanded to be perpetuated in his Church, two sacraments; baptism (sprinkling, washing with, or immersion in water) in the name of the holy and ever blessed Trinity, as a sign of the cleansing and regeneration influences of the Holy Ghost, producing a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; and the eucharist, or Lord's Supper, as commemorating the sacrificial death of Christ. That by the first, once administered, all believers may be kept in mind of the foundation on which their salvation is built, and receive grace to enable them to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.
27. That the soul is immaterial and immortal, and can subsist independently of the body.
28. That there will be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; that the souls of both shall be reunited to their respective bodies; and that both will be immortal, and live eternally.
29. That there will be a day of judgment, after which all shall be punished or rewarded, according to the deeds done in the body; the wicked being sent to hell, and the righteous taken into heaven.
30. That these states of reward and punishment shall have no end, forasmuch as the time of probation or trial is for ever terminated, and the succeeding state must necessarily be fixed and unalterable.
31. That the origin of human salvation is found in the infinite philanthropy of God; and that on this principle the unconditional reprobation of any soul is absolutely impossible.
32. The Sacred Writings are a system of pure, unsophisticated reason, proceeding from the immaculate mind of God; in many places, it is true, vastly elevated beyond what the reason of man could have devised or found out, but in no case contrary to human reason; they are addressed, not to the passions, but to the reason of man; every command is urged with reasons of obedience, and every promise and threatening founded on the most evident reason and propriety. The whole, therefore, are to be rationally understood and rationally interpreted. He who would discharge reason from this, its noblest province, is a friend in his heart to the antichristian maxim, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion." Revelation and reason go hand in hand; faith is the servant of the former, and the friend of the latter; while the Spirit of God, which gave the revelation, improves and exalts reason, and gives energy and effect to faith.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 1. Articles of Religion, cont.

¶2.1.3 *To conclude: the doctrines or principles which I have stated above, and defended in this work, I believe to be the truths of God. Those against which I have argued I believe to be either false or unproved. The doctrine which cannot stand the test of rational investigation cannot be true. The doctrines or principles already enumerated have stood this test; and those which shrink from such a test are not doctrines of Divine revelation. We have gone too far when we have said, "Such and such doctrines should not be subjected to rational investigation, being doctrines of pure revelation." I know no such doctrines in the Bible. The doctrines of this book are doctrines of eternal reason, and they are revealed because they are such. Human reason could not have found them out; but when revealed, reason can both apprehend and comprehend them. It sees their perfect harmony among themselves, their agreement with the perfections of the Divine nature, and their sovereign suitableness to the nature and state of man; thus reason approves and applauds. Some men, it is true, cannot reason; and therefore they declaim against reason, and proscribe it in the examination of religious truth.*

¶2.1.4 *Men may incorporate their doctrines in creeds or articles of faith, and sing them in hymns, and this may be all both useful and edifying if the doctrine be true; but in every question which involves the eternal interests of man, the Holy Scriptures must be appealed to, in union with reason, their great commentator. He who forms his creed or confession of faith without these, may believe anything or nothing, as the cunning of others, or his own caprices, may dictate. Human creeds and confessions of faith have been often put in the place of the Bible, to the disgrace both of revelation and reason. Let those go away, let these be retained, whatever be the consequence. Adam Clarke. Millbrook, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1817.*

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 2. Articles of Faith.

¶2.2.1 **The Holy Trinity.** The Trinity is easily distinguished in scripture and impossible to separate. To separate the Trinity is to violate the unity of God. To say or suggest that one may have one person of the Trinity apart from the other two is serious error. The moment one believes in separation of the Trinity, he becomes a victim of the heresy of polytheism.

¶2.2.2 **The Incarnation and Deity of Christ.** “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: ...and his name shall be called... the mighty God, the everlasting Father...” “...the Word was God...the Word was made flesh...” “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” Jesus Christ is the eternal God manifested in true humanity. In his human mission of qualifying to be the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” he never functioned in his deity but solely in his real humanity. His qualifying sinlessness was accomplished solely in his humanity.

¶2.2.3 **The Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is ever present and active in and through the Church. He convinces the world of sin, regenerates those who repent and believe and guides the Christian into all Truth. He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us.

¶2.2.4 **The Holy Scriptures.** The Holy Scriptures are the thirty-nine Old Testament and twenty-seven New Testament books of the Christian Bible. They are inspired by God in the sense that by his will and power they were given and are preserved. From all that is stated in these inspired writings, may be produced the full, inerrant and infallible word of God. This produced “word” exceeds in volume and weight the words stated in scripture. Our preferred illustration of this important principle is the acorn and the oak tree. The vital healthy acorn represents the Bible. The flourishing mature oak tree represents the word of God.

¶2.2.5 **The Eternal Purpose of God.** The purpose of God in eternity is to love and be loved not merely out of programmed necessity but by free moral choice.

¶2.2.6 **The Moral Nature and Responsibility of God.** The divine nature consists of twelve essential qualities called attributes. In his sovereignty, God may do whatever he will and is not answerable to anything extrinsic to himself. But, he is forever answerable to his own intrinsic nature. He only and always acts in full harmony with each of the essentials of his nature.



## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 2. Articles of Faith, cont.

¶2.2.7 **The Nature of Created Spirits (The Image of God).** God is a spirit. The image of God in which man is created is spirit. Created spirits possess two inherent and inalienable characteristics: permanent, conscious, active existence and the permanent power to love God by free moral choice. Conversely, this power to love God by free choice is the ability to commit sin.

¶2.2.8 **God's Work in Time.** God is actively working his perfect plan to remove all sinning from his entire creation once and forever.

¶2.2.9 **The Inherited Sin Nature.** The death Adam suffered in the garden by disobedience to God was spiritual, not physical. This death was the separation of God's Spirit from the spirit of Adam. This same death is transmitted to every member of the human race. That which is commonly referred to as the sin nature of man is simply the absence of God from the human spirit.

¶2.2.10 **Four Spiritual Standings.** Every member of the human race living on the earth is presently in one of only four spiritual standings before God. The first is "LOST IN ADAM," which is the absence of God from one's spirit. The second is "CHRISTIAN," which is Christ dwelling in one and that one abiding in Christ. The third is "A BACKSLIDER," a convert who has Christ dwelling in him but he is not abiding in Christ. The fourth is "APOSTATE." One can only come to this standing as a backsliding convert who persists until he exceeds the limits of the elasticity of God's saving grace. He has refused to respond to the patient reproof of the Holy Spirit. He has become guilty of the unpardonable sin or "the sin unto death," which is not a single act but a prolonged series of attitudes and activities contrary to the known will of God. This is the most tragic standing for the reason that it is without remedy.

¶2.2.11 **Eternal Salvation.** The full salvation of man involves four aspects in a required order. First, we must be saved from sins personally committed. Second, we must be saved from the sin nature inherited from Adam. Thirdly, and most importantly, we must be saved from the committing of sins. In realizing the third part of salvation, the fourth aspect is effected by the purpose and necessity of hell being eliminated.

¶2.2.12 **Essential Elements of Salvation.** Our Lord speaks of a strait gate and a narrow way which ends in life. By this, and other scriptures, we recognize two essential elements for eternal salvation; these are the conversion experience and the Christian relationship. Because of the natural state of man in sin, the saving relationship remains forever impossible without the conversion experience. The experience allows the relationship, and only in the Christian relationship is full salvation realized.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 2. Articles of Faith, cont.

¶2.2.13 **The Sacraments.** The two sacraments of the Church are rituals ordained by God as outward and visible symbols of inward and spiritual realities.

1. God's purpose for the sacraments is to speak symbolically of the two essentials for human salvation.
2. These essentials are "the conversion experience" and "the saving relationship."
3. A sacrament in no way, or to any degree, adds to or consummates the inward reality.

If we fail to clearly distinguish between the reality and the ritual, confusing the one for the other, we actually negate the saving grace of God from our lives.

¶2.2.14 **Baptism.** The sacrament of water baptism speaks symbolically of the conversion experience. Conversion to Christ is a cleansing or washing experience. The historical and universal symbol of washing is water. It is our belief from scripture, and therefore our preference, that water baptism be by affusion (sprinkling and pouring).

¶2.2.15 **The Lord's Supper.** The element of bread is an emblem representing the incarnation and human life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The juice of the grape is the emblem of blood which represents the suffering and sacrifice of our Lord. Together these two elements of Holy Communion represent the entire purpose and process of the human life and death of Jesus Christ. By partaking of these emblems we are saying that we are the blessed recipients of the saving grace provided by that life and death. The clearest and most concise statement of the reality of communion was spoken by our Lord himself; "he that is eating my flesh and drinking my blood is dwelling in me and I in him," *John 6:56*. Here we have both a description and the definition of the word "Christian," mutual indwelling; Christ in you and you in Christ.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 3. General Rules.

¶2.3.1 There are two essentials for eternal salvation and each is symbolized in the two sacraments of the church. The sacraments speak symbolically of these two essentials for eternal salvation:

1. The spiritual **EXPERIENCE** of receiving Christ into one's spirit, which is realized by faith in a moment of time. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." *Colossians 1:27*.
2. The continuing spiritual **RELATIONSHIP** of following Christ (abiding in Christ) through faith. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." *John 8:31-32*. "Abide in me...I am the vine, ye are the branches...If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch...and they are burned." *John 15:4-6*.

¶2.3.2 All members of the Bethel Methodist Church should evidence these essential realities in their daily lives. Such evidence includes a strong desire to be free from committing sin, to assemble with other Christians in public worship, to pray, to fast when so led of the Holy Spirit, to give to the financial support of the church through proportional giving and offerings, and to share the knowledge and understanding of God with others.

## SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION

### Chapter 4. Founding Principles of the Denomination.

¶2.4.1 **Purpose.** The purpose of the Bethel Methodist Church is to know and understand God. (*Luke 10:42, Jeremiah 9:23-24*) Our compelling objective is to make Him known and understood. This progressive realization of our purpose compels us to:

1. Seek to establish and maintain ourselves as a “message centered people with a God-centered message.”
2. Make Him known and understood through personal and corporate witness, Christian Mission, Christian Education and Church Extension.

¶2.4.2 **Church Government.** The Bethel Methodist Church is both congregational and connectional. It is **congregational** in two ways:

1. As to property rights:
  - a. Property rights are vested, with respect to ownership and maintenance, in the local church and held in trust to the local church by the trustees of the local church. In the absence of a Board of Trustees, the duties and responsibilities of officers shall be vested in either the Board of Stewards or the church may authorize one or more members to act in its behalf.
  - b. The General Conference may make provision for the holding of property, other than the above, when mission money or general funds are involved.
2. As to calling a pastor:
  - a. The choice of pastor is vested with the local church for its final authority, subject to the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church.

It is **connectional** in that the entire church operates under the Constitution and By-Laws enacted by the General Conference in the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church. All local churches that affiliate with the Bethel Methodist Church shall operate under the Discipline.

## **SECTION 2 – CONSTITUTION**

### **Chapter 5. Amendments to Constitution.**

¶2.5.1 The Constitution can be amended only by the following procedure:

1. Three-fourths (3/4) quorum majority vote (present and voting) of any General Conference.
2. Ratification by two-thirds (2/3) of the local churches voting. Ratification at the local church level shall be by two-thirds (2/3) of the membership (present and voting) at either an Annual Church Conference or a Special Church Conference.

¶2.5.2 Proposed amendments to the Constitution may originate in the General Conference, at a local Church Conference or in the Interchurch Council.

## **SECTION 3 – BY-LAWS**

### **Chapter 1. Definition.**

¶3.1.1 All which follows in the Discipline, not specifically in the Constitution, shall be known as the By-Laws.

¶3.1.2 The By-Laws can be amended by the General Conference, but must always be in harmony with and not contrary to the Constitution.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 1. Purpose.**

¶4.1.1 The Christian Church is composed of all believers who have received Christ into their spirit and are trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ for cleansing from all sin unto eternal salvation.

¶4.1.2 The Bethel Methodist Church is a collection of persons who, by mutual agreement, are like-minded in matters of theology and united in the purpose of knowing and understanding God and causing Him to be known and understood.

¶4.1.3 In fulfilling this purpose, the local church meets regularly for the worship of God, the preaching and teaching of God's Word and the receiving of the sacraments of baptism and Holy communion. The local congregation is both a spiritual and social family; they share one another's joy and burdens, fellowship together, pray for one another and exhort one another to be more Christ-like. The local church also gives evidence of the knowledge and understanding of God by sharing the gospel in word and example at home and abroad, ministering to community needs and generally applying the teachings of Christ to everyday life.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 2. Membership.**

¶4.2.1 All who have repented of their sins and are trusting in Christ alone for salvation, growing in the knowledge and understanding of God and willing to walk in that light as given by the scriptures and Holy Spirit may be considered for membership in the Bethel Methodist Church.

¶4.2.2 When, after counseling, prayer and careful consideration, the pastor is satisfied that the candidates are born-again, sufficiently familiar with and supportive of the theology, purpose and program of the Bethel Methodist Church, the pastor may receive them into membership, by administering the vows of the church and presenting them to the congregation.

¶4.2.3 Members of any Bethel Methodist Church are eligible for membership in another Bethel Methodist congregation by transfer, provided the provisions of ¶4.2.1 and ¶4.2.2 are satisfied.

¶4.2.4 The pastor and/or the Membership Secretary shall keep an accurate record of church membership noting additions, withdrawals and the reason for withdrawal in the roll book.

¶4.2.5 Any member who joins another church shall be noted as having withdrawn.

¶4.2.6 Members, who for reason of change of residence or cause other than sickness, have absented themselves for over six or more months, may be removed from the membership roll at the Annual Church Conference. If possible, said persons shall have been contacted by the pastor and/or the Membership Secretary and informed of the pending action.



## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 3. Church Affiliation.**

¶4.3.1 The local church, acting at its Annual and Special Called Church Conferences, constitutes the basic governmental body of the Bethel Methodist Church. The General Conference and all duly elected officers derive their administrative powers and duties from the local churches acting through their delegates. The local churches act cooperatively at the general level by carrying out the programs and following the Discipline adopted by their delegates at these conferences.

¶4.3.2 Any local congregation desiring to unite with the Bethel Methodist Church may do so, providing the following requirements are met:

1. The General Superintendent has met with the pastor, board and congregation.
2. The Interchurch Council and the General Superintendent are satisfied that the congregation is in general agreement with the theology, purpose and program of the Bethel Methodist Church.
3. An invitation is extended by the General Superintendent to the local church to affiliate.
4. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of eligible members of the local church present and voting and fully understanding the privileges and responsibilities pertaining thereof, vote to establish formal affiliation with the Bethel Methodist Church.

¶4.3.3 Ten percent (10%) of all donations to the local church's general fund shall be sent monthly to the treasurer of the Bethel Methodist Church with the following exceptions:

1. Personally designated gifts.
2. Special offerings approved by the Board.

¶4.3.4 The local church treasurer and pastor shall see that all Conference support has been paid at the end of the fiscal year and report the same to the Annual Church Conference. If there is a shortage, the local church will have thirty days prior to the General Conference to make up the shortfall. If the shortfall is not made up in that time, the local church will not be allowed to seat delegates at the conference except upon recommendation of the General Superintendent and a two-thirds favorable vote of the conference.

¶4.3.5 No purchase, transfer, sale or exchange of real property can be made without a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the eligible members present and voting at the Annual Church Conference or a Special Called Church Conference. Proposal of such action shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference.

¶4.3.6 The local church may encumber or mortgage church property upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those eligible members present and voting at the Annual Church Conference or a Special Called Church Conference. Proposal of such action shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 3. Church Affiliation, cont.**

¶4.3.7 The local church may disaffiliate or withdraw from the Bethel Methodist Church upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those eligible members present and voting at the Annual Church Conference or a Special Called Church Conference. Proposal of such action shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference. The General Superintendent must be notified of such proposed action at least ninety (90) days prior to such vote.

¶4.3.8 If, in the course of providence, a group of Bethel Methodists desires to form a new Bethel Methodist church, yet lacks the numbers and support necessary to become self-sufficient, it may petition the Interchurch Council and/or the General Conference in order to obtain a charter as a Bethel Methodist Mission Church. As such, the Mission Church is encouraged to participate in Interchurch Council Meetings and at the General Conference, though without voting privileges.

¶4.3.9 The Interchurch Council and/or The General Conference may elect to draw from General funds in order to support the Mission Church. The local churches and their membership are encouraged to prayerfully consider how they support the Mission Church.

¶4.3.10 Once a Mission Church has become self-sufficient, it is by definition a “local church” of the Bethel Methodist Denomination, having satisfied the provisions of ¶4.3.2. Voting privileges will be extended in accordance with ¶4.3.3 and ¶4.3.4.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 4. Annual Church Conference.**

¶4.4.1 The pastor and the Board of Stewards, in consultation with the General Superintendent, shall set the date of the Annual Church Conference. Notice of the Annual Church Conference shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference.

¶4.4.2 A quorum shall be constituted of all eligible members present. Members sixteen years of age and older are eligible to vote. Any member who has been absent for a period of six months prior to the conference except for illness or an absence excused by the Board of Stewards shall forfeit the right to vote, if challenged by an eligible member and upheld by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the conference.

¶4.4.3 The Annual Church Conference shall be conducted in accordance with the Discipline and Robert's Rules of Order.

¶4.4.4 The following is a suggested order of business. The Annual Church Conference shall:

1. Be called to order by the pastor or Chairman of the Board of Stewards, who shall introduce and turn the meeting over to the General Superintendent. In the event that the General Superintendent is unable to attend the Annual Church Conference, the pastor shall act in his stead.
2. Begin with a short devotional service and prayer.
3. Establish the voting bar.
4. Elect a presiding officer. The General Superintendent (or pastor acting in his stead) may preside over the Annual Church Conference or ask the Local Church to elect its own Conference Chairman. After presiding over the election of the Conference Chairman, the General Superintendent (or pastor acting in his stead) shall relinquish the chair.
5. Elect a Conference Secretary to take minutes of all conference business.
6. Vote on an agenda.
7. Receive written reports from the pastor, Chairman of the Trustees (if applicable), Chairman of the Stewards, Sunday School Superintendent, Treasurer and all committees and auxiliary groups of the church.
8. Read the Nominating Committee Report.
9. Elect all officers, teachers, youth sponsors, boards and committees. All Local Church and Sunday School officers shall be elected either individually or as part of the Nominating Committee report and shall take office immediately upon election. See ¶4.4.5a through ¶4.4.5e and ¶4.9.23.
10. Present the budget for the coming year.
11. Conduct any other business that is in keeping with the Discipline. See ¶4.4.7a through ¶4.4.7e, pastoral vote for even numbered years.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 4. Annual Church Conference, cont.

¶4.4.5a The Annual Church Conference shall elect the following Boards, Committees and Delegates:

- Board of Stewards
- Delegates to the Interchurch Council
- Finance Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Pastoral Relations Committee

¶4.4.5b The Annual Church Conference shall elect the following Officers:

- Sunday School Superintendent
- Treasurer
- Secretary

¶4.4.5c The Annual Church Conference may elect the following and any other Committees that the Local Church deems necessary:

Advertising and Promotion	Library
Board of Trustees	Missions
Benevolence	Music
Christian Education	Nursery
Communion	Parsonage
Evangelism Outreach	Property Maintenance
Fellowship	Ushers/Welcoming

¶4.4.5d The Annual Church Conference may elect the following Officers:

- Asst. Sunday School Superintendent
- Asst. Treasurer/Financial Secretary
- Historian
- Membership Secretary

¶4.4.5e The Local Church may organize the following auxiliary groups and others it deems necessary:

- Bethel Methodist Men
- Bethel Methodist Women
- Bethel Methodist Youth Groups

¶4.4.6 It shall be the duty of the local church secretary and officers to make all records and books of the local church available to the Annual Church Conference.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 4. Annual Church Conference, cont.

¶4.4.7a A pastoral vote shall be conducted at each local church's Annual Church Conference held on an even numbered year.

1. In the case of a newly called pastor, a vote shall not be taken unless the pastor has served at least one complete year.
2. The outgoing Pastoral Relations Committee has the authority to delay the required pastoral vote for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days.

¶4.4.7b Notice of the pastoral vote shall be posted and announced at least two Sundays prior to the conference. Included within this announcement shall be the explanation that:

1. A pastoral vote shall, as a matter of Annual Church Conference business, be conducted at all Bethel Methodist Churches held on even numbered years, noting the exception in ¶4.4.7a.
2. This pastoral vote is being conducted as a result of business voted on and passed at General Conference.
3. This pastoral vote in no way reflects on the character of the pastor.

¶4.4.7c The following is the prescribed order of business:

1. The pastoral vote will be the last order of business at the Annual Church Conference and shall be conducted by the General Superintendent or his designated representative.
2. The vote shall be preceded by the General Superintendent, or designated representative, reiterating the explanation as provided in ¶4.4.7b.
3. The question of the vote shall be, "Do you believe it is God's will for 'Pastor's Name' to be the theological, spiritual and pastoral leader of the Bethel Methodist Church of 'Location' at this time?"
4. There will be no discussion on the question at the time of the vote.
5. The vote will be conducted by secret ballot.
6. The vote will be determined by a simple majority. A tie vote is the same as a negative vote.
7. After all ballots have been collected, the votes shall be counted in closed quarters by the following, or their designated representative:
  - a. The General Superintendent.
  - b. The outgoing Chairman of the local church's Board of Stewards.
  - c. The outgoing Chairman of the Pastoral Relations Committee.
8. The pastor shall be called in and given the exact vote count.
9. The General Superintendent, or his designated representative, shall report the exact vote count to the conference.
10. The Annual Church Conference shall be brought to a close.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 4. Annual Church Conference, cont.**

¶4.4.7d The pastor shall have fifteen (15) days after notification to respond to an affirmative vote.

¶4.4.7e In the event of a negative vote, the newly elected Board of Stewards will convene as soon as practical to begin deliberations concerning the following:

1. What pulpit privileges shall the outgoing pastor be afforded?
2. What severance pay shall be awarded?
3. What policy shall be followed with respect to the outgoing pastor's office and the parsonage?

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 5. Special Church Conference.**

¶4.5.1 A Special Church Conference may be called by the pastor, Board of Stewards, or the General Superintendent. Notice of the Special Church Conference shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference. In addition, the notification must specify the item(s) of business to be considered.

¶4.5.2 A quorum shall be constituted of all eligible members present. Any member who has been absent for a period of six months or more prior to the conference except for illness or an absence excused by the Board of Stewards shall forfeit the right to vote, if challenged by an eligible member and upheld by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the conference.

¶4.5.3 The Special Church Conference shall be conducted in accordance with the Discipline and Robert's Rules of Order.

¶4.5.4 A Special Church Conference may be called for the reasons of:

1. Considering the question of Pastoral Relations. See [Chapter 6](#).
2. Considering the question of continuing Church Affiliation. See [¶4.3.7](#).
3. Encumbrance of Church property.
4. Amending the budget.
5. Any other business deemed sufficiently urgent by the pastor, Board of Stewards or General Superintendent.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 6. Special Church Conference on Pastoral Relations.

¶4.6.1 A Special Church Conference on Pastoral Relations may be called by the pastor, the Board of Stewards or by the General Superintendent. Notice of the Special Church Conference shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the conference. In addition, the notification must specify the item(s) of business to be considered.

¶4.6.2 A quorum shall be constituted of all eligible members present. Members sixteen years of age and older are eligible to vote. Any member who has been absent for a period of six months or more prior to the conference except for illness or an absence excused by the Board of Stewards shall forfeit the right to vote, if challenged by an eligible member and upheld by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the conference.

¶4.6.3 The Special Church Conference shall be conducted in accordance with the Discipline and Robert's Rules of Order.

¶4.6.4 The Special Church Conference may be called for the purpose of calling a pastor or determining whether the current pastoral relations should be continued.

¶4.6.5 In the event of calling a pastor, the question of the vote should be, "Do you believe it is God's will for 'Candidate's Name' to be the theological, spiritual and pastoral leader of the Bethel Methodist Church of 'Location' at this time?" Vote shall be by secret ballot and a two-thirds (2/3) majority shall be required to call the pastor. The pastoral candidate shall have fifteen (15) days after notification to respond to an affirmative vote.

¶4.6.6 In the event of a vote on the current pastor, the question of the vote should be "Do you believe it is God's will for 'Pastor's Name' to be the theological, spiritual and pastoral leader of the Bethel Methodist Church of 'Location' at this time?" Vote shall be by secret ballot and a simple majority shall be required to retain the current pastor. The pastor shall have fifteen (15) days after notification to respond to an affirmative vote. See ¶4.4.7a through ¶4.4.7e.

¶4.6.7 Any Special Church Conference that deals with the call of a new pastor should also include a full discussion of the proposed salary and timetable for the assumption of duties.



## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 7. Board of Stewards

¶4.7.1 The Board of Stewards is a representative body elected by and accountable to the local congregation, deriving its powers and functions from the Discipline and the local church. Representing the laity and key committees within the church, the Board of Stewards is the chief governing body in the absence of the church conference. While the Board of Stewards is responsible for executing the business of the local church, certain major items of business must always be brought before either the Annual or a Special Church Conference, including:

1. Hiring of a pastor. See [Chapter 6](#).
2. Determining Church Affiliation. See [Chapter 3](#).
3. Encumbrance of Church property.
4. Changing Local Church By-Laws.

Other important items which may be deemed prudent to bring before the entire church include: substantial amendments to the budget; approval of a new building; etc.

¶4.7.2 The Board of Stewards should be composed of at least three (3) members and not more than eleven (11) members. The following positions, boards and committees should be represented:

1. Church Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer.
2. Finance Committee Chairman or representative.
3. Pastoral Relations Committee Chairman or representative.
4. Property Maintenance Committee Chairman or representative.
5. Sunday School Superintendent or representative.

¶4.7.3 Candidates for Board membership must be members of the church body and at least eighteen (18) years of age. They should demonstrate evidence of discretion, kindness, humility, responsibility and prudence with regard to stewardship of church funds and property and any other qualities consistent with spiritual maturity and Christian leadership.

¶4.7.4 Board members are elected to one year terms. No Board member, except the Treasurer, may serve for more than three consecutive terms. For the sake of continuity, terms of Board members should be structured so that approximately a third of the Board rotates off each year. All members of the Board of Stewards are eligible to vote, except the Chairman, who may vote only in the case of a tie.

¶4.7.5 The Stewards shall be elected at the Annual Church Conference. As soon as possible after their election, the Stewards shall organize and elect their Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary and determine the time of their regular monthly meeting.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 7. Board of Stewards, cont.**

¶4.7.6 The minutes of all meetings of the Stewards shall be kept in a permanent record by the Secretary of the Stewards and shall be available to the Stewards and the pastor. Any member of the local church may review the minutes upon request.

¶4.7.7 All committees of the church shall work with the Stewards and pastor and report to them when called upon to do so.

¶4.7.8 The Stewards shall lead the congregation in all spiritual matters by precept and example by: (1) calling on visitors, the sick and the needy; and (2) endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace while nurturing and preserving the unity of the faith among members and especially teachers, youth leaders and those in positions of influence.

¶4.7.9 It shall be the duty of the Stewards to nominate the succeeding year's Nominating Committee.

¶4.7.10 If any elected position becomes vacant, the Stewards may fill said vacancy.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 8. Board of Trustees.**

¶4.8.1 The trustees of the local church shall be composed of three members of the church body of at least twenty-one years of age. Members shall be elected for a term of three years with one trustee being elected each year. Should a vacancy occur, the Board of Stewards shall have the responsibility of filling the vacancy pending the Annual Church Conference.

¶4.8.2 Each local Bethel Methodist Church should be incorporated under the laws of the state in which it is located. The trustees are the Directors of the corporation.

¶4.8.3 The trustees are empowered to hold title to all church property, accept bequests and endowments and administer the same in accordance with the wishes of donors and laws of the state. The trustees may transact the sale of church property in accordance with the wishes of the congregation and transact all legal business pertaining to the church. The trustees shall secure a place of safekeeping for all legal papers of the church, including policies, deeds, money deposits, receipts, etc., and be responsible for same. The trustees shall make a written report with regard to church property and legal business to the Annual Church Conference.

¶4.8.4 The duties of the chairman of the Board of Trustees shall be:

1. Calling meetings.
2. Executing actions taken by trustees.
3. Seeing that all duties of the trustees are implemented.

¶4.8.5 In the absence of a Board of Trustees, their duties and responsibilities shall be vested in either the Board of Stewards or the church may authorize one or more members to act in its behalf.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers.

¶4.9.1 Nominations for Annual Committees shall be prepared by the Nominating Committee, posted and announced two Sundays prior to the Annual Church Conference. At the discretion of the local church, this list may or may not include each committee's chairman. This slate of nominees plus any nominations from the floor, shall be voted on at the Annual Church Conference.

¶4.9.2 The Annual Committees hereby presented shall submit reports to the Annual Church Conference. Where applicable, these committees should also submit budget requests to the Finance Committee prior to the Annual Church Conference.

¶4.9.3 No board or committee shall hold a meeting pertaining to the church without the pastor's prior knowledge, unless the church is without a pastor.

¶4.9.4 Except where otherwise noted, all of the Annual Committees may be comprised of either members, or members and regular attendees. The individual duties of some of the Annual Committees are as follows:

¶4.9.5 **Advertising and Promotion.** The Advertising and Promotion Committee shall be responsible for publicizing the activities and special events of the church in the media.

¶4.9.6 **Assistant Sunday School Superintendent.** See Sunday School Superintendent, ¶4.9.29.

¶4.9.7 **Assistant Treasurer.** The Assistant Treasurer shall be a member of the church body and shall assist the Church Treasurer as needed, being authorized to act in the Church Treasurer's absence.

¶4.9.8 **Benevolence.** The Benevolence Committee, working with the Pastor, is to be aware of and respond to various needs within the church. Also, it is to appraise and consider outside requests from community charities and individuals.

¶4.9.9 **Board of Stewards.** See [Chapter 7](#).

¶4.9.10 **Board of Trustees.** See [Chapter 8](#).

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers, cont.

¶4.9.11 **Christian Education.** The purpose of the Christian Education Committee is to develop and promote a Bethel curriculum for elementary, junior high, senior high and adult Sunday School classes. This committee is coordinated at the general level by the Board of Christian Education.

¶4.9.12 **Communion.** The Communion Committee shall be responsible for securing elements for communion and preparing them for service in cooperation with the pastor.

¶4.9.13 **Delegates to the Interchurch Council.** Each church shall elect two members from the church body to represent them as Lay Delegates to the Interchurch Council. At least one alternate should also be elected. Each church's pastor shall also be a delegate to the Interchurch Council.

¶4.9.14 **Evangelism/Outreach.** See [Missions, ¶4.9.21](#).

¶4.9.15 **Fellowship.** The Fellowship Committee is to encourage and arrange frequent social functions, receptions, dinners and special events to aid in unifying the church family. It is also to help new members to become better acquainted.

¶4.9.16 **Finance.** The Finance Committee shall be composed of members from the church body. Their responsibilities shall be:

1. Solicit budget requests from the various groups and committees in preparing the church budget.
2. Prepare an operating budget and present it to the Board of Stewards and the Annual Church Conference.
3. Consult with the Pastoral Relations Committee to review the Pastor's salary and make recommendations regarding the same either to the Annual Church Conference or a Special Church Conference on Pastoral Relations.
4. Inform the Annual Church Conference as to the amount of giving required to meet the budget.
5. Review and/or audit all accounts of the church following the close of the fiscal year and report their findings to the Board of Stewards.
6. Conduct an audit at any time deemed necessary by the Board of Stewards.

¶4.9.17 **Historian.** The Historian shall record and maintain all information pertinent to the local church.

¶4.9.18 **Library.** The Library Committee shall be responsible for maintaining and organizing books and other library materials and for promoting their use among the church membership.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers, cont.

¶4.9.19 **Local Website Committee.** The purpose of the Local Website Committee is to act as an outreach ministry by providing information to the public while promoting the goals and objectives of the Bethel Methodist Church. It is not the responsibility of this committee to create content; it is their responsibility to post content as provided. The responsibilities of this committee are as follows:

1. Maintain and update the local website.
2. Obtain approval by the pastor for all theological content to be posted on website.
3. Record, edit (as needed), and upload sermons in a timely manner.
4. Provide up-to-date information for local and denominational events (i.e. conference dates, youth camp, retreats, etc.).

If the local church does not desire to maintain their own website they can request that basic information be posted on the denominational website.

¶4.9.20 **Membership Secretary.** The purpose of the Membership Secretary is to help the pastor keep an accurate record of church membership noting additions, withdrawals and the reason for withdrawal in the roll book.

¶4.9.21 **Missions.** The Missions Committee shall be responsible to assist the local church in evangelism, outreach, home and world missions. In addition to keeping the message of missions before the local congregation, the Missions Committee should identify, pursue and promote individual missionaries and missionary organizations which hold theological positions in harmony with those of the Bethel Methodist Church.

¶4.9.22 **Music.** The Music Committee shall provide for the music of the church by securing a song leader, choir director, organist, pianist and/or other musicians in consultation with the pastor and Board of Stewards. The Music Committee shall see that the music of the church is of the highest quality possible and is consistent with the message.

¶4.9.23 **Nominating.** The Nominating Committee shall be composed of five members from the church body representing the following: Stewards, Trustees (if applicable), Sunday School, Bethel Methodist Men and Bethel Methodist Women. The Pastor shall chair the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall meet prior to the Annual Church Conference and prepare a slate of officers, youth sponsors, boards and annual committees for consideration by the Conference, although nominations from the floor are always in order. The Sunday School Superintendent along with the Assistant Sunday school Superintendent and Pastor shall nominate the Sunday School teachers. The Board of Stewards shall nominate the Nominating Committee for the succeeding year. The Board may choose to defer nominations for representatives of the Stewards and/or Trustees to the Local Annual Church Conference. If the Board defers these nominations, the following process shall be followed: After the Trustees and Stewards are elected as part of the general election slate;

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers, cont.

the unfilled positions on the Nominating Committee shall be nominated and elected with only the newly elected Stewards and/or Trustees being eligible.

¶4.9.24 **Nursery.** The Nursery Committee shall be composed of all mothers of nursery age children and is responsible for the following items:

1. Setting guidelines for the operation of the nursery in concert with the Board of Stewards.
2. Maintaining the church nursery, keeping it safe, clean, comfortable, well supplied and in good repair.
3. Supervising all nursery attendants.

Additionally, the Nursery Committee should submit a recommendation regarding the salary of any employee under its charge to the Finance Committee prior to the Annual Church Conference.

¶4.9.25 **Parsonage.** The Parsonage Committee shall be responsible for insuring that the parsonage is safe, well maintained and adequately furnished.

¶4.9.26 **Pastoral Relations.** The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be composed of five members from the church body elected at the Annual Church Conference and representing the following: Stewards, Trustees (if applicable), Sunday School, Bethel Methodist Men and Bethel Methodist Women. The Pastoral Relations Committee is responsible for filling the pulpit in the Pastor's absence and for conducting a search for a new Pastor when necessary. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall assist the Pastor in his various responsibilities and act as both a liaison and advocate on behalf of both the Pastor and individual church members. Additionally, the Pastoral Relations Committee should submit a recommendation regarding the Pastor's salary to the Finance Committee prior to the Annual Church Conference.

¶4.9.27 **Property Maintenance.** The Property Maintenance Committee shall be responsible for:

1. Maintaining the church's physical property, keeping it clean, comfortable and in good repair.
2. Supervising all janitorial, lawn care and other workers employed to care for church and parsonage property.
3. Submitting a recommendation regarding the salary of any employee under its charge to the Finance Committee prior to the Annual Church Conference.

## SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Chapter 9. Annual Committees/Officers, cont.

¶4.9.28 **Secretary.** The Church Secretary shall be responsible for making and keeping accurate records of church proceedings such as Annual and Special Church Conferences. The secretary shall also correspond in an official capacity when necessary.

¶4.9.29 **Sunday School Superintendent.** The Sunday School Superintendent and the Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall be members of the church body and shall be responsible for:

1. Securing and supervising teachers, filling vacancies in emergencies and working with the Pastor and Stewards to fill vacancies permanently. In concert with the Pastor, they shall nominate teachers for all Sunday School classes. This slate of nominees shall be posted and announced two Sundays prior to the Annual Church Conference and may be appended to the Nominating Committee's report or presented to the Annual Church Conference by the Sunday School Superintendent.
2. Building up teachers with continued training and proper encouragement.
3. Securing and maintaining proper literature and supplies for all classes.
4. Maintaining attendance and offering records from Sunday School classes.

The Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall have the power to appoint representatives to help them carry out the above duties.

¶4.9.30 **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be a member of the church body. The duties of the church treasurer are as follows:

1. To receive and record all tithes, offerings and other funds coming to the church.
2. To deposit all funds in their proper accounts.
3. To pay all bills approved by the Board of Stewards.
4. To keep accurate records of all regular and designated gifts and compile annual reports for individual donors.
5. To report the church's financial condition monthly to the Board of Stewards and post a monthly financial report.
6. To report the church's financial condition at the Annual Church Conference and to post an annual financial report.
7. To assist the Finance Committee in drawing up the operating budget for the coming year.

¶4.9.31 **Ushers/Welcoming.** The Ushers/Welcoming Committee shall:

1. Greet people as they arrive for church and see that they are comfortably seated.
2. Receive the offering.
3. Direct people in the Lord's Supper.
4. Distribute bulletins and other church literature.



## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 10. Auxiliary Groups.**

¶4.10.1 The local church may organize the following auxiliary groups and others as it deems necessary. Within these groups, the following officers, and any others believed appropriate, may be elected: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

#### **¶4.10.2 The Bethel Methodist Men:**

The official men's organization of the Bethel Methodist Church shall be known as The Bethel Methodist Men.

It is composed of men, both members and non-members united by the common purpose of service to God and the Bethel Methodist Church.

Its purpose is to work in cooperation with the pastor to develop the spiritual life of men in the church by: Conducting Bible studies and prayer meetings as well as spiritual and social functions for both men and boys in the local church.

Other goals may include: instructing the young men of the church in church citizenship, stewardship and leadership by precept and example; and being attentive and responsive to the needs of groups, committees and individuals in the local church.

#### **¶4.10.3 The Bethel Methodist Women:**

The official women's organization of the Bethel Methodist Church shall be known as The Bethel Methodist Women.

It is composed of women, both members and non-members united by the common purpose of service to God and the Bethel Methodist Church.

Its purpose is to unite the women of the Bethel Methodist Church in a continued, organized effort to develop Christian living and service by: promoting a wider knowledge and interest in both home and world missions; supporting and encouraging the Christian education of young people; and conducting Bible studies and prayer meetings as well as spiritual and social functions for both women and girls in the local church.

#### **¶4.10.4 The Bethel Methodist Youth:**

The official youth organization of the Bethel Methodist Church shall be known as The Bethel Methodist Youth.

It is composed of youth, both members and non-members of Primary (3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grades), Junior High, High School and College age.

Its purpose is to provide a spiritual and social environment apart from the influences of the world.

Activities shall include an appropriate balance of spiritual and social functions such as regular Bible studies, training in Christian service and leadership in the church, positive peer

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 10. Auxiliary Groups, cont.**

influence, spiritual enrichment, afterglows, youth camps and retreats, and other activities deemed appropriate by the youth leaders/sponsors, pastor and Board of Stewards. The Bethel Methodist Youth should also take advantage of opportunities to be of service to the local church by being attentive and responsive to the needs of groups and individuals within the church family. This may include participation in regular church services, assistance in Vacation Bible School, Sunday School classes, nursery and other areas of church life.

## **SECTION 4 – THE LOCAL CHURCH**

### **Chapter 11. Church Staff**

¶4.11.1 Ministers to be employed in such capacities as assistant pastors, ministers of Christian education, youth ministers, ministers of music, etc. shall be under the authority of the pastor. Each staff position must be created by the favorable vote of the congregation, upon recommendation of the pastor and the Board of Stewards. Salaries will be approved by the congregation at the Annual or Special Church Conference. Potential staff members will be interviewed by the pastor and the Board of Stewards. The duties, services and continued employment shall be determined by the pastor and the Board of Stewards. Upon change of the pastor, all other ministerial staff members will present their resignations to the next pastor in order that he shall have the freedom to construct his own ministerial staff.

¶4.11.2 Non-ministerial employees such as custodians, secretaries, nursery workers, etc., shall be hired by the Board of Stewards in consultation with the pastor. Such employees' duties, salaries, and continued employment shall be determined by the Board of Stewards and the pastor.

## **SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL**

### **Chapter 1. Purpose.**

¶5.1.1 The purpose of the Interchurch Council is to serve as a liaison between the local churches and the Denomination. Providing a forum in which the local churches may communicate one with another, the Interchurch Council is the chief governing body in the absence of the General Conference.

## **SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL**

### **Chapter 2. Responsibility.**

¶5.2.1 It is the responsibility of the Interchurch Council to conduct the official business of the Denomination in the absence of the General Conference. Official business shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Giving direction to General Conference Officers, Boards, and Committees.
2. Proposing policy and making recommendations to the local churches and the General Conference.
3. Receiving reports from General Conference Officers, Boards, and Committees.
4. Disseminating information to the Denomination regarding any action taken by General Conference Officers, Boards, Committees, or the Interchurch Council.
5. Nominating the succeeding Nominating Committee to be voted on at the next General Conference. Nominations should be made when the Interchurch Council meets at General Conference.
6. Initiating proceedings for ethical questions concerning General Conference Officers. This may include the appointing of a Conference Investigation Committee. See ¶7.2.1.

¶5.2.2 While the Interchurch Council is responsible for executing the business of the Denomination, certain major items of business must always be brought before the denomination. This shall be accomplished by either a General or Special General Conference and includes such items as:

1. Election of a new General Superintendent.
2. Encumbrance of Denomination property.
3. Changing Denominational By-Laws.
4. Amending the Discipline.
5. Other important items which may be deemed prudent to bring before the Denomination.

## **SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL**

### **Chapter 3. Composition.**

¶5.3.1 The makeup of the Interchurch Council is such that each local church is equally represented. The voting membership of the Interchurch Council is comprised of:

1. Two (2) lay delegates from each local church. The two delegates and at least one alternate delegate shall be elected at each local church's Annual Church Conference. If a local church is without a pastor, it may be represented by three (3) lay delegates. The election of lay delegates does not need to be ratified at the General level.
2. The senior pastor from each local church.
3. The General Superintendent.
4. The Director of Administration.
5. The Conference Treasurer.
6. The Chairman, or person acting in his stead, votes only in case of a tie. The Chairman is elected at the General Conference and must be a lay member of the Denomination.
  - a. If the Chairman is unable to attend an Interchurch Council meeting, the Vice-chairman shall act in his stead. If the Vice-Chairman is a lay delegate, an alternate from his local church may serve in his stead.
  - b. If both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are unable to attend an Interchurch Council meeting, the Chairman shall appoint an Acting Chairman from the voting membership and alternates of the Interchurch Council. The Acting Chairman must be a lay member of the Denomination. If the Acting Chairman is a lay delegate, an alternate from his local church may serve in his stead.
7. Additionally, voting privileges are extended to our founding General Superintendent, Reverend Arthur L. Slye, Jr.

## **SECTION 5 – THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL**

### **Chapter 4. Interchurch Council Meetings.**

¶5.4.1 The Interchurch Council shall meet three times a year; in the winter, at General Conference and in the fall. Additional meetings shall be scheduled as necessary. Dates and locations for Council meetings should be arranged by the Director of Administration and approved by the Council.

¶5.4.2 Two conditions must be satisfied before official business can be transacted at an Interchurch Council meeting:

1. A quorum must be present. A simple majority of the total voting membership shall constitute a quorum.
2. The quorum must be composed of a majority of lay delegates.

¶5.4.3 The Interchurch Council shall be conducted in accordance with the Discipline and Robert's Rules of Order.

¶5.4.4 The following is a suggested order of business. The Interchurch Council shall:

1. Be called to order by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Acting Chairman. See ¶5.3.1, [Item 6](#).
2. Opening prayer.
3. Establish the voting membership present.
4. Minutes.
5. Finance report.
6. Board of Youth Activities.
7. Discipline Revision.
8. Local Church Reports.
9. Old Business.
10. New Business.
11. General Superintendent's Report.
12. Have a season of prayer.
13. Adjournment.

¶5.4.5 All written reports shall be given to the Director of Administration after each meeting. It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Administration to compile and maintain the minutes and reports presented and approved at each meeting. These records shall be made available to the denomination.

## **SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

### **Chapter 1. Composition.**

¶6.1.1 The General Conference shall be held once a year, the time and place being determined at the previous General Conference or by the Interchurch Council.

¶6.1.2 The voting body of the General Conference shall be composed of the General Superintendent, the Director of Administration, and up to a maximum of fifteen (15) delegates from each local church. Members eighteen (18) years of age and older are eligible to serve as delegates.

¶6.1.3 A quorum shall be defined as those present and eligible to vote with lay representation being in the majority.

¶6.1.4 The General Conference Treasurer shall gather information and shall publish a list of churches who have paid in full their Conference Support obligation for the past fiscal year. Only these churches may seat delegates at the General Conference. Delegates of churches which have not fulfilled their Conference Support obligation by thirty (30) days before General Conference can be seated only upon recommendation of the General Superintendent and upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by said Conference.

¶6.1.5 Additionally, voting privileges are extended to our founding General Superintendent, Reverend Arthur L. Slye, Jr.



## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 2. Elections.

¶6.2.1 During the first day’s business session, the Nominating Committee and Interchurch Council shall present a slate of Officers, Boards, and Committees for consideration by the General Conference. (The Interchurch Council shall nominate the succeeding Nominating Committee). This slate, plus any nominations from the floor, shall be voted on during the second day’s business session. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted up until the time of election.

All lay positions shall be held by members of a local Bethel Methodist Church or a Bethel Methodist Mission Church. See ¶6.4.12 and ¶5.2.1.

¶6.2.2a The General Conference shall elect the following Boards and Committees:

Board of Discipline Revision .....	See ¶6.4.3.
Board of Finance .....	See ¶6.4.4.
Board of Ministerial Relations .....	See ¶6.4.5.
Board of Theological Research .....	See ¶6.4.6.
Board of Youth Activities .....	See ¶6.4.8.
Minutes Committee .....	See ¶6.4.11.
Nominating Committee .....	See ¶6.4.12.
Website Committee .....	See ¶6.4.13.

¶6.2.2b The General Conference shall elect the following officers:

Director of Administration .....	See ¶6.4.14.
General Superintendent .....	See ¶6.2.3, ¶6.2.4 & ¶6.4.15.
Interchurch Council Chairman .....	See ¶6.4.16.
Treasurer .....	See ¶6.4.17.

¶6.2.2c The General Conference may elect the following Boards and Committees:

Board of Christian Education .....	See ¶6.4.1.
Board of Church Extension .....	See ¶6.4.2.
Board of World Missions .....	See ¶6.4.7.
Archives Committee .....	See ¶6.4.9.
Forms & Publications Committee .....	See ¶6.4.10.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 2. Elections, cont.

¶6.2.3 The General Superintendent shall be voted on at the General Conference held on even numbered years.

1. The question of the vote shall be, “Do you believe it is God’s will for ‘Candidate’s Name’ to be the theological, spiritual and pastoral leader of the Bethel Methodist Denomination at this time?”

¶6.2.4 In the event of succession of the General Superintendent, voluntary or otherwise, the following action shall be taken:

1. Two committees shall be formed:
  - a. The Lay Committee – composed of all elected lay-representatives to the Interchurch Council.
  - b. The Ministers’ Committee – composed of all ordained Elders and active Pastors in the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Each committee shall meet separately at least 60 days prior to the General Conference to discuss eligible candidates and to select one name to be placed on the General Conference Nominating Committee Report.
3. The Nominating Committee shall also nominate an eligible candidate in accordance with provisions of the Discipline.
4. If each committee nominates a different candidate, three names will be placed in nomination prior to the General Conference.
5. Notwithstanding the above, Conference delegates may make additional nominations for General Superintendent from the floor.

## **SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

### **Chapter 3. Special Session.**

¶6.3.1 A Special Session of the General Conference may be called by the Interchurch Council when deemed advisable. Notice of a Special Conference shall be posted and announced at each local church four Sundays prior to the conference.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers.

¶6.4.1 **Board of Christian Education.** It is the purpose of the Board of Christian Education to research and develop written theological materials for the promotion of the unity of the faith, by teaching the person, purpose and program of God. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. To research, document and provide written material, audio and visual tapes for the theological information or teaching of scriptural principals.
2. To provide theological materials for the Sunday Schools, Bible studies and outreach of the denomination.
3. To report to local annual church conferences and the General Conference.
4. To follow the scriptural revelation of God as He has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures.

¶6.4.2 **Board of Church Extension.** It is the purpose of the Board of Church Extension to:

1. Attempt to locate churches whose theology is similar to the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Conduct preliminary investigations of churches which show an interest in the Bethel Methodist Church.
3. Make recommendations to the Interchurch Council.
4. To work with the General Superintendent in finding and establishing new congregations.

¶6.4.3 **Board of Discipline Revision.** It is the purpose of the Board of Discipline Revision to develop, maintain, and recommend revisions to the discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Propose revisions to the Discipline as needed by constructing new sections or modifying existing language.
2. Present proposed revisions to the Interchurch Council for approval or further revision.
3. Present council-approved revisions to the General Conference.
4. Incorporate conference-approved revisions into the Discipline in a timely manner.

¶6.4.4 **Board of Finance.** The purpose of the Board of Finance is to oversee the financial activities of the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Ensure that an annual financial report is prepared for the General Conference.
2. Ensure that an operating budget is prepared and presented at the General Conference.
3. Maintain copies of all budgets as approved.
4. Ensure all just debts are paid in a timely manner by the Treasurer.
5. Ensure all financial records are properly kept.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

¶6.4.5 **Board of Ministerial Relations.** The Board of Ministerial Relations is responsible to supervise the recruitment, training and accreditation of prospective and current ministerial leaders within the Bethel Methodist Church. This overview includes Preachers, Pastors, Evangelists and Associates who exercise regular spiritual responsibility and authority over the local church in general. This does not include Youth Leaders, Sunday School teachers or others who work in specific or particular areas of the church. Anyone who holds and exercises ministerial credentials or who preaches regularly in any Bethel Methodist Church or at denominational functions may be subject to the Board of Ministerial Relations.

The purpose of the Board is to make certain that each local minister is divinely-called and enabled to preach the Gospel and perform all ministerial functions including weddings, funerals, personal counseling, visitation and the proper administration of the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Further, the Board is responsible to protect God's Word from error and corruption, and to protect local congregations from unqualified, incompetent or unethical ministers. The Board may use a course of study, oral or written examinations, investigations, interviews and other means to validate the qualifications of any man who would preach under the auspices of the Bethel Methodist Church.

Ministers are ordained by God alone. When the Board recognizes that this divine act has taken place and an applicant has met various qualifications, it may issue ministerial credentials and conduct a public ordination ceremony. While each church is at liberty to call its own pastor, the Board of Ministerial Relations has the power to grant or suspend ministerial credentials when appropriate. In an emergency, the General Superintendent may act unilaterally to accomplish the stated purpose(s) of the Board, but must seek an overview of any such action(s) by convening the Board as soon as possible. Revocation of credentials is governed by the Judicial Administration Section of the Discipline.

Core members of the Board of Ministerial Relations shall be composed of the General Superintendent, who shall be its chairman, each ordained minister (who is actively pastoring a church) and one or two laymen.

The General Superintendent may choose annually to recommend to the Interchurch Council Associate members from the ranks of active Ordained Ministers not currently pastoring a church. The recommendations are then voted on by the Interchurch Council. Those that are approved by the Interchurch Council are then voted on by the General Conference. If approved by the General Conference, the Associate members shall serve as members of the Board of Ministerial Relations until the next General Conference, at which time the process may be repeated.

The Board shall meet at least annually, preferably at the General Conference to conduct any pertinent business and hear informal progress reports from each pastor.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

¶6.4.6 **Board of Theological Research.** It is the purpose of the Board of Theological Research to both examine and draw conclusions concerning any questions relating to God's Truth and/or the doctrine of the Bethel Methodist Church.

¶6.4.7 **Board of World Missions.** It is the purpose of the Board of World Missions to carry out the objective of the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Oversee and direct all Bethel Methodist mission programs.
2. Report mission activities to the Interchurch Council and General Conference with recommendations to continue or discontinue support.
3. Research and present to the Interchurch Council and the General Conference any recommended mission programs.
4. Provide spiritual leadership and supervision in the mission field.
5. Take emergency action concerning missionaries with the approval of the General Superintendent.

¶6.4.8 **Board of Youth Activities.** It is the purpose of the Board of Youth Activities to develop, maintain and improve the general youth program of the Bethel Methodist Church, holding forth the organization's stated purpose of knowing and understanding God as the motivating factor in all youth activities. The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Meet with all members of the Board as soon as possible after the General Conference elections in order to inform members of their responsibilities and to establish objectives for the year.
2. Review the budget for the new conference year, the financial status of the current account and the previous year's financial records.
3. Review annual events and dates already established by the previous Board. Recommend changes to the Interchurch Council if needed.
4. Plan and organize all activities and programs of the general youth including youth camp, retreats, seminars, General Conference youth activities, competitions, etc.
5. Encourage and aid in establishing effective local youth programs.
6. Report all activities, plans, goals and finances to the Interchurch Council and the General Conference.

¶6.4.9 **Archives Committee.** The Archives Committee shall retain the history of the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination in written, pictorial, audio and video form. The responsibilities of the this Committee are as follows:

1. Maintain a copy of all General Conference and Interchurch Council minutes.
2. Maintain a copy of all General Conference and Interchurch Council financial statements.
3. Maintain a copy of all General Conference newsletters and brochures.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

4. Take or collect pictures from various denominational activities, such as trips members might take for missionary purposes, General Conference activities, special church services and youth activities.
5. Communicate with the local church historians as needed.

¶6.4.10 **Forms and Publications Committee.** The purpose of the Forms and Publications Committee is to design and distribute all denominational publications, including Christian Education literature, newsletters, brochures, the denominational directory, etc. Their responsibilities include:

1. Production of all publications (formatting, editing, obtaining final approvals through the final printing phase).
2. Coordinating and distributing publications throughout the denomination.
3. Maintenance of all publications as to reprinting, changes, etc.

¶6.4.11 **Minutes Committee.** The function of the Minutes Committee is as follows:

1. Record minutes of the General Conference.
2. Submit the minutes of the General Conference at the next Interchurch Council meeting for preliminary approval.
3. Submit minutes approved by the Interchurch Council at the next General Conference for final approval.
4. Present Historian with a copy of the approved minutes.

¶6.4.12 **Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee shall be composed of one delegate from each local church and chaired by the previous year's Chairman of the Interchurch Council. The Nominating Committee shall meet prior to the General Conference and prepare a slate of Officers, Boards and Committees for consideration by the Conference, with the exception of the Nominating Committee for the succeeding year, which shall be nominated by the Interchurch Council. This shall be done in consultation with the General Superintendent. These nominations, along with any nominations from the floor, shall then be voted on by the Conference.

¶6.4.13 **Website Committee.** The purpose of the Website Committee is to act as an outreach ministry by providing information to the public while promoting the goals and objectives of the Bethel Methodist Church. It is not the responsibility of this committee to create content; it is their responsibility to post content as provided. The responsibilities of this committee are as follows:

1. Maintain and update the denominational website.
2. Obtain approval by a pastor for all theological content to be posted on website.
3. Provide up-to-date information for events (i.e. Interchurch Council Meetings, General Conference, youth camp, retreats, etc.).

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

4. Post basic information for any local church that does not maintain its own website.

¶6.4.14 **Director of Administration.** The Director of Administration shall administer the affairs of the church in keeping with the Discipline, the General Conference and the Interchurch Council. The responsibilities of the Director of Administration are as follows:

1. To provide a time and place for the winter and fall meetings of the Interchurch Council.
2. To counsel with the General Superintendent, as he may request, concerning all phases of his work, and to coordinate the work of all the officers, boards, committees and auxiliaries of the church.
3. To receive reports at regularly scheduled meetings from the General Superintendent, Treasurer, local pastors, boards, committees and auxiliaries of the church and any other reports the General Conference and/or Interchurch Council shall require.
4. To keep the record of the minutes of the General Conference, Interchurch Council, and any other special denominational meetings and to maintain these and all reports of the church in a central file.
5. To recommend to the General Conference and the Interchurch Council an annual calendar of events.
6. To appoint such sub-committees as he shall deem wise and to delegate duties and powers to the same.
7. Present a written report to the General Conference describing the denomination's work for the past year.

¶6.4.15 **General Superintendent.** The duties of the General Superintendent shall be:

1. Theological studying, researching, recording, teaching, and communication.
2. Contacting, qualifying, recruiting, and training the best possible ministers for our churches. (He shall establish and maintain a regular and continuing "Ministerial Training Program.")
3. Church Extension - Finding, nourishing, and qualifying new congregations to affiliate with our denomination.
4. To be a theological/spiritual "Watchman on The Wall" for the protection and future well-being of God's work.

¶6.4.16 **Interchurch Council Chairman.** The Interchurch Council Chairman shall chair Interchurch Council meetings in such a way that provides for the spiritual awareness of denominational issues. Further responsibilities include:

1. Coordinate the scheduling of Interchurch Council meetings with the Director of Administration.



## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 4. General Boards, Committees and Officers, cont.

2. Preside over meetings.
3. Present a written report to the General Conference describing the Interchurch Council's work for the past year.

¶6.4.17 **Treasurer.** The responsibilities of the treasurer are as follows:

1. Receive and record all monies sent to the denominations: Conference Support, Share Support, and love gifts.
2. Pay all bills upon approval by the Interchurch Council.
3. Submit a monthly report to the Interchurch Council.
4. Submit a year-end report to the General Conference. The fiscal year begins May 1<sup>st</sup> and ends April 30<sup>th</sup>.
5. Assist the Board of Finance in forming an operating budget.

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 5. Guidelines for Camp Counselors.

¶6.5.1 **Overview.** Senior camp, junior camp and retreats hold tremendous potential for both God and man. They possess the potential of providing an atmosphere in which the distractions of the world are minimized, affording God an opportunity to communicate to one's heart. As such, it is essential that the utmost care be taken in selecting camp counselors.<sup>1</sup>

¶6.5.2 **Guidelines.** The following guidelines should be considered:

1. Life experiences as well as spiritual maturity both contribute to qualifying an individual to be a counselor.
2. Relatively new Christians may serve as counselors at camp or retreats provided their number is properly balanced by a majority of mature Christians.
3. It is desirable for an individual to serve as a junior camp counselor prior to serving as a senior camp counselor.

¶6.5.3 **Counselor-In-Training.**

1. To bridge the gap between attending camp as a camper and attending camp as a counselor, the Counselor-In-Training program has been established.
2. A counselor-in-training (CIT) may begin serving at camp the year following high school graduation, given that the prospective CIT is accepted into the required mentorship/discipleship program.
3. The program shall be administered at Camp by the General Superintendent or his appointed representative and continue for a minimum of one year.
4. The General Superintendent, appointed representative (if applicable) and the CIT's local church shall confer prior to the following General Conference and inform each CIT of their status.

¶6.5.4 **Eligibility.** The following rules shall be observed:

1. All counselors and CITs shall be professed Christians and leading a life consistent with said professions.
2. All potential counselors age 22 and younger must participate in the Counselor-In-Training program for a minimum of one year.
3. All potential counselors age 22 and younger must complete the CIT program before being eligible to serve as a counselor at retreats.

¶6.5.5 **Procedure.** The following procedure should be followed:

1. The local church may elect to post a sign-up sheet for all who would like to be considered for positions as camp counselors or CITs.
2. The local church shall create a list of approved potential counselors and CITs. The approval process shall be determined at the Local Annual Church Conference.

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<sup>1</sup> Counselor – one who has supervisory duties at a summer camp. *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary.*

## SECTION 6 – THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

### Chapter 5. Guidelines for Camp Counselors, cont.

3. This list shall be presented to the Board of Youth Activities at the next General Conference where a master list for the entire denomination will be compiled.
4. Additional names may be submitted to the Board of Youth Activities after General Conference provided the approval process determined in Item 2 has been satisfied.
5. Camp Directors and individuals responsible for retreats will select counselors and CITs for the coming year from the master list.
6. If an insufficient number of qualified counselors are available for a scheduled camp or retreat, the event should be cancelled.

¶6.5.6 **Retreats.** The following rule shall be observed:

1. An elder or a designee approved by the elders must be present at all retreats.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 1. Investigation and Trial of Ministers.

¶7.1.1 Offenses for which the General Superintendent, an elder, a member on trial or a local preacher may be tried:

1. Willful disobedience to the Vows or the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Unchristian tempers, words or actions.
3. Habitual neglect of duties.
4. Disseminating doctrine contrary to the Bible.
5. Crime or immorality.
6. Maladministration in office.

¶7.1.2 **Investigation and Trial of General Superintendent.** If the General Superintendent is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.1.1 to the Director of Administration and the Interchurch Council, the Interchurch Council shall appoint a Conference Investigation Committee to inquire into the same. See [Chapter 4](#).

¶7.1.3 If, in the judgment of the majority of the Conference Investigation Committee there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall:

1. Prepare and sign the proper charges and specifications and determine the date and location of the formal inquiry and send a copy by certified mail to the accused and to the Interchurch Council.
2. The date of the formal inquiry should be within fifteen (15) days from the time Item 1 is executed.
3. The location of the formal inquiry should be as convenient as possible.
4. Inform all witnesses whose testimony is expected to have bearing on the case as to the date and location of the formal inquiry.

¶7.1.4 At the formal inquiry, the accused shall have the right to make a statement in his own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not himself present any witnesses. If a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one. It may suspend the General Superintendent, with pay, pending a trial.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 1. Investigation and Trial of Ministers, cont.

¶7.1.5 Should a trial be ordered, the Conference Investigation Committee shall, within seven (7) days, set a time and place for said trial and notify the accused by certified mail. The date of the trial shall be no sooner than thirty (30) but no later than forty-five (45) days after the date the trial was ordered. The trial court shall be constituted as follows:

1. The Conference Investigation Committee shall appoint a presiding officer over the court. This individual may be an elder or layman.
2. The presiding officer shall appoint counsel for the conference.
3. The presiding officer shall arrange for a meeting of the accused, his counsel and the counsel for the conference as early as practicable after the trial is ordered, to select the personnel of the trial.
4. The presiding officer shall nominate, as proposed members of the trial court, six (6) elders and laymen from the conference, at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
5. The conference and the defendant shall each have the right of preemptory challenge to the number of four, and of unlimited challenge for cause.
6. The presiding officer shall add other eligible elders or laymen until the required number is selected. By the same method, four (4) alternates shall be selected.

The trial court as thus constituted shall have full power to try the accused, and by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, to suspend him from the exercise of the function of his office, to depose him from his office, the ministry, or both, to expel him from the church, or, in case of minor offenses, to affix a lesser penalty. Its finding shall be reported to the General Conference for entry in its minutes. The records of the trial, including the testimony, shall be signed by the presiding officer and secretary of the General Conference, together with all the documents in the case, for preservation with the papers of the General Conference, and shall be the basis of any appeal which may be taken to the General Conference Court of Appeals. See Chapter 6.

¶7.1.6 A General Superintendent, once deposed, shall have no claim upon the salary funds, dwelling, or any other expenses from the time of deposition.

¶7.1.7 **Investigation and/or Trial of an Elder or Member on Trial.** If an elder or member on trial is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.1.1 to the General Superintendent and the Interchurch Council, the Interchurch Council shall appoint a Conference Investigation Committee to inquire into the same. See [Chapter 4](#).

¶7.1.8 If, in the judgment of the majority of the Conference Investigation Committee there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall proceed to ¶7.1.3, with the following exception:

1. Prepare and sign the proper charges, specifications and notification as to the date and location of the formal inquiry and send a copy by certified mail to the accused, the General Superintendent and to the Interchurch Council. See ¶7.1.3, [Item 1](#).

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 1. Investigation and Trial of Ministers, cont.

¶7.1.9 At the formal inquiry, the accused shall have the right to make a statement in his own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not himself present any witnesses. If a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one. It may suspend the accused, with pay, from all ministerial services, pending a trial.

¶7.1.10 Should a trial be ordered, the General Superintendent shall, within seven (7) days, set a time and place for said trial and notify the accused by certified mail. The date of the trial shall be no sooner than thirty (30) but no later than forty-five (45) days after the date the trial was ordered. The trial court shall be constituted as enumerated in ¶7.1.5, with the following exception:

1. The General Superintendent shall act as or appoint a presiding officer over the court. See ¶7.1.5, Item 1.

The trial court as thus constituted shall have full power to try the accused, and by a two-thirds (2/3), vote to suspend him from his office, to remove him from his office, the ministry, or both, to expel him from the church, or, in case of minor offenses, to affix a lesser penalty. Its finding shall be reported to the General Conference for entry in its minutes. The records of the trial, including the testimony, shall be signed by the presiding officer and secretary of the General Conference, together with all the documents in the case, for preservation with the papers of the General Conference, and shall be the basis of any appeal which may be taken to the General Conference Court of Appeals. See Chapter 6.

¶7.1.11 An elder or member on trial, once removed, shall have no claim upon the salary funds, dwelling, or any other expenses from the date of removal.

¶7.1.12 **Investigation and Trial of a Local Preacher.** If a local preacher is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.1.1 to the General Superintendent and the Interchurch Council, the Interchurch Council shall appoint a Conference Investigation Committee to inquire into the same. See Chapter 4.

¶7.1.13 If, in the judgment of the majority of the Conference Investigation Committee there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall proceed to ¶7.1.3, with the following exception:

1. Prepare and sign the proper charges, specifications and notification as to the date and location of the formal inquiry and send a copy by certified mail to the accused, the General Superintendent, the pastor and the Chairman of the Board of Stewards where the local preacher holds his membership. See ¶7.1.3, Item 1.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 1. Investigation and Trial of Ministers, cont.

¶7.1.14 At the formal inquiry, the accused shall have the right to make a statement in his own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not himself present any witnesses. If a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one. It may suspend the accused, with pay, from all ministerial services, pending a trial.

¶7.1.15 Should a trial be ordered, the General Superintendent shall proceed according to ¶7.1.10, with the following exception:

1. The presiding officer shall nominate, as proposed members of the trial court, six (6) lay members of the local church who are in good standing and at least twenty-one (21) years of age. See ¶7.1.5, Item 4.

¶7.1.16 A local preacher, once removed, shall have no claim upon the salary funds, dwelling, or any other expenses from the date of removal.

¶7.1.17 The General Conference may restore the credentials of a minister who has been deposed, removed, suspended, or who has withdrawn from The Bethel Methodist Church, providing proper restitution has been made and sufficient proof of his good character be presented to the Conference by the Board of Ministerial Relations.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 2. Investigation and Trial of Lay Members.

¶7.2.1 Offenses for which a lay member may be tried:

1. Willful disobedience to the Vows or the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Unchristian tempers, words or actions.
3. Crime or immorality.

¶7.2.2 **Investigation and Trial of Lay Members.** If a lay member of a local church is accused of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.2.1 to the pastor, the pastor shall endeavor to determine the validity of the accusation. If, in the judgment of the pastor there is reasonable ground for the accusation, he shall privately admonish the member, and, if there is an acknowledgment of fault and proper humiliation, the person may be borne with. Failing such, or on further offense, the pastor shall take with him at least two discreet laymen, one of which must be a steward and give further reproof. If the offense be continued, the member shall be brought to trial.

¶7.2.3 If a lay member of a local church is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.2.1, the charges being signed by at least two (2) parties and presented to the pastor and/or Board of Stewards, the pastor and Board of Stewards shall appoint an Investigating Committee. The Investigating Committee shall be composed of six (6) members of the local church in good standing who are at least twenty-one (21) years of age. The General Superintendent, or his designated representative, shall fix the time and place of the investigation and shall be the presiding officer. Such investigations shall normally be held within thirty (30) days after written charges have been made. The accused and the accusers shall be brought face to face, if possible, and the accused shall have the right of making a statement in his own behalf and of interrogating witnesses, but shall not have the right of presenting witnesses. The Investigating Committee shall then determine, by secret ballot, whether a trial is justified. In the case of a tie, the presiding officer shall cast the deciding vote. If it is determined that a trial is justified, the Investigating Committee shall formulate the charges and order the trial. A copy of the order shall be sent to the General Superintendent, the local pastor, the accused and the parties bringing accusation.

¶7.2.4 Should a trial be ordered, the General Superintendent shall proceed according to ¶7.1.10, with the following exception:

1. The presiding officer shall nominate, as proposed members of the trial court, six (6) lay members of the local church who are in good standing and at least twenty-one (21) years of age. See ¶7.1.5, Items 4. through 6.
2. References to ministerial positions do not apply. See text, ¶7.1.10.
3. The finding of the trial court shall be reported to the secretary of the local church for permanent record. See text, ¶7.1.10.



## **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Chapter 2. Investigation and Trial of Lay Members, cont.**

¶7.2.5 An expelled member of a local church shall have no privileges of the church without repentance, contrition, and satisfactory restitution to the determination of the pastor and Board of Stewards. In such a case, the individual may be permitted to take the membership vows of the church and be restored to full membership.

¶7.2.6 No member of a local church who is also a member of the Conference may be tried by a local church trial court, but must be tried by a Conference trial court.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 3. Investigation and Trial of a Local Church.

¶7.3.1 Offenses for which a local church may be tried:

1. Willful disobedience to the Discipline of the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Disseminating doctrine contrary to the Bible.

¶7.3.2 **Investigation and Trial of a Local Church.** If a local church is accused of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.3.1 to the Director of Administration and the Interchurch Council, the Interchurch Council shall act as a Conference Investigation Committee to inquire into the same. See [Chapter 4](#).

¶7.3.3 If, in the judgment of the majority of the Interchurch Council there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall proceed according to ¶7.1.3.

¶7.3.4 At the formal inquiry, the accused local church shall have the right to make a statement in its own behalf, and to interrogate witnesses, but shall not itself present any witnesses. If a majority of the Interchurch Council determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one. A trial may be conducted at either a General Conference or a Special Called General Conference.

¶7.3.5 Should a trial be ordered, the Interchurch Council shall, within fourteen (14) days, set a time and place for said trial and notify the accused by certified mail. If the General Conference is scheduled within ninety (90) days after the trial was ordered, the trial shall be conducted as the first item of major business at said General Conference. If the General Conference is not scheduled within the aforementioned ninety (90) days, then a Special Called General Conference shall be announced, its only item of business being said trial.

¶7.3.6 The trial court shall be constituted of all conference delegates, excluding the accused church. The trial court as thus constituted shall have full power to try the accused local church, and by a two-thirds (2/3) vote to suspend or remove it from the Bethel Methodist Church, or, in case of minor offenses, to affix a lesser penalty. Its finding shall be reported in the minutes of the General Conference. The records of the trial, including the testimony, shall be signed by the presiding officer and secretary of the trial court, and shall be placed in the custody of the secretary of the General Conference, together with all the documents in the case, for preservation with the papers of the General Conference, and shall be the basis of any appeal which may be taken to the General Conference Court of Appeals. See [Chapter 6](#).

## **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Chapter 3. Investigation and Trial of a Local Church, cont.**

¶7.3.7 Those that remain members of a local church that has been removed, shall not participate in any functions of the Bethel Methodist Church, such as, the General Conference, Interchurch Council, Youth Activities, lay activities, etc. Furthermore, said local church shall remove all logos and/or signs affiliating them with the Bethel Methodist Church Denomination.

## **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Chapter 4. Conference Investigation Committee.**

¶7.4.1 If the General Superintendent, an elder, a member on trial or a local preacher is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.1.1, or a local church is accused in writing of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.3.1, and said accusations are submitted to the proper agents and/or agencies, the Interchurch Council shall appoint a Conference Investigation Committee.

¶7.4.2 The duties of a Conference Investigation Committee shall be as follows:

1. Perform a preliminary investigation.
2. If, as a result of the preliminary investigation, a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee believes there is reasonable ground for said accusation, it shall initiate a formal inquiry.
3. If, as a result of the formal inquiry, a majority of the Conference Investigation Committee determines that a trial is justified, it shall order one.
4. In cases involving individuals for whom a trial has been ordered, the Conference Investigation Committee has the authority to suspend the accused pending the trial.

The details of the duties of the Conference Investigation Committee are described in greater detail in ¶7.1.1 through ¶7.1.17 and ¶7.3.1 through ¶7.3.7.

¶7.4.3 The composition of a Conference Investigation Committee shall be as follows:

1. Three (3) members, representing both laymen and elders, except in the case of an accused local church where the Interchurch Council shall act as a Conference Investigation Committee.
2. The chairman may be an elder or layman and shall be appointed by the Interchurch Council.
3. It may represent from one (1) to three (3) local churches, except in the case of an accused local church in which all churches except the accused shall be represented.
4. Members must certify that they are not personally involved in any dispute with the defendant(s) and that they can perform their investigative duties without bias or respect of persons.

¶7.4.4 The Chairman of the Conference Investigation Committee shall preside throughout the proceedings, and shall certify and declare the judgment of the Committee.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 5. General Directions.

¶7.5.1 **Withdrawal Under Charges of Complaint.** When the General Superintendent, an elder, a member on trial, or a local preacher is accused of any of the offenses enumerated in ¶7.1.1, and he desires to withdraw from the church, he shall be permitted. In so doing, the record shall be plainly marked, “Withdrawn Under Charges.” If written complaints have been filed with the proper agents and/or agencies, and he desires to withdraw from the church, he shall be permitted. In so doing, the record shall be plainly marked, “Withdraw Under Complaints.” In either case, his status shall be the same as if he had been expelled.

¶7.5.2 When any of the aforementioned is deprived of, or surrenders by withdrawal, his credentials, license, or ordination, the necessary authority shall file them along with the respective records dealing with his case.

¶7.5.3 **Counsel.** In all cases of trial, the accused shall be entitled to appear, to be represented by counsel of his own selection, and to be heard in oral or written argument. If the defendant has not secured counsel, such counsel shall be appointed by the presiding officer, unless the defendant elects to represent himself. Each counsel shall be allowed one assistant counsel of his own choice.

¶7.5.4 All notices required in judicial administration shall be in writing, signed by or on behalf of the person or body giving or required to give such notice, and shall be addressed to the person or body to whom it is required to be given. Such notices shall be served at least seven (7) days in advance, and be delivered, in person, to the party or leading officer of the body to whom it is addressed, or by certified mail addressed to the last known residence or address of such party. The fact of the giving of the notice shall affirmatively appear over the signature of the party required to give such notice, and becomes a part of the record in the case.

¶7.5.5 In all cases of investigation or trial, notice to appear shall be given to such witnesses as either party may name, shall be issued in the name of the church, and be signed by the presiding officer of the trial court. It shall be the duty of all church members to appear and testify when summoned.

¶7.5.6 As soon as the trial court has convened, the charge shall be read by the presiding officer at which time the accused shall enter his plea which shall be duly recorded. On his neglect or refusal to plead, the plea of “not guilty” shall be entered for him, and the trial shall proceed, provided that the court may adjourn from time to time for sufficient cause, and provided that the accused shall, at all times during the trial, have the liberty to be present to make his defense and produce testimony.

## SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Chapter 5. General Directions, cont.

¶7.5.7 In case the accused person shall refuse or neglect to appear at the time or place set forth for the hearing, the trial court may proceed in his absence.

¶7.5.8 **Records.** In the trial court, the records shall be accurate and complete. They shall include the proceedings in detail, all the evidence taken stenographically, if possible, and documents admitted, together with the charges and findings, and shall be approved and attested by the presiding officer and secretary.

¶7.5.9 If, within sixty (60) days after the conviction of any of the aforementioned accused, he (or she) shall make application in writing to the General Superintendent or presiding officer for a new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence, and shall submit therewith a written statement of the same, and if it shall appear to the General Superintendent that such evidence is material to the issue involved, he shall grant a new trial. In no case, however, shall a new trial be granted upon newly discovered evidence which could have been obtained for the trial by the exercise of due diligence, or which is merely cumulative in its effect.

## **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Chapter 6. Appeals.**

¶7.6.1 The Conference Court of Appeals shall be appointed as needed by the Interchurch Council.

1. It shall be composed of seven (7) members, including at least four (4) lay members.
2. It may represent from three (3) to seven (7) local churches.
3. Members must certify that they are not personally involved in any dispute with the defendant(s) and that they can perform their investigative duties without bias or respect to persons.
4. One member shall be elected chairman.

A quorum of four members of the Court of Appeals shall be necessary in order to function. The Interchurch Council shall fill by appointment any vacancies which may occur in this body. This court shall have jurisdiction to hear and to determine all appeals from the decisions or actions of any Conference trial court.

¶7.6.2 The Court of Appeals shall determine two questions only:

1. Does the evidence sustain the charge or charges?
2. Were there such errors of procedure or interpretation as to invalidate the verdict?

The questions shall be determined by the records of the trial and the arguments of a representative of the trial court and the counsel of the accused. The court shall in no case hear witnesses nor admit new evidence.

¶7.6.3 In all cases of appeal, the appellant shall, within thirty (30) days following the decision of a trial court, give notice of intent to appeal to the Interchurch Council, who shall appoint a Court of Appeals per ¶7.6.1. The appellant shall then furnish the Court of Appeals with a written statement defining the grounds on which his appeal shall be made. The hearing of the court shall be limited to the grounds set forth in said statement. It shall be the duty of the chairman of the Court of Appeals, on receiving a notice of intent to appeal, to fix the time and place within thirty (30) days of receiving notice for consideration of the appeal and to notify all persons involved by certified mail.

¶7.6.4 Appeals, properly taken, shall be heard by the Court of Appeals, unless it shall appear to the said court that the appellant has forfeited his right to appeal by misconduct, such as result to abide by the findings of the Conference Investigation Committee or of the trial court, or by withdrawal from the church, or by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal. The right of appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate court.

¶7.6.5 An appeal shall not affect a suspension of the decision or action of a trial court. The finding of the trial court must stand until it is modified or reversed by the appellate court.

## **SECTION 7 – JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Chapter 6. Appeals, cont.**

¶7.6.6 The Court of Appeals may refuse to admit an appeal as lacking proper grounds. It may reverse, in whole or in part, the findings of the trial court, or it may remand the case back to the trial court for a new trial. It may determine what penalty, not higher than that affixed at the trial, may be imposed. If no such modification or reversal is made by the appellate court, the judgment of the trial court shall stand. The appellate court shall not take remedial action because of errors of procedure or interpretation by the trial court which did not affect the verdict.



## **SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY**

### **Chapter 1. The Call to Preach.**

¶8.1.1 Any man who professes to be called by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel and desires to pursue ordination in the Bethel Methodist Church should be examined by the Board of Ministerial Relations. The following questions should be used as a guide when considering such a candidate:

1. Have they received and are they following Christ by faith?
2. Have they the abilities that accompany the call to preach? Do they have a clear understanding of the things of God revealed in scripture? Do they speak clearly and accurately? Is God's calling evident to others?

These we receive as sufficient evidence that they are called of God to preach the Gospel of Christ and may be admitted to a course of study prescribed by the Board of Ministerial Relations leading to full ordination.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 2. The Matter and Manner of Preaching.

¶8.2.1 This section is Section XI of the 1804 Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

**Question One:** What is the best general method of preaching?

**Answer One:** To convince, to offer Christ, to invite, to build up, and to do this in some measure in every sermon.

**Question Two:** What is the most effectual way of preaching Christ?

**Answer Two:** The most effectual way of preaching Christ is to preach Him in all His offices, and to declare His law, as well as His Gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches (See John 15).

**Question Three:** Are there any smaller advices which might be of use to us?

**Answer Three:** Perhaps these:

1. Be sure never to disappoint a congregation.
2. Begin at the time appointed.
3. Let your whole deportment be serious, weighty, and solemn.
4. Always suit your subject to your audience.
5. Choose the plainest text you can.
6. Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand.
7. Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation.
8. It is recommended to the yearly Conferences to caution and restrict our preachers from improper publications.
9. Do not usually pray extempore above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission.
10. Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of Scripture, and let young preachers often exhort without taking a text.
11. Always avail yourself of the great festivals by preaching on the occasion.

## **SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY**

### **Chapter 3. The Preacher in Charge.**

#### **¶8.3.1 The pastoral duties include:**

1. To preach the unsearchable riches of Christ through the Gospel.
2. To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to perform the marriage ceremony and to bury the dead. Unordained pastors or local preachers serving pastoral charges may administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, and perform the marriage ceremony where the laws of the state permit, within the bounds of their pastoral charge, as long as they are in good standing and their local preacher's license is up-to-date. Only preachers who renew their license annually have this privilege.
3. To preach and teach the biblical principles of Christianity.
4. To preach on the doctrinal distinctives of the Bethel Methodist Church.
5. To preach on the importance of Christian education and to urge all parents to train their children in public and private worship.
6. To charge God's people with the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of Christian Character and Conduct.
7. To conduct regular services, prayer meetings, bible studies and special services. The preacher in charge of a church as pastor is not required to secure consent before holding services in any church on his charge.
8. To present the missionary program of the church and urge its support by all the people in the church.
9. To instruct candidates for membership in the church in the doctrines, rules, and regulations of the church, to receive persons into membership and to grant letters of transfer on request.
10. To visit from house to house in order to give pastoral guidance and help to members of the church and others in need of spiritual help through Christ.
11. Upon consultation with the Board of Stewards, to obtain evangelists, missionaries, and Bible lecturers for a series of meetings such as he thinks best for the spiritual welfare of the church at large in keeping with the Discipline.
12. To have oversight of the local preachers in his pastoral charge, and to arrange opportunities where their talents can glorify God. He shall also encourage the young men under his charge to be aware of the possibilities of God's call to pastoral ministry.

#### **¶8.3.2 The administrative duties of the pastor include:**

1. To administer all the provisions of the Discipline in his church and see that the ordinances and regulations of the church are duly observed.
2. To make a written report to the General Conference and the local annual conference of the work of the local church, plans for the future, and other items of interest.
3. To be amenable to the General Conference for the exercising of his office. To be amenable to the General Superintendent for the exercising of his office.

## **SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY**

### **Chapter 3. The Preacher in Charge, cont.**

#### **¶8.3.2 The administrative duties of the pastor, cont.**

4. To attend the meetings of the Board of Stewards and work with them, providing inspiration and leadership in carrying out the program and business of the local church. The pastor may call the stewards into special session whenever it is deemed necessary for the welfare of the church.
5. To explain the importance and value of the Conference Support, and urge its support by all the people in his charge.
6. To keep a membership record for the church in which shall be noted the name and time of reception and/or removal of each member of the church.
7. To keep an up-to-date working file of the membership of the church which shall be ready to assist with addresses, etc., for visitation, evangelism, finance campaigns, and shall be kept up-to-date for a new pastor or general superintendent.
8. To see that the people are supplied with all of our literature and other theologically sound materials.

#### **¶8.3.3 The pastor's report to the local church conference may include the following:**

1. The spiritual condition of the church or churches in his charge.
2. The names of all who have been received into the church, indicating the method of reception; and of all who have died, transferred, withdrawn, or been expelled during the conference year.
3. The enrollment, attendance, and spiritual condition of the Sunday Schools within the charge, including noteworthy events, weekday meetings of children, youth, and adults, as well as fellowship meetings of the church.
4. Pastoral work done with children.
5. Pastoral calls.
6. The Conference Support relationship to the conference.
7. Plans for future work.
8. Other items worthy of record.

#### **¶8.3.4 Annual tenure of service:**

The pastor, when it becomes known to him that he is to leave a church, shall give at least thirty (30) days notice of his proposed move.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 4. The General Superintendent.

#### ¶8.4.1 Qualifications:

1. An ordained elder of the Bethel Methodist Church.
2. Shall have had acceptable pastoral experience.
3. Proven theological insight and communication.

#### ¶8.4.2 Duties:

1. See ¶5.3.1 and ¶5.4.4, Item 11.
2. See ¶6.1.2, ¶6.1.4, ¶6.4.5, ¶6.4.7, ¶6.4.11 and ¶6.4.14.
3. To preach and to oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of the general church. The General Superintendent shall cooperate with and respect the administrative roles of other General officers, the Interchurch Council and the local pastors.
4. The recruiting of ministers.
5. To promote the evangelistic activities of the church.
6. To establish regular and continuing ministerial training programs.
7. To discharge such other duties as the Discipline may direct.
8. To act as a pastor to the ministers of the denomination and candidates for the ministry.
9. To establish and organize new congregations whenever possible, according to the Discipline.
10. To supervise the work of all preachers in the denomination.
11. To report the names and addresses of all local preachers to the secretary of the General Conference for insertion in the minutes; to report the names and addresses of all who have been licensed to preach during the year; and to report all candidates for the ministry to the Board of Ministerial Relations.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 5. Ministerial Relations.

¶8.5.1 **Admission on Trial.** A candidate for admission on trial into the Annual Conference shall have completed prescribed studies. He shall be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations and receive a favorable vote of the General Conference.

¶8.5.2 It is recommended that all candidates for the ministry complete a bachelor's degree or its equivalent.

¶8.5.3 A candidate on trial, or member on trial, is an individual officially admitted and active in the ministerial program leading to ordination. The trial period lasts for a minimum of two years. His character, competency, and preaching must prove to be advantageous. Before being admitted for ordination as an elder, the candidate on trial may voluntarily withdraw, or the Board of Ministerial Relations may choose to remove the candidate without any reflection on his character.

¶8.5.4 **Elder's Orders.** A candidate for full ordination as an elder shall have been employed at least two years in the active ministry and shall have completed prescribed studies. He shall be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations and a favorable vote of General Conference.

¶8.5.5 The General Superintendent, or his appointed representative, shall call the class to be admitted into full connection, and receive them into conference membership after asking the following questions of the Discipline. (Here follow the questions which every Bethel Methodist preacher from the beginning has been required to answer upon becoming a full member of the conference. These questions were formulated by John Wesley and have been little changed throughout the years.)

1. Have you faith in Christ?
2. Are you going on to perfection?
3. Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?
4. Are you groaning after it?
5. Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and His work?
6. Do you know the general rules of our church?
7. Will you keep them?
8. Have you studied the doctrines of the Bethel Methodist Church?
9. After full examination, do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?
10. Will you preach and maintain them?
11. Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity?
12. Do you approve our church government and polity?
13. Will you support and maintain them?
14. Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?
15. Will you visit from house to house?

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 5. Ministerial Relations, cont.

16. Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both in precept and example?
17. Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?
18. Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?
19. Will you observe the following directions:
  - a. Be diligent. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at one place than is strictly necessary.
  - b. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time.
  - c. Do not mend our rules, but keep them, not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

This examination of the ministers and the passing of their characters should be business of the same session.

¶8.5.6 Upon election by majority vote of the General Conference, the candidate for admission into full connection as an elder immediately becomes a full member of the General Conference. He will then receive ordination by the laying on of hands at the time set by the General Superintendent.

¶8.5.7 **Elder.** An elder is an officially recognized ordained minister of the gospel with authority to preach, teach and pastor within the Bethel Methodist Church. The title of elder is synonymous with the titles of ordained elder and ordained minister.

¶8.5.8 **Receiving Ministers from Other Churches.** Ministers from other churches who are ordained and desire to unite with us as traveling preachers may be admitted into the General Conference as elders by transfer. They must be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations and the General Superintendent. They must also have read the Discipline carefully and shall have passed the examination required by the Course of Study Committee. They shall give evidence of their agreement with The Bethel Methodist Church in matters of doctrine and policy, and hold no credentials in any other church.

¶8.5.9 Ministers from other churches who desire to unite with us as local preachers may be received by transfer, in cases of emergency, by the General Conference upon giving satisfactory evidence to the Board of Ministerial Relations that they are suitable persons. They must be recommended by the General Superintendent.

¶8.5.10 **Local Preacher.** A local preacher is an individual granted temporary pastoral authority in a local church. His authority is the same as that of an elder, regarding local pastoral responsibilities, but he can be terminated at any time by the Local church through a Special Called Conference or the General Superintendent (in consultation with the Board of Ministerial Relations). A local preacher has no authority beyond the local church pastoral ministry and must receive concurrence from the local Board of Stewards before bringing in members to the local church.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 5. Ministerial Relations, cont.

¶8.5.11 **Supernumerary Preachers.** A supernumerary preacher is one who is so disabled by affliction as to be unable to preach constantly, but who is willing to do any work in the ministry he may be able to perform. A supernumerary relation shall not be granted by a General Conference except on the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations.

¶8.5.12 **Superannuated Preachers.** A superannuated preacher is one who has retired from active service. A superannuated relation shall not be granted by a General Conference except on the recommendation of the Board of Ministerial Relations.



## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 6. Termination of Ministerial Relationship.

¶8.6.1 **By Transfer.** When a minister in good standing desires to transfer to another denomination, his credentials must be surrendered to the conference for the following inscription to be plainly written across them.

\_\_\_\_\_ has this day been honorably transferred by the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference from the ministry of The Bethel Methodist Church after \_\_\_\_\_ years of service.

Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent.  
\_\_\_\_\_, Secretary.

This may be done at any time, provided the minister's character is in the clear.

¶8.6.2 **Withdrawal.** When a minister desires to withdraw his ministerial relation from the General Conference, he may do so upon request to the General Superintendent and the General Board of Ministerial Relations. The General Superintendent shall notify the Director of Administration and the next General Conference Session. Ministers leaving or absenting themselves from the session of the General Conference in protest or lack of sympathy and harmony with the policy and proceedings of such conference, when publicly stated, shall be judged, by vote of the conference, as having withdrawn. Ministers uniting with, or receiving credentials from other denominations, except by transfer, shall be considered as having withdrawn.

¶8.6.3 **Withdrawal Under Complaints.** See ¶7.5.1.

¶8.6.4 **Voluntary Location.** When a minister in good standing desires to discontinue regular ministerial and evangelistic work he may do so, upon request, provided his credentials are surrendered to the conference for the following inscription to be plainly written across them:

\_\_\_\_\_ has this day been honorably dismissed by the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference from the ministry of The Bethel Methodist Church after \_\_\_\_\_ years of service, who avowedly intends to discontinue regular ministerial, evangelistic, or missionary work.

Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent.  
\_\_\_\_\_, Secretary.

## SECTION 8 – THE MINISTRY

### Chapter 6. Termination of Ministerial Relationship, cont.

¶8.6.5 **Involuntary Location/Located Without Consent.** The General Conference may locate without consent a ministerial member for any cause listed in ¶7.1.1. The General Superintendent shall submit his reasons for considering a minister's involuntary location in writing to the Board of Ministerial Relations, and shall notify in writing the individual involved prior to the General Conference session at which the proposed action is to be considered. The Board of Ministerial Relations shall submit its recommendations to the General Conference which may locate without consent the ministerial member which deprives him of the right to exercise the ministerial office. The records (minutes and pastoral record) shall indicate such action under ¶7.1.15.

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 1. Order of Worship**

¶9.1.1 True worship is an attitude or act of recognition of the superior position of God in relation to all others.

¶9.1.2 Let the service of worship begin at the time appointed. Let the people enter the sanctuary in a prayerful and respectful manner.

Prelude  
Call to Worship  
Welcome/Announcements  
Hymn  
Pastoral Prayer  
Hymn  
The Apostle's Creed (as worded in the membership vows)  
Gloria Patria  
Scripture of Responsive Reading  
Offering  
Doxology  
Special music  
Message from God's Word  
Hymn  
Benediction  
Postlude

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 2. Calls to Worship

¶9.2.1 ...the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.  
*Habakkuk 2:20.*

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. *Psalm 122:1.*

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. *Psalm 118:24.*

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. *Psalm 27:14.*

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. *James 4:8.*

...the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. Surely the Lord is in this place...this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.  
*Habakkuk 2:20; Genesis 28:16,17.*

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.  
*Psalm 33:8*

O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. *Psalm 95:6,7.*

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!  
*Psalm 107:1,8.*

My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. *Psalm 84:2.*

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth, My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. *Psalm 124:8; 121:2.*

...the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. *John 4:23,24.*

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 3. The Sacraments.

¶9.3.1 The two sacraments of the Church are rituals ordained by God as outward and visible symbols of inward and spiritual realities.

1. God's purpose for the sacraments is to speak symbolically of the two essentials for human salvation.
2. These essentials are "the conversion experience" and "the saving relationship".
3. A sacrament in no way, or to any degree, adds to or consummates the inward reality.

If we fail to clearly distinguish between the reality and the ritual, confusing the one for the other, we actually negate the saving grace of God from our lives. (*Galatians 5:2,4; Romans 2:28-29*)

#### ¶9.3.2 BAPTISM.

1. The sacrament of water baptism speaks symbolically of the conversion experience (the new birth).
2. Conversion to Christ is a cleansing or washing experience.
3. The historical and universal symbol of washing is water.
4. It is our belief from scripture that the proper mode of water baptism is by affusion (sprinkling and pouring).

#### **The minister shall use the following:**

"Dearly beloved the sacrament...(use the 1<sup>st</sup> three statements above under Baptism)..."

#### **Then the minister may read the following:**

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." *Acts 2:38-42*

"And in Acts 10:47 Peter asks this important question: 'can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized.'"

#### **Then shall the minister say to the persons to be baptized:**

"Dearly beloved who have come here desiring to receive the sacrament of baptism, the congregation gives thanks to God for your coming, and prays that you shall continue in Christ, that your faith shall not fail. In the sight of this congregation you are making known that you have repented of your sins and have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Please kneel."

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 3. The Sacraments, cont.

#### ¶9.3.2 BAPTISM, cont.

**Then the minister shall baptize them saying:**

“ \_\_\_\_\_ (Full Name) \_\_\_\_\_, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

#### **Prayer**

#### ¶9.3.3 COMMUNION -- The Lord's Supper.

1. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper speaks symbolically of the saving relationship which is mutual indwelling (*John 6:56*).
2. By receiving this sacrament we are saying Christ dwells in us and we are dwelling in Him.
3. The Lord's Table should have upon it a clean white cloth. The pure, unfermented juice of the grape shall be used. It is custom to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper kneeling, but if persons so desire, they may receive the elements while seated or standing.
4. The minister may read I Corinthians 11:23-29, 31-32 or other appropriate scripture.
5. Then the minister shall offer prayer which includes confession of our unworthiness and consecration of the elements.
6. Then the minister and those who serve with him shall first receive communion. Then shall the minister instruct the people and invite the communicants to the Lord's table.
7. After serving both elements the minister shall say:

“The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for you. Take and eat this, remembering that He died for you, and feed on Him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.”

“The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you. Drink this, remembering that His blood was shed for you, and be thankful.”

8. When all have communed, the minister shall cover the remaining elements.

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 4. Receiving Persons into the Church.**

¶9.4.1 “Dearly beloved, the church is of God and will continue to the end of this present age for the promotion of His worship and the proper administration of His Truth and sacraments, the maintenance of Christian fellowship and discipline, the edification of believers, and the proclamation of the Gospel to the world. All, of every age and station, stand in need of the means of grace which it alone supplies. The persons before you come professing to have already entered into this Holy Community.”

“These people now come seeking admission into this denomination and this local church. They have been instructed in the purpose, theology, and objective of the Bethel Methodist Church.”

“Dearly beloved, you profess to have a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from your sins, and to be a faithful servant in the Kingdom of God; you seek the fellowship of the people of God, to assist you in working out your salvation; I therefore ask:”

#### **As to repentance:**

**Question:** “Do you renounce Satan and all of his works, the standards and ways of the world, so that you will not follow or be led by them?”

**Answer:** “I renounce them all.”

#### **As to faith:**

**Question:** “Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, that He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, that the third day He rose from the dead; that He ascended into heaven, and is sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead? And do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the one universal Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?”

**Answer:** “All this I steadfastly believe.”

#### **As to obedience:**

**Question:** “Will you then obediently keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

#### **As to service:**

**Question:** “Will you be loyal to the Bethel Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service, as long as it remains faithful to Christ and His Church according to the scriptures?”

**Answer:** “I will.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 4. Receiving Persons into the Church, cont.**

“We rejoice to recognize you as members of this church, and bid you welcome to all of its privileges; and pray that you may continue with His people here, and with His saints in glory forever. Amen.”

#### **Prayer**



## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 5. Receiving Persons by Transfer.

¶9.5.1 “Dearly beloved, the persons before you have been members of the Bethel Methodist Church of \_\_\_\_\_ and are presenting themselves for membership in this church.”

**Question:** “Beloved, you are not a stranger to Bethel Methodism. And as a fellow member of our denominational family, we ask only if you will be loyal to this church and uphold it with your prayers, your presence, your gifts and your service?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 6. Wedding Ceremony.**

¶9.6.1 At the time appointed, the qualified persons to be married shall stand together facing the minister, the man at the minister's left hand and the woman at the right, the minister shall say:

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted by God, and signifying unto us the mystical union which exists between Christ and His church. It is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons come now to be joined.”

**Speaking to the persons to be married, the minister shall say:**

“I charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, to remember that love and loyalty alone will avail as the foundation of a happy and enduring home. If these solemn vows be kept without violation, and if steadfastly you endeavor to do the will of your heavenly Father, your life will be full of joy, and the home which you are establishing will abide in peace. No other human ties are more tender, no other vows more sacred than those that you now assume.”

**Then the minister shall say to the man, using his Christian name:**

**Question:** “\_\_\_\_ (Man's Name)\_\_\_\_, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?”

**The man shall answer:** “I will.”

**Then the minister shall say to the woman, using her Christian name:**

**Question:** “\_\_\_\_ (Woman's Name)\_\_\_\_, Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?”

**The woman shall answer:** “I will.”

**Then may the minister say:**

**Question:** “Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?”

**The Father of the woman, or whosoever giveth her in marriage, shall answer:** “I do.”

**Then the minister shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and say after him:**

“\_\_\_\_\_, take thee \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 6. Wedding Ceremony, cont.**

**Then shall they loose their hands and the woman, with her right hand taking the man by his right hand, shall say after the minister:**

“ \_\_\_\_\_, take thee \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God’s holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.”

**Then shall they again loose hands. Then the man may give unto the woman a ring; the minister, taking the ring, shall say:**

“The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two loyal hearts in endless love.”

**The minister shall then deliver the ring to the man to put upon the third finger of the woman’s left hand. The man, holding the ring there shall say after the minister:**

“In token and pledge of the vow between us made, with this ring I thee wed: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

**When a second ring is to be given, the woman shall place the ring upon the man’s finger and repeat:**

“In token and pledge of the vow between us made, with this ring I thee wed: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

**Then shall the minister pray:**

“O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life: send Thy blessing upon this man and woman so that they may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant now made in Thy presence, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to Thy will. Look graciously upon them, that they may love, honor, and cherish each other, and so live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and a place of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

**Then shall the minister join their right hands together and with his hand on their united hands shall say:**

“Forasmuch as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have pledged their faith each to the other, and have declared the same by joining hands and by giving (and receiving) a ring; I pronounce that they are husband and wife together in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Amen.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 7. Funeral Service.**

¶9.7.1 The funeral service may contain the following:

Prelude

Song

Scripture reading

Obituary

Prayer

Song

Eulogy

Message

Prayer

¶9.7.2 At the burial:

Scripture reading with brief comments

Prayer

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 8. Dedication of Infants and Children.

#### ¶9.8.1 The minister shall say:

“In Mark 10:13-16 the scriptures say, ‘and they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.’”

“This act of dedication relates directly to God’s meaning in Proverbs 22:6 ‘train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.’”

“This is the commitment of the parents. Blessed is the child when the substance of this commitment is realized, for then the child can never be comfortable in sin.”

“This congregation is participating in the sense of its responsibility to maintain the kind of church environment essential to assist the parents in fulfilling their commitment.”

“Dearly beloved, for as much as you now present your child for dedication to God, it is your responsibility to live before him the life that becometh the Gospel and to instruct him to regularly worship God both publicly and privately.”

**Question:** “Will you train him up in the way he should go?”

**Answer:** “We will, God being our helper.”

#### **Then the minister shall take the child, saying:**

“\_\_\_\_\_(Full Name)\_\_\_\_\_, I dedicate thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

#### **Prayer**

## SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP

### Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders.

¶9.9.1 The ordination service should be conducted at the General Conference.

**The General Superintendent shall read and exhort from the following:**

Ephesians 4:3, 7-8, 11-15.

John 10:11-13.

John 21:15-17.

Jeremiah 3:15

**The General Superintendent shall call those to be ordained to the altar and introduce them by name.**

“These are they whom we purpose, God willing, to ordain Elders. After examination and observation, we find strong evidence that they are called of God to this highest level of ministerial ordination, and they are persons qualified for this office. But if there be any of you who knows any valid reason any one of them should not be received into this holy ministry, let him come forth in the name of God and show what the impediment is.”

“Brethren, do you see the work of your calling? ‘for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; *till we all come in the unity of the faith, unto the full knowledge of the Son of God – by speaking the truth in love?*’”

“That when you are a ‘*good shepherd*’ you care for the sheep and will give your life for their eternal salvation. But if you do not really care for the sheep, then you are an hireling and will abandon them in time of danger or difficulty. Your profession here tonight, says you do it for the love of God and His people, *never* as paid employment.”

“Do you see that if you truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall ‘*feed*’ His lambs and sheep?”

“And that if you are truly called to this holy office, then you are a ‘*Pastor/Shepherd*’ according to God’s own heart, and you shall ‘*feed*’ God’s people *with knowledge and understanding?*”

“We expect you have pondered and weighed both the importance and responsibility, as well as the great honor and privilege of this office whereunto you are called of God.”

“And now before this congregation of Christians here assembled, you shall answer plainly to these things which we, in the presence of God, and in the name of His Church, shall require of you.”

**Question:** “Have you experienced the new birth, having received Jesus Christ into your spirit by repentance and faith?”

**Answer:** “Yes, I have.”

**Question:** “Presently, are you in a continuing right relationship with God – walking in the “narrow way” which alone leads to eternal salvation?”

**Answer:** “I am.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders, cont.**

**Question:** “Do you believe by conviction that the Holy Scriptures contain all truth necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Christ? And will you teach nothing as God’s truth but that which you are persuaded may be concluded from the Holy Scriptures and proved thereby?”

**Answer:** “I do so believe and have so determined.”

**Question:** “Will you, with all faithful diligence, seek to recognize, expose and drive away all erroneous teachings contrary to God’s Word?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

**Question:** “Are you aware that Christ has said: ‘One thing is needful?’ And do you understand that the ‘one thing’ is to attain unto the knowledge and understanding of God to the extent He has revealed Himself to His people?”

**Answer:** “Yes, I am aware of His statement, and do so understand His meaning.”

**Question:** “Do you believe God has willed and provided for you, and for all Christians, to be conformed to the moral image of His Son in this present life? And that this moral image is the progressive and ultimate result of the attaining of the true knowledge and understanding of God?”

**Answer:** “Yes, I do so believe.”

**Question:** “Are you convinced by God that He willed the organization and existence of the Bethel Methodist Church?”

**Answer:** “I am so convinced.”

**Question:** “Do you have a basic understanding of the message of The Bethel Methodist Church?”

**Answer:** “I do.”

**Question:** “Do you believe by conviction that our theology is in harmony with God’s written Word?”

**Answer:** “I do so believe.”

**Question:** “Will you, in love, wisdom and courage, preach, teach and maintain the theology of our church?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders, cont.**

**Question:** “Do you agree with, and appreciate, the attitude and resolve of our church that all the Bethel Methodist Church shall preach, teach and embrace as God’s truth shall be open to; **QUESTION**, to careful **EXAMINATION**, to proper **CHALLENGE** and to **CHANGE** when found to be somewhat true, but not fully or precisely so? And to **REMOVAL** if it is proven to be error?”

**Answer:** “I strongly agree with, and have deep appreciation for this attitude and resolve of our church.”

**Question:** “Are you knowledgeable of the form of church government, organizational structure and discipline of our church? Do you approve and support all of these?”

**Answer:** “I am knowledgeable, and I do approve and support all of these.”

**Question:** “Do you desire and agree to attend, participate in and contribute to our regular and continuing ministerial training program?”

**Answer:** “Yes I do, as God gives me opportunity.”

**Question:** “Will you, by reason, honesty and humility submit to the authority of those ministers unto whom God, through His people, has committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their admonitions which are within the love and will of God?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

**Question:** “Are you determined, by the grace of God, to bring all the people God shall place under your ministry into the fullest possible knowledge and understanding of God according to the revelation of Himself through the holy scriptures.”

**Answer:** “Yes, I am determined to do so.”

**Question:** “Will you faithfully love the people God shall place under your responsibility by ministering to their needs, according to the will and grace of God, both publicly and privately?”

**Answer:** “I will, God being my helper.”

**Question:** “Will you be diligent in prayer, in studying the Word of God, and in all studies which help in the knowledge and understanding of our Lord?”

**Answer:** “I will, by the help of God.”

**Question:** “Is it your conviction that God has called you, and ordained you, to the office of elder in His Church, and do you understand it to be a full-time and life-long ministry?”

**Answer:** “It is my conviction and I do so understand.”



## **SECTION 9 – RITUAL AND WORSHIP**

### **Chapter 9. Ordination of Elders, cont.**

**Question:** “Are you decided and committed to occupy and exercise this office of elder as God gives you direction, place, and opportunity?”

**Answer:** “I am so decided and committed.”

“May Almighty God, who hath given you this will to do all these things, grant also unto you strength and power to perform the same; that He may accomplish His work which He has begun in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

#### **Prayer by General Superintendent.**

##### **With the Man kneeling:**

The General Superintendent with other selected elders shall lay their hands together upon everyone to be ordained. (Each one ordained should hold a Bible in his hands.)

##### **The General Superintendent shall say:**

“We hereby acknowledge and ratify that Almighty God has called and ordained you, giving you authority to preach and teach His Holy Word, to administer the sacraments of His church, and to be His instrument in leading His people into the true knowledge and understanding of Him, unto eternal salvation. The Lord give unto you the power of His Holy Spirit for the work of this office now confirmed unto you by the laying on of our hands. Be a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Ordinances; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Preface**

¶A.1 The purpose of Appendix A is to provide a home for documents addressing theological issues.

¶A.2 All items included in Appendix A must first be nominated by the Board of Theological Research.

¶A.3 The approval procedure shall be as follows:

1. The proposed document shall be presented to the Interchurch Council for approval without revision.
2. If approved by the Interchurch Council, the proposed document shall be presented to the General Conference for approval without revision.
3. If approved by the General Conference, the Board of Discipline Revision shall incorporate the proposed document into the Discipline in a timely manner.

## **APPENDIX A1**

### ***Our Vision***

**OUR VISION**  
**(GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH)**

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**A Study**  
**Presented to**  
**The Texas District Conference of**  
**The Evangelical Methodist Church**

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**In Fulfillment**  
**of the Responsibility as an Official**  
**District Study Commission**

---

**by**  
**Arthur L. Slye, Jr.**  
**March 1977**

**“THEY ARE CONFUSED”**

**“THEY ERR IN VISION”**

**“THERE IS NO PLACE CLEAN”**

**(Isaiah 28:7, 8)**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	8
Chapter	
I. THEOLOGY .....	13
II. DEPOSITORY .....	21
III. INSATIABLE INTRUDER .....	26
IV. A DIVINE PROMISE .....	31
V. A DIVINE METHOD .....	34
VI. THE TRUE DENOMINATION .....	44
VII. THE SINGLE EYE .....	53
VIII. APPLICATION AND CONCLUSIONS .....	60
A FINAL WORD .....	85
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	89

## **PREFACE**

I am convinced that the writing of this paper is the most important thing I have ever attempted.

This conviction is in my heart, but there are events and circumstances which give external support to that internal conviction. Therefore, I feel it is necessary to relate some of the events which have led to the occasion of this writing.

Many of you already know that I have had a growing concern about the direction of our denomination over many years, for I have been open and vocal about such concern.

A few months prior to the 1976 Texas District Conference, while attending the district cabinet meeting, I brought up the subject of my concern for our district and denomination. I expressed my feeling that the theme of our previous district conference was improper from the standpoint that it was out of proper order. That theme was: "Give Us a Vision." I stated that we already had one and that all our major problems were resulting from the fact that the majority of us did not know what that vision was. A simple definition for "vision" is: "Seeing clearly God's original and remaining singular purpose for our existence as a denomination." It was my point that it is improper to be asking for a vision to be given to us when we already

have one which is being ignored, neglected, and violated.

I asked the cabinet if we could retain the subject of “vision” in our conference theme, and suggested that the one for our approaching 1976 conference be: “Recognizing Our Vision.” The proper and productive order of themes on this subject would be as follows: First, “WE HAVE A VISION”. Second, “RECOGNIZING OUR VISION”. And a third, “REALIZING OUR VISION”.

There was genuine interest on the part of the members of the cabinet, and they urged me to write a paper on the subject of just what our “vision” was. I agreed that if God would allow me to do so, I would.

I will share a circumstance which led to the discovery of the three part theme which appears at the front of this paper. One morning I was praying for God to direct me in the writing of the paper on “Our Vision.” I had prayed specifically for God’s help in knowing if He really wanted me to write it or not. As I got up from prayer, I was immediately attracted to an accumulation of papers on one of my bookshelves. I began to sort through these, and a page of notes I had made while studying on the subject of “tongues” arrested my attention. It referred to Isaiah 28:11. I reached for the nearest Bible, which happened to be the Amplified Version, and began reading the entire chapter. Verses seven and eight contained three statements which seemed to leap out to me: “THEY ARE CONFUSED,” “THEY ERR IN VISION,” “THERE IS NO PLACE CLEAN.” My excitement at



this discovery cannot be written.

At the same moment my telephone rang. It was John Pelt saying: "All right, Arthur, I'm going to 'bug' you until you get on that promised paper and finish it." I shared with him that his call at that moment, on that particular day, was of God, and I was becoming convinced that He was encouraging and directing the writing of the paper.

It would be negligence to omit the occasion and events which caused the creation of this study commission and as the result, this paper. At the Texas District Conference in Irving, March 12, 1976, John Pelt, the district lay leader, had gone forward to give his report to the conference. In all honesty and innocence, Mr. Pelt had been selected to be the instrument of God in the answering of prayer.

In the course of his report, Mr. Pelt had given vent to his personal frustrations and had repeated several times the theme of those frustrations in the words: "I DON'T KNOW". This is a very significant and important statement that is becoming more and more common from the lips, and in the thoughts and feelings, of the people of our denomination. This sad statement seems to typify the condition of our church.

The wife of one of our district ministers joined Mr. Pelt in adding, "I'm confused, too. I don't know what we

are expected to be and do”. Almost simultaneously several others began to join in and express some of their own frustrations and perplexities.

For many weeks I had been in much specific prayer for God to cause something, anything, to open the door clearly and undeniably for an opportunity to express my concerns for our beloved denomination to the conference. I had promised Him that I would not initiate such an opportunity. I had prayed specifically that if He wanted it, He must do it.

With my heart pounding at undeniable evidence of God answering specific prayer, I went forward, was recognized by the chairman, and addressed myself to the conference. I challenged them that in the face of all the “I don’t knows” we had been hearing, to try to love and understand me, because I wanted to be one who could stand up and say: “I DO KNOW.” I stated that I knew what the source of all our problems and frustrations was, because I knew what our true purpose for existing was.

As I shared a part of my convictions, concerns, and hopes before the conference that afternoon, many responded, and widespread, enthusiastic interest in the subject was evident. A vent had been opened which was allowing deep, long-suppressed, frustrations and perplexities to come to the surface.

The conference took action to set aside the scheduled agenda for that afternoon’s business session in order to give

all the time to the discussion of this matter of our problems and frustrations. A very meaningful and productive period of expressions and discussions followed, which not only consumed all of the time of the scheduled business session, but also all of a scheduled missionary program which was to follow.

The evening before all this occurred, I had been in conversation with a person who most of you know and respect, and one who shares some of the same concerns for our church that I have. I shared that I had been under a burden of prayer for many weeks, but especially during the days just preceding the conference, and that I was encouraged in my heart that God was going to do something of real significance to change the course of our district and denomination at this district conference. This person's reply literally shocked and frightened me to the point of tears. It was, "Brother Slye, it's too late". Please know that this person is one who knows the facts and is a very serious person. If I were to believe such a statement, this is a person from whom I would be most likely to believe it. I replied that I did not believe that and if I did, my heart would be broken.

After the events of Friday afternoon, this same person said to me: "Perhaps I was wrong and there is still hope for our church."

The following morning, Saturday, March 13, the conference voted to create a study commission for the

purpose of determining “WHAT WAS, AND REMAINS, GOD’S PURPOSE IN RAISING UP THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH.”

The following were elected to this commission by the conference: Mr. John Pelt, Mrs. Laura Stewart, Rev. Linam Prentice, Rev. Tim Hicke, and myself as chairman.

Some of you are only suspicious, while to others it has been obvious from the beginning that this study is, for the most part, if not entirely, the work of the chairman. We admit it. But we want it known that the members have all read, studied, and questioned the final product and are in agreement with the findings and have unanimously consented to give their support to it.

The material in this study is not the result of work begun and completed since the creation of this commission a mere twelve months ago. On the contrary, the majority of this material is the result of many years of concerned study and prayer. I had personally accumulated a large file, which existed long before March 1976, on the subject of God’s purpose for the Evangelical Methodist Church.

The past twelve months have been good in that they have forced me to the task of consolidating, organizing, and condensing the mass of material accumulated over those years.

Finally, there are many factors and principles involved in the total picture of what is needing to be communicated in this study. But I am convinced that bulk would not serve our purpose well. Therefore, great effort

has been made to be as concise as possible and still be clear. This is extremely difficult. There is much that could have been included which was not. This was good material that would help us to see more clearly God's purpose for His Evangelical Methodist Church. Therefore, we feel it is important and proper to make ourselves available for official or unofficial discussion with groups or individuals, either public or private.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For several years it has been apparent to some that our beloved denomination is being victimized by serious problems which are preventing its success and threatening its very survival. These problems have sapped our vitality, diminished our enthusiasm, and on a general level stopped our progress. In fact, we have come to the point of regression. As a result, we are, for most practical purposes, in an accelerating process of failing.

It is the task and responsibility of leadership to determine and understand the factor, or factors, which are the source of this sad condition of our church. But the urgency of the hour involves every member who cares in this same task and responsibility. It must be our plea to all, as to one, who can determine and understand the source of our problems, to come forward and tell us, show us, and lead us out of the dark shadows of failure into the bright sunshine of success. A success that would bring glory to God and satisfy His purpose for our existence as a denomination within His church.

We believe, whether consciously or unconsciously, it was the spirit and intent of the 1976 Texas District Conference in creating this study commission, to assign it the task and responsibility of seriously and prayerfully focusing

attention and energies upon this urgent and vital issue. We believe we have been faithful to that task and responsibility, and we further believe that we have been successful.

We have approached our task basically from the standpoint of three questions, all three of which are closely related. First, does God ever denominate? Second, did God move to raise up the Evangelical Methodist Church? Is it possible that our problems are related to the fact that God did not raise us up as a denomination after all? We are forced to face this question. It is proper, and it is imperative, to consider that our accelerating process of failing may well be evidence of divine disapproval. Our discipline states that “the rise and spread of the movement has been evidence of divine approval.”<sup>1</sup> If we should accept that as our criterion, then we would be forced to interpret our failing as His disapproval upon our existence and efforts as a denomination.

The answer to our second question is naturally personal and emotional. Those of us who are members of this denomination and love it would naturally say, without any hesitation, that certainly we are of God. But the question must and can be answered on the basis of scriptural, spiritual, and logical principles. On the basis of these principles and some known circumstances, we believe that He most certainly

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<sup>1</sup> Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church (Chicago, Ill.: Good News Press, Inc., 1954), P. 7.

did raise us up according to His purpose. We are also convinced that in the process of the uncovering of these principles and circumstances it shall become undeniably evident to all of our constituents that this answer is correct. We are divinely originated and presently approved in accordance with valid principles supporting our denominational existence.

Our third question follows the positive, affirmative answering of the second. Since God did move to raise up the Evangelical Methodist Church, what was His purpose in doing so?

We have made previous reference to the sad condition of our church in its accelerating process of failing. If, as we have concluded, God did in fact raise us up, then HE IS COMMITTED AND RESPONSIBLE TO OUR SUCCESS. THEN WHY ARE WE FAILING? It is the conviction of the writer and so the thesis of this paper that it is because we have failed to keep the course prescribed and required by our singular priority purpose. We have lost our vision. We are not seeing and acting in accord with God's singular purpose for bringing us into existence as a denomination.

God is actually being faithful to us by not blessing our efforts which are unrelated and even contrary to His originating purpose for us. For Him to bless us when we are in violation of His purpose, His "vision," would serve to strengthen and establish us in our error and thereby destroy all hope of correction and return to His true



purpose and ultimate success. We should thank God for our sad condition. We do not want a “success” which in reality would be a tragic failure. The present sad condition of the E.M.C. is a divine blessing designed to cause our return to His true purpose for us, which is our true “vision.”

All “successes” that are achieved in contradiction to His purpose in raising us up, are in reality dismal failures.

Our success is the responsibility of God, but only when we are holding and acting in accord with His purpose for our existence as a denomination. Our condition of failing must therefore be directly related to human irresponsibility, not divine. We are irresponsible when we are failing to see and keep our true vision, which is God’s original and remaining purpose for us.

Our task is not to search out methods of turning failure into success, but to determine if our existence was, and so remains, in the will and purpose of God. Then, if it is, to discover and clearly communicate precisely what that divine will and purpose is.

Thus, in summary, we list three things that we see to be our task and responsibility as your study commission.

1. To determine if the existence of the E.M.C. was, and remains, an act of God according to purpose.
2. To discover, clarify, and communicate precisely what that divine purpose was, and is, to the constituents of our denomination.

3. To make strong recommendation that everything we are and do be in full and constant accord with that original and remaining divine purpose.

If our findings are accurate and we can have your whole-hearted support, then our success as a true denomination shall be assured. It then becomes impossible to fail because our success is as sure as the faithfulness and omnipotence of God.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE FIRST PRINCIPLE RELATING TO OUR TASK**

#### **THEOLOGY**

There is one God who created all things. The crowning creature upon the earth was made in the image of God. God called this crowning creature “man”.

For most important reasons God has taken steps to reveal Himself. He desires to make Himself seeable and thus knowable to this creation called man. This self-revelation of the infinite and eternal God was to be at least as complete as the limits of man’s finiteness could permit. It was to involve God’s inner nature and His outer activity. For to “see” Him by this self-revelation is to “know” Him. And to be in this kind of knowing relationship with Him is life eternal.

There are various means and methods by which God is revealing Himself, but the greatest and central method is the Incarnation of Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ, “God manifest in the flesh” (I Timothy 3:16).

But that full and pure self-revelation in Jesus Christ, as immeasurably and unspeakably magnificent as it is, was brief. It covered a span of only about thirty-three years upon the earth. All men were not so privileged as the Apostle John who could say of Jesus Christ, “which

we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life” (I John 1:1).

It is of vital importance to this study for us to understand and realize that this revelation of God in Christ was continued from the point of those few years up to the very present in a different form. This form is referred to in the Bible as “The record of His Son” (I John 5:10). This form of the revelation of God to man is what we call “The written Word of God”. This is the Holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments.

The scripture record allows us to perceive of the “Word of God” in three forms: God the Father as the ETERNAL WORD, God the Son as the INCARNATE WORD, and the Bible as the WRITTEN WORD.

The “Eternal Word” is in the God form. “Being in the form of God,” (Philippians 2:6). This form is invisible and thus unknowable to mankind. “No man hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18).

The full and pure revelation of God in the Son, the Incarnate Word, was His act of making Himself visible and thus knowable to mankind. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, is “the express image of the person of God” (Hebrews 1:3).

We have said all this in order to emphasize that

THE ONE AND ONLY POSSIBLE WAY OF KNOWING GOD TODAY IS BY AND THROUGH HIS WRITTEN WORD, WHICH, IN THE PRESENCE AND UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSTITUTES THE SINGULAR SOURCE OF TRUE THEOLOGY IN THE WORLD TODAY. Please see the great importance of that!

True theology is a phrase which must have a definition which is accepted by all of us in order to communicate. Communication is impossible until we hold the same definition.

By “True Theology” we simply mean all of the doctrines of the scriptures accurately interpreted and properly assembled into that whole we call the truth, with no intrusion of error; only the total of all scriptural doctrines, with no adding to or taking away; all the pieces or parts of the total self-revelation of God completely and properly assembled in relation each to the others constituting the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, SO HELP US GOD!

A more concise definition of true theology, as we use it in this study, is: “The study of divine revelation culminating in a synthesis of philosophy and doctrines.”

True theology is composed of two major and essential parts. The first is “doctrine”, the second is “philosophy”.

DOCTRINE is the whole of scriptural truth broken down into all its distinct separate parts. A single doctrine is one of many parts. Each of these many parts taken separately is a doctrine. When we take all of these

many doctrines and assemble them together, in proper relationship one to the others, we constitute the whole Truth. Truth is an entity, a whole, all of the many separate parts that together constitute that whole, are called doctrines.

PHILOSOPHY is essentially the putting together, the assembling, of all the many parts of Truth into proper arrangement and attachment each to the others according to their relationships It is the proper arrangement and ordering of all the constituent parts into the whole.

Philosophy is also the placing of “VALUE” to each of the parts we call doctrines. It is a tragic mistake to over-value or to under-value any doctrine. This has happened very often throughout the history of the church. It is happening today.

God’s revelation of Himself is referred to in the Scriptures in many ways. Some of these are: “The Word”, “The Faith”, “The Gospel”, “The Way”, “The Truth”, etc. All of these are in direct reference to that complete, pure, and proper arrangement of all the parts into the whole, which is this study we shall call “TRUE THEOLOGY”.

TRUE THROLOGY IS A BEAUTIFUL, HARMONIOUS BALANCE OF THE WHOLE OF GOD’S REVELATION OF HIMSELF IN CHRIST, AS RECORDED IN THE WRITTEN WORD. That needs repetition: God’s revelation of Himself to man is a complete, pure, balanced, and harmonious whole. Please remember that His personal revelation is composed of many parts. Each of those many

parts is a “doctrine.” The proper integrating of all those various parts into the whole, together with the proper placing of value on each of those various parts, is what we are meaning by “philosophy.” Finally, it may be said that “philosophy” is the evaluating and locating of each of the parts in relation to the others, properly composing the whole of the divine revelation.

HOW IMPORTANT IS JUST ONE DOCTRINE? Perhaps it could be said that the only thing more important than the part is the whole. But let us consider that the whole cannot exist except with all of its parts. Each single part is vital to the whole. Thus it is true that the whole is non-existent unless it has all its single parts. In this light the part seems to approach equal importance with the whole. Since the whole is non-existent without the part, the part is absolutely essential to the whole.

The great importance of each part of God’s whole revelation of Himself is understood and realized from the viewpoint of the undeniable principle that He is not merely revealing things “about” Himself, but He is actually revealing “HIMSELF”.

Therefore, it is true that we have a “picture” or “image” that may be seen and known of the true eternal God in the written Word It is as a composite photograph, a picture of God composed of many pieces, and each piece being a single doctrine of His revelation of Himself. When all the composite parts are properly, accurately assembled,

they give a picture of God. In this way men may “see” Him and “know” Him, and by “knowing” Him be the recipients and heirs of eternal life.

In the light of what we are saying, we may perceive each doctrine of the written Word as a piece of our God. When our exegesis and Christian philosophy have gathered all the pieces and assembled them all together properly, we “see” God. This is how men may “see” God today. By the eye of faith, we “see” God by the form of the written Word.

Is there one among us who would “blaspheme” by belittling or devaluing a part of the perfect God, or dare to lightly discard a small piece of Him?

It is true that all the parts of the divine revelation of Himself are in the Scriptures, but they are not assembled in proper order. God has scrambled them so that only the faithful believer can “see”, “know”, and be eternally saved. Only the “supernatural” man can know the “things” of God. Only the believer’s “eyes” are open to perceive God in the form of the written Word. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned” (I Corinthians 2:14). Jesus “rejoiced in spirit, and said, I think thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” (Luke 10:21). He becomes visible and known only to those who have the exercise of the right kinds of eyes to see and ears to hear. To this



kind of “seeing” and “hearing” Jesus referred many times. These are the “eyes” and “ears” of the human spirit, not the human body, which are simply the exercise of Christian faith in the truths of God’s Word.

This is the place and necessity of interpretation and integration or synthesis. Interpretation (exegesis) is the discovery and extraction of each separate doctrine scattered throughout the written Word. Integration or synthesis is the task and process of placing upon each of these discovered and extracted doctrines their proper value, and then the placing of each one into the whole theological system of truth in accurate relationship to the others. When we have exegeted (extracted by interpretation) all the true doctrines of God’s written Word, and have properly integrated them by the process of Christian philosophy, we behold the fullness of the Godhead. We then find Him “ALTOGETHER” lovely. We fall down and worship Him, and get up and serve Him faithfully.

Isaiah attained sufficient true theology to see “The Lord, high and lifted up,” fell down on his face and worshipped, got up and said: “Here am I, send me!” (Isaiah 6:1, 8).

Isaiah is the source of another great truth which is very relevant to our major premise. He wrote: “His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men:” (Isaiah 52:14). This is most certainly a prophecy of the physical mutilation of the face and body

of our incarnate God, Jesus Christ, at the hands of cruel Roman soldiers. But it is also a dreadful prophecy of the THEOLOGICAL MUTILATION of that same Holy Christ by many “theologians”, “ministers”, “priests”, “laymen”, religious organizations, cults, and failing denominations in our day. God forgive us! God help us!

A theological philosophy that allows the ignoring, devaluation and even discarding of a true doctrine from God’s Word is actually a brutal striking and marring of the “visage” or image of God. It is a cutting and tearing away of a piece of His lovely face which, when it is “altogether”, is “lovely”. But when it is cruelly theologically mutilated, He becomes unrecognizable, unattractive, and even grotesque to the people who see Him by that polluted, erroneous theology. This is a step in the direction of “crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:6).

It must be our philosophy that each doctrine of the Word of God is unspeakably precious and indispensable. And the only way of “earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), is to simply and continually contend for each separate piece called a doctrine, which is essential to that whole and true theology called “THE FAITH”.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SECOND PRINCIPLE RELATING TO OUR STUDY

#### DEPOSITORY

(The Pillar and Ground of the Truth)

The Church of Jesus Christ is the sole depository of God's theological revelation of Himself which He calls "The Faith." God has sovereignly selected to put His Truth in the Church and nowhere else.

Jesus Christ said: "I have given them thy Word" (John 17:14). "Them" refers to His disciples who are soon to be the nucleus of His infant church. "Thy Word" is the total divine revelation.

The church "is the pillar and ground of the Truth" (I Timothy 3:15). The Greek word translated "ground" is "HEDRAIŌMA" which comes from the word "hedra" meaning "seat". It means to us the "place of" or "the location" which is fixed, permanent. That which is put there is to remain there and be nowhere else. The second word "pillar" is the Greek "STULOS" and is literally a column supporting the weight of a building, but it is used metaphorically in the Bible as "those who bear the weight of responsibility". In this text, it clearly refers to the solemn responsibility of the church of Jesus Christ to maintain all the doctrines of "The Faith".

“The Truth” is the complete and pure revelation of God in Christ as it is recorded in the written Word.

It helps us to see the full significance of this when we see it in the light of the fact that God tells us “the world is condemned already” (John 3:17, 18). All men everywhere are under the just sentence of eternal death. “The whole world lieth in the wicked one” (I John 5:19). All mankind are “locked” in the shackles of enslavement to sin (Romans 6:17, 20; John 5:34). Men are all prisoners of death and hell. Jesus Christ came “to set the captives free” (Luke 4:18). Our Lord said: “and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Here the Jews responded that they had never been “slaves.” Jesus informed them that He was speaking in reference to the universal slavery to sin of all mankind. He was telling them, and us, that the “Truth of God” could, and would, set men free from the shackles of enslavement to sin. Thus we conclude that the only possible way to set men free from their enslavement to sin, death, and hell is by the “Truth” which has been deposited in His church.

“Truth” is the message of the written Word of God which we refer to as “The Faith”, true theology, in its completeness, purity, and proper arrangement.

How important and valuable is this deposit? What happens to true church extension, evangelism, and missions if we should suffer the loss of this deposit or a serious altering of it?

If, or when, we allow and accommodate the erosion of the message of the church, we make extremely difficult and finally impossible all true church extension, evangelism, and missions.

It is our intention, hope, and prayer that the preceding statements have prepared you to see and realize the urgent importance of that much abused and neglected part of the total truth found in the little Epistle of Jude: “ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Look at that “once delivered”! It means in the Greek that “The Faith” was deposited in the church (“the saints”) ONE TIME, AND ONLY ONE TIME, NEVER TO BE RE-DEPOSITED A SECOND TIME. This is the awesome responsibility of the saints. YOU! ME! US!!!

If the church should fail in this responsibility as the depository of, and “earnest contender” for, The Faith, then the knowledge of God would be lost to mankind forever, never to be recovered. For those among us who, by the grace of God, can see this fact, we want to pause and allow time to experience that “inward groaning of the Spirit which cannot be uttered” (John 11:38; Romans 8:26).

This responsibility of the church could not be more clearly and awesomely put than the way God has put it. Any man that is ever loosed from his sins is done so by and through the ministry of the church using the effective power of her deposit of Truth. The reason for men

remaining in their sins on earth is normally one of two possible circumstances. The first would be that the church takes the deposit of Truth to men who refuse and reject it. The second would be the church failing to get the Truth to men, and thus leaving them bound in the slavery of sin. But there is also a third possibility. What if the church should fail to keep “the Faith” in sufficient purity and wholeness to be effective, and, as a result, leave all men, for all time and eternity, in the hopelessness of their enslavement to sin with no message on earth that can make them free?

If the church allows the erosion of the Truth, the altering of its message, then she is on the path of allowing the final destruction of “The Faith.” The Scriptures teach that in this dreadful event, “The Faith” shall never be available to mankind again.

Jesus Christ referred to His followers as “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). In the same verse He continued: “but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” God is clearly telling us that the church has a power to stop and prevent the corruption of sin. But if it should lose that which gives it that power, it is from that moment on, “fit for nothing.” That “power” is its deposit, the Faith, its message of Truth. This Scripture says that its deposit can be lost, and that if it should be, it cannot be restored.

Because it was “once” delivered to the saints, it shall never be delivered a second time.

The church of Jesus Christ could conceivably lose her deposit of Truth. If she should, it can never be restored, and we shall be from that point in time, and forever, a depository without its deposit, empty and “fit for nothing.”

## CHAPTER III

### THE THIRD PRINCIPLE RELATING TO OUR STUDY

#### INSATIABLE INTRUDER

(The Presence and Nature of Error)

The principle of the insatiability of intruding error is clearly and persistently revealed in Scripture. But the most concise statement of it is: “A LITTLE LEAVEN LEAVENETH THE WHOLE LUMP” (Galatians 5:9; cf. I Corinthians 5:6; Matthew 16:6-12). This is God’s revelation concerning the dreadful pernicious nature of error. One theological error, whether doctrinal or philosophical, intruding into the system of the Truth, threatens the corruption of the whole

There may be some skeptics who are thinking the loss of God’s revelation of Himself to man could not happen. We would remind you of the biblical record of this very nearly happening, not just once, but many times. It was almost totally lost in Noah’s day. Out of the millions of people living on the earth in those days who once had the true knowledge of God, only eight souls were in sufficient possession of God’s revelation of Himself for that day to be accounted “righteous” in God’s sight.

It very nearly happened again in Sodom and Gomorrah. When Abraham bargained with the Lord that if He could find



diminishing numbers of “righteous,” i.e. those in possession of sufficient purity of the knowledge of God to be so accounted, would He not spare it? God agree to spare it if He could find ten “righteous.” But alas, that quality and quantity of His Truth had very nearly perished from those cities.

What of the days of the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ? What was the condition of God’s revelation to man in Israel, Jerusalem, and so the world? There had been a great theological breakdown. There had been an erosion of God’s Truth. The pernicious infection of error had made great advances into the message of the people of God.

History, since the completion of God’s revelation of Himself to man, also tells us this same thing. Mankind went from the glorious victory of the world-wide success of the Gospel in just one century, to the dismal ignorance and darkness of what historians have appropriately called “the Dark Ages.” The doctrines of Rome were false doctrines, theological errors, and as the result their entire theological structure was one great false system of doctrinal and philosophical errors. When the “light” the “church” it projecting, is in actuality “darkness,” “how great is that darkness?” (Matthew 6:23).

Jesus Christ uttered a shocking and alarming question when He asked: “nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find (The) Faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

There exists in the Scriptures much eschatological truth which warns us that the church in the last days shall be in great decline. This can only result from a massive theological breakdown. It speaks of “a great falling away”, “the love of the majority waxing cold”, “false prophets arising and showing great signs and wonders insomuch that there is the awful prospect that they shall deceive the very elect”, and “there shall arise false Christs” (Matthew 24:24). Also we read: “many shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils” (I Timothy 4:1).

Now that we understand that God’s revelation of Himself is a whole, we should realize that all the separate parts, called doctrines, are each essential to that whole. As we add new doctrines in proper relation to our ascending system of theology, we are growing in the faith. But we must also understand that if we take an error, a false doctrine, and force it into our system as a “truth,” it inevitably, inescapably DEMANDS and REQUIRES another error, and another, and another, more and more. AN ERROR ADMITTED INTO THE TRUTH SYSTEM OF OUR THEOLOGY IS INSATIABLE. It ultimately invades and permeates the whole system. Truly, “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

On the opposite side of this truth, we must see that if we omit one single doctrine of truth, then we block all further progress in truth in that particular branch or area. Each truth we properly place into our theological

system opens the door for the next truth. No truth stands apart and independent of all the other truths that eventually compose the whole. Each and every single truth is attached and related to preceding and succeeding truths in the progressing, growing system of the whole.

In this light, we can point out that the neglect or discarding of a single truth always stops the growth and expansion of the system of the whole truth, especially in that particular area or branch. That missing truth is an essential prerequisite to the discovery and understanding of the next truth in the growing system of the whole.

This same principle applies to the intrusion of an error, a false doctrine, into the system of the whole which is presented as God's Truth. This error requires the next addition to that branch or area to be another error also, and still another, and another, and another, until that theological system becomes dark, dead, and decayed. I must agree with our Lord Jesus Christ when He tells us a little false doctrine ultimately permeates the whole system that is called "truth" into a monstrous system of lies, deception, and confusion.

A little false doctrine is as a cancer in the cellular structure of the body. It creeps and grows, spreading and multiplying cells of error that are deadly destruction to the whole.

If the church in our day is not shaken out of its slumber and made aware of its responsibility to earnestly

contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, then the answer to our Lord's searching, haunting question as to whether or not He shall find the faith on the earth when He comes back, shall be a somber "NO" of unspeakable, immeasurable tragedy.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE RELATING TO OUR STUDY**

#### **A DIVINE PROMISE**

(An Opportunity for Every Generation of Men)

Early in our last principle we stated that there may be some skeptics who were thinking that the loss of God's deposited Truth could not happen. We reminded you of some of those times in the Bible and history when we very nearly came to that tragic circumstance. But it is a fact that we never did come to that final or total loss. We are very happy to agree with these skeptics, and report that we never shall come entirely, or completely to that tragedy. But we are compelled to add that it is also undeniable, according to prophetic scripture, that at the end of the age of the Church, there shall be a gigantic and massive theological breakdown (cf. Matthew 24:5, 11, 12, 24; Luke 18:8; II Thessalonians 2:3; I Timothy 4:1; II Timothy 4:3-4; etc.). Thus while it is true that "The Faith" shall surely be found on the earth by the Lord when He returns, it shall be pitifully few who are in possession of that treasure of immeasurable value and still "earnestly contending for it." This was the Lord's object and intent in asking that shocking prophetic question of Luke 18:8. He desired for us to know that the intrusion of doctrinal and philosophical

errors into the truth system of “The Faith” would be so great that it would require great discernment and great determination to be faithful to His plea and command for us to “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered.” He desires for this shocking question to get our attention, in order that you and I, together with all those we shall be privileged to inform and warn, shall not be deceived with the great majority of the church and world by the “strong delusion” (II Thessalonians 2:11) that God is going to send.

It is not our purpose to determine the form, factors and methods that give this “delusion” its adjective of “STRONG”, but it is very important that we point out the fact that the reason God “sends” it is the failure of men to “receive the love of the truth” (II Thessalonians 2:10). God sends this “strong delusion” to those who “received not the love of the truth”. If we are to be saved from the great deception of the last days, the strong delusion which God shall surely send, then we must receive “the love of the truth.” The “lover” of Truth is the one who contends earnestly for the whole, by earnestly contending for each and every part. If we will not earnestly contend for it in this way, then we do not “love” it. And we are headed surely for the great deception of the last days which God calls the “strong delusion”, “believing the lie” (II Thessalonians 2:11).

It is an undeniable fact of Scripture that we face

in the near future, a frightening, tragic, massive theological breakdown, a losing of “The Faith” by a majority of God’s church. But it is sure that this coming breakdown of true theology shall not be all inclusive. For some of us shall not succumb to the “lukewarm” theology of the final period of the church in history. For God has given us an infallible promise. It is only because of this great promise of His love, goodness, and mercy that His revelation of Himself has not been lost to all men long before now. Read it, praise Him, and be thankful!

“FOR THE LORD IS GOOD: HIS MERCY IS EVERLASTING:  
AND HIS TRUTH ENDURETH TO ALL GENERATIONS.”  
(Psalms 100:5).

The omnipotent, faithful, and holy God has promised that His revelation of Himself called “The Faith”, “Truth”, which are His expressions for “True Theology”, shall “ENDURE TO ALL GENERATIONS” of men upon the earth.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE RELATING TO OUR STUDY

#### THE DIVINE METHOD

(Denominationalism)

God has deposited the significant part of the revelation of Himself in His church. The church, as the depository of that revelation of God, is responsible for its maintenance in completeness and purity. When the church is in a general condition of theological breakdown as the result of failing to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to it, and God sees that His deposit is in serious danger of being lost to the next generation of men, to whom He has promised in His Word that the Truth shall endure, then He is forced to take an action that He does not prefer to take. It is His last resort, but it is still the divine method. HE DENOMINATES.<sup>1</sup> Denominationalism is God's last resort in preserving His Truth, as promised, in completeness and purity down through each generation of men to the last.

There is abundant biblical and historical evidence that God is the source of many "restoration movements" down

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<sup>1</sup> For additional clarification of this term see the first three paragraphs of P. 44.



through the history of His dealings with man. The “retaining of the knowledge of God” has been a constant struggle from the beginning (Romans 1:21, 28). The “theological breakdown” is an all too frequent occurrence in the history of mankind.

Perhaps these principles are most clearly set forth in the book of Judges:

“And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that He did for Israel”  
(Judges 2:7).

That is the desirable result of successful theological restoration. But sadly we read further in the same record:

“and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers and followed other gods”  
(Judges 2:10-12).

That is the example of the principle of “theological breakdown”. The knowledge of God results in: “the people served the Lord”. The loss of the knowledge of God results in: “the people did evil, forsook the Lord God, and followed other gods”.

As it happened in those days, so it tends to happen in our day. Even as they “turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in” (Judges 2:17) , even so it happens in our generation.

When these conditions occur, what does God do? First, His

judgment falls in punishment (Judges 2:14-15). But then in His love and mercy, He raises up “judges” as deliverers whose purpose and activities constitute the principle of “theological restoration”. (Judges 2:16).

The pattern of the book of Judges is the pattern of the history of God revealing Himself and dealing with mankind. This pattern is a recurring one of “theological restoration” and “theological breakdown”, restoration and breakdown in sad monotony.

The “judges” of the book of Judges were men raised up of God for the purpose of restoring the knowledge of God to the people. Therefore we say that they are personal representatives of the biblical principle of “theological restoration”. When we find a person or group in the Bible, or in Christian history, being used of God to restore and preserve His Truth in the earth, we see that person or group as representing the biblical principle of the “true denomination”. This principle may be seen in Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Judges, and many of the prophets, as well as some of the kings of Israel. In some sense we see it in Christ Himself. In more recent history we see this principle in Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley and others.

When we use the term “denomination”, in any and all of its forms, we are in reference to the biblical principle of “theological restoration” which is God acting in and through His faithful people to restore and preserve His Truth for succeeding generations of men.

Interpretations of scripture and their resulting theological positions are often condensed, clarified, and communicated by the simple method of denominational names.

Those whom God involves in His true “restoration movement” may, or may not, take a denominational name or even a distinct organizational form. The basic biblical principle remains stable and unchanged by the presence or absence of such a name or organizational structure.

The Evangelical Methodist Church, which is the subject of this study, had taken such a denominational name, as well as a distinct organizational form or structure. Therefore for the purposes of this study we shall refer to the scriptural principle of “Theological Restoration”, as “denominationalism”. We are convinced that this is the best term we could apply to this biblical principle in order to communicate to the constituents of our own particular “denomination”, The Evangelical Methodist Church. We could have selected the terms “restoration movement” or “faithful remnant”, but we are convinced these could not serve our purpose nearly so well as this term “denomination”.

The conditions and circumstances that bring God to the point that requires Him to denominate is the process of accumulating error reaching the point that it becomes a serious threat to His promise that His Truth shall endure to the next and each succeeding generation. In the generation of a failing church, God’s method of a new

restoration movement assures that His Truth shall be available in complete and pure form for the next generation.

The intrusion and spreading of theological error, i.e. false doctrines or wrong philosophy, into the vital message of God's church is the circumstance that leaves God no alternative. "When that infection of error approaches a critical level which threatens the eventual destruction of that deposited revelation of Himself, God takes action". He searches His church looking for a man. He finds a man and then some more men, and a gathering of those men with others until there is a movement. Through the influence of these men, others are attracted and give added momentum and influence. God causes these to be joined and perhaps organized together in a real commitment to the "love of the Truth". These are all able and willing to receive God's "Vision", His singular purpose, and make it their "vision" or singular purpose.

When the church fails to earnestly contend for "The Faith", once delivered to the saints, the result is widespread, general "THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN" which produces a dangerous religious confusion in the church and world. God is forced to look throughout the total church in search of a man, and more men, who are able and willing "to stand in the gap" in order to "make up the hedge", i.e. repair the breach through which the invasion of pernicious error is pouring into the theology of the church (Ezekiel 22:30). These honorable men are determined to "buy the truth and

sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23) and “when the enemy is coming in like a flood”, they are willing to be “the standard” which God raises up against it (Isaiah 59:19). Please note that the wisdom of God through Solomon advises us to “buy the TRUTH” and “sell it not”. This clearly, and simply, and profoundly means: “PAY ANY PRICE TO POSSESS THE TRUTH, AND DON’T EVER TAKE ANYTHING FOR IT”!!! THAT IS THE NATURE, ATTITUDE, AND STRONG DETERMINATION OF EACH AND EVERY TRUE DENOMINATIONALIST. Will you pardon me if I say that I feel like standing with Martin Luther and saying, “Here I stand, I can do none else, God help me”! I must add to this that every true Evangelical Methodist is a true denominationalist. It is true that this ought to be the position, attitude, and determination of the whole general church. But when it is not, then it becomes the attitude, determination, and position of the true denomination.

Perhaps what God’s denomination really is and why it is His chosen method of keeping His promise of Psalm 100:5 can best be communicated by an illustration: GOD’S DENOMINATION WITHIN THE TOTAL BODY OF HIS CHURCH IS ALMOST, IF NOT ENTIRELY, A THEOLOGICAL, ECCLESIASTICAL COPY OF THE ANATOMICAL “KIDNEY” OF THE HUMAN BODY.

A few months ago, I visited a precious saint at the “Dialysis” center in Dallas. I was amazed as I stood and talked with this person. I could actually see her entire body’s supply of blood circulating through what

seemed to be miles of clear plastic tubing leaving her body on one side and entering again on the other. Between these clear plastic tubes, filled with her circulating blood, was a large machine with complex filters. This was the artificial, mechanical “kidney”. Her blood was really no different from yours or mine. Her kidneys were different.

It is a fact that in the passing of time, and during the course of the normal processes of the body’s functioning, there is a natural, cyclical accumulation of poisons in the life-blood of the human body If these poisons are not removed by a healthy, active filtering organ call the “kidney”, then that accumulation continues to a critical point of weakening and poisoning the total body. If that ever-increasing accumulation of poisons in the life-blood is allowed to continue unchecked long enough, it shall, and does, inevitably result in the death of the body.

This precious saint was making three trips a week from Denton to Dallas in order to have the poisons removed from her blood. Her natural “kidneys” have both failed. If she did not have the opportunity to use this dialysis machine, this artificial “kidney”, she could not live. She would die within a week or two.

God has convinced me that this is a very precise illustration of the place and function of His denomination within the total body of His Church.

God’s Truth, that He likes to refer to as “The Faith” and which I like to refer to as “TRUE THEOLOGY”,

is actually the “LIFE-BLOOD” of the Church, the body of Christ.

It is true of God’s Church, just as it is true of the human body, that in the passing of time and during the course of the normal processes of the Church’s functions, there is a diabolical, cyclical accumulation of polluting poisons of mis-interpretation called “theological errors”. Errors of doctrine and errors of philosophy, are each, and in combination, “THEOLOGICAL ERRORS”. These two kinds, or types, of theological error will become increasingly more significant as we progress toward the end of the age and the second coming of Christ.

If these diabolical and cyclical intrusions of theological error which naturally and continually accumulate in the message of the Church, are not removed, but permitted to progress unchecked long enough, the balance mechanisms of the body become confused, weakened, and critically ill. They will inevitably result in the death of the body of Christ. If Satan is allowed to destroy the life-blood of the Church, he has destroyed the Church.

Since the Church, the body of Christ, is the sole depository of “The Faith”, it must not be allowed to be killed by the poisons of theological errors in its life-blood. For then the promise of God that His Truth would endure to all generations would fail.

The ramifications of God’s promise, or Word, failing in any way, and to any degree, is another lengthy

subject we cannot go into in this paper. But allow us to say briefly that all His vast creation would crumble into an eternal chaotic state of ruin and darkness. If the Word of God should fail (and it shall not), then God has failed. He would abdicate His eternal Throne and there would be NO GOD. Where there is no God, there is no “word of His power to uphold all things” (Hebrews 1:3). As a result, all things fall into eternal ruin and chaos.

It is our hope that all will see that the promises of God shall never fail. He has promised that His “Truth” shall endure to all generations, and so it shall. He has also promised that the “gates of Hell” shall not prevail against His Church, and so they shall not. These are companion promises. When God takes the necessary step to insure that the “Truth” shall endure to all generations, He simultaneously takes the same step to see that the gates of hell do not prevail against the Church. He DENOMINATES and fulfills both promises together.

The true denomination is God’s method or instrument for restoring and preserving the Truth, while at the same time it becomes at least a part of, if not entirely, the surviving Church from a critical and deadly theological breakdown. We should be aware of the fact that one single Christian surviving with God’s Truth called “The Faith”, could scripturally and legitimately constitute the entire Church militant (upon the earth).

We conclude that whenever there exists in the general



Church of Jesus Christ, which is the body of Christ, a “kidney failure”, a theological breakdown, God is left no alternative but to commence a restoration movement.

This action of God is not one that He desires or prefers. His preference is that He shall never have to do it again. This would mean that one now existing would become successful in its task and responsibility and be found faithful at the coming of the Lord of Glory. God grant it in Jesus Name! Amen.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE RELATING TO OUR STUDY**

#### **THE TRUE DENOMINATION**

(Its Nature)

Many so-called “denominations” are not “true” restoration movements. A “True” denomination is one which exists by virtue of the fact that God moved to raise it up. God directly acted to bring it into existence according to His purpose.

A denomination that is not existing by the will and action of God must necessarily have another source to which we may attribute its origin and existence. This source may be satanic or it may be mere human carnality and selfishness. It could be, and often is, a combination of the two.

The denomination that is not of God may be referred to as a “false” one. These are contributing to, and compounding, the problem of theological error, with the resulting religious confusion and spiritual ignorance in the church and world.

The place and function of the true denomination is the exact opposite. It exists for the purpose of eliminating spiritual ignorance and religious confusion by restoring, preserving, and communicating the complete and pure message of God’s revelation of Himself, i.e. “The Faith”.

The Scriptures reveal the nature of the true restoration movement which in turn gives us an invaluable aid in recognizing and discerning the “true” denomination from the “false”. This nature of the true restoration movement or denomination may be found in various places throughout the New Testament, but the clearest and most concise revelation of this nature is found in the book of Ephesians:

“With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”  
(Ephesians 4:2-3, 13-14)

This text reveals that the nature of the “true” denomination is composed of two distinct parts. The first is “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit”, and the second is “Till we all come in the unity of the faith”.

The first essential part of this nature of the true denomination means, simply and briefly, that we must realize and acknowledge that we are not the “only ones”. We are only a “part” of the total body called Christ’s Church. The true church of Jesus Christ is

NATURALLY “one” in the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The unity of the Spirit does constantly and naturally exist at all times no matter what happens. We may deny its existence, but it is existing unchanged by our foolish denial. We may prefer not to recognize this spiritual unity, but it continues to naturally exist in spite of that preference. A person may imagine that this unity is broken, but the disruption does not really or actually exist. It falsely exists only in his mind and attitude.

The only way we are to “keep” the unity of the Spirit is simply by maintaining our awareness and acknowledging of the fact. It is keeping the knowledge, attitude, and activity that we are not the whole church. In the case of our own Evangelical Methodist Church, how ridiculous it would be not to know and admit that there are many, many more real Christians outside of our denomination than there are inside it. If indeed we had one half of all the Christians in the world today, how pitifully small the Church would be.

Those people in religious groups and organizations today who claim they are the only real Christians, and maintain that their group or organization is the only true Church, to the exclusion of all others, are the ones who are disobeying God by failing to “keep the unity of the Spirit.”

Thus it is an essential part of the nature of the true denomination to continually know, believe, and

acknowledge that all men in whom Christ dwells by faith are in fact true members of His universal Church. And this fact is in spite of the errors of doctrine and philosophy they may have embraced as truths.

There is only one true Church of Christ. There never has been but one, and there never shall be but one. All who have truly repented of sin and received Jesus Christ by faith according to the teaching of the Word of God, and in whom He continues to dwell through faith, are members of that one true Church, regardless of what Christian denomination or Christian religious organization they may have joined.

The second part of the twofold nature of the true denomination is found in these words: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith”. This is a unity that does not exist naturally. It must be “earnestly contended for” at all times or this desirable and essential unity is attacked, infected, damaged, and even destroyed.

The true Church must be ever vigilant and constantly working to establish and maintain the “unnatural” unity of the faith. By “unnatural” we mean it does not always exist by its very nature as does the unity of the Spirit.

The “unity of the faith” is a theological unity. It is a unity of doctrine and philosophy. It is all of God’s people having and believing all of God’s Truth alike. I know that is a very simple way to state such a fantastic and thrilling thought, but that is simply and positively what it means. Just imagine all Christians knowing and

believing all the doctrines of “The Faith” according to their true value and in proper relationship each to the others. That possibility is very exiting.

That is when “Christ shall be formed in” every Christian (Galatians 4:19). That is the condition of stability and security as indicated by being “no more children (theologically immaturity), tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of (false) doctrine” by those who just “lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14).

It is a sad, well-known fact that this kind of unity does not presently exist in the entire Church of Jesus Christ. In fact, and I am very sorry to say, it does not exist in this small piece of His Church we call the Evangelical Methodist denomination. But let us be sure it could exist. This is undeniable by virtue of the fact that God reveals here and elsewhere that this is His desire, His prayer, and His objective for His entire Church. He holds up this “unity of the Faith” as His desire and purpose for His true denomination, and ultimately through them to the entire Church. It is a practical goal toward which to strive, and at which to finally arrive. When God tells us to cometo the unity of the faith, or to anything else, it necessarily follows that we surely can. Our God never invites, asks, expects, or commands a thing without also providing the power to do it

The Apostle Peter demonstrated profound and amazing theological insight when he conceived an infallible method

of positively identifying the ghostly figure out on the misty sea which had frightened them all. The figure had claimed to be their Lord, Jesus Christ. Peter said, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” And He said, “COME” (Matthew 14:28-29). That one word from the incarnate eternal God instantly gave this mere man the power, the real enablement, to do that which is physically and humanly impossible.

When God tells us to “COME” to the unity of the faith, may we never deny His faithfulness as the holy and omnipotent God. Let us be as believing as was Peter in going over the side of that boat in a storm. But unlike Peter, we should not doubt and turn away from the great theological principle that when God says “come”, He always provides the power to “come”. Let us never lapse from the eye of the human spirit called “faith”, back to the eye of the flesh, which in unbelief says, “What you are doing, attempting, or suggesting is impossible and foolish”; and as a result cause us to “sink” in failure also.

Let us be sure that if God tells me, Laura Stewart, John Pelt, Linam Prentice, and Tim Hicke to “COME” to the unity of the faith; for us to be ONE in Spirit, and ONE in theology, then I am sure that we can. And, I am sure that we shall, if we believe.

The statements of our Lord’s prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John have so often and by so many been abused and confused. But they afford us another

significant revelation of this divine desire and hope. He prayed: “That they may be ONE, as we are”; “I pray that they all may be ONE”; “that they also may be ONE in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”; “that they may be ONE, even as we are ONE”; “that they may be made perfect in ONE”. (John 17:11, 21, 22, 23).

God the Father is willing and able to answer this repetitious pleading prayer of God the Son for a real and whole unity of His Church in the world, and for the world.

This prayer is for a magnificent unity. A unity in both parts A unity of the Spirit and a unity of the faith. A spiritual and theological unity even as our Ephesians text exhorts us to. Our Lord prayed for a great and worthy unity which is a whole unity. It is not a half unity. It is the twofold unity in both the spiritual sense and in the theological sense. Just as a “half-truth” is not really a truth at all, even so a “half-unity” is not really a unity at all.

The true denomination is one which exists because God moved to raise it up. He brought it into existence according to His purpose. His purpose naturally and necessarily becomes that denomination’s purpose.

The nature of the true denomination is composed of the two parts of “the unity of the Spirit” and “the unity of the faith”. If the true denomination ever releases and abandons either of these two essentials of its nature, it



ceases to be a true denomination.

There are two very common kinds of false denominations in the world today, even as in history. These are those which profess to be “Christian” churches while they are guilty of doing one of two things. They may “keep the unity of the Spirit”, but discard the “unity of the faith”. Or, they may eagerly embrace the “unity of the faith” and abandon the “unity of the Spirit”.

To embrace and hold “the unity of the faith” without embracing and holding the “unity of the Spirit”, is the path of LEGALISM. While on the other hand, to embrace and hold the unity of the Spirit without embracing and holding the unity of the faith is the path of LIBERALISM. This position and attitude of liberalism leads to the extremely dangerous “lukewarm” theology of the Laodicean period of the church (Revelation 3:16), and finally issues in the deadly theology of the “Great Whore” of Revelation seventeen. The “Ecumenism” of satanic influence must embrace a “unity of the Spirit”, and discard “the unity of the faith”. It is a deadly deception to hold a “unity of the Spirit” at the expense of the “unity of the faith”. Also, it is disastrous to hold the unity of the faith, apart from the unity of the Spirit.

The Lord Jesus Christ prayed to the Father for a church unity which results from both of these essentials of the nature of the true denomination. A spiritual unity, and also a theological unity.

It is true that this two part nature is the standard of attitude and activity which God desires and expects from His entire Church. But when the total body, in a general sense, fails to do it, then a much lesser body within that larger body falls heir to this urgent, essential responsibility. This lesser body is God's true denomination.

The true denomination must always "keep the unity of the Spirit", while at the same time it is determined and striving "to come to the unity of the faith". This is first of all, and especially, within its own denominational fellowship. After this, it is further responsible, as God directs and gives gracious opportunity, to extend that restored message to the entire Church of Jesus Christ.

When we are allowing the Father to answer the prayer of the Son, the whole church is becoming ONE in a real unity, a spiritual and theological unity. Under this condition, the whole world "might believe".

Finally, let us refresh ourselves as to what gives the "true" denomination its status as such. At the first, it is because it begins to exist by divine action and purpose. But it continues in, and retains that status, not on the basis of its divine origin, but on the basis of its faithfulness in holding simultaneously and securely both essentials of its nature.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE RELATING TO OUR STUDY**

#### **THE SINGLE EYE**

#### **(SINGULARITY OF PURPOSE)**

The Evangelical Methodist Church is failing. We do not believe for one moment that she has already failed, but that she is clearly on the course of failure. If she continues in her present direction, she shall inevitably fail.

If that failure should finally occur, she will have failed her God, her POSTERITY, and her HERITAGE. The singular purpose of this study is that we may contribute to the prevention of that looming, potential failure.

The task assigned to this study commission is: “TO DETERMINE AND RE-ESTABLISH WHAT WAS, AND REMAINS, GOD’S PURPOSE IN RAISING UP THE EVANGELICALMETHODIST CHURCH”. (Minutes of the twenty-sixth Texas District Conference, Page 5, paragraph 5). We are convinced that this is the one great and urgent need of our church.

A SINGULAR PURPOSE, A “VISION”, is essential to success. It is not the last step to success, it is the first. There are three absolutely essential and indispensable steps or factors involved in success. Also, there is an essential order to these steps or factors. When the order is

proper, each factor produces the next essential factor. These factors in their proper order are: PURPOSE, UNITY, POWER, AND THEN SUCCESS. Purpose is essential to success. Unity is essential to success. Power is essential to success.

THE CRYING AND DESPERATE NEED OF THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH IS A “UNIFYING SINGULAR PURPOSE”. The moment we can all see our worthy purpose and embrace it, and hold it securely, is the moment we shall turn from our present course of failure, and steer our course to true success.

A singular purpose, when it is recognized and accepted, always produces unity. Unity always creates power. Power grants ability to successfully achieve the singular purpose.

If we are going to succeed in God’s purpose for us, we must “see” that purpose and embrace it as our own. When we do this we shall have an exciting unity. This exciting unity shall give us great power to succeed at His purpose for us. IT IS REALLY JUST THAT SIMPLE.

When we have no unity in our denomination, we may know immediately that, in effect, we have no conscious awareness of a unifying singular purpose. It is sure that we do have a singular purpose, but it is not generally known, or is not being accepted by sufficient numbers within the organization to produce the desired and essential unity.

The clear evidence is, as we shall show, that God did raise up the E.M.C. Therefore we do have a singular purpose. It is the exact same one that God had for raising us up. Since we are not experiencing the desired unity, power, and success, we are forced to the accurate conclusion that God's purpose for us is generally unknown or ignored. As a result of this, it is being violated. Our "vision" is not producing unity, power, and success because it cannot, as long as it continues unknown, ignored, and violated. It is simply not being allowed to produce these other essentials for us.

We would like to direct you to the Word of God, allowing Him to confirm what we are attempting to communicate to you about the essential, indispensable factor of singular purpose. The day He directed me to this text in His Word, I walked the floors in gratitude, excitement, and praise. (My wife can confirm this as literally true).

"The light of the body is the eye:  
if therefore thine eye be single,  
thy whole body shall be full of light.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole  
body shall be full of darkness. If  
therefore the light that is in thee  
be darkness, how great is that darkness!

No man can serve two masters; for  
either he will hate the one, and love  
the other; or else he will hold to the  
one, and despise the other. Ye cannot  
serve God and mammon"

(Matthew 6:22-24)

The most obvious and apparent “failures” of persons and groups are those which result from having no purpose at all. They are “PURPOSELESS” and therefore obvious failures. These never really become or do anything constructive at all. They just move, drift, and change with whatever their mood may be at the moment, and whatever the purposeless trends may be at any given time. These are not directly dealt with in our Scripture text, but God, as we, knows they exist in abundance in human society. When and where there is no purpose, there is always failure.

Our next consideration is directly referred to by our Lord in the text. This is the “MULTI-PURPOSED” person, group, or organization. Christ simply states: “no man can serve two masters”; and is telling us that when a person, group, or organization holds two or more purposes on equal level, there cannot be persistent, continuing commitment to any. A single purpose allows, even demands, total and constant commitment to it. This kind of commitment creates a discipline that assures success. Where there are two or more purposes, there is divided attention, divided planning, and divided activity. This causes complexity, contradiction, confusion, frustration, and defeat. It is a principle of eternal Truth that we simply cannot serve two masters, i.e. “Purposes”, “Visions”, WE CAN ONLY SERVE “ONE”.

God is stating this exact same principle when He says: “The double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). This condition of being “multi-purposed” is a state of indecision causing

instability, disunity, impotence, and failure.

We fully intend to show you clearly the singular purpose of God for the E.M.C. His purpose is naturally our true singular “Vision” or purpose. When we all see this singular divine purpose for us, we shall ask and expect you to embrace it, hold it, and serve it with us.

There is a third condition which God deals with directly in our text at hand. It is the condition of having a singular purpose which is the wrong one. He tells us: “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, HOW GREAT IS THAT DARKNESS!” This is the condition of “THE WRONG SINGULAR PURPOSE”. This is the most tragic condition of all.

Perhaps it will help to paraphrase this Scripture. “But if your ‘vision’, your singular purpose, should be the wrong one, a deception, a satanic substitute, the result shall be that everything you become, and everything you do, shall be wrong, false, and deceptive. For it is accomplished in contradiction and violation of the true and correct singular purpose that God intended for you. If that which you embrace and hold as your singular purpose is the wrong one, i.e. an evil, satanic substitute, then all of your so-called ‘success’ shall, in fact and reality, be colossal and tragic failures”.

It is an infallible fact that our “TRUE SINGULAR PURPOSE”, our “VISION”, shall give to us a unity that shall

in turn give us legitimate power for an exceeding great and genuine success. It is equally true that a “FALSE SINGULAR PURPOSE”, a “FALSE VISION” shall give to us a unity. But this is a unity that shall produce an “illegitimate” power for a supposed “success” which is in fact a tragic and dismal failure.

Every personal “success”, every local “success”, and every denominational “success” that is achieved in contradiction and violation of God’s true singular purpose for us is in reality a pathetic failure.

Let all of us together say that we want no “success” in our sight, that would be a “failure” in God’s sight. What may be termed a “success” by the standard of what we think to be our singular purpose, may be termed a “failure” by the standard of God’s true singular purpose for us.

Let us all see and agree that it is better to be “purposeless” or “multi-purposed” and in a process of failing as a result, then it is to have been deceived into embracing the wrong singular purpose which would give a unity and resulting power to achieve a “success” that would be in fact a “failure”.

We conclude this principle by emphasizing that a real success is impossible apart from our true singular purpose. If this study is successful in discovering and communicating accurately to your “sight” (VISION) what in God’s “sight” (VISION) is our singular purpose, then this study shall be the instrument of insuring absolute



success to God's true denomination we call the Evangelical Methodist Church.

## CHAPTER VIII

### APPLICATION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### THREE CLOSELY RELATED QUESTIONS

We have given seven important principles which are biblical, spiritual, and logical. Now we shall answer the three questions which were proposed in our introduction from these seven principles. On page nine of our introduction we have stated: “We have approached our task basically from the standpoint of three questions, all three of which are closely related.” First, does God ever denominate? Second, did God move to raise up the Evangelical Methodist Church? And third, since God did move to raise up the E.M.C., what was, and remains, His purpose in doing so?

DOES GOD EVER DENOMINATE? By this we are asking if God has ever been directly responsible for the existence of a separate and distinct organization of Christians within the total body of His Church? The natural conclusion being that if He ever has, He may have done so again under the same or similar conditions and circumstances, and for the same reasons and purpose.

We could base this natural conclusion on many valid principles of God’s Word, but the most obvious may be the best. It is the divine attribute of IMMUTABILITY

(Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). If God has acted on the principle of true denominationalism before, then it is an action consistent with His perfect nature, and He may do the same as many times as He chooses or deems necessary, without violating the perfection of the divine attributes.

Every action of God in all eternity past, present, and future, has, must, and shall forever be in strict accord with the sum total of all the divine perfections that constitute His divine nature.

So the question we are asking is: Does the principle of true denominationalism accord with, or violate, the nature of God? It is clear from our seven principles that God has, and does denominate every time certain conditions and circumstances require it. He never desires or prefers to do it, but has often been required to.

Our principles tell us that God was revealing Himself from the very beginning of the creation of man and that this self-revelation was progressive and accumulative. With the coming of Jesus Christ and God's closing of the canon of His Word, God's self-revelation to man was completed. It was total, and it was pure.

We have also found that God has committed that revelation into the keeping and responsibility of His true people. We have pointed out that the message of His self-revelation is deposited in His Church. This involves the factor of human weakness exposed to another factor of the real presence and activity of superior satanic and demonic

spirit powers. These powers create or constitute a hostile and dangerous environment of pernicious and insatiable error relentlessly striving to intrude into the precious treasure God has deposited in His Church. This treasure is "THE FAITH". This treasure is "once delivered", and if it is lost or destroyed it shall not be delivered a second time. Thus the circumstance or condition which required God to act in denominating is when His people are not strong and succumb to the temptations of the easier and more comfortable path of not contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to them. This is what we have termed the "theological breakdown". The weakness, irresponsibility, and failure of God's people to keep His self-revelation complete and pure, on a general or majority level, is when God has, does, and shall denominate in order to fulfill His promise of Psalm 100:5 that His Truth shall endure to all generations of men.

What was the problem in Noah's day? Moral. Yes, it was a very real moral problem, but it was a spiritual problem before it was a moral one. The one and only thing that precipitated this moral and spiritual disintegration was clearly a massive theological breakdown. It is always a theological breakdown that results in moral and spiritual disintegration.

Noah and his family represent the denominational principle which runs through the whole of Scripture. The flood and the Ark were God's action to be rid of

insatiable, pernicious error and to restore and preserve His progressing self-revelation in the world of men throughout its history to the last generation.

When God's deposit of Truth is threatened with a real possibility of extinction in the world, He takes action to remove and separate error from His Truth, and to preserve and perpetuate it. It is true that if God did not act in such circumstance and condition, then His Truth would not survive on the earth, His promise would fail, God would abdicate His throne, and all things would collapse into eternal ruin of chaos and darkness.

Does God ever denominate? The answer is beyond further question. It is "YES".

IT IS CERTAIN THAT GOD HAS AND DOES DENOMINATE EVERY TIME HE IS FORCED TO IT BY THE FAILURE OF HIS PEOPLE WHICH RESULTS IN "THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN".

In the "answering" of our three questions, we would like to deviate from the order of their "asking" which is found in our introduction. We have just answered the first, which was "does God ever denominate?" and we have definitely concluded that He has and therefore may again. The next question, in the order of asking, would have been, "did God move to raise up The Evangelical Methodist Church?" We would like to hold this question which was second in the order of asking, and place it third in the order of answering. In order to do this we shall say that we are going to show that God did in fact

move to raise up the E.M.C., therefore we are asking this next question on the basis of that yet to come conclusion.

SINCE GOD DID MOVE TO RAISE UP THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH, WHAT WAS HIS PURPOSE IN DOING SO?

If you have perceived it, you already know the answer to this question, for it has been stated many times, and in various ways, throughout this paper. Should we be required to state it in one word, that word would be “Theology”. By that one word we would mean God’s True Theology, THE MESSAGE OF HIS CHURCH which He calls “THE FAITH”.

We expect that by now you have become very familiar with the term “Theological Breakdown”. We may illustrate how we are using it by referring to what men call a “nervous breakdown”, or a “physical breakdown”. It simply means that in the light of an accepted standard of good mental health, and good physical health, we may observe a person that has fallen far below that standard of “good” and so he may be accurately described as having had a “breakdown”. Their mental or physical health has fallen far below the standard of “good”. This is what we mean by “Theological Breakdown”. It is that God has a “standard” of what is “good health” relative to “The Faith” He has deposited in His Church. When the health of that deposit falls far below that standard of “good”, it is accurate to term it a “theological breakdown”. We have concluded that when God sees that this breakdown reaches

a critical point, He denominates. He takes action to raise up a restoration movement.

If you can see clearly what we are meaning by this term “theological breakdown” then it shall be a simple matter to communicate to you exactly and precisely what God’s singular purpose for His true denomination is. IT IS THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN IN REVERSE. It is the exact opposite of theological breakdown. It may be said that it is the “antonym” of it.

God’s “VISION” naturally and necessarily becomes “OUR VISION” as His restoration movement. For our purposes the term “vision” and the term “purpose” are identical. God’s “vision” for us as His true denomination, is our “vision” as His true denomination. God’s singular purpose is our singular purpose. These terms are synonymous.

We have stated this “vision” or “purpose” by one word: “THEOLOGY”. Our singular purpose is “THEOLOGICAL”. It is directly related to the first principle of this study. As the exact opposite of the “theological breakdown” our singular purpose is “THEOLOGICAL RESTORATION”. It is the purpose of taking the critically ill theology of Christ’s Church and nursing it back to perfect health and strength.

This “theological restoration” takes two forms, one of which is NEGATIVE, and the other POSITIVE.

THE POSITIVE form is that we must reclaim and rediscover all Truth. We must restore “wholeness”, “completeness” to the message of the Church where some

parts or pieces are lost or missing. This requires much praying and much hard work in searching out the Word of God for the whole Truth of His revelation of Himself. Also, in order for this to be possible, we must “believe” that it is possible. We must believe God that we can “ALL COME TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH”, and that The Holy Spirit, now that He has come, “WILL GUIDE US INTO ALL TRUTH” (John 16:13).

THE NEGATIVE FORM of our purpose of theological restoration is simply and clearly that we must eliminate from God’s message, every error we find in it. This is surely a major responsibility of the true denomination. It is the role of the “ecclesiastical-theological Kidney”. We have described this kidney in our principle of “The Divine Method” in chapter V. We exist for the essential purpose of removing each and every “poison” of pernicious, insatiable error from “The Faith”. Or Lord calls this “leaven” and warns that a little of it, can leaven the “whole lump”, i.e. permeate the whole system of His Truth. We must remove all these poisons from the life-blood of His Church, which is its true theology, its message. For any Christian to knowingly “Accommodate” the least infection of error into our truth system is a violation of God’s purpose for us. But we must and shall always do this in the grace of God, in love and understanding, BUT WE MUST DO IT. When we are failing in this responsibility, when we refuse to DO IT, we begin the process of “theological breakdown”



in our own denomination, and thereby do the exact opposite of God's will and purpose for our very existence as His true denomination. Please see this! Those who fail God in this responsibility by ignoring error, and thereby accommodating error into God's deposit, are the ones who shall bear the final responsibility of the ultimate "theological breakdown" and death of their own denomination. This is exactly how the once great church that Dr. Hamblen withdrew from was destroyed. Some of her men, in positions of responsibility, failed in their responsibility and so failed their God, by ignoring and thus accommodating some "small" errors, which opened the door for some larger, major errors later. They let in a "little leaven" and it became a "lot of leaven" until it was so big and strong and widespread, that it could not be stopped, and so it "leavened the whole lump", and she was dead. The "salt" had lost is "savour" and it was thenceforth "fit for nothing". They were the "virgins" who lost their oil from their lamp, and when the "bridegroom" comes, they will find that their lamps have gone out (Matthew 25:1-13). TRUE THEOLOGY, THE FAITH, is the oil that fuels our lamps. It is our true theology that makes us "salt" and enables us to affect the corruption of the world. If we suffer (allow) the loss of our "oil", or our "savour", our lamps go out, and we are from that point on "fit for nothing".

SURELY OUR SINGULAR PURPOSE, OUR VISION, IS THE OPPOSITE OF "THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN" AND IS THEREFORE

“THEOLOGICAL RESTORATION”. That must forever be in both of its essential requirements; The acquisition of all truth and the elimination of all error. It has been stated beautifully by the courts of our great land for centuries - “THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, SO HELP US GOD!”

Before we can close the full answering of this question, which is the objective of the entire study, we must enlarge upon the full extent of God’s desires and hopes for us as one of His true denominations. We can state the fullness of those desires and hopes in four words: RESTORATION, PRESERVATION, PROCLAMATION, AND CONFRONTATION.

We have already dealt fully with “RESTORATION” which best defines and describes our first responsibility as God’s true denomination.

It is sure that our responsibility continues after successful restoration into the necessary task of the total Church, which is “PRESERVATION”. We are still under divine orders to “earnestly contend for THE FAITH which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Especially is this true now that “The Faith” has been restored. We must be diligent to KEEP IT WHOLE AND PURE. This is preservation.

Most certainly we, along with the entire Church of Jesus Christ, are still under divine command to “go ye into all the world and PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature” (Mark 16:15). That is “PROCLAMATION”. It is sharing our restored and preserved true

theology with any and all. It is “church extension” into other areas of our city and into other cities and towns. It is “evangelism”. This is sharing the great message of salvation with individuals as well as with the masses at every Spirit directed opportunity. Proclamation is also “mission”, both “home” and “foreign”. We must take this glorious restored and preserved Truth to all lands and all tribes.

The last thing we shall mention as a responsibility of the true denomination is “CONFRONTATION”. Our Lord has warned us that many “false christs” shall arise in the last days (see Matthew 24), along with many false prophets and that these would deceive the majority. We must confront every FALSE THEOLOGY that comes to claim the souls of men. Every satanic false theology that threatens the Church and the world must be confronted by the Truth. If there is no true theology to confront the false, then men shall believe the lie.

DID GOD MOVE TO RAISE UP THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH? Are we in His will as a separate, distinct organization of Christians within His total Church? Are we really a true denomination raised up by God according to His purpose?

In answering this question, we shall make a general application of our seven principles to three areas or factors of our denominational existence: our PAST, our FUTURE, and then our PRESENT. This is historical, eschatological, and contemporary application of our stated principles relative to our denominational existence.

We have shown and concluded that God does in fact denominate when He is required or “forced” to it by a certain condition.

We have shown and concluded that the consistent single factor which requires God to denominate is only, and always, ONE. IT IS THEOLOGICAL. The true denomination exists in the will and by the act of God according to His purpose.

The condition that requires God to denominate is “THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN”. But there are two applications of this one condition which may require God to denominate. These two are identical in nature and therefore are really one, but they are distinct from each other only by their location or occurrence in time. One is “historical”, and other is “eschatological”. The one relates to the past, while the other relates to the future.

“ESCHATOLOGY” is the area or part of God’s revelation of Himself that deals with the future state and condition of His Church, the world, and the souls of men.

This past and future application of the theological breakdown simply means that GOD NORMALLY, AND ORDINARILY, ACTS TO RAISE UP A NEW DENOMINATION OUT OF THE MIDST OF A PROGRESSING, CURRENT THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN, BUT ON SOME RARE OCCASION HE MAY MOVE TO RAISE UP A TRUE DENOMINATION IN DIVINE ANTICIPATION OF A YET FUTURE, BUT RAPIDLY APPROACHING, THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN. This is by the power of God to “foreknow,” by His “prescient” attribute. God

can “see” the end from the beginning. He knows what is going to happen in the future in every minute detail.

To sum this up, we are saying that God’s “TRUE DENOMINATION” comes into existence at the event of a current theological breakdown, or in divine anticipation of a yet future, but rapidly approaching one. It is essential that we understand the only time God has ever denominated, or ever shall, IS IN THE EVENT OF, OR IN DIVINE ANTICIPATION OF, A SERIOUS, CRITICAL, AND DANGEROUS THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN WHICH THREATENS THE EXTINCTION OF GOD’S TRUTH ON THE EARTH, AND THEREBY THREATENS THE FAILURE OF A DIVINE PROMISE AND THE RESULTING ETERNAL RUIN.

This truth affords us two separate and distinct criteria or standards by which we may determine if an existing denomination qualifies initially as a “true” one.

Let us recall and keep in mind that the criterion for determining the “true” denomination at the first, or in its origin, is by virtue of the fact that God moved to raise it up according to His purpose. But that it continues in that status of “true”, not on the basis of its divine origin, but only on the basis, or criterion, that it continues to hold both essentials of its nature securely. These two essentials are “KEEPING THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT” and striving to “COME TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH”. (Ephesians 4:3, 13).

We may examine our own E.M.C. by either or both of these criteria and know if God did in fact move to bring us into existence.

It would be very interesting indeed if we should combine these two criteria into a third. We are suggesting that it is possible, as we accelerate and gain momentum toward the end of the age of the Church, that cycles occur more rapidly, and that God could conceivably act to raise up a true denomination that would clearly and definitely fit both standards of divine origin at once. This would be one that God moved to raise up out of the midst of a great theological breakdown in current progress, and at the same time, it would also be one that He moved to raise up in divine anticipation of a still future, but rapidly approaching, even greater and more massive theological breakdown. THIS DENOMINATION WOULD BE “DOUBLY” A TRUE ONE.

In the case of the true denomination being raised up out of the midst of theological breakdown, its purpose would be, for the most part, to restore and preserve God’s Truth, while the one raised up prior to, and in divine anticipation of a future, approaching theological breakdown, would be to establish and prepare it to be strong enough to challenge and confront that breakdown when it arrives.

May we, The Evangelical Methodist Church, properly call ourselves a “TRUE” denomination as to our origin? Lets look at our past. We must examine the condition of God’s Church and its MESSGE in 1946, the historical date

of our origin. Did we come into existence for the direct reason of theology? Was there a serious, even critical, theological breakdown in progress at the time?

We have an abundance of printed materials which tell us our history and origin from the discipline to Dr. Hamblen's book, with many tracts and papers between. Most of us are aware, as these printed materials clearly and undeniably show, that THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH WAS RAISED UP OUT OF THE MIDST OF A MASSIVE, CRITICAL, AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN WHICH WAS TERMED "MODERNISM". Dr Hamblen and others, made it very clear that the total and only issue of the year of 1946 and the origin of the E.M.C. was theological.

The following are some quotes from Dr. Hamblen's book, "A Look Into Life":

Several years after I had joined the Methodist Conference, I observed the seed of Modernism beginning to show up in the schools...there I came into full knowledge of the groundwork of Modernism which has done its deadly work in the Methodist Church...

I began to notice things in the Sunday School literature that somehow did not sound like Methodism to me.<sup>1</sup>

When we examine the history of our origin, we must look at the conditions of the general Church universal. We must not look with the eye of methods, organization, material wealth, or numerical success.

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Hamblen, A Look Into Life (Abilene, Tex.: J. H. Hamblen, 1969), pp. 104-5.

We must look at the condition of the Church only with the eye of theology, the message of God. We examine the Church in 1946 from the sole viewpoint of its theological condition. THE ONLY VIEWPOINT FROM WHICH A DENOMINATIONAL EXISTENCE CAN BE JUSTIFIED IS THE THEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT: The wealth, methods, organizational power, and numerical success were in relatively good condition. The condition of the message, THE THEOLOGICAL CONDITION, WAS UNDENIABLY A SHAMBLES OF RUIN. It was a storm-tossed sea of instability. It was an ocean of theological errors and resulting religious confusion.

The most significant quote we could give to clearly establish that the E.M.C. originated out of the midst of a great theological breakdown is to give Dr. Hamblen's own statement as to why God had him to withdraw from the Methodist Church and thereby forfeit all the privileges and benefits accumulated by over forty years of faithful service.

I stood on the Conference floor, and with love in my heart to all and ill will to none, and of my own free will and accord, withdrew from the Methodist Church. I stated that I could not conscientiously remain in a church WHERE MODERNISM PREDOMINATED and where the leaders did not believe in and uphold the Articles of Religion of Methodism; where the Sunday School literature was filled with doubt of the inspiration of the Bible and the fundamental doctrines of evangelical Christianity; where the young preachers no longer believed the cardinal doctrines of the church. I had fought this deadly skepticism and infidelity right up to the time of



my withdrawal.<sup>1</sup>

That is sufficient historical evidence to show undeniably that the E.M.C. did in fact originate out of the midst of a great, critical, and dangerous theological breakdown called by church historians “THE MODERNIST-FUNDAMENTALIST CONTROVERSY”.

NOW WE MUST LOOK INTO OUR FUTURE which may confirm our status as a “true” denomination and give indication of our POTENTIAL as such.

It is our belief that the E.M.C. was raised up by God in what may properly be termed “A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD” between two very significant periods of the Church’s history. I am referring to the last two “churches” of the seven addressed in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation.

A great many conservative Bible scholars have interpreted the “seven churches which are in Asia” (Revelation 1:4) as the seven characteristic historical periods of the church down through the entire age. I agree with these. The last two characteristic periods of the historical condition of God’s Church are described by “Philadelphia” and “Laodicea”. Philadelphia is the only one of the seven that is not criticized or rebuked (Revelation 3:7-13), while “Laodicea” is criticized for being “lukewarm” and “knowest

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:" (Revelation 3:14-17). The point for now is that the church in the world shall go from her very best historical period to her very worst in one quick step of failure and deception It is my belief that our E.M.C. was raised up by God at the close of the period of Philadelphia, in order to be His strong instrument toward the opening of the Laodicean period.

The church in the Laodicean period is a deceived church. It "sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" while in the eyes of our Lord it is the exact opposite. So we find the church is headed for what may be termed its greatest, most dangerous and massive THEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN of its entire history.

There is one more very significant and applicable revelation along this line in the seventeenth chapter of the same book of Revelation. This is in reference to "THE GREAT WHORE" (Revelation 17:1). This "Whore" is a fantastically successful world-wide ecclesiastical, ecumenical system, i.e., A FALSE CHURCH. This false church shall "deceive" the whole world along with all its great people. The condition of the church of "Laodicea" is the "Great Whore" in formation, in its embryonic stage. The precise point where "Laodicea" suddenly becomes "The Great Whore" is the RAPTURE of Christ's faithful remnant.

It is most interesting to consider that "THE FUNDAMENTALIST-MODERNIST CONTROVERSY" MAY WELL BE THE

TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BETWEEN THAT PERIOD OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST'S CHURCH CALLED "PHILADELPHIA" AND THAT PERIOD CALLED "LAODICEA". The SO-CALLED "CONTROVERSY" between modernists and fundamentalists is far more than a mere "controversy", it is a "WAR", AN ALL-OUT WAR, AND IT IS NOT OVER. Some have thought it was over some years ago, but it appears they are mistaken. Apparently this war involves two great battles, not just one. Our own Dr. J. H. Hamblen, along with many others who were faithful to Christ and His Truth, fought long, hard, and well. They actually won their battle. Now we are involved in the second great battle between the "Modernists" and the "Fundamentalists". It hurts me to say that we Fundamentalists are losing this battle against modernism. And the final outcome looks bleak indeed.

The first great battle was theological. The second great battle is also theological. The great difference is that the first battle was DOCTRINAL. The second great battle is PHILOSOPHICAL. We are at this very moment in mortal combat. It is the Fundamentalist philosophy against the Modernist philosophy. And the evidence indicates that the Modernists are winning at this point.

Christ's application of the term "LUKEWARM" to Laodicea represents the "THEOLOGY" of the greater part of the church of Jesus Christ at the end of the age. MODERNIST THEOLOGY IS "COLD". FUNDAMENTALIST THEOLOGY IS "HOT". The Lord Jesus Christ tells Laodicea that He would prefer her to be "cold" rather than

“lukewarm” (Revelation 3:15). Why is this? It is because in the power to deceive, “cold” modernist theology was harmless in comparison with “lukewarm” Laodicean theology. The theology of the church in the Laodicean period shall be half fundamentalism, and half modernism. When we desire “lukewarm” water from the faucet in our modern kitchen or bathroom we simply turn on the “hot”, and then turn on the “cold” and mix the two about half and half. Lukewarm water in which to wash is nice, pleasant. But “lukewarm” theology which is fundamental in doctrine and modernistic in philosophy is so terribly, diabolically, deceptive that it makes The Lord sick to his stomach and He warns that church if they do not repent and get back to “hot” fundamental theology, He is going to vomit them out of Him.

It could not be more clear in the Word of God that the end of the age shall be a time of unprecedented deception. God warns us to “take heed that no man deceive you” (Matthew 24:4), “that day shall not come except there come a falling away first,” (II Thessalonians 2:3). He tells us in many ways and in many places that “false Christs” and “false prophets” shall arise and deceive the majority. God warns that because they will not “receive the love of the truth” that He shall send “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (II Thessalonians 2:10-11).

We conclude that the E.M.C. was undeniably born out of a great theological breakdown called “Modernism”, and it is also raised up in the face of a massive and almost

total theological breakdown called “Laodicea” which finally consummates in the “Great Whore”, which are both yet future, but rapidly approaching. Perhaps THIS MAKES US “DOUBLY” A TRUE DENOMINATION BY DIVINE ORIGIN. HE RAISED US UP OUT OF THE MIDST OF A TEOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN, AND IN THE FACE OF ANOTHER WELL ON THE WAY. THE E.M.C. IS A “TRUE” DENOMINATION. It is doubly a “true denomination” by virtue of its origin and purpose.

Now we come to the last application of principles to our denomination: We have applied these principles to our past and our future, now we must apply them to our present. This is the “Contemporary” APPLICATION. In the light of our principles we are asking where are we, and what are we doing, as God’s true denomination in the NOW?

This is the application which gives us the most concern. If we are being and doing what we ought to be and do in the present then we are being faithful to our past, our heritage, and we are going to succeed in and for our future, our posterity. It is our hope that we shall see and realize that THE PRESENT IS ALWAYS RESPONSIBLE TO THE PAST AND ESPECIALLY TO THE FUTURE

The only question our principles require is: Are we, in our present, being and doing the things that allow and validate the status of “TRUE” denomination? In other words, are we “keeping the unity of the Spirit” AND are we striving “to come in the unity of the faith?”

I believe we are at the most critical point of our denominational life. We are showing undeniable signs of holding “the unity of the Spirit” while at the same time we are not clearly, openly and securely holding that other essential of believing and striving to “come in the unity of the faith”. This second essential of the nature of the true denomination is the primary, major objective of God for His true denomination. It is the “theological” essential. This second essential of the nature of the true denomination most fully defines and describes the “Vision” or the singular PURPOSE of God for it. God is trying to say: “This is what I raised you up to be and do; to come to, achieve, restore and establish my people in the complete and pure revelation of myself which I call ‘the Faith’.” Who in all the church or world could ever ask for a more challenging and exciting “PURPOSE” or “VISION” than that? Why any Christian would ever resent or oppose this is beyond my understanding. I can understand resentment and opposition to wrong, unkind methods and attitudes in attempting it on the part of some, but not the thing itself.

When we apply these valid principles to our origin, we have no problems with God or man. It is also true that when we apply them to our potential, i.e. God’s need and purpose for us in the future, we have no problems. It is only when we apply them to our present, the contemporary application, that we find some dangerous problems that are causing us to be “IN AN ACCELERATING PROCESS OF FAILING”.

All of our glorious past as a true denomination

amounts to little, and all of the glory of our future potential as His true denomination shall never be, if we are not being and doing those things which our Lord wills and longs for us to be and do in the present, the NOW.

This is where we are “failing” as has been stated from the beginning of this study. As to contemporary application we are in serious trouble. We are failing. It must be understood that we are not saying any individual person of our church is failing. Neither are we saying that any local congregation within our denomination is failing. WHAT WE ARE SAYING, AND MEANING, IS THAT WE ARE CLEARLY AND UNDENIABLY FAILING ON THE DENOMINATIONAL LEVEL.

By this “failing” we mean that we, as a denomination are not being, becoming, or doing what God wills us to be, become, and do. This “failing” is in the contemporary present, THE NOW.

This “failing” in the present, amounts to a failure of our past, our heritage. We shall fail Dr. Hamblen, Dr. E. B. Vargas, Rev. Linam Prentice and all the others who made great sacrifice and struggle to have this denomination for God, the Church, and the world.

THIS “FAILING” IN THE PRESENT IS A POTENTIAL FAILURE OF OUR FUTURE, WHICH SHALL SO DESPERATELY NEED US TO BE THERE, AS WHAT GOD “PURPOSED” US TO BE, WHEN THAT FUTURE ARRIVES. IT IS A FUTURE THAT SHALL SO DESPERATELY NEED US TO HAVE COME TO IT ALREADY ESTABLISHED AND STRONG. This is what God foresaw us to be in His original “Vision”.

The one reason of this present condition of failing is that we have LOST OUR VISION. We “DO NOT KNOW” (This is that constantly recurring statement and attitude which typifies our denomination today). We have lost our awareness of just what God’s purpose for us is.

It is because we have not known what our singular purpose is that we are tending to lose or release, even abandon, that great essential of our nature as a true denomination which is for all of us “to come in the unity of THE FAITH”. Our major problem lies in the realm of Christian philosophy; the philosophy half of theology, more than in the realm of Christian doctrine; the doctrine half of theology.

Our attitude and actions are seemingly in accord with “the unity of the Spirit”, but they are clearly in violation of: “till we all come in the unity of the faith”. We must be reminded that the problem at the time of our origin, which was modernism, held strongly to “the unity of the Spirit”, but disliked and even detested “the unity of the faith”; the essential “theological” unity. They literally “hated” the ideas of doctrine, while they dearly loved the “togetherness”, the “fellowship” of the Spirit”.

Yes, I am suggesting that the subtle deception that caused the destruction and death of the once great Methodist Church, is the exact same subtle deception that is at this very moment causing the slow, but sure destruction and death of another true denomination: OURS.



WE MUST CORRECT OUR PRESENT. We must make positive contemporary application of the principles of the true denomination. We must renew and restore our true “Vision”, God’s singular purpose for us, AND WE SHOULD BEGIN TODAY.

We have shown that there is a real and great need for us as a true denomination in the future. In order to be there, still existing as a true denomination in that future, and to be what God purposed us to be, WE MUST BE AND DO WHAT IS GOD’S WILL IN THE PRESENT NOW!

THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH was originated, raised up by God, in a period of undeniable and great theological breakdown called “Modernism”. It was also raised up in the interim period just prior to the greatest and final theological breakdown. This is the prophesied “Great falling away”. The great deception, “The strong delusion” of “Laodicean lukewarmness” and the coming of “the Great Whore” at the end of the age.

On the basis of our criterion for the “true” denomination, we conclude that The Evangelical Methodist Church fits perfectly both aspects of our two part criterion for a divinely originated true denomination. We are doubly qualified as a true denomination Therefore we are doubly responsible to the general Church of Jesus Christ, and doubly responsible to the lost world of men. And what is more important and challenging is that we are doubly responsible before GOD.

The answer to our question: Did God move to raise

up The Evangelical Methodist Church? is a strong doubleYES. It is a YES, YES.

I conclude that we may all agree with Dr. J. H. Hamblen, our founder, in saying: “WE HAVE COME TO THE KINGDOM FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”.

## **A FINAL WORD**

What God desires and needs in these last days of the age of the Church cannot be accomplished by ONE SINGLE CHRISTIAN alone, no matter how popular, spiritual and energetic he may be. Neither can it be done by A SINGLE CONGREGATION of Christians, no matter how large, spiritual and successful they become. It can only be realized by A TRUE DENOMINATION. A growing, successful, advancing denomination composed of many truly united congregations. United in the spiritual and the theological sense, a true, whole unity. Each of these congregations composed of holy, committed Christians. Then hundreds of congregations, and growing to thousands, all in the will and purpose of God, until it is large enough and influential enough to make an impact on the great and desperate needs of the hour and the days just ahead, and until it can be effective to confront and challenge “Laodicea” and the deadly “Whore” to follow. I believe we can do this. I invite you to believe with me.

Perhaps it may be THE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH which shall be blessed and privileged to confront and challenge the great deception, the “strong delusion” of the closing days of the age. Even to the success of causing the Whore to mutter beneath her breath: “I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” (Revelation 18:7).

It may well be that this “saying in her heart” is the result of the presence and challenge of an existing true denomination which is large enough, and influential enough, to have challenged her coming, and she is thinking about that challenge to the point of concern and worry. I believe she is denying and attempting to dismiss from her mind something someone has been privileged to tell her. She has been “confronted” with the truth.

The discovery of this did real and great things for me in my hope for our true denomination. I am excited at the possibility that the E.M.C. may well be God’s instrument of confronting “Laodicea”, and through her, the coming “Great Whore”.

We have stated that what God needs in these last days cannot be done by one Christian, nor by a single congregation. It can only be realized by and through a true denomination, a growing, successful “true denomination”. In my finite mind, I can see no other way. Perhaps God, in His infinite mind, sees no other way. At least no other way acceptable to His plan and purpose for time and eternity.

It does appear that the “TRUE DENOMINATION” is the way God chooses to do what needs to be done, what must be done. THE TRUE DENOMINATION IS GOD’S METHOD. LET US NOT DENY HIM HIS METHOD!

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That we ask for a unanimous agreement concerning The Evangelical Methodist Church being a true denomination, “Having come to the kingdom for such a time as this”, and thereby acknowledge that “WE HAVE A VISION”.

2. That we ask for unanimous agreement and support for our “Vision”, God’s singular PURPOSE for us as one of His true denominations and thereby “RECOGNIZE OUR VISION”.

3. That we require everything we are and become, as to our nature and character, and everything we do, as to pursuits and activities, be in total and constant ACCORD WITH THAT “VISION”, THAT SINGULAR PURPOSE FOR OUR EXISTENCE AS HIS TRUE DENOMINATION and thereby “REALIZE OUR VISION”.

4. That we direct the chairman of this study commission to organize this study into lesson form for a curriculum, in order that it may be taught in classes, and perhaps become a required course for the ministers and laymen of our denomination.

5. That this study, once it is in lesson form, as a curriculum, be taught in seminars at our conferences, in our local churches, and ultimately in our own “Hamblen University” or “Bible College”.

6. That we memorialize this study to the General Conference of the summer of 1978 for possible adoption as an official “Vision” or denominational Purpose of our General Church.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The Bible

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Hamblen, J. H. A Look Into Life. Abilene, Texas: J. H. Hamblen, 1969.

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **Preface**

¶B.1 The purpose of Appendix B is to provide a home for documents/procedures created by the various General Conference Boards in conjunction with their delegated responsibilities.

¶B.2 All items included in Appendix B must first be nominated by one of the following General Conference Boards:

1. Board of Discipline Revision
2. Board of Finance
3. Board of Ministerial Relations
4. Board of Theological Research
5. Board of Youth Activities

¶B.3 The approval procedure shall be as follows:

1. The proposed document/procedure shall be presented to the Interchurch Council for approval or further revision.
2. The Interchurch Council-approved revisions shall be presented to the General Conference.
3. The Board of Discipline Revision shall incorporate conference-approved revisions into the Discipline in a timely manner.



## **APPENDIX B1**

### **Ministerial Scholarship Fund**

¶B1.1 The denomination shall establish a scholarship fund for qualified candidates pursuing pastoral ministry in the Bethel Methodist Church. The fund shall be known as the “Arthur L. Slye Ministerial Scholarship Fund,” in honor of Founding General Superintendent Rev. Arthur Slye. (Reference action taken at the 25<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the Bethel Methodist Church.)

¶B1.2 The fund shall be established with \$2000.00, allocated by conference action and administered by members of the Interchurch Council, whose majority vote as a Scholarship “Governing Board” will determine which candidate receives scholarship funds, how much, how long, etc.

¶B1.3 The fund may be enlarged by conference vote and by private donations.

¶B1.4 The following guidelines shall be adhered to:

1. A candidate must be recommended by the Board of Ministerial Relations.
2. The candidate shall appear before the Governing Board to present their character, calling, educational and vocational objectives.
3. To prevent any appearance of conflict-of-interest, any member of the Governing Board who is related to the scholarship candidate by blood or marriage, or who is a minister or member of the candidate’s current local church must abstain from voting on the awarding of scholarship money.
4. For meeting and budgeting convenience, scholarship funds should be considered and awarded on a schedule that coincides with Interchurch Council meetings or General Conference.
5. The Governing Board may appoint one or more member-representatives to mentor and supervise the recipient.
6. Scholarship funds may be used for any course unit the Governing Board determines is useful or appropriate in the pursuit of the ministry, but awards must be specific, not general.
7. Scholarship funds will be paid directly to the university, seminary or other accredited educational institution chosen by the recipient.
8. Scholarship awards must be reviewed and renewed annually by vote.
9. While receiving funds, the recipient shall, upon request, furnish transcripts or other evidence of their educational progress to the Governing Board or its representatives.
10. Scholarship funds shall cease whenever the recipient graduates or finishes the assigned unit or course of study for which funds were granted, or if the candidate suspends their pursuit of the ministry in the Bethel Methodist Church.

## **APPENDIX B2**

### **Ineligibility to Serve**

¶B2.1 The Bethel Methodist Church has the right to protect its public reputation from private misconduct and corruption which may reflect poorly on the denomination.

¶B2.2 Any person, while a member of the Bethel Methodist Church, convicted of a Class B Misdemeanor (punishable by up to 180 days in jail) or greater, shall be considered ineligible to serve in any position of denominational leadership or trust, including, but not limited to, General Officer, General Board or Committee chairman, Youth Camp/Retreat Director or any member of the Interchurch Council.

¶B2.3 The measure applies in the event of conviction, plea of no-contest, plea-bargain or any final court disposition, notwithstanding appeals, restitution and the member's constitutional rights.

¶B2.4 In the course of time, if the member acknowledges regret and displays true repentance, makes full restitution; and is recommended by his local pastor and another brother in Christ, he may appeal to both the Interchurch Council and the General Conference for full or partial reinstatement of previously forfeited rights and privileges. Upon receiving a favorable two-thirds (2/3) majority vote from both the Interchurch Council and the General Conference, full or partial reinstatement shall be granted.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

To be added at a later date.

## **INDEX**

To be added at a later date.