

REGULATIONS, DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNMENT
OF
THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

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**REGULATIONS, DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNMENT
OF
THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND**

CHAPTER 1

THE METHODIST CHURCH

1.01. "The Church of God which He purchased with His own blood"¹ has been ordained and established by Him for calling people into fellowship with Himself and with one another, according to His eternal purpose in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord.

Within this Church the Methodist Church holds a true place. For the Church of Christ exists as a visible community wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name and in obedience to His Spirit. It is the company of His disciples, consisting of such as confess Him to be the Son of God, accept Him as their Saviour and Lord, love one another and unite in the fellowship of those who serve the coming of His Kingdom on earth. In the providence of God the Methodist Church has been raised up to spread scriptural holiness through the land by the proclamation of the evangelical faith and experience. It preaches the gospel of "a free, full, present salvation"² for everyone who repents and believes upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This gospel is the offer to the most unworthy of a new heart and the power to live a new life.

The Methodist Church declares that all believers in Christ may know their sins forgiven, live day by day with the peace of God in their souls and, rejoicing with "joy unspeakable and full of glory,"³ may be enriched with all the privileges that belong to the children of God. It proclaims also the possibility, here and now, of Christians being made perfect in love through the obedience of faith.

Membership in the Methodist Church is not conditional upon the acceptance of any theological tests, nor dependent upon any traditional authority or ecclesiastical ritual. All persons are welcomed into membership who seek salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who evidence the same in life and conduct and service, and who seek fellowship with Christ Himself through fellowship with His people.

After adequate training, those who are approved by the Church Council are admitted to the full privileges and obligations of membership, and, at the earliest opportunity,

¹ Acts 20:28 AV

² MHB 316 v.3

³ 1 Peter 1:8 AV

are recognised at a service conducted by the minister in the presence of the congregation; the observance of the Lord's Supper being associated with this service. In the case of any persons about to be received into membership who have not been baptised, the Sacrament of Baptism shall be administered either before or in connection with this service. Those who take upon themselves the duties and privileges of membership of the Methodist Church have their names entered upon a Class Book and are placed under the care of a Class Leader. They are also expected, as far as they are able, to contribute to the funds of the Church and to engage in some form of Christian service.

The Methodist Church makes due provision for the regular and ordered Service of Holy Communion. It is the duty and privilege of all its members to avail themselves of every opportunity to partake reverently and in faith of the Lord's Supper. For in His Sacraments the presence of Christ, through His Spirit, is realised in response to the obedient faith of His people.

As the law of love is the law of Christ, the spirit and practice of Christian love is the supreme test of membership in the Methodist Church and an indispensable condition of abiding faithfully therein. Upon the same foundation of Christian love rest the social obligations and the sacrificial service for the Kingdom of God to which those who confess Christ commit themselves, after the example of their Lord and Master.

As union in Christian fellowship is the natural expression of Christian love, the distinctive Methodist institutions, and especially the Covenant Service, are based upon the assumption that those who love the Lord Jesus will become helpers one of another. Fellowship is, therefore, incumbent upon all the members of the Church. None may be counted as discharged from this debt of love, save those who are debarred, or physically unable to attend at the means of grace, and to these the Church owes special and tender care.

Methodism in Ireland

1.02 Methodism was introduced into Ireland in 1747. It met with formidable difficulties but the lives and labours of its preachers and leaders overcame persecution and prejudice, until in every part of the land its Divine mission was manifested by the multitudes turned from darkness to light, the quickening influence exerted on other Churches, and the raising of the standard of public morals.

Throughout the entire period of its history hundreds of its members annually found a home in other lands, where many of them were the earliest standard bearers of the Cross. Its numbers and influence in world-wide Methodism have been so great that the Methodist Church in Ireland is one of the least results of the Methodist Revival in this land.

In the years 1797-8 a controversy concerning the course taken by the Conference, in regard to the administration of the Sacraments and as to lay representation in the District Meetings and the Conference, resulted in a small secession which became united with the English Methodist New Connexion in 1799, and was the nucleus of the mission established by that Church in Ireland in the year 1825. Another and a more serious division took place in the years 1816-18, when the Conference permitted its ministers to administer the Sacraments, and the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society was then formed. Happily both these divisions have now been healed. In the year 1878 the Wesleyan Methodist Society and the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society united as the Methodist Church on terms made possible by an Act of Parliament obtained by the latter body in 1871. In the year 1904 the Methodist New Connexion successfully negotiated the transfer of its stations in Ireland to the Methodist Church, while in 1910 the few societies in Ireland belonging to the English Primitive Methodist Church were also transferred to the care of the Irish Methodist Conference.

General Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists

1.03 No code of rules can comprehend all the obligations of membership, but "The Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists," drawn up by John and Charles Wesley in 1743, still enshrine the spirit of fellowship and universal goodwill to which members of the Methodist Church acknowledge allegiance in the social, civic and economic conditions of the present day.

These Rules, published in the year 1743, under the title, "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, etc." are as follows: -

1. In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together; which, from thenceforward, they did every week, viz., on Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), I gave those advices from time to time which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meetings with prayer suited to their several necessities.
2. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a Society is no other than "a company of men having the form, and seeking the power, of Godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of

exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

3. That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each Society is divided into smaller companies, called Classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in every Class; one of whom is styled the Leader. It is his business-
 - (a) To see each person in his Class once a week, at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; To receive what they are willing to give towards the relief of the poor.
 - (b) To meet the Ministers and the Stewards of the Society, once a week in order to inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved; To pay to the Stewards what they have received of their several Classes in the week preceding; and To show their account of what each person has contributed.
4. There is only one condition previously required in those who desire admission into these Societies, viz., "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from their sins." But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First – By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most generally practised. Such is: The taking the name of God in vain; The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling: Drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity. Fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling: The buying or selling uncustomed goods: The giving or taking things on usury; i.e., unlawful interest: Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of Magistrates, or of Ministers. Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us: Doing what we know is not for the glory of God; as, The "putting on of gold, or costly apparel"; The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus. The singing those songs, or reading those books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God: Softness, and needless self-indulgence: Laying up treasure upon earth: Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these Societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly – By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible to all men:

To their bodies, of the ability that God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison:

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all they have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that "we are not to do good, unless our hearts be free to it."

By doing good especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only. By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed. By running with patience the race that is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation.

Thirdly – By attending upon all the ordinances of God: such are,

The public worship of God;
The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded;
The Supper of the Lord;
Family and private prayer;
Searching the Scriptures; and
Fasting or abstinence.

7. These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in His written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know His Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

(Signed)
May 1, 1743

JOHN WESLEY
CHARLES WESLEY

CHAPTER 2

MEMBERSHIP IN THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

A Methodist Community

2.01 consists of:

- (a) Members of the Methodist Church in Ireland, recorded on the Membership Register,
- (b) Other adults with whom the church has an ongoing pastoral responsibility, recorded on the Congregational Register,
- (c) Those on the Junior Register.

Admission to Membership

2.02 The Methodist Church in Ireland welcomes into membership those who

- (a) have committed their lives to Christ,
- (b) show evidence of that commitment in life, conduct and service,
- (c) and formally accept the discipline of the Methodist Church and obligations of Membership.

2.03 Such persons, after appropriate training under the pastoral and teaching oversight of a suitable leader, and approval of the Church Council, may be admitted into the privileges and obligations of membership and their names placed on the Membership Register.

Members of other Churches who satisfy the above requirements may be admitted to membership.

Privileges of Membership

2.04 Every member shall have their name recorded in the Membership register and should receive pastoral support and encouragement in their discipleship from the local minister and lay leaders.

2.05 Only those whose names are recorded in the Membership Register shall be entitled to be members of the Church Council, Circuit Executive, District Synod or Conference.

Obligations of Membership

2.06 All members are expected to

- (a) attend the means of grace, especially the ministry of the Word, united prayer, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,
- (b) join with others in Christian fellowship,
- (c) engage in some form of Christian service,
- (d) financially support the ongoing work and mission of the church through regular giving,

so far as can reasonably be expected.

Review of Membership

2.07 The Membership Register shall be updated as necessary and will be formally reviewed annually prior to the final Church Council of each calendar year. At this meeting a full report on the Local Methodist Community should be presented. Following the presentation of these figures to the Circuit Executive meeting, they shall be returned to the Connexional Membership Secretary.

2.08 A member, who in the judgment of the Church Council, has persistently failed to fulfil the Obligations of Membership, despite being reminded of those obligations, shall be regarded as having withdrawn from membership of the church and her/his name shall be removed from the Membership Register.

Marriage of Members

2.09 Marriages solemnised according to the usages of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall be conducted by a minister in full connexion with the Conference. The form of service shall be that which is authorised by the Conference.

Dual Membership

2.10 No person shall be reckoned as a member on more than one Circuit at the same time. When a member is enrolled on a second Circuit, the previous membership is thereby terminated.

Transfer of Members

2.11 When a member is transferring from one Circuit to another, a written Notice of Transfer shall be sent by the minister with pastoral responsibility for that member to the Superintendent of the Circuit to which the member is moving. If the member is not able to confirm which circuit they hope to associate with, the Notice of Transfer shall be sent to the Superintendent of the District concerned.

- 2.12** When a Notice of Transfer is received, if the member wishes to associate, even temporarily, with a society on that Circuit or District, the Superintendent of the relevant Circuit shall then be accountable for the member, and shall formally acknowledge reception of the transfer. If the member cannot be found by the Superintendent who received the Notice of Transfer, or does not wish to associate with any society on the local Circuit/District, the minister who transferred the member shall be notified and shall resume pastoral responsibility for the member.
- 2.13** A member transferring to any place out of Ireland shall be entered in the Membership Register as an Emigrant. A member seeking to transfer to any other denomination shall be entered in the Membership Register as having Ceased to be a Member. In every case where possible a Notice of Transfer shall be sent.

Congregational Register

- 2.14** The Congregational Register shall contain the names of those, aged 16 and over, who have not accepted or no longer accept the privileges and obligations of Membership, listed in two categories:
- (a) those who attend frequently at worship,
 - (b) those with whom there is pastoral contact.

These persons shall be placed under the pastoral oversight of Congregational Visitors appointed by the Church Council.

Those on the Congregational Register shall not be counted when consideration is given in regard to the rights, duties and privileges of Circuits.

Junior Register

- 2.15** The Junior Register shall consist of all those under the age of 16 who have not yet accepted the privileges and obligations of Membership, including a record as to whether each person has or has not been baptised. Suitable persons shall be appointed by the Church Council to exercise pastoral care and, where possible, to provide fellowship for all on this register.

After the age of 16 the names of those who have not accepted the privileges and obligations of membership shall be transferred to the Congregational Register.

Those on the Junior Register shall not be counted when consideration is given in regard to the rights, duties and privileges of Circuits.

Membership Classes

2.16 Classes in which people shall be instructed in preparation for their intelligent acceptance of Membership shall regularly take place in every Circuit.

Connexional Membership Records and Statistics

- 2.17** (a) The Conference shall appoint annually a minister as Connexional Membership Secretary.
- (b) Circuit Superintendents shall ensure that Membership, Congregational and Junior Registers on their circuits are accurately maintained, including records of all members transferred and received together with the names of any other Circuits or Churches concerned.
- (c) The Circuit membership of resident pupils at Wesley College, Dublin and Methodist College, Belfast, or any other secondary boarding school, as well as students in third level education, shall ordinarily be retained on their home Circuits. With the permission of the individuals concerned, or their guardians, notification of their membership shall be sent by the minister with pastoral responsibility for them to the appropriate Chaplain at the educational establishment concerned.
- (d) Annual statistical records of numbers on the Membership, Congregational and Junior Registers, as of the fifteenth day of December, shall be sent to the Connexional Membership Secretary, by Superintendents of Circuits, together with a list of receptions and removals of members, with the appropriate names and addresses.
- (e) The Connexional Membership Secretary shall make enquiry into every case in which a member reported as removed is not also recorded in the relevant report as having been received.
- (f) The Secretary shall compile from the Annual returns a statement of membership which shall be forwarded to the District Synods and submitted to the Conference as the official membership figures for the year.

CHAPTER 3

MEANS OF GRACE

3.01 The means of grace recognised by the Methodist Church include:

- (a) public worship and the Sacraments,
- (b) meetings for fellowship, prayer and Bible study,
- (c) family worship,
- (d) individual Bible study and prayer.

Public Worship

3.02 The usual order of public worship consists of:

THE PREPARATION which includes prayers of adoration and confession, with an assurance of God's forgiveness.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD through the Old and New Testament Scripture readings and the Sermon. The use of the Lectionary is recommended.

THE RESPONSE in prayers of Thanksgiving, Intercession and Dedication.

Hymns, Songs, a Children's Address and other activities should be inserted where appropriate.

The Methodist Hymn Book (1933), Hymns and Psalms (1983), Singing the Faith (2011), the Revised Common Lectionary (1992), the Book of Offices (1936) and the Methodist Service Book (1975) are authorised for use. The Methodist Worship Book (1999) is recommended for use subject to the approval of the Church Council. These shall be used for the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for the celebration of marriage.

Services at the New Year traditionally include a Watchnight Service on the last night of the year and the Covenant Service on the first Sunday of the year.

The Sacraments

3.03 There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ, that is to say, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

3.04 Baptism.

The Sacrament of Baptism shall, if possible, be administered in connection with public worship, and, in general, only to the children of members and those on

the Congregational Register, and to adults who have not previously been baptised. Careful instruction on the meaning of baptism shall be given to parents of children and to adults requesting this Sacrament.

- (a) All baptisms shall be registered by the officiating minister in the Baptismal Register. Baptisms of children shall also be entered in the Junior Roll of the Circuit.
- (b) No probationer shall administer this Sacrament without the express sanction of the Circuit Superintendent.
- (c) Recognising that the Church has not authorised rebaptism, a minister receiving a request for baptism from one who has been baptised as an infant, shall advise the applicant regarding Methodist usage. Should the applicant, on grounds of conscience, still desire this ceremony, the minister concerned shall seek advice on this matter from the President through the Superintendent of the District.

3.05 The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly in every church and be administered by a minister in full connexion.

The administration shall be by the Superintendent or other minister in full connexion except as provided for in paragraph 5D.10 and subchapter 6D.

Admission to the Lord's Supper shall be the privilege of members of the Church, and such members of the congregation, including children who wish to communicate, as the minister may judge to be eligible.

The wine used in the ordinance shall be unfermented.

At observances of the Lord's Supper an offering for the Benevolent Fund shall normally be received.

Meetings for fellowship, prayer and Bible study

3.06 Meetings for fellowship, prayer and Bible study shall be held on church premises, in homes and other suitable places, in different parts of the Circuit, at times which will not interfere with public worship.

Family Worship

3.07 Regular and reverent family worship and the saying of grace before meals are encouraged in all homes. Members are encouraged to engage in regular reading of and meditation on Scripture and in private prayer.

CHAPTER 4

MINISTRY

4.01 The Methodist Church in Ireland affirms that the whole body of Christ is called to share in his priestly ministry of reconciliation. It is a ministry exercised within the community of faith as well as within and for the wider sphere of community, society and world. Within this general calling, the individual members of the Church express their shared ministry in a variety of ways. Some (often simply referred to as ‘ministers’) are set aside for life and ordained as ministers of Word, sacrament and pastoral oversight. Some (for example, Local Preachers) are appointed to a particular office which they exercise with the authority and under the discipline of the Church as a whole. Others exercise a role within the ministry of the local Church or Circuit which may reflect a formal appointment (for example, as Steward, Sunday School Teacher or Pastoral Visitor) or may reflect (for example, in the case of members of a choir or prayer ministry team) less formal, but still essential, aspects of the Church’s ministry.

The Board of Ministry

4.02 The Board of Ministry shall meet at least twice in each Connexional year and have responsibility for the development and oversight of lay and ordained ministry within the Methodist Church in Ireland, in accordance with the directives of Conference.

4.03 The Board of Ministry shall be appointed annually by Conference and consist of:

- (a) The President, the Lay Leader, the Secretary of Conference, and the President-Designate;
- (b) The Chair of the Board of Ministry, appointed by the Conference;
- (c) The Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee, representing that Committee;
- (d) The Training and Development Officer, representing the Lay Ministry Committee;
- (e) The General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children’s Department;
- (f) The Chair of the Board of Governors of Edgehill Theological College;
- (g) The Principal of Edgehill Theological College;
- (h) The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department;

- (i) A representative of the Pioneer Mission Committee, designated by the Church Development Board;
- (k) The Connexional Ministerial Local Preachers' Secretary;
- (l) The Director of Ministry, who shall convene and facilitate the Board.

4.04 The Board shall have the following constituent Committees:

- (a) Ordained Ministry Committee (*see Chapter 5*)
- (b) Lay Ministry Committee (*see Chapter 6*)

4.05 The following also relate to the Board:

- (a) Edgehill Theological College (*see Chapter 25*)
- (b) Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Department (*see Chapter 20*)
- (c) Pioneer Mission Committee
- (d) Sabbatical Committee

CHAPTER 5
ORDAINED MINISTRY
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5A THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF AN ORDAINED MINISTER

5A.01 An ordained minister is ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, in full connexion with the Conference and answerable to Synod and Conference in matters of discipline and doctrine.

5A.02 The office of an ordained minister is to:

- (a) win and watch over souls as one who must give account,
- (b) feed and guide the congregation by regular and faithful preaching, teaching and pastoral care,
- (c) recognise that the quality of her/his life and witness will determine her/his effectiveness under God,
- (d) exercise such self-discipline that no offence or occasion to stumble is given to anyone,
- (e) act with particular responsibility in matters where her/his actions may be the cause of physical or moral harm to others.

5A.03 In addition, the duties of a Methodist ordained minister shall include:

- (a) to obey reverently the ordained ministers placed in authority over her/him, and not to take part against her/his Superintendent or encourage anyone who opposes her/him in the discharge of official duties,
- (b) to attend to all matters pertaining to Methodist discipline,
- (c) to meet and confer with the Church Council in regard to the members under its care, and the work of God in each Society,
- (d) to remember that Methodism, as a Church, does not exist for the purpose of party and that Methodists are especially bound by the example of their founder and by the original principles on which the Societies were formed, to be "friends of all, and enemies of none,"
- (e) to regard ordained ministerial colleagues as co-workers in the Gospel and when necessary defend each other's character and reputation and endeavour each to prefer the other before self.
- (f) to engage in further study, supervision and appraisal, training and professional development as directed by the Ordained Ministry Committee.

Superintendent Ministers - Duties

5A.04 The ordained minister whose name stands immediately after the name of a Circuit, except where specified otherwise in the List of Stations, is the Superintendent of the Circuit.

The Superintendent shall be accountable for the proper maintenance of discipline in the Circuit. Her/his colleagues are co-pastors, with whom he/she shall confer on all matters affecting the interests of the Circuit, but the ultimate responsibility for action shall rest with her/him.

Subject to the rules and usage in regard to the different matters, it is the duty of the Superintendent:

- (a) To instruct the probationers under her/his care in the various details of their work; to inquire into their behaviour and studies, and, at proper times, into their Christian life and experience.
- (b) To admit into, and exclude from Church membership, in conjunction with the Church Council; to oversee effective pastoral care, to keep lists of members received from or removed to other Circuits; to forward the Membership Schedule to the Secretary of the Membership Bureau, to enter all necessary particulars in the Circuit Schedule Book; to forward in due time all such statistical information relating to the Circuit as may be required by rule.
- (c) To arrange with her/his colleagues for the holding of Congregational Meetings, weeknight meetings and Church Council meetings; to arrange for the holding of Circuit Meetings, Trustees' Meetings and meetings of the Circuit Executive; to see that the Circuit plan is prepared and fulfilled; to see that public worship is conducted in all the Churches and other preaching places as provided for in the Circuit plan; that special attention be given to the opening of new preaching appointments, and so far as possible, in conjunction with her/his colleagues, to engage the members in such suitable work as may develop their gifts and contribute to the greater efficiency of the Church.
- (d) To secure through the Connexional Team prior permission of the General Committee before discontinuing Sunday services in any Church or preaching-place located on the Circuit.
- (e) To ensure that all official meetings of the Circuit are properly chaired.
- (f) With the assistance of the Circuit Executive to nominate Circuit Officials for election by the Circuit Meeting.

- (g) To nominate suitable persons for the office of Local Preacher and suitable candidates for the ordained ministry.
- (h) To ensure that the accounts of the Circuit and the Society Treasurers, the accounts of the Trustees and all other accounts pertaining to any department of Circuit work are properly kept and duly audited.
- (i) To ensure that the property is kept in good repair, and used only for the purposes specified in the Deeds under which it is held; to obtain the requisite sanction, before proceeding with the erection, enlargement, purchase, or sale of any Trust property; to take care that all property acquired for Trust purposes in the Circuit is duly settled according to the Statutory Trusts; and that new Trustees are duly appointed when necessary.
- (j) To ensure that only persons duly accredited are permitted to preach in any place of worship under her/his care.
- (k) To ensure that the Baptismal Register, the Circuit Schedule Book, the Furniture Book, the Circuit Register of Members and Classes, lists of families belonging to the congregation with their names and addresses, lists of children on the Circuit who are receiving grants from the Child Care Society, with all other books, lists, or forms required to be kept, are duly and accurately filled, kept and presented to the appropriate authorities, or left for her/his successor, or otherwise dealt with as the regulations of the Conference may require.
 - (i) The names of members of Society shall be entered in the Membership Register and Quarterly Class Roll
 - (ii) The Membership Register and Quarterly Class Roll shall be submitted to the Spring Synod for examination and report.
- (l) To submit the Circuit Schedule Book for examination by the District Superintendent.
- (m) To ensure that all collections for Connexional Funds are made at the proper times, and the amounts forwarded promptly to the respective Treasurers.
- (n) To furnish lists of preaching places and members of Society to Superintendents to whose care the same may have been transferred on account of changes in Circuit boundaries.
- (o) To fill the Circuit Plan Schedule for the use of her/his successor when leaving a Circuit.
- (p) To attend to all other matters and duties pertaining to her/his office, or which may, from time to time, be specified by the Conference.

5B ORDAINED MINISTRY COMMITTEE

5B.01 The Ordained Ministry Committee shall have responsibility for aspects of the ordained ministry, including:

- (a) discernment and testing of the call to ordained ministry in the Methodist Church in Ireland;
- (b) the ongoing training of Probationers;
- (c) the continuing development of those in ordained ministry;
- (d) support for those exercising ordained ministry.

5B.02 The Committee shall be appointed by the Conference and consist of:

- (a) The President, the Lay Leader, the Secretary of Conference, the Ex-President, and the President-Designate;
- (b) The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department;
- (c) District Superintendents;
- (d) The Ministerial Secretary of the Local Preachers' Committee;
- (e) The Director of Ministry;
- (f) The Principal and Director of Studies of Edgehill Theological College;
- (g) The Ministerial Psychological Assessor;
- (h) The Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Committee, appointed annually by Conference.
- (i) Six ordained ministers who shall have travelled at least five years after ordination, selected as follows:
 - (i) three shall be co-opted by the Ordained Ministry Committee;
 - (ii) three shall be elected by the Ministerial Session of Conference.
- (j) Six lay persons, who shall be at least twenty-five years of age and have been members of the Methodist Church in Ireland for at least three years, selected as follows:
 - (i) one shall be nominated by the Board of Governors of Edgehill Theological College from the membership of that Board;
 - (ii) three shall be elected by the Ministerial Session of the Conference;
 - (iii) two shall be co-opted by the Ordained Ministry Committee.

5B.03 Elected or co-opted members of the Committee shall serve a four-year term. At the completion of the term they may be elected or co-opted for one additional four-year term, but shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

5B.04 A vacancy of an elected member of the Committee shall be filled by a vote of the Conference from the names of three ordained ministers or lay persons, as required, nominated by the Committee, and any additional nominations in the Conference.

Meetings and duties of the Ordained Ministry Committee

5B.05 The Committee shall:

- (a) normally meet in October, January and April;
- (b) oversee the process for those candidating for the ordained ministry and make recommendations to the Ministerial Session of the Conference;
- (c) in consultation with the Discipline and Advisory Committee, monitor the progress of all those in training for the ordained ministry through to ordination and make recommendations to the Ministerial Session of the Conference;
- (d) in consultation with Edgehill Theological College determine the required studies and reading for Probationer ministers;
- (e) appoint a Ministerial Psychological Assessor to oversee the psychological testing of all candidates and psychological formation during training;
- (f) delegate to the officers of the Committee and the Director of Ministry the consideration of all matters relevant to the Committee between its meetings;
- (g) recommend the allocation of probationers, students and candidates to circuit, to Edgehill Theological College.

The Stationing Committee shall act upon this recommendation. When the report of the Ordained Ministry Committee is presented to Conference it shall be altered only by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in the Conference.

- (h) recommend to Conference, for approval, the printing of university degrees of ordained ministers, together with their source, in the Minutes of Conference, subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) they were obtained from a University or College in Great Britain or Ireland, or from an overseas institution, which the Ordained Ministry Committee considers is of appropriate standing.

- (ii) Honorary degrees shall be indicated by the suffix (Hon.) after the name of the University.
- (iii) Ad Eundem degrees shall not be printed.

5C CANDIDACY

- 5C.01** (a) A person intending to offer as a candidate for the ordained ministry shall:
- (i) be a member of the Methodist Church in Ireland;
 - (ii) be a fully qualified local preacher and provide a portfolio outlining worship and preaching experience;
 - (iii) satisfy her/his local Superintendent that he/she assents to the doctrinal standards of the Methodist Church in Ireland and indicate that he/she is willing, on reception into Full Connexion, to uphold the discipline of the Church and to accept the obligations to be at the disposal of the Conference for stationing;
 - (iv) be prepared to accept the form and length of training prescribed by the Conference, and, if over the age of 55 years at the commencement of the candidating process, commit to offer a minimum of five years stationed ministry following ordination.
- (b) The candidating process shall take place over the course of eighteen months, normally consecutive, referred to herein as Year 1 and Year 2.
- (c) Where a person has offered as a candidate and has been unsuccessful, he/she may not offer again as a candidate until eighteen months have elapsed from the date of the Conference at which her/his original application would have been recommended, had that application been successful.
- 5C.02** (a) In January of Year 1 a conversation shall take place between the candidate, the Superintendent of the circuit of which he/she is a member, her/his local ordained minister, society steward and circuit steward with the purpose of exploring the candidate's call to ordained ministry and proposed candidature and of determining whether the candidate satisfies the qualifying conditions as set out in 5C.01.
- (b) The prospective candidate shall be provided with the Criteria for Selection and an outline of the candidating process and shall be given the application form (C1) to be completed and returned to the Ordained Ministry Committee no later than the end of February of Year 1.
- (c) Any person normally expected to participate in the conversation may be substituted by an appropriate alternative participant if this is deemed appropriate in the particular circumstances.
- (d) If the Superintendent is also the candidate's local ordained minister, another ordained minister of the circuit or district shall also participate.

- (e) Not later than the end of February in Year 1 the Superintendent, local or district ordained minister and Circuit Steward shall provide an agreed report informed by the entire knowledge of the candidate and by the meeting with the small group on form C2 concerning the candidate's suitability for ordained ministry and shall notify the Ordained Ministry Committee of the candidate's intention to offer as a candidate for ordained ministry.
 - (f) If the candidate has not been resident on the circuit for at least the preceding two years, a written report on supplemental form C1(a) shall be obtained from the candidate's previous Superintendent.
 - (g) If the Superintendent has not been Superintendent of the circuit for at least the preceding two years, a written report shall be obtained on supplemental form C2(a) from her/his predecessor.
- 5C.03** (a) A meeting of the Circuit Executive shall be held in March of Year 1 at which the candidate shall give an account of her/his conversion and call to ordained ministry and answer any subsequent questions. The members of the Circuit Executive will receive a copy of the application form C1 prior to this meeting (all hard copies of which to be destroyed and electronic copies deleted after the meeting is finished).
- (b) The candidate's Superintendent shall nominate the candidate and shall present the written report on form C2 and any supplemental report on form C2(a).
 - (c) A vote by secret ballot shall be taken on the candidate's nomination and a record of the voting showing the numbers entitled to vote and the numbers voting for and against shall be recorded in the minutes.
 - (d) Only those members present throughout the presentation of reports and information, interviews, questioning and discussion shall be entitled to vote on the nomination.
 - (e) A candidate who secures approval by a vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting shall proceed to the next stage of the candidating process with the approval of the Circuit Executive.
 - (f) A candidate who does not secure approval by a vote of at least two-thirds of those present and entitled to vote shall not proceed further.
 - (g) An agreed report on form C3 shall be provided by the Circuit Executive and sent with form C2 to the Ordained Ministry Committee by the end of March in Year 1. Form C3 should include comments from the Circuit Executive under the headings relating to the criteria from Agreed Expectations for Candidates.

- (h) A report addressing the candidate's general state of health and fitness shall be obtained by the candidate from her/his General Practitioner and sent to the Senior Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee by the end of March in Year 1. Should the General Practitioner's Report highlight significant medical issues, the Ordained Ministry Committee may refer the candidate to the Medical Adviser of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 5C.04** (a) Between March and July of Year 1 the candidate shall prepare a Worship Portfolio in a format prescribed by the Ordained Ministry Committee under the guidance and supervision of a local tutor, who shall be appointed by the Ordained Ministry Committee.
- (b) The Worship Portfolio shall focus on the candidate's experience in leading different forms of worship and shall include an assignment on a title to be set by the Ordained Ministry Committee.
- (c) The tutor and the candidate shall be provided with guidance notes for the completion of the Worship Portfolio.
- (d) An assessment of the Worship Portfolio on form C4 shall be completed by the local tutor and sent to the Ordained Ministry Committee not later than the end of July of Year 1 for submission to the District Ministerial Synod.
- 5C.05** (a) Between March and July of Year 1 the candidate shall prepare a Ministry Portfolio in a format prescribed by the Ordained Ministry Committee under the guidance and supervision of a local tutor, who shall be appointed by the Ordained Ministry Committee.
- (b) The same person should not normally act as tutor for both the Ministry Portfolio and the Worship Portfolio.
- (c) The Ministry Portfolio shall focus on matters of belief and practice and shall include an assignment on a title to be set by the Ordained Ministry Committee.
- (d) The tutor and the candidate shall be provided with guidance notes for the completion of the Ministry Portfolio.
- (e) An assessment of the Ministry Portfolio on form C5 shall be completed by the local tutor and sent to the Ordained Ministry Committee not later than the end of July of Year 1 for submission to the District Ministerial Synod.
- 5C.06** (a) In April of Year 1 the candidate shall be assigned to a placement by the Ordained Ministry Committee.

- (b) The placement shall normally include a role in leading worship in the course of four services of worship and an additional commitment of six hours per week for a period of six weeks.
- (c) The Ordained Ministry Committee shall appoint a Placement Supervisor who shall be responsible for providing appropriate support, supervision and guidance to the candidate.
- (d) At the conclusion of the placement a report on form C6 shall be prepared by the Placement Supervisor and sent to the Ordained Ministry Committee not later than the end of July of Year 1 for submission to the District Ministerial Synod.

- 5C.07**
- (a) At the District Ministerial Synod in Year 1 the candidate shall make a presentation on a topic to be decided by the Ordained Ministry Committee.
 - (b) The members of the District Ministerial Synod shall be provided with copies of forms C1-C6 in advance of the meeting and the District Superintendent shall in addition receive copies of the Worship Portfolio and Ministry Portfolio.
 - (c) The candidate may be asked to respond to questions raised by members of Synod.
 - (d) On the proposal of the candidate's Superintendent a vote shall be taken by secret ballot.
 - (e) Only those ordained ministers who have read all written reports furnished and have been present throughout the candidate's presentation and interview, the presentation of any additional information and any relevant discussion shall be entitled to vote on the nomination.
 - (f) A candidate who secures approval by a vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting shall proceed to the next stage of the candidating process with the approval of Synod.
 - (g) A candidate who does not secure approval by a vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may choose to proceed to the Ministerial Selection Panel of the Ordained Ministry Committee without the approval of Synod.
 - (h) The decision of the Synod shall be conveyed to the candidate by his or her Superintendent.
 - (i) A report on form C7 shall be prepared by the Secretary of the District and sent to the Ordained Ministry Committee by the end of October of Year 1.

- 5C.08** (a) In November of Year 1 the Ordained Ministry Committee shall arrange for the candidate to undergo psychological assessment by a Clinical/Counselling Psychologist appointed by the Ordained Ministry Committee.
- (b) The Clinical/Counselling Psychologist appointed by the Ordained Ministry Committee shall report on any findings he or she considers to be relevant on form C8 to be sent to the Committee by the end of December in Year 1.
- 5C.09** In November of Year 1 the candidate shall attend at Edgehill Theological College, or such other venue as may be arranged, for the purposes of Training Interviews with the intention of determining appropriate training pathways for the candidate. Edgehill Theological College shall report to the Ordained Ministry Committee if there are any concerns about future training.
- 5C.10** (a) The Ordained Ministry Committee shall appoint a Ministerial Selection Panel of six members which shall be chaired by the Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee. The Director of Ministry shall be one of the six and the Ministerial Psychological Assessor shall be in attendance but shall not participate in the voting.
- (b) In January or February of Year 2 the Ministerial Selection Panel shall convene a Residential Selection Conference to be attended by all candidates. The candidates' District Superintendents, the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee, the Director of Ministry and the members of the Panel of Reference (5C.11) shall also be in attendance. The Residential Selection Conference shall comprise the following:
- (i) an interview conducted by the Ministerial Psychological Assessor appointed by the Ordained Ministry Committee who shall report to the Ministerial Selection Panel on form C9 findings he/she considers to be relevant;
 - (ii) a Group Exercise attended by each candidate's District Superintendent who shall report to Ministerial Selection Panel on form C10 their observations regarding each candidate observed;
 - (iii) two interviews each conducted by two members of the Ministerial Selection Panel on specified subjects the outcomes of which shall be reported to the Ministerial Selection Panel on form C11.
 - (iv) an interview before the Ministerial Selection Panel the outcomes of which shall be reported to Ordained Ministry Committee on form C12.
- (c) After due consideration of all written reports and further information presented, the members of the Ministerial Selection Panel shall vote on whether

they recommend a candidate for initial training for ordained ministry in the Methodist Church in Ireland.

- (d) A candidate who receives unanimous approval in terms of votes cast shall proceed to the next stage of the candidating process and the Ministerial Selection Panel shall recommend the candidate to the Ordained Ministry Committee and shall notify the candidate and her/his District Superintendent in writing of its decision.
- (e) A candidate who does not receive unanimous approval in terms of votes cast shall be referred by the Ministerial Selection Panel to a Panel of Reference for further enquiry into matters specified by the Ministerial Selection Panel.
- (f) If the Ministerial Selection Panel votes unanimously not to recommend a candidate for initial training for the ordained ministry, the candidate shall not be referred to the Panel of Reference.

- 5C.11** (a) The Ordained Ministry Committee shall appoint a Panel of Reference of three: two ordained ministers and one layperson.
- (b) The Panel of Reference shall interview the candidate and shall investigate the matters identified by the Ministerial Selection Panel for further enquiry.
 - (c) After giving due consideration to all information presented to it the Panel of Reference shall provide a report on the matters remitted by the Ministerial Selection Panel.
- 5C.12** (a) Upon receiving and giving due consideration to the report of the Panel of Reference the members of the Ministerial Selection Panel shall again vote on whether they recommend the candidate for initial training for ordained ministry in the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (b) A candidate who receives the approval of the Ministerial Selection Panel by a vote of at least two-thirds of votes cast shall proceed to the next stage of the candidating process and the Panel shall recommend the candidate to the Ordained Ministry Committee and shall notify the candidate and her/his District Superintendent by email or letter of its decision.
 - (c) A candidate who does not receive the approval of the Ministerial Selection Panel by a vote of at least two-thirds of votes cast shall not be recommended to the Ordained Ministry Committee and the Panel shall notify the candidate and her/his Superintendent in writing of its decision.

- 5C.13** (a) A candidate who does not receive the approval of the Ministerial Selection Panel by a vote of at least two-thirds of votes cast may within 10 days of being notified of the Panel's decision apply in writing for a review of that decision.
- (b) An application for review must be on one or more of the following grounds:
- (i) that the procedural provisions as set out in these regulations have not been correctly followed;
 - (ii) that there are facts which were not available to the Ministerial Selection Panel and which are such as to make its recommendation inappropriate;
 - (iii) that the decision of the Ministerial Selection Panel, as conveyed to the candidate in the official correspondence informing the candidate that her/his offer has been declined, is questioned in writing by both the candidate's Superintendent and District Superintendent.
- (c) An application for review shall be heard and considered by a Review Panel composed of the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Secretary of Conference and a current or previous District Superintendent. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee shall also be in attendance.
- (d) Members of the Review Panel must not be members of or have been in attendance at meetings of the Ministerial Selection Panel. The President or Secretary of Conference may be substituted by an appropriate alternative member if this is deemed appropriate in the particular circumstances.
- (e) The Review Panel shall be supplied with copies of all reports considered by the Ministerial Selection Panel and the Chair of the Ministerial Selection Panel shall address the Review Panel on the reasons for its recommendation.
- (f) The candidate shall have the right to attend before the Review Panel, to be present when representations are made by the Chair of the Ministerial Selection Panel and to reply. The candidate may be accompanied by an ordained minister of her/his choice.
- (g) The candidate may be questioned about the grounds of the application for review but there shall be no general rehearing of the case or repetition of the assessment procedures undertaken.
- (h) Subject to the above the Review Panel shall regulate its own procedure.
- (i) Upon hearing the submissions of the candidate and the Ministerial Selection Panel and giving due consideration to all documentation supplied, the members of the Review Panel shall vote on whether they consider that the decision

of the Ministerial Selection Panel should be re-considered. If a majority of members consider that the decision should be re-considered it shall within 10 days notify the candidate, her/his Superintendent and the Ministerial Selection Panel in writing of its determination setting out the reason or reasons on which that determination is based.

- (j) In the event that the Review Panel determines that the application should be re-considered the Ministerial Selection Panel shall reconvene and shall re-consider the matter. The Panel shall re-consider all written reports and further information originally presented to it having regard to the written determination of the Review Panel and shall vote on whether it recommends a candidate for initial training for ordained ministry in the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (k) A candidate who receives the approval of the Ministerial Selection Panel by a vote of at least two-thirds of votes cast shall proceed to the next stage of the candidating process and the Panel shall recommend the candidate to the Ordained Ministry Committee and shall notify the candidate and her/his District Superintendent in writing of its decision.
- (l) A candidate who does not receive the approval of the Ministerial Selection Panel by a vote of at least two-thirds of votes cast shall not be recommended to the Ordained Ministry Committee and the Panel shall notify the candidate and her/his Superintendent in writing of its decision.

5C.14 (a) The Ordained Ministry Committee shall report to the District Ministerial Synod on the progress of all candidates by way of information.

- (b) The Synod shall not further discuss individual candidates beyond noting current progress.

5C.15 (a) Not less than 10 days prior to the April meeting of the Ordained Ministry Committee its members shall be provided with copies of all relevant reports namely forms C1 to C12.

- (b) At the April meeting the Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee shall present the reports prepared in relation to each candidate and shall propose that the Committee approve the recommendation of the Ministerial Selection Panel in respect of each candidate.
- (c) A candidate who receives the approval of the Ordained Ministry Committee by a vote of at least two-thirds of votes cast shall be recommended to Conference for initial training for ordained ministry in the Methodist Church in Ireland.

- (d) Only those members of the Ordained Ministry Committee who have read and considered all reports furnished in relation to a candidate and have been present during the formal presentation of those reports shall be entitled to vote in relation to that candidate.
 - (e) The numbers entitled to vote, voting for and voting against shall be recorded.
 - (f) The Ordained Ministry Committee shall report to Conference on its recommendation in respect of each candidate on form C13.
- 5C.16** (a) Not less than 10 days before the commencement of Conference all members of the ministerial session of Conference shall be provided with a copy of the report of the Ordained Ministry Committee in respect of each candidate on form C13.
- (b) The Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee shall present the reports on form C13 and shall propose that Conference endorses the recommendation of the Ordained Ministry Committee in respect of each candidate by vote.
 - (c) A candidate who receives the approval of Conference by the votes of at least two-thirds of those present at Conference and entitled to vote in relation to that candidate shall be accepted for initial training for ordained ministry in the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 5C.17** A candidate who is declined at any stage in this process is not precluded from presenting as a candidate on a future occasion.

5D TRAINING, PROBATION AND ORDINATION

Training

5D.01 After a candidate has been accepted by the Conference, the Director of Ministry shall provide advice and support in relation to ministerial development:

- (a) during training in College – in co-operation with the College Principal,
- (b) during probation – in co-operation with the Circuit Superintendent,
- (c) after ordination – directly.

5D.02 Initial Training for the ordained ministry shall consist of studies based in Edgehill Theological College and probation on circuit.

5D.03 Students for the ordained ministry are normally allocated to College for two or three years where they shall undertake studies for a university diploma or degree in theology and other courses particularly related to Methodism. The minimum standard expected at the end of training is a University Diploma in Theology.

5D.04 Students who already have obtained a university degree in theology are normally allocated to College for a shorter time and undertake studies as directed by the Principal.

5D.05 Each student, on entering College, shall be required to pledge, in the event of her/his retiring from the work before he/she has rendered a specified number of years of active service, to pay to the Governors of the College, compensation for board, residence and training at such rate as may be determined from time to time.

5D.06 The Principal of the College shall report to Conference annually, through Ordained Ministry Committee, on the progress of students in College.

Probation

5D.07 Following completion of studies in College students shall be allocated to circuit for probation.

Probationers shall:

- (a) undertake such duties as directed by their Circuit Superintendent.
- (b) undertake studies as directed by the Ordained Ministry Committee, attending residential and other courses and submitting assignments.

- (c) read the prescribed list of books, as printed in the Minutes of Conference, and affirm to the District Ministerial Synod that these have been read and also submit a list of other books read during the year.
- (d) in the first and final years of probation, conduct an appraisal service before a Committee of Synod.
- (e) receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at least quarterly, as arranged by the Superintendent.
- (f) not undertake any work outside her/his circuit without the express permission of the Superintendent.

5D.08 A probationer who is married to an ordained minister or probationer in a circuit appointment, may in exceptional circumstances, be permitted, on application to the Ordained Ministry Committee to undertake part of her/his probation in the same appointment as her/his spouse, provided that at least one year of probation is served in another appointment.

5D.09 Annual reports on the circuit work shall be submitted by the Superintendent to the District Ministerial Synod which shall also receive reports of appraisal services. Reports on studies shall be submitted to the Ordained Ministry Committee. All reports shall be forwarded for submission to the Ministerial Session of Conference through the Ordained Ministry Committee.

5D.10 Under the direction of their Superintendent, probationers may preside at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper within the Circuits to which they have been stationed.

5D.11 The total time in training between candidature and ordination shall normally be five years. Recommendations on length of initial training for individual probationers shall be made to the Ministerial Session of Conference by the Ordained Ministry Committee.

5D.12 (a) A student or probationer, who can satisfy the Ordained Ministry Committee of her/his intention to complete training and probation and in due course enter full work, may, on compassionate or compelling domestic grounds, apply for exemption from or deferment or suspension of stationing for probation through the Ordained Ministry Committee to the Conference, which may grant or refuse the application. A candidate shall not during any deferment or suspension of probation be at any cost to the Connexion except as provided in clause (c) below.

- (b) If the grounds for such an application arise or be discovered after the last meeting of the Ordained Ministry Committee before the Conference, such an

application may be made to the President any time before the Conference and the President, if satisfied as to her/his intention to complete training and probation and in due course enter full work, may grant the application.

- (c) The names of probationers granted exemption, deferment or suspension shall, in the list of stations, be printed in the Circuit in which they reside as “without pastoral charge” and they shall be expected to give such help to the Circuit as they are able and in appropriate cases shall be entitled to remuneration by decision of the Circuit Executive.

5D.13 Students who fail to complete their training and ministerial probation shall withdraw from training for the ordained ministry. If subsequently they apply for reinstatement by the Conference, the training received and the years of probation travelled when they withdrew shall be taken into account. Any subsequent application to the Conference for reinstatement will be discerned and assessed by the Ordained Ministry Committee.

Reception into Full Connexion and Ordination

5D.14 In the final year of training, a candidate for reception into Full Connexion and Ordination:

- (a) shall conduct an appraisal service as arranged by the Secretary of the District.
- (b) shall undergo examination in the District Ministerial Synod respecting her/his knowledge of Methodist theology (as reflected in Wesley's Sermons and Notes on the New Testament), the practice of ordained ministry and application of Christian faith to the contemporary world and if the performance is deemed to be satisfactory the Synod shall recommend her/him for admission into Full Connexion. (No mark shall be recorded.)
- (c) during the period of Conference, shall be examined privately in the presence of the President of the Conference and a selected number of senior ministers.
- (d) shall be required to avow before the Ministerial and Representative Sessions of Conference her/his belief in Methodist doctrine and discipline.
- (e) if the result of the examinations is satisfactory, shall be received into Full Connexion during the Representative Session and, in the Ordination Service, be set apart to the work of the ordained ministry by the imposition of hands and by receiving a copy of the Holy Scriptures.
- (f) shall have her/his name entered in the Journal (and Minutes of Conference) and the date of the beginning of ministry recorded as determined by Conference.

Recognition of Ordained Ministers of Other Churches

- 5D.15** (a) Ordained ministers of other churches seeking permanent recognition as ministers of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall make their application to the Conference through the Ordained Ministry Committee.
- (b) Applications shall be directed to the Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee in sufficient time to allow adequate enquiries to be made before the Spring meeting of the Committee. Where possible, preliminary notice of such intention shall be given to the September meeting of the Committee.
- (c) The applicant shall meet with the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee and the Director of Ministry with the aim of exploring the applicant's sense of call and reasons for seeking a transfer.
- (d) An applicant shall notify the appropriate authority or official(s) of her/his Church of her/his intention and action and shall produce acceptable evidence that this has been done.
- (e) The Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee shall make enquiries from the appropriate authority or official(s) in the Church concerning the ordination and good standing of the applicant. Further enquiries shall include the work, witness, qualifications, suitability, and any other issues as may be considered appropriate. If there are concerns about the validity of the applicant's ordination he/she shall be required to go through the full candidating process.
- (f) The applicant shall attend the Residential Selection Conference, which constitutes part of the candidating process, for in-depth interviews. The Ministerial Selection Panel shall act on behalf of the Ordained Ministry Committee and make a recommendation regarding the transfer to the Spring meeting of the Ordained Ministry Committee.
- (g) The applicant shall appear before the Spring meeting of the Ordained Ministry Committee. He/she shall give reasons to the Committee for the application and be required to answer such questions as the Committee sees fit to ask.
- (h) Should the Ordained Ministry Committee deem an applicant's academic qualifications insufficient he/she shall be advised to defer application until such time as he/she has acquired such qualifications as the Committee may require. Or, while still wishing to recommend the applicant to the Conference, the Committee may require the applicant to undertake any additional courses which it deems necessary – orientation to Methodism etc.
- (i) The Ordained Ministry Committee shall recommend to the Conference whether or not to accept the applicant's request to transfer. In making this

recommendation, the Committee shall satisfy the Conference with regard to the ordination, qualifications, and suitability of the applicant.

- (j) Where the Conference is satisfied on all grounds that the application should be sustained, it shall decide by vote to receive the applicant and give permission for her/him to enter the Stationing process in the following connexional year. A two thirds majority is required.
- (k) The applicant will normally be received into Full Connexion after a period of two years on Circuit.
- (l) Each year the applicant's Superintendent will write a report on the applicant's ministry and submit it to the Spring meeting of the Ordained Ministry Committee. After two years the Committee will make a recommendation to the Conference as to whether the applicant should be received into Full Connexion.
- (m) Where the Conference is satisfied on all grounds that the application should be sustained, it will decide by standing vote to receive the applicant into Full Connexion as from 1st July following.

5D.16 Ordained ministers of other churches seeking temporary recognition as ministers of the Methodist Church in Ireland in order to facilitate the work of a particular Circuit shall make their application to the Conference through the Ordained Ministry Committee.

Acceptance of Students and Candidates for Elder of the United Methodist Church

5D.17 (a) Accredited students for the ministry and candidates for elder of the United Methodist Church seeking to enter the ministry of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall make their applications to the Conference through the Ordained Ministry Committee.

- (b) The applicant shall notify the Bishop of her/his Conference and shall produce satisfactory evidence that this has been done.
- (c) The Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee shall enquire from the Bishop of the Conference concerned and from such other persons as they deem fit with regard to the work, witness, qualifications, and suitability of the applicant. They or the Committee may require the applicant, at her/his own expense, to appear before the Committee.
- (d) The Ordained Ministry Committee shall recommend to the Conference as to the action it should take, and as to what further study and probation should be required. If accepted, the Conference shall decide as to whether the applicant should be regarded as a student for the ministry or as a probationer.

5E FORMATION FOR MINISTRY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

5E.01 The Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee is a sub-committee of the Ordained Ministry Committee.

- (a) Its purpose is:
 - (i) To monitor progress of students and probationers for ordained ministry and make recommendations to the Ordained Ministry Committee.
 - (ii) To receive reports on students and probationers and, where necessary, recommend a course of action.
 - (iii) To formally address, where necessary, serious disciplinary issues regarding students and probationers.
 - (iv) To recommend, on the basis of the Church's agreed expectations, continuance or discontinuance in training or probation.
- (b) The recommendations of the Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee will be reported to the Ordained Ministry Committee for ratification and inclusion in its recommendations to the Ministerial Session of Conference.

5E.02 The Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee shall be appointed annually by Conference and consist of:

- (a) the President, the Lay Leader, the Secretary of the Conference;
- (b) the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Board of Examiners Ordained Ministry Committee;
- (c) the Director of Ministry;
- (d) the Principal and Director of Studies of Edgehill Theological College;
- (e) the Ministerial Psychological Assessor;
- (f) two members of the Edgehill Theological College Board of Governors (one ministerial and one lay) who shall be nominated by that Board and serve for a period of three years;
- (g) six others nominated by the Ordained Ministry Committee, three of whom shall be ordained ministers and three of whom shall be lay persons who shall reflect areas of interest and expertise pertaining to the business of the committee, and who shall serve for a period of three years.

- 5E.03** (a) The Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee is responsible for disciplinary proceedings regarding students and probationers. It may remove a student or probationer from training if it concludes that the student or probationer is not fulfilling the required standards of progress regarding academics, ministerial formation, or adherence to the discipline of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (b) The Committee shall apply the rules of procedure for the hearing of a charge or complaint against a Local Preacher before the Circuit Executive (See Chapter 6).
- (c) A student or probationer who has been removed from training may appeal this decision by writing to the Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee within seven days, setting out the reasons why he/she believes the decision of the Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee is wrong. The appeal shall use the following procedure:
- (i) The Ordained Ministry Committee shall convene a panel of five voting members to hear the appeal. The Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee and the Secretary of the Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee shall also be in attendance in a non-voting capacity.
 - (ii) No member of the Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee who was party to the original decision may be a voting member of the appeal panel.
 - (iii) The Secretary of the Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee shall present to the panel the reasons for the decision of that committee.
 - (iv) The panel shall receive all relevant written reports on the progress of the student or probationer throughout her/his entire time in training. Members of the staff of Edgehill Theological College may be asked for clarification.
 - (v) If the student or probationer has met with a sub-committee of the Formation for Ministry Oversight Committee regarding lack of progress, the panel shall receive relevant reports. Members of that sub-committee may be asked for clarification.
 - (vi) The panel may gather any other evidence it deems relevant.
 - (vii) The student or probationer shall be required to attend an interview before the panel to provide her/his reasons for the appeal. The student or probationer may bring a colleague with her/him to the interview. The colleague may be either another student for the ordained ministry or a minister in Full Connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland. The colleague

has the right to ask for one break in the interview to confer with the student or probationer.

- (viii) Following the interview the student or probationer shall be asked to be available for any further clarification. Other relevant people may also be asked to be available at the appeal hearing for clarification purposes.
- (ix) A simple majority of the appeals panel is required for its decision.
- (x) The Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee shall inform the student or probationer, and the Superintendents of the Circuit and the District in which the student or probationer resides, of the decision. The Circuit Superintendent will be asked to exercise particular pastoral care for the student or probationer and her/his family.
- (xi) The decision of the appeals panel is final.

5F ITINERANCY

- 5F.01** The rule which regulates and provides for the itinerancy among the ordained ministers and probationers of the Conference is contained in the Fifth Section of the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928. As amended, it declares that the Conference may appoint any minister for any number of years successively, to the use and enjoyment of any chapel or premises given or to be given or conveyed on the trusts recited in the said Acts.
- 5F.02** As presently provided for by the Constitution, Section VII, 4, as amended, the appointment of an ordained minister shall be for an open and flexible term, subject to the provisions of paragraph 5F.01. The normal duration of an appointment is regarded as being eight years.
- 5F.03** All appointments shall be subject to review and confirmation annually by the Conference which has the unquestionable right to appoint ordained ministers and probationers in any way it may consider best in the interests of the Connexion.
- 5F.04** It is provided in the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, Section 5, (b), that "the Conference may appoint any minister to any institution or department, or to the use and enjoyment of any premises declared by the Conference to be used for the purpose of a Mission, for any number of years successively". The declaration of Conference that any station shall henceforth be a Mission shall be made by Conference on the recommendation of the Connexional Team, and by a vote of Conference in which at least three-fourths of the members present and voting approve of the alteration.
- 5F.05** (a) Any proposal for the reappointment of an ordained minister to a Circuit, Mission, Institution or Department beyond an eight-year term shall be subject to an appraisal of the work and ministry. In the case of Circuits and Missions such appraisal shall be undertaken by an independent group appointed by the Church Development Board Executive. An application for such an appraisal shall be made through the Secretary of the Church Development Board and shall not be made earlier than 1st January in the minister's sixth year (and every third year subsequently). The independent group shall report its findings to the Church Development Board Executive which shall forward its recommendation to the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team. All appointments are always subject to the exigencies of stationing. The Church Development Board shall make guidelines available for Circuits, Missions and other relevant appointments.

(b) On the advice of the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team the Conference may re-appoint any ordained minister to the use and enjoyment of any Church or premises belonging to, or held in trust for the purpose of, the Church for a further period not exceeding two years successively in the following circumstances:

- (i) A minister who is designated to be the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland in the year of, or in the year following, what would have been the completion of her/his term on a circuit.
- (ii) A minister who is due to retire from the ministry within two years following completion of her/his term on a circuit.
- (iii) A minister or spouse who suffers from serious illness, confirmed by written medical advice, during the final year of her/his term on a circuit.
- (iv) A minister whose children would, in the judgment of the Stationing Committee, experience unduly severe disruption to their education.

5F.06 An ordained minister or Circuit Executive may request a change of appointment before the completion of the eight-year term. Such request shall be made in writing to the District Superintendent, and shall have been considered by the September meeting of the Circuit Executive in the year in which a change is desired. However, no approach may be made by any circuit to an ordained minister on another circuit about a possible change of appointment except through the District Superintendent concerned.

5F.07 All appointments of ordained ministers and probationers are made by the Conference as from the 1st July to the next succeeding 30th June.

5F.08 Ordained ministers and probationers, newly appointed, are expected to be in the Circuits to which they are appointed not later than the third Sunday of July, the date to be arranged by correspondence between the ministers concerned.

5G MODES OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

- 5G.01** (a) The Methodist Church in Ireland recognises one form of ordained ministry, presbyteral ministry, which can be exercised in various ways:
- (i) Full-time Stipendiary Ministry: This is an itinerant ministry in which ministers can be stationed across Ireland and for which a full stipend is paid.
 - (ii) Non-Stipendiary Ministry: This is an itinerant ministry in which ministers feel called by God to be self-supporting while exercising ordained ministry. The distinctive feature of this ministry is that it is self-supporting in which no stipend is paid.
 - (iii) Ministry in a Part-time Appointment: This is an itinerant ministry in which ministers feel called by God to be partially self-supporting while exercising ordained ministry. The distinctive feature of this ministry is that the minister receives a pro-rata stipend in accordance with the scales set down by the Conference.
- (b) Any minister wishing to transfer between modes of ministry shall inform her/his District Superintendent and shall make application in writing to the Special Committee through the Secretary of Conference by 30th September detailing the reasons for the request. The final decision in relation to the transfer shall be made by the Ministerial Session of the Conference.

Full-time Stipendiary Ministry

- 5G.02** Those in the Full-time Stipendiary ministry receive a full stipend, in accordance with scales as laid down by the Conference, and may engage in regular paid employment outside circuit and connexional commitments only under the following conditions:
- (a) after consultation with the District Superintendent, conducted through the Circuit Superintendent (unless the minister is Superintendent),
 - (b) after the opportunities on the Circuit, as well as the contribution to the mission of the church the proposed paid employment would be likely to make, have been assessed by the Church Council(s) and Circuit Executive
 - (c) after the consent of the Church Council(s) and Circuit Executive and of the District Advisory Committee has been obtained,
 - (d) that the amount by which the income from such paid employment exceeds the gross amount determined from time to time by the Stipends and Allowances Board will be deducted from her/his stipend and remitted in equal sums to the Treasurers of the Home Mission and Retirement Funds.

Non-Stipendiary Ministry

- 5G.03** (a) Non-Stipendiary ministry is a 'tent-making' ministry for those who are self-supporting.
- (b) A Non-Stipendiary minister is free to offer as much time as he/she is able to a circuit but shall offer a minimum of two Sunday services a month and two sessions a week to the Circuit in which he/she is stationed (a session being roughly equivalent to a morning, afternoon or evening).
 - (c) In the List of Stations, the suffix NS shall be placed after the name of a Non-Stipendiary minister, but removed when he/she retires.
 - (d) A Non-Stipendiary minister who has served in an appointment for the maximum of eight years will normally take one year's leave of absence for reading and reflection. Any Non-Stipendiary minister who does not avail of the year's leave of absence after eight years will be eligible for a sabbatical under the terms of Manual of Laws paragraph 5H.01.
 - (e) A Non-Stipendiary minister has no entitlement to a manse, but if a manse is available he/she may avail of it only with the approval of the Home Mission Department.
 - (f) No contributions to the funds of the Church which exist for the support of the Stipendiary Ministry shall be required of a Non-Stipendiary minister and no benefits therefrom shall be available.
 - (g) Expenses shall be reimbursed by the Circuit in accordance with the scale determined by the Stipends and Allowances Board.
 - (h) **A Non-Stipendiary minister may hold such offices in the District and the Conference as her/his circumstances permit.**
 - (i) At any point a Non-Stipendiary minister may request a meeting with the Special Committee with the purpose of reviewing ministry and addressing any particular questions.
 - (j) A Non-Stipendiary minister must apply through the Secretary of Conference to the Special Committee for permission to take on or change outside employment.

Ministry in a Part-time Appointment

- 5G.04** (a) Ministry in a Part-time Appointment is a 'tent making' ministry similar to Non-Stipendiary Ministry, differing primarily in that the minister receives a pro-rata stipend in accordance with the scales set down by the Conference

- (b) In the List of Stations, the suffix PT shall be placed after the name of a minister in a Part-time Appointment, but removed when he/she retires.
- (c) A minister in a Part-time Appointment has no entitlement to a manse, but if a manse is available he/she may avail of it, subject to the agreement of the circuit and the approval of the Home Mission Department and provided the tax implications have been clarified.
- (d) A minister in a Part-time Appointment shall make pro-rata contributions to the funds of the Church which exist for the support of the Stipendiary Ministry and avail of those benefits on a pro-rata basis, or as determined by the Stipends and Allowances Board.
- (e) Expenses shall be reimbursed by the Circuit in accordance with the scale determined by the Stipends and Allowances Board.
- (f) A minister in a Part-time Appointment may hold such offices in the District and the Conference as her/his circumstances permit.
- (g) At any point a minister in a Part-time Appointment may request a meeting with the Special Committee with the purpose of reviewing ministry and addressing any particular questions.
- (h) A minister in a Part-time Appointment must apply through the Secretary of Conference to the Special Committee for permission to take on or change outside employment.

Stationing

5G.05 The following regulations apply to the stationing of Non-Stipendiary ministers and ministers in Part-time Appointments:

- (a) A Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in Part-time Appointment anticipating a new appointment at the ensuing Conference must:
 - (i) submit to her/his District Superintendent a 'Minister's Profile for a Part-time or Non-Stipendiary Appointment' on the form provided, in addition to a Stationing Procedures form. This profile will make clear any particular issues relevant to her/his stationing, including the number of sessions for which he/she will be available to a Circuit; and
 - (ii) meet with the District Superintendent to discuss the needs and expectations of the minister regarding Non-Stipendiary ministry or ministry in a Part-time Appointment.

- (b) Any Circuit seeking the new appointment of a Non-Stipendiary minister or a minister in a Part-time Appointment shall make application to the Connexional Team through the District Superintendent.
 - (i) After the draft of stations has been published, representatives of the Society and Circuit involved will meet with their designated minister to begin the process of drafting a Working Agreement (the pro-forma for which will be available from the Secretary of Conference).
 - (ii) The Secretary of Conference is responsible for ensuring that a clear Working Agreement is in place with a church receiving a Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in Part-time Appointment by 15th May in the year of the change.
- (c) In any year the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team may deem it appropriate to recommend the appointment of a Non-Stipendiary minister or a minister in Part-time Appointment where no application has been made and shall do so in direct consultation with that Circuit, Department or Institution.
- (d) The appointment of a Non-Stipendiary minister or a minister in Part-time Appointment to a Circuit shall be from year to year for a maximum of eight years.
- (e) A Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in a Part-time Appointment is normally stationed within 30 miles of her/his home and continues to live in that home.
- (f) If during the Connexional year a Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in Part-time Appointment is transferred to another location by her/his outside employer, the situation shall be considered by the Special Committee which shall advise the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team and the President of the Conference to take such action as may be necessary, acting under the regulations of the Church.
- (g) In the List of Stations, when a Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in a Part-time Appointment is appointed to a station where a 'line' exists, the line should be printed after the name of the minister.

Ministry by Married Couples

- 5G.06** (a) A married couple, both of whom are ordained, shall be subject to normal stationing, except that they may express the desire to serve together in a joint ministry. Where this arrangement is granted each minister will continue to have her/his own individual relationship with the Conference. Conference cannot give any undertaking that such an arrangement will be continued and may at any time station a couple in separate appointments.

- (b) If a couple who have so requested cannot be stationed together, one of them may be designated as “without pastoral charge” in the circuit in which he/she resides. He/she shall be expected to give such help in the Circuit as he/she is able, and in appropriate cases shall be entitled to receive remuneration by the decision of the Circuit Executive. He/she shall have all the rights and privileges of a church member in the Circuit in which he/she resides.
- (c) A married couple in a joint appointment shall arrange with the Circuit Steward how the duties are to be discharged and how the stipend is to be paid.
- (d) Ministers designated "without pastoral charge" under clause (b) above shall be liable and eligible to be stationed whenever suitable arrangements can be made to station them with their husbands or wives and, in exceptional circumstances, such a minister may be appointed separately to a Circuit by the President.
- (e) The Conference, may, if it thinks fit, approve applications by ministers married to each other, submitted through the appropriate Synod, for permission to enter into arrangements with a Circuit under which one or both of them serve part-time and stipends are adjusted accordingly.

Ministry overseas as Mission Partner

5G.07 Ordained ministers, probationers, and accepted candidates for the ordained ministry desiring to offer for service as Mission Partners, shall do so through the Secretary of the Conference in consultation with the Overseas Service Committee appointed by the Conference, and permission of this Committee will be required before such offer is submitted to the Overseas Service Panel of the Methodist Church in Britain.

5G.08 The Overseas Service Committee shall deal with urgent applications arising between the meetings of Conference. Where financial arrangements are involved the Committee shall consult with the General Committee.

5G.09 As provided by Section 43 (d) of the Deed of Union of the Methodist Church in Britain, ordained ministers of the Irish Conference shall be subject to the rules and discipline of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Britain while serving as Mission Partners with the Methodist Church. Probationers of the Methodist Church in Ireland serving overseas in connection with the World Church Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain shall be subject to the rules and discipline of the Methodist Church in Britain.

- 5G.10** When probationers of the Irish Conference are appointed as Mission Partners a report from the Conference or Church in which each probationer is stationed shall be presented annually to the Irish Conference.
- 5G.11** Probationers of the Irish Conference who are serving as Mission Partners shall, in the concluding year of their probation, be examined by the Conference or Church in which they are stationed, and a report concerning their character and work shall be submitted to the Irish Conference by the World Church Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain. Their reception into Full Connexion shall be by the vote of the Irish Conference.
- 5G.12** Arrangements for the return to work in Ireland of ordained ministers and probationers who have been serving overseas shall be determined by consultation between the World Church Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain and the Overseas Service Committee of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 5G.13** Ordained ministers and probationers of the Irish Conference returning from overseas stations shall be appointed to Circuits in Ireland in the same manner as those who have been travelling in home Circuits.
- 5G.14** Financial arrangements concerning Irish ordained ministers and probationers serving as Mission Partners in connection with the World Church Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain shall be agreed from time to time by the British and Irish Conferences.
- 5G.15** Detailed regulations relating to ordained ministers, probationers and lay workers serving as Mission Partners in connection with the World Church Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain are set out in Book III, Part 10 of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church in Britain.

Ministry in Separated Appointments

- 5G.16 (a)** Notice of the need for appointment of ordained ministers for the position of:
- Secretary of Conference,
 - District Superintendent,
 - General Secretary of the Home Mission Department (while a full-time separated appointment),
 - General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Department,
 - The full-time ministerial staff of Edgehill Theological College,
 - Full time Chaplains to Universities and Chaplains to Colleges,

shall normally be brought to Conference two years in advance of appointment. At that time the Conference will approve the Job Specification, agree the criteria for appointment and appoint the Selection Panel.

For the appointment of District Superintendents, the Selection Panel shall consist of the President, Lay Leader and Secretary of the Conference, one District Superintendent, and four District representatives (two ministerial and two lay) selected by the District Advisory Committee of the District requiring the appointment. The Secretary of the Conference shall act as convener.

- (b) The Selection Panel shall be responsible for carrying out the selection process. All eligible ministers shall be considered. It may be appropriate on occasions to advertise a particular position and such an advertisement should be brought to the attention of all ministers.
- (c) The Selection Panel shall report to the following Conference and bring a name or names to the Conference, together with a statement of the reasons why the person or persons being nominated are suitable for the appointment. The Conference shall designate for appointment one year later.
- (d) When the Selection Panel presents one name to Conference, it shall keep a record of the names of other suitable ministers in order of preference. In the event of an emergency, the President and his/her Advisory Committee shall consult the Selection Panel and take appropriate action.

5H LEAVE FROM ORDAINED MINISTRY

Sabbatical Leave

5H.01 All ordained ministers in Conference appointments shall be entitled at intervals to a sabbatical, that is a period of release from the duties of the appointment, in addition to normal holidays, for the purpose of undertaking an approved programme of study, research, work or experience. Any Non-Stipendiary Minister who does not avail of leave of absence under paragraph 5G.03(d) shall be entitled to a sabbatical under the terms of paragraphs 5H.02 and 5H.03.

5H.02 The length of the sabbatical shall be three months.

5H.03 The years in which sabbaticals may be taken shall normally be the tenth and each seventh year of travel after it, but sabbaticals may for good reason be taken one year earlier or later and in particular shall not be taken in the first year of a new appointment. Special permission shall be required for any greater departure from the normal dates.

5H.04 The Sabbatical Committee shall consist of:

- The President of the Conference
- The Lay Leader of the Conference
- The Secretary of Conference
- A representative of the Ministerial Training Fund
- The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department
- A Sabbatical Officer

together with six additional members, to include at least four lay people.

The Committee shall be nominated to the Conference by the General Committee. The Sabbatical Officer shall act as Convener.

5H.05 Before the Sabbatical is taken, the following require approval by the Committee:

- (a) the dates of release and return,
- (b) the programme,
- (c) arrangements for covering the duties of the appointment,
- (d) arrangements for the pastoral support of the participant's partner and dependants.

5H.06 In relation to prospective sabbaticals the Committee shall identify those eligible for sabbaticals. It shall consider, advise upon and monitor items (a) and (b)

of paragraph 5H.05 above and provide advice in the preparation and execution of programmes. The Committee shall ensure that a Sabbatical Support Group is established by each participant in accordance with paragraph 5H.07.

- 5H.07** Each participant shall, in consultation with the connexional Sabbatical Committee, form a Sabbatical Support Group to consider, advise upon and monitor items (c) and (d) of paragraph 5H.05 above; to provide support in the preparation and execution of the programme; and to ensure that the fruits of the programme are properly shared. It shall include representatives of the Circuit (or other body responsible for the payment of stipend), and where relevant the participant's partner. The participant shall be a member, but shall not chair it. The participant's Circuit Executive shall appoint the chairperson and convener. In the case of separated appointments, the chairperson and convener shall be appointed by the General Committee.
- 5H.08** The Sabbatical Support Group shall report to the Sabbatical Committee and to the relevant Circuit Executive or corresponding Church Department.
- 5H.09** The Circuit or other responsible body shall continue during a sabbatical to provide a manse and the minister's stipend and to pay all expense allowances which are of a continuing nature, but not those for expenses which cease to be incurred or to be related to the appointment, including mileage allowances.
- 5H.10** Each ordained minister taking a sabbatical shall receive from the connexional Sabbatical Fund a grant of an amount from time to time prescribed by the Conference. The fund shall be raised by annual levy through the Comprehensive Assessment on each Circuit or other body responsible for the stipend of any ordained minister in Full Connexion and in a Conference appointment. The fund shall be administered by the General Purposes Fund.
- 5H.11** The connexional Sabbatical Committee shall report to the Conference through the General Committee. Where special permission under paragraph 5H.03 above is required, or there is any dispute, the General Committee shall consider the matter and judge accordingly.

Maternity Leave

- 5H.12** (a) A circuit minister or other ordained minister or probationer appointed to a station within the control of the Church, who becomes pregnant but who does not wish to be exempt from normal stationing, or whose confinement is expected to occur before or within six weeks after she ceases to be stationed, shall as soon as possible so inform the Superintendent, the Circuit Steward or

other responsible officers and, if she is herself a Superintendent or is not a circuit minister, the District Superintendent, the Secretary of Conference or other appropriate person.

- (b) She shall be entitled to statutory maternity leave, arrangements for which shall be discussed with the Circuit Steward and other responsible officers.
- (c) During maternity leave she shall be paid her stipend. (In Northern Ireland the Circuit, through the Trustees Office, shall be responsible for claiming Statutory Maternity Pay. In the Republic of Ireland, the stipend shall be paid less any Social Security Benefits to which she may be entitled). She shall also be paid expense allowances which are of a continuing nature, but not for expenses which cease during leave. She shall not receive stipend for any period of unpaid leave allowed under statutory regulations, but shall continue to receive expense allowances which are of a continuing nature. She shall also be responsible for the employee's share of any pension contributions.

As to reimbursement from the Ministers' Benevolent Fund see the relevant regulations.

- (d) Where a Circuit anticipates substantial additional expense in providing ministerial cover during the period of maternity leave the Circuit Steward shall consult with the Secretary of Conference, the Secretary of the Home Mission Department and the Treasurer of the General Purposes Fund.
- (e) Any failure to agree under clause (b) above and any disagreement as to the application of any other part of this regulation shall be referred, in the case of a circuit minister, to the Superintendent of the District and, in other cases, to the President and shall be resolved by the President's decision.

Local government elections

5H.13 The Conference affirms its conviction that Christian witness should be clearly and courageously borne in the whole network of political, social and community relations. In view of the deep divisions in Irish politics it believes that ordained ministers can most effectively bear their witness by the wise and enlightened application of Biblical insights to political issues and by the encouragement and enabling of Christian laypersons to enter party politics.

5H.14 Where an ordained minister feels constrained to enter party politics he/she shall, before doing so, consider carefully the effects of this action on the ministry of reconciliation to which he/she is committed and on the discipline he/she has accepted at ordination to be under the direction of the Conference for appointment anywhere in Ireland.

- 5H.15** Any ordained minister wishing to be a candidate in a local government election or to become a member of a local authority shall, before taking any decisive action in the matter, make written application for approval of this proposed action to the Superintendent of her/his District.
- 5H.16** On receipt of such application, the District Superintendent shall consult with the minister concerned, with her/his Superintendent (if the minister making such application is serving under a Superintendent) and with the Circuit officials concerned. The District Superintendent shall then bring the application and a report on her/his consultations to the District Advisory Committee (lay and ministerial) which shall have authority to grant or refuse such application. The Committee in its consideration of the application shall have regard to all factors affecting the work of the Circuit concerned from such participation in local politics.
- 5H.17** In the event of the District Advisory Committee being unable to reach a conclusion in the matter, the District Superintendent shall refer the application to the President's Advisory Committee for comment and advice.
- 5H.18** In no circumstances shall church or manse property be used for any kind or form of political electioneering.

Parliamentary elections

- 5H.19** An ordained minister, serving in an appointment at the direction of the Conference, who seeks election to membership of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, Dail Eireann, the Northern Ireland Assembly or European Parliament shall adopt the following procedure:
- (a) Not later than the Conference preceding the election at which he/she proposes to stand for election, he/she shall have received permission to be without pastoral charge in accordance with the regulations applying to such applications.
 - (b) In the event of her/his being invited to accept adoption as a candidate at an election taking place before he/she can have fulfilled the foregoing regulation, he/she shall, before accepting the invitation, having consulted her/his Superintendent fully, if he/she is not already a Superintendent, apply through the Superintendent of the District to the President and Secretary of the Church for permission to be without pastoral charge.
 - (c) Her/his case shall be considered at a specially convened meeting of the Special Committee which shall recommend to the ministerial members of the General Committee, who shall have Conference power in the matter.

- (d) In the event of her/him receiving such permission and being elected, he/she shall vacate the manse and the President, on the advice of the Stationing Committee, shall take steps immediately to make arrangements for her/his station or appointment.

Any manse occupied by an ordained minister seeking such election shall not be used for electioneering purposes.

- (e) In the event of her/his failure to secure election, he/she may apply for reinstatement in the pastoral ministry, and the procedures as set out in paragraph (c) above shall apply.

Extern engagements

5H.20 An ordained minister in an appointment within the control of the Church proposing to leave Ireland for a period exceeding one month and not exceeding three months in order to undertake temporary work in another land shall submit details of the nature of the work to be undertaken, together with an application for leave of absence to a committee composed of the President, the Secretary of the Conference, the Ex-President, the Ministerial Officers of the Home Mission Department and the Superintendent of the District concerned. This committee shall have power to take such action as may be deemed appropriate.

51 SPECIAL COMMITTEE

51.01 A Special Committee shall consider and report to the Conference with regard to such special cases concerning ordained ministers as are to come before the Conference and which are competent to be brought before the committee for consideration and recommendation.

51.02 The Special Committee shall consist of:

The Ministerial Members of the President's Advisory Committee,
The Lay Leader of the Conference
The Ex-President,
The President Designate,
The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department,
The Lay Treasurer of the Home Mission Department,
The Director of Ministry,
A representative from the District of any minister whose application is under consideration,

together with five additional ministers, appointed by the Conference, who shall each serve for a three-year term.

Representatives of the following shall attend if summoned:

The Ministerial Treasurer and Secretary of the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund,
The Secretary and Ministerial Treasurer of the Children's Fund,
The Convener of the Faith and Order Committee (if an ordained minister) or a ministerial representative of that committee.

The Secretary of the Conference shall be the Convener.

51.03 An ordained minister whose application is before the Committee may nominate as a personal representative any other minister in full connexion.

51.04 Ordained ministers seeking permission to:

pursue a course of study,
have leave of absence to undertake temporary work abroad,
serve as full-time Chaplains to the Forces,
undertake other specialised work,
be readmitted to the ordained ministry,
be stationed, having had leave of absence,
resume their availability for stationing having been retired,

be granted leave of absence on compassionate or compelling domestic grounds

shall send their applications to the Special Committee through the Secretary of the Conference, not later than 15th September. If for good cause an application cannot be submitted by the 15th September, it shall be considered by the President's Advisory Committee who shall decide whether it is appropriate to call an extraordinary meeting of the Special Committee.

51.05 On receipt of an initial application the Secretary of Conference shall request a small panel of members from the Special Committee to meet with the applicant in order to discuss her/his application. The District Superintendent and, where requested, the applicant's representative (see 51.03) shall also attend.

The panel shall subsequently report to the full meeting of the Special Committee. Further specific regulations governing such applications shall be determined by the Conference from time to time and shall be printed in the Minutes of Conference.

51.06 Ordained ministers who have permission to be without pastoral charge shall continue to be subject to the Discipline of the Conference and shall report to their District Superintendent.

5J RESIGNATION AND REINSTATEMENT

- 5J.01** If the resignation of any ordained minister or probationer be tendered to the Superintendent of the District during the interval between the meetings of the Conference, the Superintendent shall consult with the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and be guided by her/his advice as to the course to be pursued.
- 5J.02** The entry in the printed Minutes of Conference concerning ordained ministers who have resigned (if any) shall be as follows: "Their names are recorded in the Journal." If a probationer resigns, her/his name shall simply be omitted from the printed Minutes.
- 5J.03** In all cases in which credentials are requested by ordained ministers or probationers who leave the Methodist Church in Ireland, and the Conference deems it right to grant them, such credentials shall be signed by its Secretary. The Conference disapproves of the practice of giving unofficial testimonials, and declares that it will not be responsible for any that may be so given. Formal credentials shall be withheld from ordained ministers who have not met their financial obligations to the Funds of the Church.
- 5J.04** Ordained ministers who desire to enter the ministry of another denomination or another branch of the Methodist Church, shall, before entering into negotiations to that end, obtain the permission of the Conference, or in the interval between Conferences, the consent of the President and Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and of the Superintendents of the Districts in which they reside.
- 5J.05** Ordained ministers resigning their connection with the Irish Conference in order to join a religious communion other than the British Methodist Church, or for any other purpose, shall have no claim for financial assistance from any of our Connexional Funds.
- 5J.06** When an ordained minister of the Irish Conference transfers to the British Conference, the following financial arrangements will be adopted:
- (a) No claim for financial assistance from the Home Mission Fund shall be admitted.
 - (b) Two-thirds of the amount which the minister so transferred shall be required to pay to the Ministers' Retirement Fund of the British Conference shall be paid by the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund.
 - (c) One year's allowance shall be paid by the Children's Fund in all cases where there is a valid claim upon that Fund.

Reinstatement

- 5J.07** (a) When an ordained minister resigns because he/she is unable to subscribe to Methodist doctrine or discipline he/she shall also lose her/his status as a Local Preacher. If he/she seeks to be reinstated as a Local Preacher such application shall not be made to Conference until two years have elapsed from the date of resignation. Reinstatement shall require a two-thirds majority in favour of the application of those present and voting.
- (b) When an ordained minister resigns, or has been asked to resign and does so due to behaviour thought to be inappropriate for anyone ordained to the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament, and if he/she seeks to be reinstated as a Local Preacher such application shall not be made to Conference until five years have elapsed from the date of resignation. Reinstatement shall require a two-thirds majority in favour of the application of those present and voting.
- (c) When an ordained minister resigns for reasons other than those covered by sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), the Conference shall reserve the right to determine status as a local preacher.

In all cases of resignation, the Conference also reserves the right to advise concerning status as a member of the Methodist Church.

An ordained minister, who has previously resigned, and applies for readmission to the ordained ministry, shall require a majority of at least two-thirds of those present and voting for the application to be approved.

5K RETIREMENT AND DEATH

Retirement of Ministers

- 5K.01** Ordained ministers seeking permission to retire at the ensuing Conference shall submit their application in writing to the Superintendent of the District and to the Secretary of the Irish Methodist Ministers Retirement Fund before 30th September. If in the interval between this date and the Conference an ordained minister is compelled to seek permission to retire, he/she shall convey her/his request immediately, in writing, to the Superintendent of the District.
- 5K.02** The minimum age for retirement shall be sixty-five years and an ordained minister shall not normally be stationed after the age of seventy. The Conference may permit an ordained minister below the age of sixty-five to retire for special reasons.
- 5K.03** All resolutions of District Synods relating to ordained ministers retiring shall be revised by the relevant Committee, printed in the Conference Agenda and, after approval, inserted in the Minutes of Conference.
- 5K.04** Retired ministers with their consent, and by arrangement with the Circuit Executives of the Circuits concerned, may take charge of stations where the work is suitable. They shall act under the direction of the Superintendent of the Circuit. All such arrangements shall be subject to the control of the Conference.
- 5K.05** When ordained ministers retire and undertake work on dependent Circuits, the Officers of the Home Mission Department, with the sanction of the General Committee, may make a grant towards the removal expenses from the Circuits in which they were last stationed to those in which they have undertaken work. Retired ministers not so employed shall be at liberty to choose their own places of residence.
- 5K.06** When retired ministers are requested to conduct services, they shall be remunerated according to the directions of the Conference as determined from time to time.
- 5K.07** Retired ministers continue to be subject to the discipline of the Conference and shall report annually to their District Superintendent concerning their belief in our doctrines, and satisfactorily answer the usual questions regarding character.
- 5K.08** Retired ministers connected with the Irish Conference, residing in Great Britain, shall report to the Synods of the Districts in which they reside. The British

Conference has arranged that retired ministers connected with that Conference, residing in Ireland, shall report to the Superintendent of the District in which they reside.

5K.09 Retired ministers residing outside the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland are required to furnish annually to the Superintendents of Districts under which their names are printed in the Minutes of Conference, the usual statements respecting solvency, and belief in Methodist doctrines, also a certificate of good standing, from the ministers of the circuits with which they are connected.

Death of Ordained Ministers and Probationers

5K.10 In the event of the death of an ordained minister or probationer, the Superintendent of the Circuit in which the deceased minister resided shall be responsible for the preparation of a suitable obituary, which shall be read at the District Ministerial Synod. When the Superintendent of a Circuit dies, the Superintendent of the District shall appoint a minister to prepare the obituary.

5K.11 Secretaries of Districts are directed to forward copies of the obituaries of deceased ministers immediately after the District Ministerial Synod to the Editorial Secretary of the Conference.

5K.12 The Committee shall revise the obituaries, which shall then be printed in the Conference Agenda and after approval be included in the Minutes of Conference.

5K.13 The obituaries of ordained ministers who have died subsequent to the District Ministerial Synod shall also be revised by the Committee on Obituaries, and, if possible, be printed and presented at the same time as those which have been submitted to the District Synods.

5K.14 The consideration of the records of the deceased ministers shall be regarded and observed as a strictly religious service, and whilst this solemn service is being held, no committees of the Conference shall meet. At this service the list of the names of deceased ministers shall be read by the Secretary of the Conference or by one of her/his colleagues.

5L DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS FOR ORDAINED MINISTERS

5L.01 Discipline in the Church is an exercise of that spiritual authority which the Lord Jesus has appointed in His Church. The ends contemplated by discipline are the maintenance of the purity of the Church, the spiritual benefit of the members and the honour of our Lord. All members and ministers of the Church are subject to its government and discipline and are under the care of its Courts, which, for disciplinary purposes, are:

- (a) in the case of members - the Church Council (see Chapter 2).
- (b) in the case of Local Preachers – the Circuit Executive, the District Disciplinary Committee, the District Synod and the Conference (see Chapter 6).
- (c) in the case of ordained ministers – the District Pastoral Committee, the District Disciplinary Committee, the District Synod, and the Conference, as described below.

5L.02 The Conference shall and may expel and put out from being a member thereof, or from being in full connexion therewith, or from being upon trial, any person, a member of the Conference, or admitted into connexion, or upon trial, for any cause which to the Conference may seem fit or necessary, and every member of the Conference so expelled and put out shall cease to be a member thereof.

5L.03 The question of ministerial character and ability shall be considered at the District Ministerial Synod, or as otherwise arranged by the District Superintendent. Inquiry shall be made respecting every minister and probationer as follows:

- (a) Is there any objection to her/his moral and religious character?
- (b) Does he/she believe and preach our doctrines?
- (c) Is he/she in debt?
- (d) Has he/she fulfilled the duties of ministerial office?
- (e) Has he/she competent ministerial qualifications and health for our work?

If any member of the Synod intends to prefer a complaint against another member in respect of any of the above-mentioned matters, he/she shall, in the first instance make the complaint known to the District Superintendent (or where the complaint relates to the District Superintendent, to the President of the Conference) and to the person the subject of the complaint. The complaint shall in the first instance be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 5L.05. No

complaint hereunder shall be entertained by the Synod unless it has first been considered by the District Pastoral Committee and District Disciplinary Committee.

5L.04 Any ordained minister or member wishing to prefer a charge against an ordained minister or probationer in respect of any of the matters referred to in paragraph 5L.03 shall:

- (a) formulate the charge in writing, and
- (b) deliver the charge to the Superintendent of the District in which the said ordained minister or probationer is stationed, or if the charge shall be preferred by or against the District Superintendent, to the President of the Conference and to the person against whom the charge is made.

The Superintendent of the District, or President of the Conference, shall, on receipt of such charge exercise her/his functions powers and duties as provided in paragraph 5L.05. No charge shall be referred to a District Disciplinary Committee until a District Pastoral Committee has first considered the matter giving rise to the charge.

District Pastoral Committee

5L.05 (a) A District Pastoral Committee is intended to assist in the moral and spiritual oversight, discipline, health and wellbeing of the ordained ministers and probationers appointed to the District, with a view to resolving matters arising in these categories or, if that is not achieved, by giving a first and prerequisite hearing in the disciplinary procedures affecting ordained ministers and probationers.

- (b) **The District Pastoral Committee shall be appointed at the District Ministerial Synod each year.**
- (c) The Committee shall consist of the District Superintendent (except where he/she is the subject of a reference to the committee in which case the President of the Conference shall appoint an ordained minister not necessarily stationed on the District, and that ordained minister shall in respect of the matter affecting the District Superintendent exercise all the functions powers and duties exercisable by the District Superintendent under this Chapter), two ordained ministers neither of whom shall be eligible to serve on a District Disciplinary Committee whilst members of a District Pastoral Committee.
- (d) The Committee shall be convened by the District Superintendent when a complaint or charge has been received under these provisions, unless he/she decides that it is not desirable to convene such a meeting of the District Pastoral

Committee, in which case he/she shall notify the person or persons making the complaint or charge who may then, if they so desire, request a hearing before the District Disciplinary Committee.

- (e) The District Superintendent shall also convene such a meeting when he/she considers it to be desirable following preliminary inquiry and counselling relating to any belief allegation or concern that an ordained minister or probationer is in need of help, or may not be observing the discipline or the moral standards required of an ordained minister or probationer.
- (f) The Committee shall consider the complaint or charge or hear the belief allegation or concern and decide if the matter should proceed to the District Disciplinary Committee.
- (g) If the matter is to proceed to the District Disciplinary Committee, the Committee shall formulate a charge to be preferred by the Secretary of the District Synod or other ordained minister appointed by the District Pastoral Committee, within ten days of the decision of the District Pastoral Committee having been made.
- (h) If the decision is not to proceed to hearing by a District Disciplinary Committee, the Committee shall notify the person or persons who brought to the attention of the District Superintendent the complaint or charge, the belief allegation or concern, who shall then be free, if they so desire, to invoke the appropriate provisions for the hearing of the matter by a District Disciplinary Committee.

District Disciplinary Committee

- 5L.06** (a) The District Disciplinary Committee is intended to afford a convenient and suitable method of investigating complaints and charges preferred against ordained ministers or probationers.
- (b) The District Disciplinary Committee shall consist of not less than seven ordained ministers, who shall, if possible, be chosen from the District in which the accused person resides, as follows:
- the District Superintendent (or where he/she is an interested party, an ordained minister nominated by the President of the Conference);
 - two ordained ministers chosen by the accuser;
 - two ordained ministers chosen by the accused;
 - two ordained ministers chosen by the District Superintendent or ordained minister appointed by the President.

- (c) Should either the accuser or accused neglect or refuse to nominate ordained ministers within seven days after being called upon to do so, the District Superintendent or ordained minister appointed by the President shall choose ordained ministers to complete the constitution of the District Disciplinary Committee.
- (d) The Committee shall be convened by the District Superintendent within ten days of the District Pastoral Committee having considered the matter and decided to refer a charge to the District Disciplinary Committee.
- (e) The District Superintendent shall give to each of the parties concerned at least seven clear days' notice of the time and place appointed for the meeting of such District Disciplinary Committee.
- (f) The District Superintendent shall transmit to the person against whom a charge has been preferred an exact copy of the charge made against her/him together with the name or names of the person or persons by whom the charge is preferred.
- (g) The District Disciplinary Committee shall apply the rules of procedure for the hearing of a charge or complaint against a Local Preacher before the Circuit Executive (see Chapter 6).
- (h) The Committee shall have power, if it sees fit, to suspend the accused or ordained minister or probationer until the ensuing District Ministerial Synod or until the Conference. An ordained minister or probationer under suspension shall not be entitled to sit or vote in the Synod or in the Conference while her/his suspension is continued, but shall be entitled to be present while the charge made against her/him is under consideration.
- (i) If the hearing is held before the meeting of the District Ministerial Synod, the Committee shall report to that Synod its proceedings and recommendations and with such report transmit to the Secretary of the District its duly confirmed minutes.
- (j) If the hearing is held in the interval between the District Ministerial Synod and the Conference, the Committee shall report directly to the Ministerial Session of the Conference unless notice of appeal has been given (in which case the procedure outlined below under "Hearing of appeal at the Conference" shall be followed). The Conference shall consider the report and recommendations of the District Disciplinary Committee, confining discussion to the matters already established in evidence as disclosed in the report and minutes before it. No re-hearing or additional evidence shall be introduced or heard. The Conference shall pronounce final judgement thereon.

- (k) When a charge or complaint is preferred against an ordained minister or probationer who has removed from the District in which the subject of the charge or complaint took place, and a serious hindrance would be caused to the attendance of witnesses, it is in the power of the President of the Conference to direct, if he/she thinks fit, that the case be tried in a District Disciplinary Committee of that District from which the charge or complaint is preferred, but the proceedings shall be fully reported to the Superintendent of the District in which the ordained minister or probationer is stationed, to the Ministerial Synod of that District, and to the President of the Conference.

Hearing at the District Synod

- 5L.07** (a) The District Ministerial Synod shall consider the report of the District Disciplinary Committee. The proceedings shall be confined to a motion for the adoption of the report. The discussion thereon shall be confined to matters included in the report and minutes without hearing any evidence, additional or otherwise, and without any matter of fact, or alleged matter of fact, being introduced or referred to in the discussion which has not been given in evidence before the District Disciplinary Committee. The Synod may confirm or dissent from the report, wholly or in part, or may vary any of its recommendations.
- (b) Ordained ministers who have been members of the District Disciplinary Committee shall not be precluded from taking part in the proceedings of the District Ministerial Synod while the proceedings of such District Disciplinary Committee are under consideration, nor shall the Superintendent of the District be precluded from presiding during the consideration of the proceedings of the District Disciplinary Committee, unless he/she is either the accuser or the accused.

Hearing of appeal at the Conference

- 5L.08** (a) If either party shall desire to have the charge re-heard by the Conference he/she shall give notice of appeal in the manner provided with reference to charges against Local Preachers (see Chapter 6), and the same course of procedure shall then be followed as provided with reference to such charges. No appeal from the decision of a Synod or District Disciplinary Committee shall be entertained by any Conference save that immediately following the meeting of the Synod or District Disciplinary Committee concerned, except by special leave of the Conference, on the recommendation of a committee appointed to investigate the application to entertain such appeal.
- (b) No charge brought by one ordained minister or probationer against another shall be heard in the Conference unless it has been dealt with in accordance

with the foregoing procedures relating to charges, or unless the matter alleged in such charge be so recent as to render such prior investigation impossible.

- (c) The Conference shall take into consideration the report and recommendations of the Synod, or a District Disciplinary Committee, with reference to proceedings founded upon a charge or complaint, and shall pronounce final judgment thereon. The discussion in the Conference shall be confined to the matters already established in evidence as disclosed by the reports and minutes before it, and there shall be no rehearing and no additional evidence introduced or heard.

5L.09 As a result of an enquiry into character or ministerial fitness or her/his compliance with the resolutions of the Conference, or as the result of a formal charge being sustained, the Conference may:

- (a) expel an ordained minister,
- (b) exercise all or any of the following powers against any ordained minister or probationer:
 - (i) admonish or rebuke her/him,
 - (ii) suspend her/him for a definite or indefinite period or subject to any conditions as to removal or suspension,
 - (iii) place her/his name on the list of retired ministers for a definite or indefinite period,
- (c) take cognisance of any allowance or allowances to which he/she may be eligible from the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund or other Connexional Funds and
 - (i) suspend same for a period or until further order, or
 - (ii) direct same to be administered for the benefit of the minister under discipline, or her/his dependents, and if so, by whom and in what manner,
- (d) deprive a probationer of credit for any year or years he/she may have travelled.

5L.10 (a) If an ordained minister be disciplined but not expelled or discontinued, he/she may at any subsequent Conference be reinstated or have the sentence modified.

- (b) If an ordained minister be suspended her/his name shall be retained in the Journal of the Conference but shall not appear in the printed Minutes. Her/his

financial relation to the Conference and its Funds shall be that of a retired minister, subject to the powers of Conference in paragraph 5L.11(b).

- (c) If an ordained minister be expelled the entry in the printed Minutes of Conference shall be "The names of those who have ceased to be recognised as ministers amongst us are recorded in the Journal of the Conference".
- (d) If a probationer be discontinued her/his name shall be omitted from the Minutes.

- 5L.11** (a) In the case of any ordained minister whose name is in the Journal only, the Conference shall define her/his position both in relation to the District Synod and to the discharge of ministerial functions.
- (b) Should the retirement or resignation of an ordained minister be necessitated in the exercise of the powers of the Conference, or should an ordained minister by reason of those regulations be suspended until the Conference decide the matter necessitating such suspension, provision, in exceptional cases, may be made to assist such minister financially from Connexional Funds or other sources.
 - (c) An ordained minister or probationer who has been suspended or expelled from the ministry, or who resigns her/his connexion with the Conference in consequence of a charge or charges which affect her/his moral character, shall not at any subsequent period be allowed to hold any office in the Church without the consent of the Conference.
 - (d) The Conference shall from time to time have power to make and alter regulations as to the manner in which the applications for reinstatement or modification shall be brought before it.

Discipline of District Superintendents

- 5L.12** (a) In the case of a charge made against the Superintendent of a District affecting either her/his personal or official conduct, the person making the charge shall apprise such Superintendent of her/his intention and of the nature of the charge, and shall lodge the complaint in writing with the President of the Conference.
- (b) The President of the Conference shall thereupon proceed to have the charge dealt with, according to the foregoing regulations, by a District Disciplinary Committee. In such case the regulations with regard to District Disciplinary Committees shall be read in all respects as if the words President of the Conference were therein substituted for the words Superintendent of the District, wherever occurring.

- (c) If, in the opinion of the District Disciplinary Committee, the complaint or charge be sustained, it shall have power, if it shall think it desirable to do so, to suspend the accused from office as District Superintendent until the ensuing meeting of the Conference, and, in case of such suspension, the President, on the advice of the Connexional Team, shall appoint an ordained minister of the District to serve as Temporary District Superintendent on a part-time basis.
- (d) Subject to the foregoing, the rules of procedure and evidence and other rules regulating the proceedings of District Disciplinary Committees and Synods in relation to the hearing and trial of charges, shall apply to the hearing and trial of charges against District Superintendents.

Disciplinary proceedings involving the President

5L.13 Where the President of the Conference is either the accuser or the accused party the complaint shall be lodged with the ex-President who shall act and proceed in the matter as if he/she were the President of the Conference.

5M MINISTERIAL SUPPLY IN EMERGENCIES

- 5M.01** When supplies are rendered necessary by illness, death, resignation or suspension of ordained ministers or probationers, or by acceptance for overseas work, Chaplaincies to the Forces, or other appointments, application shall be made to the President of the Conference through the Superintendent of the District in which the supply is needed.
- 5M.02** Where the supply needed is to be of a temporary nature the necessary arrangements should, if possible, be made within the District in which the vacancy has occurred, with the advice of the Superintendent of the District and the President of the Conference.
- 5M.03** In all cases where the necessary arrangements cannot be made within the District, the President of the Conference shall have power, on the advice of the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team, to make arrangements to fill the vacancies by withdrawing and transferring ordained ministers and probationers from other appointments to fill either the original vacancy or any substituted vacancy which may be caused by such withdrawal and transfer, and to appoint ordained ministers and probationers returning from overseas work, chaplaincies or other appointments to fill vacancies.
- 5M.04** In all cases in which the vacancy, withdrawal, transfer or appointment shall involve or affect the Superintendency of a Circuit, the President, with the advice of the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team, shall determine who is to be the Superintendent of the Circuit or Circuits affected for the remainder of the connexional year.

CHAPTER 6
LAY MINISTRY
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6A LAY MINISTRY COMMITTEE

- 6A.01** The Lay Ministry Committee has been established to facilitate the discipleship of lay people in the Methodist Church in Ireland and to help them become who God wants them to be, through the provision of opportunities and resources for learning and growth.
- (a) The Lay Ministry Committee aims to recognise the value of vocational lay employees through the provision of training, support and resourcing, and to allow for greater co-ordination among the different people and departments of the Methodist Church in Ireland who are concerned with the provision of training and learning opportunities for lay people.
 - (b) The work of the Lay Ministry Committee involves the support, training and resourcing of vocational lay employees and volunteers exercising specific roles and ministries, and the encouragement and support of good practice among those providing training and learning opportunities.
- 6A.02** The Lay Ministry Committee shall consist of:
- (a) The President and the Secretary of Conference;
 - (b) The Lay Leader of the Conference, who shall chair the Committee;
 - (c) Two representatives appointed by the connexional Local Preachers' Committee;
 - (d) The General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Department (IMYC);
 - (e) A representative appointed by the IMYC Executive;
 - (f) The Director of Ministry;
 - (g) The Training and Development Officer, who shall act as convener.
- 6A.03** The Committee shall have the power to co-opt additional members as required.

6B LOCAL PREACHERS

6B.01 A Local Preacher is a member of the Church, recognised as qualified and called to preach the Gospel, though not “separated” from her/his ordinary business.

6B.02 A Committee shall be appointed annually by the Conference, to promote the efficiency and work of Local Preachers. It shall be constituted as follows:

- The President of the Conference,
- The Lay Leader of the Conference,
- The Secretary of the Conference,
- The Ex-President of the Conference,
- The Ministerial and Lay Secretaries of the Committee,
- A member of the full-time ministerial staff of Edgehill Theological College, Belfast,
- The District Secretaries for Local Preachers,
- The Secretary or Assistant Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee,
- Up to two ordained ministers and four lay members elected by the Conference.

The ministerial and lay secretaries shall be appointed annually by the Conference.

Nomination and Appointment

6B.03 When an individual believes that God is calling her/him to become a Local Preacher and wants to test this call he/she will first have a conversation with her/his local Minister, who in turn shall inform the Superintendent Minister. Superintendent Ministers shall give special attention to suitable men and women in their Circuits, and, in co-operation with other Ministers and Local Preachers, as far as possible, assist in preparing them for this office.

6B.04 The Superintendent Minister shall have the responsibility of presenting to the Local Preachers’ Meeting as candidates for appointment as Local Preachers, persons who:

- (a) are able to give an account of their journey of faith and call to preach,
- (b) give evidence of genuine piety,
- (c) are zealous in promoting the work of God,
- (d) have the ability to express themselves with sufficient readiness and clarity,
- (e) intend to complete the training prescribed by Conference in the time allocated.

At the same time the Superintendent shall inform the Connexional Ministerial Local Preachers' Secretary of the applicant's name and contact details so that they may be sent an Application Pack.

The Local Preachers' Meeting shall examine the applicant using the set pro-forma questions. If satisfied that the applicant is suitable, it shall recommend to the Circuit Executive that the applicant be received as a 'Local Preacher in Training'.

If the Circuit Executive agrees, the applicant will complete the Application Form and submit it, together with all supporting documentation, to her/his Superintendent Minister.

In any circuit where there is no Local Preachers' Meeting the duties of the Local Preachers' Meeting shall be undertaken by the Circuit Executive.

6B.05 The Superintendent Minister shall:

- (a) immediately after the Circuit Executive forward the applicant's Application Form and all supporting documentation (names of referees and any application for accreditation of prior learning) to the Connexional Local Preachers' Ministerial Secretary.
- (b) in consultation with the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee, appoint suitable persons as Local Tutors who shall supervise, and where appropriate teach, the prescribed training pathway as specified by the Committee.
- (c) in December of each year submit a written report on each Local Preacher in Training to the Connexional Local Preachers' Ministerial Secretary.

6B.06 The Connexional Local Preachers' Committee shall:

- (a) scrutinise the application and confirm, or not, the recommendation of the Circuit Executive,
- (b) assess any application for accreditation of prior learning,
- (c) specify the training pathway that is best suited in the form of a Learning Plan,
- (d) agree the appointment of a Local Tutor,
- (e) review and assess the written reports submitted by the Circuit Superintendent each December.

6B.07 Local Preachers in Training are required to:

- (a) undertake training as prescribed by the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee and defined in the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Local Preachers', with the assistance of her/his Local Tutor.
- (b) study diligently the Word of God.
- (c) keep a Worship Portfolio as defined in the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Local Preachers'.
- (d) keep a Log of Practical Experience as defined in the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Local Preachers'.
- (e) write a synopsis of one of John Wesley's Sermons which he/she shall choose from the list published in the Local Preachers' section of the Methodist Church in Ireland's website.
- (f) submit exegeses of set passages as prescribed by their Learning Plan.
- (g) read at least four books from the list published in the current Minutes of Conference.

The 'Regulations and Guidelines for Local Preachers' are published annually in the Minutes of Conference and in the Local Preachers' section of the Methodist Church in Ireland website.

6B.08 The period in training shall normally be not less than one year and not more than four years, at the end of which the Local Preacher in training shall:

- (a) conduct an appraisal service, as arranged by the Superintendent Minister.
- (b) present to the Local Preachers' Meeting
 - (i) her/his Log of Practical Experience,
 - (ii) her/his Worship Portfolio,
 - (iii) a list of the books read,
 - (iv) her/his written synopsis of one of John Wesley's sermons.
- (c) undergo, in the Local Preachers' Meeting, an interview conducted by the Superintendent Minister or under her/his direction, using the pro-forma set of questions relating to her/his
 - (i) journey of faith,
 - (ii) call to preach,

- (iii) Worship Portfolio and Log of Practical Experience,
- (iv) the books he/she has read,
- (v) synopsis of one of John Wesley's sermons,
- (vi) knowledge of and loyalty to Christian doctrine and, in particular, Methodist doctrine,
- (vii) willingness to submit to Methodist discipline.

In any circuit where there is no Local Preachers' Meeting the duties of the Local Preachers' Meeting shall be undertaken by the Circuit Executive.

6B.09 When the candidate has satisfactorily completed the requirements in paragraphs 6B.07 and 6B.08 the Superintendent Minister shall report accordingly to the Circuit Executive and if the candidate's general effectiveness in preaching and in Christian work and her/his personal character are considered satisfactory by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, the Circuit Executive shall recommend to the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee that the candidate be received as a 'fully accredited' Local Preacher.

The Superintendent Minister shall then forward to the Connexional Local Preachers' Ministerial Secretary:

- (a) the standard Report Form,
- (b) the candidate's Worship Portfolio,
- (c) the candidate's Log of Practical Experience
- (d) the marks given in the candidate's chosen training pathway

The Connexional Local Preacher's Committee shall examine all the material and, if satisfied, shall issue a Certificate of Accreditation, to be presented at a recognition service locally.

The names of 'fully accredited' Local Preachers accepted during that Connexional year shall be recorded in the ensuing Minutes of Conference.

6B.10 If a candidate has not completed the requirements set out in paragraphs 6B.07 and 6B.08 above by the end of the four-year period, he/she may apply through the Local Preachers' Meeting to the Circuit Executive to remain in training for an extended period, renewable annually. This renewal will be on the recommendation of the Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting and with the approval of the Circuit Executive. The applicant shall be required to explain why the requirements have not been met. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with

the consent of the Connexional Local Preachers' Committee, shall the total period in training exceed eight years. If after this further period the requirements are still not completed, he/she shall cease to be regarded as a Local Preacher in training.

6B.11 Each Local Preacher is required to:

- (a) attend frequently fellowship meetings of the Church and the Lord's Supper.
- (b) affirm annually that he/she continues to believe and preach our doctrines and to observe the discipline of the Church.

At the District Ministerial Synod, Circuit Superintendents shall be asked to confirm that the Local Preachers on their Circuits have affirmed that they continue to believe and preach our doctrines and observe the discipline of the Methodist Church in Ireland and that this has been noted by the March Circuit Executive.

6B.12 Each Local Preacher who has not retired is required to:

- (a) commit to 15 hours of further learning or training per year.
- (b) undergo a Review every 10 years.

6B.13 If the Local Preacher is unwilling to make the affirmation required by paragraph 6B.11 above her/his name will be removed from the Circuit Preaching Plan and the Connexional list of Local Preachers.

In a case where the Local Preacher makes the affirmation but the Circuit Executive has reason to doubt her/him, the matter shall be reported to the District Superintendent who shall then arrange to convene a District Disciplinary Committee.

6B.14 If a Local Preacher behaves in a manner considered by the Circuit Executive to be inappropriate or a charge is made against a Local Preacher, he/she will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures set out below in section 6C.

6B.15 When a Local Preacher has resigned because he/she has been unable to subscribe to Methodist doctrine and discipline and seeks to be reinstated as a Local Preacher he/she shall:

- (a) make application through the Superintendent Minister to the Circuit Executive. Such application shall not be made until two years have elapsed from her/his re-admission to membership of the Methodist Church, or if membership has not ceased, until two years from the date of her/his resignation.

- (b) be examined at the Circuit Executive. Re-instatement shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in favour of the application.
- 6B.16** When a Local Preacher has been asked to resign, or been removed, due to behaviour thought to be inappropriate for anyone called to be a preacher of the Gospel, and seeks to be re-instated he/she shall:
- (a) make application through the Superintendent Minister to the Circuit Executive. Such application shall not be made until five years have elapsed from her/his re-admission to Membership of the Methodist Church, or if membership has not ceased, until five years from the date of her/his resignation or removal.
- (b) have her/his application for re-instatement referred to the District Disciplinary Committee, the report from which shall be considered before the application proceeds to the Circuit Executive.
- (c) be examined at the Circuit Executive. Re-instatement shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in favour of the application.
- 6B.17** No person who has been suspended or expelled from the Ministry shall be employed as a Local Preacher without the consent of the Conference.
- 6B.18** A Local Preacher removing from one Circuit to another shall, on production of her/his Certificate of Accreditation as a Local Preacher, together with a letter from the Superintendent Minister stating that he/she is in good standing, be placed on the plan of the latter Circuit.
- 6B.19** Circuit and Society Treasurers shall be responsible for the payment of travelling expenses to all Local Preachers who conduct services on their Circuits, as outlined in the Minutes of Conference.

District Secretaries

6B.20 The District Superintendent, in consultation with the District Advisory Committee, shall appoint a Local Preacher as District Secretary, who shall collect information concerning the work of Local Preachers on the District.

District Secretaries for Local Preachers shall keep a list of all Local Preachers on their Districts. They shall be responsible for arranging the appointments on the District for Local Preachers' Sunday.

6B.21 District Local Preachers' Secretaries shall forward their reports to the Lay Secretary of the Local Preachers' Committee.

- 6B.22** The statistical returns shall show as active Local Preachers all those who are able and willing to take appointments.
- 6B.23** The Sunday following Easter shall be recognised as Local Preachers' Sunday, on which as far as possible worship shall be led by Local Preachers.
- 6B.24** The District Superintendent shall facilitate the 10-year Review Process for all Local Preachers, as defined in the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Local Preachers' published annually in the Minutes of Conference.

The role of the District Superintendent is to facilitate the process of Review by providing support and guidance to Local Preachers and, in conjunction with the District Local Preachers' Secretary, to ensure that reviews are undertaken and completed within the required timeframe.

*Regulations concerning circuit Local Preachers' Meetings
are found in Chapter 11 CIRCUIT ORGANISATION.*

6C DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS FOR LOCAL PREACHERS

6C.01 A charge against a Local Preacher may be preferred:

- (a) by any ordained minister or member who shall formulate the charge in writing, and deliver it to the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit of which the accused is a member.
- (b) or by a resolution of the Church Council of the Society of which the accused is a member, which shall appoint one or more of its members to state the charge in writing, and deliver it to the Superintendent Minister. (See also paragraph 6B.14)

Hearing at Circuit Executive

6C.02 The Superintendent Minister shall forthwith:

- (a) arrange, in consultation with the District Superintendent, a Circuit Executive to investigate the charge.
- (b) send a copy of the charge to the Local Preacher accused giving at least seven clear days' notice of the time and place of the Circuit Executive called to investigate the charge.
- (c) give each member of the Circuit Executive seven clear days' notice of the time and place of meeting and of the purpose for which it is summoned.

6C.03 If a witness to a material fact be unable to attend the Circuit Executive in person, owing to distance or ill-health, the evidence of such witness may be accepted in the form of a written, signed and authenticated statement delivered to the District Superintendent at least three days before the Circuit Executive. The District Superintendent shall peruse the statement and be satisfied that it does not contain irrelevant or inadmissible matter and that the evidence may be accepted in that form, without prejudice to the interests of the other party in consequence of there being no opportunity for cross-examination. If so satisfied, the District Superintendent shall submit a copy to the party against whom it is proposed to be used.

6C.04 At the Circuit Executive:

- (a) the District Superintendent shall preside; unless he/she is also Superintendent of the Circuit concerned, in which case the President shall nominate the Superintendent of another Circuit in the District or the Superintendent of an adjoining District to preside.

- (b) the Chairperson shall ensure that evidence presented shall be strictly confined to matters relevant to the charge before the meeting - all matters of hearsay, inference and opinion shall be rigorously excluded. Any person disregarding the ruling of the Chairperson in these respects shall be refused further hearing.
- (c) after the meeting has been duly opened, the Chairperson shall state the purpose of the meeting, and shall read the charge.
- (d) the person bringing the charge may address the meeting in support of the charge, and proceed to call evidence. The evidence shall, as far as may be practicable, be given orally, and be subject to cross-examination.
- (e) the person charged may address the meeting and call evidence to rebut the charge.
- (f) the person bringing the charge may address the meeting in reply.
- (g) the parties to the charge and their witnesses shall withdraw from the meeting.
- (h) the members of the meeting shall proceed to deliberate on the matter; the investigation shall be confined strictly to the subject matter of the written charge but if the meeting shall be of the opinion and resolve, that it is expedient in order to make a complete investigation and ensure that justice is done, that the charge be amended, the meeting shall be adjourned for at least ten days to enable the amended charge to be prepared and a copy thereof delivered to the person accused seven clear days before the adjourned meeting.
- (i) the meeting shall determine whether the charge is found to be:
 - not sustained.
 - partially sustained, and to what extent,
 - wholly sustained,
 and may add to its finding a rider or expression of opinion.
- (j) if the charge is found partially or wholly sustained the Meeting shall have power to admonish, rebuke, suspend or remove her/him from office in the Church. Suspension from office may be for a definite or indefinite period, or subject to any condition as to its duration or removal. In no case shall sentence of removal from office be pronounced until after the lapse of at least seven days subsequent to the meeting at which the charge was found to have been sustained.

- (k) the finding of the Circuit Executive shall be announced by the Chairperson at the meeting at which the investigation has taken place, or at any adjournment thereof, of which the parties have had due notice, and a copy of the finding, signed by the Chairperson and Secretary of the meeting, shall forthwith be transmitted to each party by the Secretary.
- (l) full minutes of the proceedings shall be recorded, not in the ordinary Minute Book of the Circuit Executive, but in a separate book provided for the purpose, and confirmed and signed by the Chairperson at the same meeting or at any adjournment thereof. The production of such minutes may be called for in the event of an appeal.

The special Minute Book shall be in the care of the Superintendent of the Circuit who shall be responsible for its safe custody until the case is finally disposed of when the Minute Book and all relevant documents shall be transmitted without delay to the Secretary of Conference for safe keeping. If a Minute Book containing defamatory entries is published to some unauthorised person, either by intentional act or negligence of the custodian, an action at law may lie against the custodian.

6C.05 A local preacher who has been removed from office shall not be readmitted to office in the same or any other Circuit without previous consultation with the Circuit Executive which decided to remove her/him from office.

Appeal to the District

6C.06 Within fourteen days after the pronouncement of the finding of the Circuit Executive, either party to the charge may, if dissatisfied with the finding or the sentence, appeal to the District Disciplinary Committee by serving written notice of appeal on:

- (a) the District Superintendent, or in cases where the District Superintendent is one of the parties concerned, or is the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit in which the proceedings took place, upon the President of the Conference, together with a copy of the charge and a copy of the finding of the Circuit Executive;
- (b) the other party concerned;
- (c) the Secretary of the Circuit Executive before which the charge was originally heard, who shall upon receipt of notice of appeal, forward to the District Superintendent, or President of the Conference, the duly confirmed minutes of all proceedings of the Circuit Executive in relation to the charge.

6C.07 The District Superintendent, or the President of the Conference, shall forthwith convene a District Disciplinary Committee to hear the appeal. In cases where the President of the Conference is called upon to act, he/she shall nominate a Superintendent of another District to act as the Chairperson of the District Disciplinary Committee, but such Chairperson shall not be the minister who presided over the Circuit Executive at the trial of the charge.

6C.08 The District Disciplinary Committee shall consist of not less than seven members chosen, if possible, from the District in which the accused is listed as a Local Preacher, as follows:

the District Superintendent (or where he/she is an interested party, an ordained minister appointed by the President of the Conference),
two ordained ministers chosen by the District Superintendent,
four Local Preachers, two of whom may be nominated by the accuser, and
two by the accused.

Should either the accuser or accused neglect or refuse to nominate Local Preachers within seven days after being called to do so, the District Superintendent or the ordained minister appointed by the President of the Conference shall choose Local Preachers to complete the constitution of the District Disciplinary Committee.

6C.09 The ordained minister appointed as Chairperson of the District Disciplinary Committee shall arrange the time and place of its meeting and shall ensure that the parties concerned are given at least seven days' notice. The District Disciplinary Committee shall re-hear the charge and, subject to the rules as to relevance and admissibility of evidence, either party may produce evidence in addition to that produced before the Circuit Executive. The rules of procedure for the Circuit Executive (paragraph 6C.04) shall apply.

Appeal to the Conference

6C.10 Either party to the charge, if dissatisfied with the finding of the District Disciplinary Committee, may within fourteen days after the finding has been communicated to her/him, appeal to the Conference by giving notice in writing to:

- (a) the Secretary of the Conference,
- (b) the other party to the charge,
- (c) the Chairperson of the District Disciplinary Committee, who shall thereupon ensure that the minutes and proceedings of the Circuit Executive and of the District Disciplinary Committee are produced to the Conference, and available on the hearing of the appeal.

Such appeal shall be entertained only at the Conference immediately following the District Disciplinary Committee by which the charge or appeal has been dealt with, and then only upon notice duly given, in accordance with the foregoing rules (see paragraph 6C.02), unless the Conference shall be satisfied that any delay or omission to give notice was due to circumstances for which the appellant cannot be held responsible and that no prejudice or injustice has been or may be caused to the respondent by such delay or omission.

6C.11 Notice of appeal shall be brought before the Conference in its Ministerial Session by its Secretary, and the Conference shall thereupon appoint a committee to hear the charge.

The President of the Conference or, if he/she is an interested party or has already presided at one of the former hearings, another ordained minister appointed by the Conference, shall preside over the committee.

The rules of procedure before such committee shall be the same as before the Circuit Executive (paragraph 6C.04) and the District Disciplinary Committee (paragraphs 6C.06 – 6C.09).

The committee shall present its report in writing, with full minutes of its proceedings, to the Conference, which may adopt or reject the said report in whole or in part, with or without variation or amendment, but the proceedings in the Conference shall be confined to the presentation and discussion of the report, and there shall be no re-hearing of the case.

6D LAY PRESIDENCY AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

- 6D.01** A Circuit which considers that any of its churches or a significant number of church members are deprived of reasonably frequent and regular celebrations of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper through lack of ordained ministers, may apply in writing for the authorisation of fully accredited Local Preachers to preside at that sacrament when appointed to do so on the plan of that circuit, or on other occasions within the circuit when authorised by the Superintendent in consultation with the District Superintendent. Such deprivation may not solely be geographical but may also occur in contexts where missional initiatives are functioning as worshipping communities with a fully accredited Local Preacher as their main leader. In such cases, the Circuit may seek the leader's authorisation.
- 6D.02** (a) Such applications, with reasons for making them and the consent of the nominee, shall be submitted by the Circuit Executive for consideration by the District Advisory Committee. The Superintendent Minister shall be responsible for the transmission of the request to the District Superintendent, stating the result of the voting of the members of the Circuit Executive.
- (b) Local Preachers nominated for authorisation to preside at the Lord's Supper shall normally be members in the Circuit. The Circuit Executive shall provide the District Advisory Committee with information as to the needs of the circuit and the suitability of the person(s) nominated. The District Advisory Committee shall forward its recommendation to the Authorisations Committee.
- 6D.03** (a) An Authorisations Committee shall be appointed annually by the Conference and shall consist of:
- The members of the President's Advisory Committee
 - The Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee
 - The officers of the Home Mission Department
 - The Superintendent of the District requesting an authorisation/s
 - The Connexional Local Preachers' Secretaries.
- The Convener shall be the Secretary of Conference.
- (b) All applications shall be sent, with the recommendations of the District Advisory Committee, to the Authorisations Committee which shall consider these and present its report to the Connexional Team. The Connexional Team shall report directly to the Representative Session of Conference, which shall grant such authorisations as it thinks fit, to take effect from the beginning of the following Connexional year. Appeals against the Connexional Team's recommendations shall be heard by Conference.

- 6D.04** (a) The authorisation shall be related to a named person for a specific place for a prescribed period of time.
- (b) The authorisation shall be renewable annually. If the District Advisory Committee is satisfied that the person authorised remains suitable and the circumstances of the Circuit have not changed, it may on the request of the Circuit Executive recommend a renewal of the authorisation for a second or third year, and the Authorisations Committee shall support any such recommendation without further investigation. A letter of authorisation signed by the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall be issued annually to the person so authorised. If renewal is sought beyond the initial or any subsequent period of three years, the procedures set out in paragraph 6D.02 (a) and (b) above shall be followed in full.
- (c) Once granted, an authorisation shall cease to be valid on cessation of membership or on removal from the Circuit plan.
- 6D.05** Persons so authorised shall, unless already instructed in presidency at the Lord's Supper, be so instructed by the District Superintendent or by a minister appointed by her/him, the forms of service authorised by the Conference being used as a basis of instruction.
- 6D.06** In emergencies arising after the meeting of the Conference by the death of an ordained minister or otherwise, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, in consultation with the Authorisations Committee may grant an authorisation having immediate effect and continuing until the 30th June following.

6E LAY EMPLOYEES

- 6E.01** (a) Any circuit (except a City Mission) or part of a circuit (such as a society or project) considering the establishment of a new position which is to be filled by a lay employee shall consult the Employment Advisory Group. This committee shall have discretion to require additional consultation concerning the appointment or re-appointment of specific personnel. All such bodies considering the employment of a person working with children or youth shall also consult with the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Department. Where the advice of the Employment Advisory Group is not sought or not followed, the employment shall be deemed for all purposes to be the personal responsibility of the members of the board or meeting concerned and not that of the Methodist Church in Ireland or its constituents.
- (b) All such positions, together with applicable Terms and Conditions of Employment, shall be subject to ratification by the Circuit Executive.
- (c) Superintendents shall ensure that all persons employed in such positions are properly vetted, shall sign all contracts of employment on behalf of the Circuit, and shall report annually to Synod on all persons so employed who have a significant vocational element in their employment (including, but not limited to, lay pastors, lay pastoral assistants, youth pastors, youth workers, church community workers, and circuit evangelists).
- 6E.02** (a) All lay employees with a significant vocational element in their employment who are employed by circuits or their constituents, City Missions or departments of the church, or as part of co-operative ventures with other statutory or voluntary agencies or Churches, shall, as a minimum, be remunerated in accordance with scales of salaries and expenses determined by the Conference, which shall provide for higher tiers for those who have completed certificate, diploma, or degree courses in their specific area of work approved by the Employment Advisory Group.
- (b) All vocational lay workers (except those employed as part of cooperative ventures) whether paid or unpaid shall, as a condition of continued employment, participate in ongoing training in consultation with the Training and Development Officer or, in the case of Youth Workers and Youth Pastors, with IMYC. Superintendents shall advise the Training and Development Officer when any such employees are appointed and provide her/him with up to date information on all employees.

6E.03 All lay workers with preaching responsibilities, who are not already fully accredited Local Preachers, shall, as a condition of continued employment, make regular progress in a Conference-approved training course for Local Preachers.

Employment Advisory Group

6E.04 The Employment Advisory Group exists for the following purposes:

- (a) To facilitate and encourage a study of the ministry needs and available financial resources of an employing body prior to any new position being established.
- (b) To make expertise in employment legislation and regulation available throughout the Connexion.
- (c) To promote the effective use of resources for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom throughout the Connexion.
- (d) To minimise divergence of practice to the detriment of employees or employers.
- (e) To promulgate necessary regulations through the General Committee to Conference.

6E.05 The membership of the Advisory Group shall be as follows:

The Secretary of the Conference

The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department, or a nominee of the General Secretary

The General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Department, or a nominee of the General Secretary

The Principal of Edgehill Theological College, or a nominee of the Principal;

A representative of the City Missions, nominated by the General Committee;

A secretary convener, appointed by the General Committee.

Additional members co-opted by the Advisory Group.

6E.06 The Advisory Group shall establish its own procedures for the expeditious dispatch of business and shall meet as necessary.

CHAPTER 7 THE CONFERENCE

7.01 The governing body of the Methodist Church in Ireland is the Conference, which consists of two Sessions, a Ministerial and a Representative Session.

The Ministerial Session

7.02 The Conference in its Ministerial Session shall consist of:

- (a) The President and the ministers appointed by the British Conference to accompany her/him.
- (b) All the elected and ex-officio ministerial members of the Representative Session.
- (c) **Such other ministers in full connexion as shall have permission from their respective District Ministerial Synods to attend.**

The Representative Session

7.03 As provided in the Constitution VI. (2) (b), "The Conference in its Representative Session consists of the President of the British Conference and the representatives appointed by that Conference, together with not less than 100, nor more than 150 ministers, and an equal number of lay members, elected or appointed in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Conference."

7.04 The ministers shall consist of:

- (a) The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
- (b) The Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
- (c) The Ex-President of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
- (d) The Assistant Secretaries of the preceding Irish Conference,
- (e) The Representatives to the preceding British Conference, and to the ensuing British Conference,
- (f) **The District Superintendents and the Secretaries of Districts,**
- (g) The Ministerial Treasurers and Secretaries of the following Connexional Funds:
 - Home Mission Fund
 - Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund
 - Children's Fund
 - Chapel Fund and Property Board Development Account
 - General Education Fund

World Mission Partnership
Child Care Society
Methodist Youth and Children's Department
Methodist Ministers' Medical Fund
Statutory Trustees

- (h) The Registrar of Deeds and Documents (if an ordained minister),
- (i) The Committee Membership Secretary,
- (j) Ministers who have filled the office of President of the Church prior to 1995; after 1995 ministers who have filled the office of President of the Church following the completion of their Presidential year for a period of four years,
- (k) The Principal of Edgehill Theological College,
- (l) The Principal of Wesley College, Dublin (if an ordained minister),
- (m) The Principal of Gurteen College (if an ordained minister),
- (n) The Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee,
- (o) Any minister of the Irish Conference serving as an officer of World Mission Partnership,
- (p) The Ministerial Connexional Secretary for Local Preachers,
- (q) The Precentor of the Conference,
- (r) The Convener of the Faith and Order Committee (if a minister),
- (s) All Superintendents of Circuits,
- (t) **The ministers in full connexion, elected by the District Ministerial Synods according to the allocation printed in the Minutes of Conference.**

7.05 The lay members shall consist of:

- (a) The Lay Leader of the Conference
- (b) The two Irish Lay Representatives to the preceding British Conference,
The two Irish Lay Representatives to the ensuing British Conference,
- (c) The Lay Treasurers of the following:

Home Mission Fund
Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund
Ministers' Children's Fund
Chapel Fund and Property Board Development Account

General Education Fund
World Mission Partnership
Methodist Women in Ireland
Child Care Society
Ministerial Training Fund
Statutory Trustees (2)
Methodist Youth and Children's Department
Council on Social Responsibility (2)
General Purposes Fund
World Development and Relief Fund

- (d) Lay Representatives nominated by Circuit Executives, as provided for in paragraph 7.07.
- (e) Three Youth Representatives, who shall not exceed twenty-five years of age at the time of her/his selection, from each District, selected by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Department.
- (f) Lay Representatives to be elected by the Committees of the following Funds and Institutions from among their own members, after the elections have taken place in the Synods, one each by-

World Mission Partnership
Methodist Youth and Children's Department
Council on Social Responsibility
Stipends and Allowances Board
Statutory Trustees
Local Preachers' Committee
World Development and Relief
Wesley College, Dublin
Methodist College, Belfast
Edgehill College, Belfast
Gurteen College

two by-

Methodist Women in Ireland

- (g) The Convener of the Faith and Order Committee (if a layperson)
The Chairperson of the Connexional Finance Committee (if a layperson)
The Chairperson of the Church Development Board
The Chairperson of the Property Board

- (h) Lay Representatives elected by the General Committee in such numbers, with the foregoing, to complete the number required.
- (i) A lay Assistant Secretary of the preceding Conference

Appointments to Conference

- 7.06** Lay representatives to Conference shall be those persons nominated by the Circuit Executives. Those eligible must be at least eighteen years of age and members of the Methodist Church for at least two consecutive years immediately preceding nomination. Circuit Executives shall also nominate persons as substitutes in case the first nominee is unable to attend. Superintendents of Circuits are required to inform the Secretary of the Conference of the names of the persons nominated and that such persons are prepared to attend.
- 7.07** Each Circuit with less than 500 members shall have one representative, and each Circuit with 500 or more shall have two representatives annually. The numbers of members for this purpose shall be those printed in the *Minutes* of the previous Conference, and shall not include junior members.

Supplemental Lists

- 7.08** The names of the four ministerial members who shall be next in order of voting to those elected by the District Ministerial Synod shall be forwarded from each District as a Supplemental List.
- 7.09** The Lay Supplemental List shall consist of those nominated as substitutes by the Circuit Executives.
- 7.10** The full Supplemental List of each District shall be sent to the Secretary of the Conference who shall summon representatives therefrom as vacancies occur.

Mission Partners and Membership of Conference

- 7.11** All mission partners of the Irish Conference on furlough at the time of the meeting of the Conference shall be honorary members of the Conference, entitled to all the privileges of the Representative Conference excluding the right to vote, while ministers shall also be entitled to full membership of the Pastoral Session of the Conference.

Mission partners thus becoming honorary members of the Conference shall be entitled to the usual hospitality and travelling expenses within Ireland, and the Committees of World Mission Partnership and Methodist Women in Ireland shall make similar provision for the lay mission partners. The foregoing provision as regards ministers shall only apply to those who have been received into full connexion.

The General Committee shall in any case of doubt have the right to determine to which mission partners this provision shall apply.

Officers of the Conference

7.12 The President - The duties of the President shall be to constitute the meetings of the Conference, to preside, to preserve order, to take the vote, to announce decisions, and generally to direct the business. He/she shall be installed at the opening of the Representative Session of the Conference according to the order approved by the Conference and contained within the appendices of the Manual of Laws.

Nomination and Election of the President

7.13 The President of the Conference shall be designated a year in advance, in the following manner:

- (a) Each District Superintendent, in consultation with the District Advisory Committee, shall appoint two ordained ministers and two lay persons to represent the District on a Nomination Committee. These, together with the President and the Secretary of the Conference and the officers of the Home Mission Department, shall form the Committee. The District Superintendents shall not be eligible to serve as District representatives. The Secretary of the Conference shall be the Convener.
- (b) The Committee shall meet in the autumn of each year and thereafter if necessary to conduct its business. It shall submit to the Conference the names of three ministers in Full Connexion who have travelled at least ten years who have not retired nor are about to retire. The names of the three ministers nominated for the position of President of the Conference shall be printed in the Conference Agenda together with reasoned statements. The outgoing President and the President Designate shall not be eligible for nomination. To these names the Conference may, if it desires, add other names. Further nominations shall have the prior approval of the nominee and be supported by six members of the Conference (three ministers and three laypersons). Those nominating additional candidates shall be responsible for the preparation of a reasoned statement of a similar nature to those produced by the Nominations Committee. From the list so provided the Conference shall by single transferable vote elect a minister who shall be designated as President for the second ensuing year. The appointment shall be ratified at the beginning of the following Conference.
- (c) Should the President so designated die during the year, or for any reason become incapable of undertaking the duties of the office, the person receiving

the next highest number of votes in the vote for the President Designate during the previous Conference shall be regarded as the President Designate.

- (d) Any member of the Conference wishing to nominate for the office of President any minister of the Irish Conference serving outside Ireland shall notify the Secretary of the Conference one year in advance of such intention. The General Committee shall then consider the financial obligations involved in such an appointment, and report to the Conference at which the nomination is made.

7.14 During the interval between one Conference and another, the President of the Conference shall be the ex-officio Chairperson of all Connexional Committees of which he/she is a member, except in the case of those boards and committees to which the Conference has appointed a chairperson.

7.15 If occasion shall arise for temporarily filling the place of the President of the Conference, the duties of the office shall be undertaken by a minister who has filled the office of President. The following shall be the order of precedence:

- (a) The President of the Conference for the previous year.
- (b) The ministers who have held the office of President in order of seniority according to the date of their occupation of that office, provided they are still in an appointment. If a minister has more than once filled the office, the date of her/his first having done so will determine the order of precedence.

7.16 In the event of the death of the President, the minister entitled as aforesaid to occupy the office shall, for the remainder of the year, and until the appointment of a successor, have all powers, privileges, and authority attached to the office, and shall be responsible for its duties. In the event of a prolonged illness of the President, these regulations shall apply to the extent and for the period that may be necessary.

7.17 The Conference shall appoint annually a President's Advisory Committee. It shall consist of the President and the Secretary of the Conference, together with two ministers and three lay persons, one of whom shall be the Lay Leader of the Conference, the lay persons acting in cases other than those which only concern ministers. It shall have power to direct the Superintendent of a District to make enquiry and report to it concerning any matter on her/his District which it deems advisable.

7.18 **The Secretary of the Conference** is the Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland who shall be designated annually by the Conference, one year in advance, on the nomination of the General Committee. Each Conference shall

ratify the appointment of the person so designated who must have completed at least fifteen years' travelling at the time of appointment.

- 7.19** Assistant Secretaries and Letter Writers shall be appointed by the Conference in its Representative Session, to discharge such duties as the Conference, through its Secretary, may from time to time, determine. At the first election to the office of Assistant Secretary, the Secretary shall submit to the Conference the names of three suitable persons.

One of the Assistant Secretaries, and one of the Letter Writers, may be a lay person. The officers so elected shall hold office until a new election shall have taken place.

- 7.20** In the case of the illness, or absence from Ireland, or death, during her/his term of office, of the minister appointed as Secretary of the Conference, the office shall be supplied and the duties undertaken by the minister next in order appointed as Assistant Secretary of the Conference. Such Assistant Secretary shall for the time being, be deemed and taken to be the Secretary of the Conference to all intents and purposes, as if he/she had been originally appointed to that office.

- 7.21 The Lay Leader of the Conference** shall be elected by the Conference for a period of two years and designated one year in advance. The appointment shall be ratified at the beginning of the following Conference.

- (a) He/she shall be nominated by the Nominations Committee.
- (b) The Committee shall meet in the autumn and thereafter if necessary to conduct its business. It shall submit to the Conference the names of three laypersons who have been members of the Methodist Church for at least the previous ten years continuously at the time of nomination. The names of the three laypersons nominated for the position of Lay Leader of the Conference shall be printed in the Conference Agenda with reasoned statements. The outgoing Lay Leader shall not be eligible for nomination. To these names the Conference may, if it desires, add other names. Further nominations shall have the prior approval of the nominee and be supported by six members of Conference (three ministers and three laypersons). Those nominating additional candidates shall be responsible for the preparation of a reasoned statement of a similar nature to those produced by the Nominations Committee. From the list so provided the Conference shall, by single transferable vote, elect a layperson who shall be designated as Lay Leader of the Conference for the second next ensuing year.

- (c) Should the Lay Leader so designated die during the year, or for any reason become incapable of undertaking the duties of the office, the person receiving the next highest number of votes in the vote for the Lay Leader Designate during the previous Conference shall then be regarded as the Lay Leader Designate.

7.22 If occasion shall arise for temporarily filling the place of the Lay Leader of the Conference, the duties of the office shall be undertaken by a layperson who has filled the office of Lay Leader. The following shall be the order of precedence:

- (a) The previous Lay Leader of the Conference.
- (b) The laypersons who have filled the office of Lay Leader of the Conference in order of seniority according to the date of their occupation of that office, provided they are still resident in Ireland and members of the Methodist Church. If a layperson has more than once filled the office, the date of her/his first having done so will determine the order of precedence.

7.23 In the event of the death of the Lay Leader, the layperson entitled as aforesaid to occupy the office shall, for the remainder of the period of office, and until the appointment of a successor, have all the powers, privileges and authority attached to the office and shall be responsible for its duties. In the event of a prolonged illness of the Lay Leader, these regulations shall apply to the extent and for the period that may be necessary.

7.24 The duties and responsibilities of the Lay Leader shall include the following:

- (a) to be involved in the service for the installation of the President of the Conference.
- (b) to have a place on the Conference platform each year.
- (c) to introduce the Conversation on the Work of God at Conference.
- (d) to be the Co-Chair of the General Committee together with the President. This shall be for a three-year period.
- (e) to be a member of the President's Advisory Committee during her/his period of office.
- (f) to perform such other duties as may from time to time be deemed as necessary by the Conference.'

Reports for the Conference

- 7.25** All reports for the Conference, together with the annual statistics and the names of the members of the Representative Session, shall be printed for the use of, and sent to, all members of the Conference and to all ministers in full connexion, at least three days before the time of meeting.

Daily Record and Journal of the Conference

- 7.26** A Daily Record shall be kept by one of the Assistant Secretaries, comprising an exact record of all the business of the Conference. The Record of each day shall be read to the Conference at the first sitting of the day following, or attested by two ministers and one lay member appointed by the Conference.
- 7.27** All resolutions and orders touching elections, admissions, expulsions, consents, dispensations, delegations, or appointments and acts whatsoever of the Conference, shall be entered and written in the Journals of the Conference, which shall be kept for that purpose. The Journal of the Ministerial Session shall be kept separate from the Journal of the Representative Session. (See Constitution, Section VI, Paragraph 8).

Entries in the Printed Minutes

- 7.28** The Secretary of the Conference shall have discretionary power regarding the entry in the printed Minutes of Conference unless in such cases as the mover of any resolution asks for the direction of the Conference regarding such entry.

Pastoral Efficiency

- 7.29** At least one session of the Ministerial Conference shall be set apart for the consideration of matters affecting pastoral efficiency, and a committee shall be appointed annually to arrange for the subjects to be discussed. The committee shall also determine the theme and the writer of a Pastoral Address. This Address shall be submitted to the following Conference and, as approved, shall be read at a suitable date to each congregation.

Expenses of Ministers attending the Conference

- 7.30** The travelling expenses of Ministers attending the Conference shall be at a rate to be determined from time to time by the Conference.

General Rules of Procedure

- 7.31** All votes of the Conference shall be taken by a show of hands, unless the Conference shall otherwise determine; and, in all business relating to matters of

administration, a majority of those present and voting shall be necessary and sufficient to decide the question.

7.32 All elections by the Conference shall be by ballot. A clear majority of the votes cast shall be necessary and sufficient in every case.

7.33 The Conference shall annually appoint a Committee of Scrutineers. Their report shall state the total number of votes cast on each occasion and shall fully account for those votes. They shall retain the voting papers until their report has been accepted. They shall bring to the notice of the Conference any irregularities in practice and procedure.

7.34 Business shall be presented to the Conference in one of the following forms:

A **Memorial**, which is a request for action to be taken by the Conference, presented by a District Synod, a Circuit Executive, a member or members of the Methodist Church in Ireland and submitted to the Secretary of the Conference prior to the date of the Spring Meeting of the General Committee, or by two members of the Conference when it is in session, submitted to the Secretary of the Conference not later than the time stated in the Conference Agenda;

A **Resolution**, which is a statement recommending an action by the Conference, presented by a Committee of the Conference and printed in the Conference Agenda;

A **Notice of Motion**, which sets out, one year in advance, a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the Church or its Courts or its Connexional Committees, and is printed in the Conference Agenda;

A **Special Resolution**, which is a resolution to alter or amend the Constitution of the Church, created when an appropriate Notice of Motion has been accepted by the Conference;

An **Emergency Resolution**, which, the permission of the Conference having been given, is submitted in writing and signed by six members of the Conference, on a matter of significant importance which has arisen after the time has expired for the submission of Memorials by members of the Conference.'

Every resolution or amendment, not printed in the Conference Agenda, shall, before it is admitted for discussion, be presented in writing and in duplicate, for use by the President and the Secretary of the Conference.

7.35 (a) The process by which the Constitution of the Church may be altered or amended shall be as follows:

A Notice of Motion of a Special Resolution setting out the proposed alteration or amendment, having been printed in the Conference Agenda, shall be presented to the Conference.

At the following Conference a vote shall be taken on the proposed alteration or amendment. Provided that three-fourths of the members present and voting vote in favour, the Special Resolution shall proceed to the following Conference.

At that Conference a second vote shall be taken on the Special Resolution. Provided that not less than three-fourths of the members present and voting vote in favour and also provided that not less than one-half of the total members of the Conference are present and voting, the Special Resolution shall be regarded as having been accepted and the Constitution of the Church duly altered or amended.

The President and the Secretary of the Conference for the time being shall certify copies of the Special Resolution and submit these for enrolment as specified in paragraph 4 of the Methodist Church in Ireland Act (1928).

(b) The process by which the Courts of the Church or its Connexional Committees may be altered or amended shall be as follows:

A Notice of Motion setting out the proposed alteration or amendment, having been printed in the Conference Agenda, shall be presented to the Conference.

At the following Conference a vote shall be taken on the proposed alteration or amendment. Provided that a majority of the members present and voting vote in favour, the alteration or amendment shall be regarded as accepted and the Manual of Laws altered or amended accordingly.

7.36 The Conference shall appoint in each Session a Memorials Committee which shall consider during the ensuing year all memorials and any matters remitted by the Conference. It shall also advise the Conference regarding any matters which ought to be considered at a private session. The Committee shall report its recommendations in the Conference Agenda.

To this Committee shall be added the Superintendent of any District from whose Synod a Memorial is to be considered by the Committee. If unable to attend, the District Superintendent shall nominate a substitute.

Memorials should reach the Secretary of the Conference prior to the date of the Spring meeting of the General Committee.

All Memorials presented during the Conference shall be submitted to the Committee for judgment as to their competence for debate and, if in order, shall be moved in the Conference by their proposer and seconder.

In doubtful cases the decision of the President for the time being shall determine to which Session the memorial or resolution belongs.

- 7.37** A memorial may be addressed to the Conference by any member or members of the Methodist Church, on any subject affecting her/his or their Church relations or interests. Such memorial must be forwarded to the Secretary of the Conference prior to the Spring meeting of the General Committee, except in cases where the circumstances which occasion the memorial arise after that date.
- 7.38** Visitors shall be permitted to be present during the Sessions of the Representative Conference, except at such times as the Conference shall otherwise determine.

Quorum

- 7.39** If at any time during a Session of Conference, the attention of the President is called to the fact that a quorum, as defined in the Constitution, Section VI. Sub-Section (7) paragraph (vi), is not present, the members who are in attendance shall not transact any further business until there be a quorum.

Rules of Debate

- 7.40** As much of the business of the Conference is conducted in the form of conversations, Rule (m) shall not apply, except when a formal resolution has been duly placed before the Conference.
- (a) The President shall decide all questions of order; shall see that order is maintained in the proceedings, and that the rules for the regulation of business are observed. No discussion shall be brought to a conclusion contrary to the will of the Conference.
 - (b) The President shall have a casting vote in addition to her/his vote as a member of the Conference.
 - (c) When any member wishes to address the Conference he/she shall rise and address the President, but shall not proceed until the President calls upon her/him.

- (d) No member shall remain standing during a discussion, except the member addressing the President.
- (e) No member shall speak more than once on the same question without leave of the Conference, except as provided for in the Preamble and in Rules (f) and (q).
- (f) The mover of a substantive resolution shall have a right of reply, but not the mover of an amendment. The reply must be limited to answering the arguments advanced against the motion.
- (g) Every motion and amendment shall be handed in writing to the Secretary at the time the proposition is made.
- (h) Motions of which due notice has been given shall, unless in special cases, be dealt with in connection with the business of the departments to which they relate or refer.
- (i) When a resolution or amendment has been moved and seconded, it shall not be withdrawn without the consent of the Conference.
- (j) The seconder of a resolution may reserve her/his speech, subject to the operation of Rule (n).
- (k) The Report of a Committee officially presented, shall be received by the Conference on the motion of the Convener, or of someone acting on her/his behalf, and its resolutions shall then be moved.
- (l) All speeches following the presentation of Reports to the Conference shall be limited to five minutes, or as determined by the Conference.
- (m) No motion on any other subject shall be submitted until that which is under consideration has been disposed of by permitted withdrawal, adoption, or rejection, or by one of the following methods:
 - (i) Amendment of the subject matter, either by varying the terms, or by omission, or addition.
 - Should an amendment be carried, it becomes the substantive motion, and an amendment thereto may be proposed. If no further amendment be proposed, the amendment which has become the substantive motion, shall be put without further discussion.
 - Should the amendment be lost, and no further amendment be proposed, the original motion shall be put without further discussion.

- A second amendment shall not be submitted until the first be disposed of, but any speaker may give notice of her/his intention to propose a second amendment if the first should not be carried.
- (ii) The adoption of any of the following motions, which would be in order, whether a motion, or a motion with amendment, were before the Conference:
- "The Previous Question"-which shall be put to the Conference in the following form:

"That the resolution (or resolution and amendment) before the Conference be not put." This may be discussed concurrently with such resolution or amendment.
 - "The Order of the Day," i.e., that the next business as ordered by the Conference be now taken.
 - The postponement of the question either to a definite time, or to a time to be hereafter fixed.
 - Reference to a Committee.
- (iii) Adjournment-
- Of the debate.
 - Of the Conference.
- (n) A motion-"that the vote be now taken"-may with the assent of the President, be made by any member, but no discussion shall be allowed thereon. If the motion should be carried by a majority of not less than two-thirds of those voting, the President shall forthwith call upon the member, if any, who may have the right of reply, and immediately after the reply shall put the question.
- (o) At the close of a discussion the President shall request the members to be seated, and the resolution, or the resolution and the amendment, as the case may be, shall be read before being put to the vote, the vote on the amendment to be taken first.
- No member shall speak after the President has risen to put the question to the Conference until a vote has been taken.
- (p) A motion to rescind a resolution of the Conference can be submitted only after notice duly given.

- (q) A member may raise a point of order when he/she deems the rules of debate, or the regulations of the Conference, to have been violated. He/she must submit the point of order to the President. Upon the question of order being raised, the member addressing the Conference shall take her/his seat, and retain it until the point of order is decided.
- (r) A member who thinks he/she has been misrepresented by a speaker may, by the indulgence of the Conference, interrupt to correct the speaker, but must not enter into argument.
- (s) As the dignity and efficiency of the Conference depend largely on the order maintained, it is the duty of members to give quiet and respectful attention to the business in hand, and any member who persistently offends in this respect is liable to be admonished from the Chair.
- (t) Questions which relate to the rights and privileges of the Conference, or of individual members thereof, or to the order of business, shall have precedence.

Appointment of District Superintendents and Secretaries of Districts

- 7.41** (a) District Superintendents shall be appointed by Conference in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5G.16.
- (b) The Conference directs that the appointment of a District Superintendent shall be for a period of seven years. During the sixth year, the District Superintendent Selection Panel shall review the appointment and, in appropriate circumstances, recommend to the Conference that the appointment be extended for a further three years. After leaving the office of District Superintendent, a minister may not be reappointed to that office for a further five years.
- 7.42** Secretaries of Districts shall be appointed by the Conference annually, on the nomination of the respective District Superintendents.

Appointments to Departmental Offices

- 7.43** All appointments as Secretaries and Treasurers of Connexional Departments and Funds, shall be for a period not exceeding six years. The outgoing officers shall be eligible for nomination and re-election.
- 7.44** At its meeting prior to the Conference at which the appointment terminates, the Committee of the Fund or Department affected shall submit to the Conference the name or names of not more than three persons in nomination for the office, of whom the officer for the time being may or may not be one. To this list of names so submitted the Conference may add other names. In any case in which the name of one minister is proposed for election or for re-election to

an office or department, special reasons for this action shall be given to the Conference.

Offices Becoming Vacant in the Course of the Year

7.45 The following offices have special provision made for the supply of vacancies occurring therein:

A District Superintendent and a Secretary of a District Synod.

A Treasurer and a Secretary of a Connexional Fund or Committee.

When a vacancy occurs in any of these offices by death, resignation, illness, or any other cause, it shall be supplied until the ensuing Conference, as follows:

- (a) In the case of a District Superintendent, the President, on the advice of the Connexional Team, shall appoint an ordained minister of the District to serve as Temporary District Superintendent on a part-time basis until a new District Superintendent is appointed by Conference under the provisions of paragraph 5G.16; in the case of a Secretary of a District, the District Superintendent shall appoint a replacement to serve until the ensuing Conference.
- (b) In the case of a Treasurer of a Connexional Fund, Department, or Committee, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the surviving Treasurer, if any, and if there be no surviving Treasurer, the President of the Conference shall fill the office in accordance with the vote of the Committee taken by post, unless in her/his judgment, the committee should meet for the purpose.
- (c) In the case of a Secretary of a Connexional Fund, Department, or Committee, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the Ministerial Treasurer of the Fund or Committee, where such exists, provided that if the office be one to which an appointment is made in the Stations, the President of the Conference shall have power to appoint an assistant to the Treasurer for the remainder of the year. If there be no Treasurer of the committee concerned, the President of the Conference shall fill the office in accordance with the vote of the committee, to be taken by post, unless in her/his judgment the committee should meet for the purpose.

Relationship with the British Conference

7.46 The following agreement has been made with the British Conference regarding the status of Irish Methodist Ministers in connection with the Conference of the Methodist Church in Great Britain:

- (a) Ministers of the Irish Conference admitted into full connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland, whether before or since the passing in Northern Ireland of the Methodist Church in Ireland Act (Northern Ireland) 1928 and in the Republic of Ireland the Methodist Church in Ireland Act 1928, shall be recognised and regarded as ministers of the Methodist Church in Great Britain admitted into full connexion.
 - (b) Ministers and lay persons of the Methodist Church in Ireland may be appointed members of the Missionary Committee or of any other committee of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, as that Conference may determine.
 - (c) Ministers of the Irish Conference, who, under the provisions of these clauses, are recognised and regarded as ministers of the Methodist Church admitted into full connexion shall be subject to the rules and discipline of the Conference of the Methodist Church while filling any appointment in Great Britain or serving in any of the overseas mission stations of the Methodist Church.
- 7.47** Any minister in full connexion with another Methodist Conference who is permitted by that Conference to serve or reside in Ireland may, on application to and approval by the Irish Conference, be regarded as being in full connexion with the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland, subject to her/his acceptance and observance of the discipline of the Conference and such other conditions and limitations as that Conference may impose. The recognition as being in full connexion shall be reviewed annually.

Representatives to the British Conference

- 7.48** In the Constitution Deed of the Methodist Church of Great Britain, it is provided that the Irish Conference shall be represented in the British Conference by the President and Secretary of the Conference and two lay representatives.
- The Conference, desiring to maintain some measure of continuity in its representation to the British Conference, directs that its representatives shall be appointed as follows:
- (a) The President of the Conference and the Secretary of the Conference shall be ex-officio representatives as provided by the Deed of Union.
 - (b) Two lay representatives shall be elected after nomination, by ballot, from the lay members of the Irish Conference. They shall be elected at the Irish Conference meeting one year prior to the British Conference which they are to attend. A lay representative who has been elected and attended, shall not be eligible for a subsequent election.

- (c) The President shall have power to fill any vacancies which may occur in the Irish representation owing to death, illness, or other cause, between the meeting of the Irish Conference and the meeting of the British Conference.

The Connexional Team

7.49 (a) The Connexional Team shall consist of the following members:

- The President of the Conference
 - The Lay Leader of the Conference
 - The Secretary of the Conference
 - The Ex-President of the Conference
 - The President-Designate of the Conference
 - The immediate past Lay Leader or Lay Leader-designate
 - The District Superintendents
 - The Director of Ministry
 - The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department, when in a full-time separated appointment
 - The General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Department
 - The Chair of the Connexional Finance Committee
 - The Chair of the Church Development Board
- The Secretary of the Conference shall act as Secretary and Convener of the Connexional Team.

- (b) The following subgroup of the Connexional Team shall have exclusive responsibility with regard to all matters concerning the stationing of ministers and probationers: The President of the Conference, the Lay Leader of the Conference, the Secretary of the Conference, the President-Designate of the Conference, the District Superintendents, the Director of Ministry, and, when in full-time, separated appointment, the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department.

7.50 The Connexional Team has the following responsibilities:

- (a) To coordinate and align vision and enable its members to exercise their executive responsibilities consistently across the Connexion;
- (b) To help enable the Connexion to maintain its Methodist ethos and links to its historic Methodist roots;
- (c) To support and resource local Circuits and Societies;

- (d) To allocate the District Home Mission budget among the Districts, for use on the District as determined by the District Superintendent in consultation with the officers of the Home Mission Department;
- (e) To facilitate regular listening opportunities across the Connexion which enable members of the Methodist community to share their joys, concerns, feelings and ideas concerning the church and world;
- (f) To support and assist its members in their individual responsibilities overseeing the various aspects of the Connexion;
- (g) Through its stationing subgroup, to recommend to the Ministerial Session of Conference the stations of ministers and probationers for the ensuing year;
- (h) If required under subparagraph 10.16 (a), below, to appoint annually a District Lay Leader, on the nomination of the District Superintendent;
- (i) To hear and decide appeals from Circuit Executives or Circuit Superintendents regarding decisions made by District Superintendents which impact them;
- (j) To report through the General Committee to Conference.

7.51 Early in October each year the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team will meet to consider:

- (a) The appointment of ministers who will have completed eight years and may be due for a change of appointment at the ensuing Conference.
- (b) The appointment of ministers who have requested a change of appointment at the ensuing Conference, or whose Circuit Executives have requested a change.
- (c) The appointment of ministers who are returning from service overseas or from service with an external organisation.
- (d) The appointment of ministers transferring from other Conferences or Churches.
- (e) The appointment of students who will be leaving Edgehill College at the ensuing Conference.
- (f) The appointment of those ministers for whom the Committee may consider a change would be desirable in the best interests of the ministers concerned and of the work on the Circuits.

- 7.52** The stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team is authorised to act upon the recommendation of the District Superintendents in regard to ministers seeking to retire at the ensuing Conference.
- 7.53** (a) The stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team shall meet as often as required during the year. Every effort shall be made to assess the requirements of the Circuits and the aptitudes, interests and skills of ministers.
- (b) The stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team is authorised not only to discuss appointments for the ensuing Conference but also to look forward to the requirements of following years.
- 7.54** At the end of February each year a list of the appointments to be proposed to the ensuing Conference shall be sent to every minister and Circuit Steward. Before such a list is published every minister who is to be transferred to a new appointment at the ensuing Conference shall be informed personally by the District Superintendent regarding her/his transfer.
- 7.55** In the event of an unexpected situation arising between the end of February and the meeting of the annual Conference likely to require an alteration in the proposed list of appointments the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team shall meet as required to deal with the matter.
- 7.56** The reading of appointments shall take place at a Ministerial Session of the Conference before the first Session of the Representative Conference when the Secretary shall read the list of Circuits and the appointments in their order. At this reading any minister who so desires may make a statement concerning her/his appointment, but no discussion shall take place, nor shall any changes in appointments be made except in those cases which the Conference by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting may determine to reconsider.
- 7.57** A Circuit Executive may also make a statement concerning a proposed change of appointment on the same basis as outlined for ministers in the previous paragraph, but such a statement may only be presented on behalf of a Circuit Executive by a minister chosen by them, and who is a member of the Ministerial Session of the Conference. Any Circuit proposing to make such a statement must give a minimum of three days' notice in writing to the Secretary of the Conference.
- 7.58** The appointments shall be solemnly confirmed by a standing vote on the motion of the Secretary and the Ex-President.

- 7.59** In the case of an emergency arising during the Conference the stationing subgroup of the outgoing Connexional Team shall remain constituted until the end of the Conference.

Removal Expenses of Ministers

- 7.60** Removal expenses shall be paid by the General Purposes Fund to all ministers changing Circuits on conditions determined by the General Committee.
- 7.61** When a minister retires legitimate removal expenses shall be paid by the General Purposes Fund. This shall also apply to the widows of those ministers who die before reaching retirement.

CHAPTER 8

CONNEXIONAL AND OTHER COMMITTEES

- 8.01** The Conference may in its Ministerial and Representative Sessions appoint such committees as may be necessary for connexional and other purposes, and may from time to time determine, amend, or alter the constitution, power and duties of such committees in so far as their constitution is not fixed by trust deed or otherwise. (See Constitution, Section VI, paragraph 10)
- 8.02** The following committees shall be appointed year by year for connexional purposes, and shall be known as Connexional committees:
- (a) The General Committee
 - (b) The Council on Social Responsibility
 - (c) The Methodist Youth and Children's Department
 - (d) World Mission Partnership
 - (e) Local Preachers
 - (f) The Child Care Society
 - (g) World Development and Relief
 - (h) Board of Education
 - (i) Faith and Order
 - (j) Connexional Finance
 - (k) The Church's Ministry of Healing
 - (l) Communications

The constitution and method of election of the General Committee is stated in Chapter 9.

The constitution of the committees lettered (b) – (l) is set out in the chapters relating to the respective Departments.

Method of Election

- 8.03** The following shall be the method of election of these committees, with the exception of the General Committee:
- (a) The members of each committee, other than the ex-officio members, shall retire each year, and the Spring meeting thereof shall nominate the requisite

number of ministers and lay persons to constitute, with the ex-officio members, the committee for the ensuing year. In such nomination regard shall be had to:

- (i) the representation of every District on the committee.
 - (ii) the special fitness of those selected for assisting in the work for which the Committee is responsible.
 - (iii) the maintenance of a proper balance of age and gender in respect of both ministers and lay persons.
- (b) Outgoing members of the committee shall be eligible for nomination if they have attended at least one-fourth of the meetings of the committee held during the two years then ending.
 - (c) No minister or lay person shall be eligible for membership, other than ex-officio membership, of more than three of these committees.
 - (d) Nothing in this method of election shall interfere with the power of the Conference to accept, alter, or amend the committees submitted to it.
 - (e) Should any of those nominated for the foregoing committees decline to serve, or should vacancies occur through other causes, the Committee Membership Secretary shall submit other names to the Conference to fill the vacancies thus created.
 - (f) The constitution and method of election of the General Committee remove it from the category of the other Connexional Committees.

Committee Membership Secretary

- 8.04** A minister shall be appointed as a Committee Membership Secretary. The appointment shall be made annually by the Representative Session of the Conference. The person appointed shall be an ex-officio member of the ensuing Conference.
- 8.05** The Committee Membership Secretary shall scrutinise the proposed membership of all the Connexional Committees, other than the General Committee, and bring to the notice of the Conference any irregularities in the nominations.
- 8.06** The Secretaries of Connexional Committees, immediately following their Spring meeting, shall send to the Committee Membership Secretary a list of the names of those nominated for committee membership for the ensuing year. Attention shall be drawn to those members who have not made the

requisite number of attendances during the previous two years, and are thereby ineligible for nomination.

Conveners of Committees

8.07 The Secretary of a Connexional Committee shall be the Convener thereof, and the Conference shall name a Convener for any other committee it may appoint.

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the convenership of a committee, the President of the Conference shall, from amongst the members of the Committee, appoint a Convener, who shall act until the ensuing Conference.

Meeting of Connexional Committees

8.08 The times and places of meeting of Connexional Committees shall be as printed from year to year in the Minutes of Conference. Should occasion arise requiring a special meeting of any committee, the President of the Conference, on the request of the officers of the committee, may direct such special meeting to be summoned.

CHAPTER 9

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE AND THE BOARDS

9.01 The General Committee shall be appointed annually by the Representative Session of the Conference. Its object shall be to co-ordinate the work of the Boards and Departments hereinafter mentioned and to discharge all or any statutory or other powers, discretions or authority as may be delegated to it from time to time by the Conference.

It shall also deal with such emergencies as may arise between meetings of the Conference, other than those already provided for in paragraphs 5M.01 - 05. Before the Committee takes action in any such situation, it must have before it the assurance of the President's Advisory Committee, and agree by a 75% majority, that the matter is in fact of emergency dimensions and not otherwise covered by our legislation. The notice convening the Committee shall state that the matter is on the agenda of the meeting.

9.02 The General Committee shall be constituted as follows:

(a) Ex-Officio members:

The President of the Conference
The Secretary of the Conference
The Ex-President of the Conference
The President-Designate of the Conference
The Lay Leader of the Conference
The District Superintendents
The Chair of the Church Development Board
The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department
The General Secretary of the Methodist Youth and Children's Department
The General Secretary of MMS (Ireland)
The President of Methodist Women in Ireland
The Lay Treasurer of the General Purposes Fund
The Principal of Edgehill College
The Chair of the Board of Ministry
The Director of Ministry
The Secretary of the Ordained Ministry Committee
The Chair of the Connexional Finance Committee

(b) **One lay member nominated by each District Superintendent, in consultation with the District Advisory Committee, and elected by the Conference.**

Fourteen lay members elected by the Conference, of whom three shall be under the age of thirty.

Fourteen ministers elected by the Conference, of whom five shall have travelled not more than fifteen years.

- (c) Any Department or Board of the Church has the right to nominate a representative to attend a particular meeting of the General Committee where reports from that Department or Board are to be presented. This representative will not be entitled to vote.

9.03 The method of election, except as regards ex-officio members, shall be as follows:

- (a) No District lay representative shall be eligible for nomination for more than three successive years.
- (b) Nomination for election by the Conference shall be made in writing and signed by three members of the Representative Session. Outgoing members of the Committee shall be regarded as having been so nominated.
- (c) The Committee shall have power to fill any vacancy that may occur by death or incapacity of any member of the Committee during the year, due regard being given to the minimum representation of every District or to the interests of any Board concerned.

9.04 The General Committee shall as a rule meet three times annually, in October, January and April. If in the opinion of the President's Advisory Committee it is deemed advisable to hold additional meetings, the General Committee shall be summoned accordingly.

9.05 At its meeting in April the General Committee shall elect as many of its lay members to be members of the Conference in its Representative Session as may be necessary in addition to the ex-officio and elected members specified in Chapter 7, to complete the requisite number of lay representatives.

9.06 In the event of the number of its lay members, not already ex-officio or elected members of the Conference, being insufficient to enable the requisite number to be so elected, the Committee may, after nomination, elect any other eligible person or persons to complete the number required.

9.07 The Secretary of the Conference shall be the Secretary of the Committee; but the Secretaries of Departments, the business of which is transacted by the Committee, shall be responsible for bringing to the meetings of the Committee the business belonging to their Departments, for preserving the records of the

proceedings of the Committee in relation to such business, and for preparing reports to be presented to the Conference. The Secretary of the Conference shall be responsible for any business transacted by the Committee outside the province of the Departments represented on the Committee.

- 9.08** In the matter of representation at inter-Church consultations, etc., interested Departments shall submit nominations to the General Committee. The General Committee is authorised to sanction payment of expenses in connection with these appointments, from the General Purposes Fund.
- 9.09** The Committee shall have the general oversight and management of the Home Mission Department, the Ministerial Training Fund, the General Purposes Fund and the three Boards specified in paragraph 9.11. The Committee shall also transact any other business which from time to time the Conference may remit to it.
- 9.10** In public ceremonies in which the Church should be represented, or in connection with appointments of a public character, or in the presentation of addresses, or in regard to matters in which the legal rights of the Methodist people are involved, either in Northern Ireland, or in the Republic of Ireland, the General Committee shall act on behalf of the Church. The Committee may delegate to those of its members living in certain areas full powers in relation to such matters.

The Boards

- 9.11** The General Committee shall have general oversight of the Church Development Board, the Property Board and the Stipends and Allowances Board.
- (a) The Boards shall present their proposals to the Conference, but shall report regularly to the General Committee.
- (b) The Chairpersons of the Boards shall be appointed by the General Committee at its Spring meeting for a period of three years, with a possible re-appointment for a further three years, the maximum term of office being six years. The Boards shall appoint their own Secretaries.
- 9.12** The constitution of each Board shall be:
- The President of the Conference
 - The Secretary of the Conference
 - One minister and one lay member to be nominated annually by each District Superintendent, in consultation with the District Advisory Committee
 - Six persons to be appointed annually by the Conference on the nomination of the Board.

A maximum of four persons to be co-opted by the Board.

Church Development Board

9.13 The Church Development Board shall be appointed annually by the Representative Session of the Conference. Its terms of reference are found in chapter 16

Property Board

9.14 The Property Board shall be appointed annually by the Representative Session of the Conference. Its terms of reference are found in chapter 29.

Stipends and Allowances Board

9.15 The Stipends and Allowances Board shall be appointed annually by the Representative Session of the Conference. Its terms of reference are found in chapter 30.

CHAPTER 10

DISTRICTS

District Ministerial Synods

- 10.01** The District Ministerial Synod is a meeting of the ordained ministers and probationers of the District.
- 10.02** The District Ministerial Synod shall consist of all ordained ministers and probationers within the District boundaries, as shown in the current List of Stations.
- 10.03** Ordained ministers and probationers who are serving as mission partners and in Ireland on furlough shall be invited to be present at the meeting of the Ministerial Synod of the District in which they are resident for the time being.
- 10.04** All ordained ministers and probationers, except retired ministers, are required to attend at their respective Ministerial Synods. No such minister or probationer shall absent himself/herself from the Ministerial Synod without the permission of the District Superintendent. This regulation shall be printed in the form summoning the ministers to the Synods. Probationers, whilst being required to attend, shall not have the right to vote.
- 10.05** District Ministerial Synod shall meet at least once each year, at a date and time arranged by the District Superintendent.

District Advisory Committee

- 10.06** Each District Superintendent shall appoint a District Advisory Committee. It shall be composed of the District Superintendent, who shall preside at its meetings, the District Secretary, the District Local Preachers' Secretary, and the District Lay Leader (where one has been appointed), together with an additional two ministers and two lay persons. When, in the opinion of the District Superintendent, the matter to be dealt with refers to a minister it shall be dealt with by the ministerial members of the committee. All other matters shall be dealt with by both the ministerial and lay members of the committee. Should any of the members of this committee be concerned in the difficulty under consideration, or be unable to act, the District Superintendent shall appoint another in his/her place.

Duties of District Superintendents

- 10.07** The District Superintendent shall:
- (a) encourage, enable, co-ordinate and facilitate mission in the Circuits of the District, in cooperation with the Circuit Executives and Circuit Superintendents;

- (b) develop and implement vision for the District and, to that end, facilitate area or District-wide gatherings for strategic planning, fellowship and inspiration;
- (c) in consultation with the District Advisory Committee and subject to the approval of Conference, develop structures for the District appropriate to its needs, including, where appropriate, the appointment of a District Lay Leader;
- (d) in consultation with the officers of the Home Mission Department, utilise the District Home Mission budget to support mission and witness across the District;
- (e) facilitate pastoral care among the ministers and vocational lay workers on the District, and their families, in conjunction with Circuit Superintendents and other colleagues;
- (f) arrange for the holding of the Ministerial Synods on his/her District; preside over their deliberations, and see that business is transacted in due order;
- (g) arrange meetings with the ministers and probationers on their District at least four times per year, including the District Ministerial Synod and including at least one individual meeting with each probationer or minister who has not yet retired;
- (h) serve as the public representative of the District.

10.08 District Superintendents shall exercise careful supervision of the working of the Circuits under their jurisdiction. A District Superintendent shall visit any Circuit Executive or Church Council in the District when he/she considers it desirable. District Superintendents will be provided with Minutes of all Circuit Executive meetings on their District.

10.09 District Superintendents shall ensure that Connexional discipline is upheld in accordance with the processes laid out in this Manual of Laws. To this end, where matters likely to affect adversely the well-being of any Circuit on his/her District are known to the District Superintendent, the following procedure shall be adopted:

- (a) The District Superintendent shall take such action as he/she may deem to be helpful to the promotion of peace and order, and to the faithful and judicious execution of the Church's discipline, visiting the Circuit and conferring with the Superintendent and those concerned should this seem advisable.
- (b) Where the District Superintendent considers the case sufficiently serious he/she shall confer with the District Advisory Committee, which shall decide what further action is necessary.

- (c) Where the advice of the District Advisory Committee has not been accepted the District Superintendent shall report the matter to the President's Advisory Committee and obtain its sanction for such action as may be considered necessary. Further disciplinary action, when necessary, shall be taken in accordance with the procedures set forth in the *Manual of Laws*, chapters 5 or 6 as appropriate.

In cases where the District Superintendent, or his/her Circuit, may be concerned, the President of the Church shall act as if he/she were Superintendent of the District.

10.10 The District Superintendent shall:

- (a) represent the District on the Connexional Team;
- (b) ensure that Circuit questions are referred in a timely and correct manner to the appropriate Connexional committees;
- (c) ensure that Connexional policies are implemented on the District;
- (d) offer specific, individual skills as a resource to the Connexion, in consultation with the Connexional Team.

Appointment and Duties of Secretaries of Districts

10.11 Secretaries of Districts shall be appointed by the Conference on the nomination of the District Superintendents.

10.12 It shall be the duty of the Secretary of a District, under the direction of the District Superintendent to:

- (a) notify the members of the District Ministerial Synod of the time and place of its meetings.
- (b) prepare lists of ministers from which the District Ministerial Synod is to elect representatives to the ensuing Conference.
- (c) send to the Secretary of the Conference a list in alphabetical order of all the ministerial representatives of the District to the ensuing Conference.
- (d) prepare complete minutes of the proceedings of the Ministerial Synods.
- (e) provide the District Superintendent with a complete copy of the minutes of the Ministerial Synod meetings.
- (f) send to the Secretary of the Conference complete copies of the minutes of the Ministerial Synod.

- (g) undertake such other responsibilities as may be agreed with the District Superintendent.

CHAPTER 11

CIRCUIT ORGANISATION

11.01 The official meetings of a Circuit shall be:

- The Congregational Meeting,
- The Church Council,
- The Circuit Meeting,
- The Circuit Executive,
- The Trustees' Meeting, where appropriate.

The Congregational Meeting

11.02 At least once each year, the Church Council shall arrange a Congregational Meeting for fellowship and inspiration.

11.03 The Congregational Meeting shall:

- (a) Review the previous twelve months and celebrate advances made,
- (b) Set out goals for the next twelve months,
- (c) Discuss the vision of the Church for the ensuing five years,
- (d) Ratify the appointment of Church Officials upon the nomination of the Minister,
- (e) Elect members of the Church Council upon the nomination of the Minister, as required,
- (f) Through the Secretary convey to the Church Council for its consideration concerns expressed or recommendations made.

The Church Council

11.04 The aim of every congregation is to glorify God through its worship and its witness within its community. Methodist congregations achieve this with the encouragement of, and by commitment to, the Methodist Church in Ireland.

11.05 To ensure that this aim is achieved, every Society shall be governed by a Church Council. (A Church Council may govern more than one Society.) The Council shall:

- (a) Produce a succinct Mission Statement to encapsulate the direction the Church wishes to take,
- (b) Review this Mission Statement from time to time,

- (c) Annually set achievable goals for the fulfilment of the Church's mission within the terms of the Mission Statement,
 - (d) Establish Working Groups, with clear guidelines and sufficient authority to achieve the specific goals assigned to them,
 - (e) Assist the members of the congregation in using their gifts and experience to serve the kingdom of God,
 - (f) Annually guide the congregation in celebrating the advances of the previous twelve months and in identifying the next steps in the fulfilment of its mission,
 - (g) Consider and promote the spiritual life of the Society,
 - (h) Promote and extend the mission of the Society in the local community,
 - (i) Encourage Council Members, through mutual consultation and prayer, to discharge their duties more effectively.
- 11.06** The Church Council shall be responsible for the oversight of the work of God in the Society, including:
- (a) Arrangements for worship,
 - (b) Pastoral care, nurturing and discipling of the congregation,
 - (c) Identification of training needs and the implementation of training within the Society,
 - (d) Reception, discipline and exclusion of members as required by the laws of the Church (Chapter 2),
 - (e) Work with children and young people,
 - (f) The role of the Society within the Circuit and the Connexion, including Connexional activities, publications and funds,
 - (g) Evangelism and witness of the society in the local community, including co-operation with other churches,
 - (h) Arranging at least one Congregational Meeting each year, which shall be announced on the four Sundays prior to the meeting
 - (i) The finance of the Society,
 - (j) Maintenance, letting and insurance of all property entrusted to the Society, subject to such rights and obligations, if any, as may be vested in Local Trustees,

(k) Communication with the congregation relating to the work of the Council.

11.07 The Council shall meet at least four times each year. No meeting of the Council shall be convened without the prior approval of the Minister.

11.08 The quorum required for a meeting of the Church Council shall be one-third of the total membership of the Council.

11.09 The Council may appoint individual members of the Council or working parties, which need not be exclusively composed of members of the Council, to undertake specific tasks relating to the responsibilities of the Council.

(a) The Council shall appoint at least one of its members to each working party.

(b) Each individual or working party shall be given specific terms of reference and shall report to the Council.

(c) The Council shall designate one of its members on each working party to report on its behalf to the Council.

(d) Reports from individuals or working parties should be submitted in writing in advance of Council meetings.

(e) A working party may, if circumstances warrant, be given powers to act on behalf of the Council and the Society within clearly specified parameters.

11.10 *Redundant as a consequence of the deletion of para.11.24.*

11.11 The term "Church Council" shall henceforth be deemed to include the term "Leaders' Meeting" where appropriate throughout the Manual of Laws.

Constitution of the Church Council

11.12 The Council shall be constituted as follows:

(a) The **Minister** responsible for the Society, who shall preside at meetings of the Council, or delegate the responsibility of presiding to another minister or member of the Council,

(b) **Other ministers and probationers** assigned by the Conference to the work of the Society,

(c) The **Church Officials** (as listed in para 11.22),

(d) The **elected members** (as described in para 11.17-11.21).

- 11.13** Persons appointed by the Circuit who have a pastoral responsibility in the Society(ies) may be invited to give reports from time to time.
- 11.14** The Circuit Superintendent shall be ex-officio a member of the Council.
- 11.15** In the interests of continuity the retiring Society Steward shall be an ex-officio member of the Council for one year following his/her retirement from that office.
- 11.16** Only Members of the Methodist Church in Ireland are eligible to be members of the Church Council.

Elected Members

- 11.17** The number of **elected members** of the Church Council shall be a multiple of three not exceeding 18 as determined by the Council from time to time, bearing in mind the need adequately to reflect the nature of the congregation, while also seeking the smallest number consistent with the efficient oversight of the affairs of the Society.
- 11.18** One-third of the elected members of the Council shall retire each year and normally shall not be eligible for re-election for at least one year.
- 11.19** Early in each calendar year the Council shall appoint three of its members to constitute the Advisory Group to consult with the Minister on nominations and appointments for the ensuing year.
- 11.20** The Minister shall, after consultation with the Advisory Group, nominate suitable Church Members to be listed on the ballot paper for election to the Council by the Congregational Meeting.
- 11.21** In the event of a casual vacancy on the Council, the Council shall co-opt a Member of the Society to fill the vacancy until the next appropriate Congregational Meeting.

Church Officials

- 11.22** A Society shall have the following Church Officials, who shall normally hold office for three years:
- (a) The **Society Steward**, who shall be regarded as the official lay representative of the Society and shall support and encourage the Minister(s) and congregation in the development of the Work of God. When necessary, the Society Steward may also serve as Secretary, but not as Treasurer or Property Steward.
 - (b) The **Treasurer**, who shall be responsible to the Council for all financial income of the Society, for its proper use or transmission as appropriate and for the

prompt payment of all accounts. He/she shall keep accurate accounts and submit them for annual audit, according to the requirements of Conference.

- (c) The **Property Steward**, who shall be responsible to the Council for the proper maintenance of all property.
- (d) The **Secretary**, who shall in conjunction with the Chairperson of the Council prepare the Agenda for meetings and issue notices in writing in good time and shall record the proceedings in a Minute Book for that purpose. He/she shall also act as Secretary to the Congregational Meeting.

11.23 A **Society Steward-Designate** may be nominated one year in advance of a vacancy in that office and may attend Church Council meetings during the year but will not be eligible to vote.

11.24 *Deleted*

The Circuit Meeting

11.25 In a Circuit there shall be a Circuit Meeting for the purpose of:

- (a) Providing mutual support and fellowship;
- (b) Electing Circuit Officials, upon nomination by the Superintendent Minister after consultation with the other Circuit Ministers and the current Circuit Officials.
- (c) Sharing stories of the work of God, thereby enabling Societies to learn from each other;
- (d) Passing on information to Societies from the Circuit, District or Connexion.

11.26 The Circuit Meeting shall consist of:

- (a) Members of the Church Councils and the Working Parties thereof,
- (b) Members of the Circuit Executive,
- (c) Fully accredited local preachers in the active work,
- (d) Class Leaders or their equivalent,
- (e) Lay persons employed by the Circuit or its constituents in a pastoral capacity,
- (f) Members of the Circuit who are local trustees or who hold District or Connexional office or are members of District or Connexional committees, and
- (g) Ministers on the Circuit, including retired ministers and those without pastoral charge.

11.27 The Superintendent Minister is responsible for ensuring that the Circuit Meeting is properly chaired.

11.28 The Circuit Secretary shall act as secretary of the Circuit Meeting.

11.29 The Circuit Meeting shall be held at least once a year, early in the Connexional year.

The Circuit Executive

11.30 In each Circuit there shall be a Circuit Executive for the purpose of deliberation and decision-making in relation to matters of Circuit responsibility.

11.31 The Circuit Executive shall have responsibility in relation to the following:

- (a) Co-ordination of the work of the Societies, with an emphasis on strategy and vision for the area;
- (b) Ministerial and remunerated lay appointments in the Circuit;
- (c) Candidates for the ministry, upon nomination by the Superintendent;
- (d) Election of Circuit representatives to District Synod and to Conference;
- (e) Purchase and up-keep of manses on the Circuit;
- (f) Trustees' business, where appropriate;
- (g) Local Preachers' business, where appropriate;
- (h) Annual financial audit of Circuit and society accounts;
- (i) Management of Circuit accounts and oversight of society accounts;
- (j) Applications from Societies for Connexional approval or for grants from Connexional bodies;
- (k) Arrangement of Circuit Meetings;
- (l) Assisting the Superintendent Minister in the nomination of Circuit Officials for election by the Circuit Meeting.
- (m) Links with other churches.

11.32 The Circuit Executive will meet as necessary, at times and places determined by the Superintendent Minister, and as a minimum at least once each quarter.

11.33 The quorum required for a meeting of the Circuit Executive shall be one-third of all members.

- 11.34** The Circuit Secretary shall ensure that the proceedings of the Circuit Executive are duly recorded, and in consultation with the Superintendent Minister, summon the meeting and prepare the agenda.
- 11.35** The Circuit Executive shall be chaired by the Superintendent Minister or by another member of the Circuit Executive designated by the Superintendent Minister.
- 11.36** Within these parameters, the Circuit Executive may establish its own procedures and structure for itself and the Circuit.

Constitution of the Circuit Executive

- 11.37** The Circuit Executive shall consist of:
- (a) Ministers appointed by the Conference to work on the various Societies of the Circuit;
 - (b) Circuit Officials, as listed in para 11.39, below;
 - (c) The Society Steward of each society;
 - (d) One other representative of each Society designated by its Church Council.
 - (e) Each trust shall have the right to have one representative at a meeting of the Circuit Executive at which matters relating to that particular trust property are on the agenda.
 - (f) The Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting shall have the right to have one representative at a meeting of the Circuit Executive at which matters relating to Local Preachers are on the agenda.

Single Society Circuits

- 11.38** Where a Circuit consists of a single Society, the Congregational Meeting may undertake the responsibilities of the Circuit Meeting and the Church Council the responsibilities of the Circuit Executive, in which case the Circuit Officials shall be ex-officio members of the Church Council.

Circuit Officials

- 11.39** A Circuit shall have the following Officials, who shall normally hold office for three years:
- (a) **Circuit Steward**, who shall provide spiritual, pastoral and advisory support to the Superintendent Minister and shall be regarded as the official lay representative of the Circuit at civic and other appropriate occasions.

- (b) **Circuit Treasurer.**
- (c) **Manse Steward.**
- (d) **Circuit Secretary.**

A Circuit may also have an Assistant Circuit Steward or Circuit Steward-designate, as determined from time to time by the Circuit Executive.

11.40 For legal purposes, Society Stewards shall also be considered Officials of the Circuit.

11.41 The term “Circuit Executive” shall henceforth be deemed to include the term “Quarterly Meeting”, where appropriate throughout the Manual of Laws.

Memorials from Circuit Executives

11.42 If the Circuit Executive in any Circuit is of opinion that it is desirable to address to the Conference a memorial on any connexional subject, and resolves to do so, the meeting may adopt and transmit to the Conference such a memorial.

11.43 Any member of such meeting who intends to propose that a memorial be presented to the Conference shall, at least three days previous to the day appointed for the holding of the meeting, give to the Superintendent of the Circuit notice of intention to do so, together with a copy, in writing, of the resolution intended to be proposed as the basis of such memorial, which copy of the resolution shall be read to the meeting by the Superintendent at an early period of its sitting. If the Circuit Executive approves the substance or principle of a resolution so brought forward, it can adopt, amend or reject the resolution, but no proposal of which such notice has not been given can be brought forward.

11.44 A memorial founded on such resolution, as approved or amended by a majority of the persons present, shall set forth in its preamble the names of those in attendance at the meeting, and shall be signed, within a week, by those who voted in favour of it. The Superintendent shall be responsible for its transmission to the Secretary of the Conference not later than the day preceding the opening of the Conference.

N.B. The foregoing regulations do not apply to resolutions of Circuit Executives passed in the ordinary course of business with reference to Circuit affairs.

Mission Committees

11.45 In each City or other Mission under the management of a Committee appointed by the Conference, all the powers, privileges and duties of a Circuit Executive may be exercised by such Committee, and an officer of the Mission, whose duties the Committee shall determine to be most closely related to those usually performed by a Circuit Steward, shall, for all purposes, rank as Circuit Steward. The Committee shall have power, on the nomination of the Superintendent of the Mission, to appoint all such officers as it may consider necessary for the work of the Mission. If the constitution of the Church Council is considered unsuitable for any Society comprised in the Mission, the Committee shall have power to alter the constitution to meet the requirements of the Society concerned, and to define the functions of the meeting so constituted.

Local Preachers' Meeting

11.46 In every Circuit on which there are resident three or more Local Preachers, there shall be held, at least once a year a meeting, consisting of the:

Ministers, Probationers, Members of the Diaconal Order, Local Preachers and Local Preachers on trial.

11.47 The business of the Local Preachers' Meeting shall be to:

- (a) appoint a Secretary from among the members of the Meeting.
- (b) arrange, under the direction of the Superintendent Minister, and for such a period as may be determined, a plan of the appointments to be supplied by the Local Preachers.
- (c) enquire into the efficiency and faithfulness of the Local Preachers on the Plan.
- (d) judge the suitability of persons nominated to be admitted as Local Preachers in training, or to be fully accredited as Local Preachers, and to receive or reject them, subject to the conditions specified in paragraphs 6B.04 and 6B.08.
- (e) make general arrangements for the carrying on of the work, and for the increase of the efficiency of its members.

11.48 The Sunday following Easter shall be recognised as Local Preachers' Sunday, on which as far as possible worship shall be led by Local Preachers.

Trustees

- 11.49** The legal estate of or in churches, schools, manses or other Connexional property was formerly vested in local Trustees usually upon ordinary Connexional Trusts.
- 11.50** By the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, Statutory Trusts were adopted as a Schedule to these Acts, and it is anticipated that so far as possible all Connexional property will eventually be vested in these Trusts. Attention is drawn to the importance of seeing that the number of Trustees does not fall below the required minimum in the Deed.
- 11.51** Under the Statutory Trusts, new Trustees should be appointed, not only in place of any who have died, but also in place of any Trustee who has resigned the office of Trustee or refused or has become incapable to act in the Trusts or has been resident out of Ireland for twelve months continuously or has become bankrupt or insolvent or has ceased to be a member of the Methodist Church in Ireland or has been called upon by Conference to resign her/his office. In each case the reason for the omission of the name from the continuing Trustees should be signified in a recital contained in the new Deed.
- 11.52** Where the Statutory Trusts have been adopted, when the number of Trustees has been reduced below four and the surviving Trustees have failed to make appointment within a period of twelve months, then it shall be lawful for the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit to appoint new Trustees and the property shall be vested in such new Trustees jointly with the continuing Trustees, if any.
- 11.53** Inasmuch as existing Trust Deeds differ somewhat in their provisions for the appointment of new Trustees, reference should be had in every case to the Deed requiring renewal. If it provides that the surviving Trustees have the right of appointment, the names of the proposed new Trustees should be submitted to them with a view of obtaining their approval, before the Deed is engrossed. This can be done either at a meeting duly summoned for the purpose, or by letter, to which a Form of Consent is appended.
- 11.54** If no special provision is made in the original Trust Deed for appointment of new Trustees, the direction of the Conference is that the selection of fit and proper persons shall be made by the Circuit Executive, on the nomination of the Superintendent of the Circuit.
- 11.55** All persons appointed as Trustees of any Connexional Trust Property shall be members of the Methodist Church.

- 11.56** Applications for permission to appoint new Trustees shall be made through the Property Board. If any grant is recommended toward the cost of the Deed it will be borne by the Property Board or the Home Mission Fund or the General Education Fund, according to the nature of the property vested. Before the work of appointing new Trustees is undertaken, the particulars set forth in the form of application must first have been approved by the Property Board.
- 11.57** If in the original Deed the number of Trustees has been either unnecessarily large or inconveniently small, in the appointment of new Trustees advantage may be taken of any provisions in existing Trustee Acts to diminish or to increase the number.

Rules for Trustees' Meetings

- 11.58** Under the provision of the Statutory Trusts the Conference is empowered to make, from time to time, such rules and regulations for the holding, and conduct of all business at the Trustees' Meetings as it shall think fit, and from time to time to annul, amend and alter the same. In exercise of the power conferred upon it, the Conference has adopted the following rules and regulations with regard to Trustees' Meetings:
- (a) It is desirable that where practicable Trustees' Meetings shall be held at least once a year, and where this is not practicable the business of the Trustees shall be transacted by the Circuit Executive, at which meeting the trust shall have the right of one representative in accordance with 11.37(e)
 - (b) The Superintendent of the Circuit, or in her/his absence, some other minister on the Circuit nominated by her/him, shall be the Chairman of the Trustees' Meeting and, if the Trust property is vested on the Statutory Trusts, shall have the right to an original and a casting vote.
 - (c) A quorum for a Trustees' Meeting shall be one-third of the surviving and continuing Trustees, provided that the number be not less than three, but in all cases in which the Trusts require a decision by a majority of the Trustees, the sanction of the Trustees unable to be present may be obtained in writing by post or otherwise.
 - (d) The proceedings of the Trustees' Meetings shall be duly recorded in a Minute Book, and the annual Trust Account shall be kept separate from the Circuit or Society Account, and shall be submitted annually to the Trustees by the officer whom they appoint to be responsible for this duty.
 - (e) The Trustees on the nomination of the Superintendent Minister may appoint from time to time and remove from office, such and so many officers paid or

unpaid, as they may consider requisite and expedient to assist them in the control and management of the Trust property.

- (f) The order and form of business of Trustees' Meetings will be found in Appendix 10 and shall be carefully followed at such meetings.

11.59 The foregoing regulations shall also apply to meetings of Trustees of property not yet vested on the Statutory Trusts provided that while the Superintendent of the Circuit or a minister nominated by her/him shall preside at the Trustees' Meeting, he/she shall not be entitled to vote unless he/she is a Trustee.

11.60 The Trustees' Meeting may appoint a suitable person to be Steward, whose duty it shall be to look after any income that the Trustees may have, and to account for the same to the Trustees at their meeting, or at the Circuit Executive, as he/she may be directed.

The income derivable on behalf of the Trusts shall be applied to:

- (a) the discharge of liabilities incurred for rent, interest on debt or other outgoings.
- (b) the maintenance of the Trust property.
- (c) the Circuit Funds.

11.61 A schedule of Trust property on the Circuit, showing the condition of each Trust as to debt, state of repair, insurance and other particulars compiled from the Annual Reports of the Trustees shall be submitted to the Circuit Executive in March in each year, and afterwards forwarded to the District Property Committee Secretary.

11.62 If any structural alteration is proposed, and in every case of expenditure in which a grant from a Connexional Fund is involved, or intended to be sought, or in which a debt is likely to be incurred, the Superintendent of the Circuit, in conjunction with the Trustees, shall promptly take such steps as may be requisite in order to obtain the sanction of the District Synod and the Property Board, or, in case of urgency, of the District Property Committee and the Property Board.

11.63 Superintendents of Circuits shall see that all needed renovations and repairs of Trust property shall be brought under the consideration of the Trustees, or, if there be no acting body of Trustees, under the consideration of the Circuit Executive or of the Church Council of the particular Society with which the property is identified, and shall see that there is no unnecessary delay in making the necessary renovations and repairs.

11.64 When a sufficient number of Trustees is not resident within such distance as to make it practicable to hold regular Trustees' Meetings, the duties of the Trustees' Meeting shall devolve upon and be discharged by the Circuit Executive; but nothing which is inconsistent with the provisions of the Trust Deed shall be done or permitted, and no new liability shall be incurred, nor any structural alterations or additions made, without the consent of the Trustees.

Use of Church Property

11.65 Trustees shall take care that Church property is restricted to Church uses only, in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deed of the premises.

The use of our Trust property for the purposes of political meetings is not contemplated by the provisions of any of our Trust Deeds, and such property can only be lawfully used for the purposes provided for in the Trust Deed.

The greatest possible care must be taken not to allow premises set apart for religious purposes to be used for entertainments which would bring offence to our people generally.

Card playing, games of chance and amusements of a vulgar type are not allowed on our Trust premises.

11.66 The sale, consumption or supply of alcohol on Trust premises occupied and used by the Church is forbidden.

11.67 Gambling of every kind is expressly forbidden in all Methodist Church buildings; and further:

- (a) The raising of funds for Methodist Church purposes by means of raffles, gaming or by any method which involves gambling is not permitted under any circumstances.
- (b) Raffles are not permitted in halls, schools, institutes or other premises forming part of our Church buildings.
- (c) Guessing and other competitions which involve the method or principle of the raffle are also excluded.

11.68 The attention of the Trustees is drawn to the General Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists as set out in paragraph 1.03. Trustees are empowered to permit, in premises for which they are responsible, only those activities which are not contrary to these regulations.

Prevention of Unauthorised Persons from Preaching in Methodist Places of Worship

11.69 It is provided in the Statutory Trusts on which Methodist property is held that “The Trustees may permit such other person or persons duly approved or appointed by the Superintendent Minister according to the usage of the Church to preach in such premises....”.

In all cases where permission is given to ministers or representatives of other denominations to conduct religious services in Methodist Trust premises, ministers or persons so appointed or permitted shall not preach, maintain, propagate or teach any doctrine or practice contrary to the Statement of Belief contained in the Constitution of the Church for the time being.

The responsibility of admitting such persons as aforesaid to our premises lies with the Superintendent minister of the Circuit. Trustees have, however, in such cases, a power of veto on the Superintendent; who, nevertheless, alone has the power to initiate such an appointment.

In all cases where such permission is given, it shall, in order to be valid, be renewed in connection with every change of Superintendent.

Endowments Held Locally

11.70 In view of the fact that a number of endowments on behalf of Circuits and institutions of the Methodist Church are held locally the Conference directs Superintendents to make known to their Circuit Executives the following regulations:

- (a) Trustees are obliged by law to invest trust money in trustee securities, unless the instrument creating the Trust specifically permits otherwise. Further, Trustees, unless authorised as above by Deed, are bound to sell non-trustee investments and re-invest in trustee securities.
- (b) In the event of trust monies being invested in non-trustee securities or being allowed to remain in non-trustee investments the Trustees, or persons so investing them, or allowing them to remain so invested, are personally liable for any loss or depreciation that may result from such investment.
- (c) Trustees investing in non-trustee securities by direction of the Circuit Executive or other Circuit authority are not thereby exempt from the personal liability which will attach to them in the event of such security resulting in the loss to the Trust or depreciation in the value of the Trust funds, and cannot even set off the appreciation of one non-trustee investment against the depreciation of another non-trustee investment.

- (d) The Conference has provided in the Statutory Trustees a body to which as far as possible all Trust monies should be transferred for investment, and in certain circumstances the Conference can, under the provisions of the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, compel such transfer to be made.

Sunday School Teachers' Meeting

11.71 The main object of Methodist Sunday Schools shall be to instruct and train the scholars in the doctrines, privileges, and duties of the Christian religion. The Holy Scriptures and, as far as possible, the Methodist Catechisms shall be used as the means of instruction and training. All the scholars shall be trained in the duty of regular attendance at public worship on the Lord's Day.

11.72 Every Sunday School shall be under the management of a Committee, consisting of:

- (a) The minister of the Society, who shall preside at all meetings of the Committee at which he/she may be present. In the absence of the minister, the chair shall be taken by a colleague, or, if no minister be present, by the Superintendent of the School.
- (b) The officers of the School, who shall be:
- (i) A Superintendent or Superintendents, who must be Church members, and who shall have been appointed by the Circuit Executive.
- (ii) A Secretary or Secretaries, and if necessary a Treasurer, Librarian, and a Missionary Secretary.
- (c) The teachers shall be of good moral character, and in sympathy with the doctrines and discipline of Methodism.

Sunday School teachers may be received on trial by the Superintendent of the School. After a probation of three months they may be nominated by her/him at a Teachers' Meeting and, if approved, shall be appointed by the Meeting.

11.73 No person shall be continued as an officer or teacher who shall at any time be declared by the Committee, or by the Church Council or Circuit Executive, to be unfitted in respect of general character or religious opinions for taking part in the religious education of the young.

11.74 The business of the meeting shall be to determine the programme of instruction in the school, to arrange for examinations, to inquire concerning absent scholars, and to deal with all matters affecting the welfare of the school.

Advisory Councils

11.75 Advisory Councils, consisting of ministers and lay representatives from the Circuits, may be formed in towns in which there are two or more Circuits, to consider such subjects as the following:

- (a) united action in such evangelistic work as can best be carried out by a union of the forces of the several Circuits.
- (b) united action in favour of temperance, religious observance of the Lord's Day, and social welfare and purity.

11.76 Councils shall conform to the following regulations:

- (a) on all questions, the settlement of which now belongs by law to the several Circuit Courts the resolutions and recommendations of the Council shall merely advise, and shall not possess a legislative or executive authority.
- (b) in harmony with the non-political character of the Methodist Church, which does not exist for the purposes of party, all party political questions shall be strictly excluded from the consideration of the Council.

CHAPTER 12
LOCAL OFFICERS

Qualification for Office

- 12.01** It is in the highest degree desirable that all persons nominated for office in the Methodist Church shall be spiritually and otherwise fitted for the positions to which they may be appointed.
- (a) No person shall be appointed to any of the following offices who is not a Church member.
 - (b) No person with an unspent criminal conviction or undischarged bankruptcy may be a member of a Church Council or Circuit Executive, or hold any of the following offices.

Appointment and Duties

Class Leaders

- 12.02** The duties of Class Leaders are as set forth in the General Rules of the Society. Superintendents are required to use the utmost care in regard to the persons whom they shall nominate for appointment to this important office.
- (a) Class Leaders shall be appointed to every Society.
 - (b) They shall be nominated by the Superintendent, and appointed by the Church Council
 - (c) They shall be trained for pastoral responsibility, which includes visitation of the members in the home and the regular meeting in Classes.
 - (d) Enquiry shall be made at the Spring District Synods whether the legislation regarding the Church Council has been put into operation on all Circuits.
 - (e) As a Leader is chosen to take charge of a Class, her/his office shall be regarded as having terminated when the class is no longer in being or when he/she ceases to fulfil the particular duties assigned her/him.

Local Preachers

- 12.03** The appointment and duties of Local Preachers are found in paragraphs 6B.01 – 6B.19.

Circuits Stewards

- 12.04** Regulations concerning Circuit Stewards are set out in Chapter 11.

12.05 The duties of a Circuit Steward are set out in 11.39(a).

Society Stewards

12.06 Regulations concerning Society Stewards are set out in Chapter 11.

12.07 The duties of a Society Steward are set out in 11.22(a).

Stewards of the Benevolent Fund

12.08 (a) There shall not be more than two for any Church.

- (b) They shall be appointed by the Church Council, or where there is not such a meeting, by the Circuit Executive, on the nomination of the Superintendent.
- (c) They shall not be appointed to the same office for more than four years in succession.

12.09 The duties of the Benevolent Fund Stewards shall be:

- (a) To make the necessary provision for the due observance of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
- (b) To receive the collections made at the Lord's Supper.
- (c) To pay any sum that may be voted by the Church Council for the relief of distress.

Secretary of the Church Council

12.10 Regulations concerning Secretaries of Church Councils are set out in Chapter 11.

Circuit Secretary

12.11 Regulations concerning Circuit Secretaries are set out in Chapter 11.

Sunday School Superintendents

12.12 Sunday School Superintendents

- (a) shall be appointed by the Circuit Executive on the nomination of the Superintendent Minister.
- (b) shall be appointed annually, but the normal term shall not exceed ten years.

12.13 Where no other suitable person is available to hold one of the foregoing offices, the Superintendent Minister may, after consultation with the District Superintendent, nominate, and the Church Council or Circuit Executive may appoint, for a longer period.

Trustees of Connexional Property on the Circuit

12.14 For regulations regarding their appointment and duties, see Chapter 11. The Trustees Meeting of trusts of Churches, manses, schools or halls, and, generally, of trusts in which the power of appointment rests with the Superintendent, or with the Circuit Executive, shall have the right to have one representative at a meeting of the Circuit Executive at which matters relating to that particular trust property are on the agenda.

Pew Stewards

- 12.15** (a) There shall not be more than two Pew Stewards in connection with any Church.
- (b) They shall be appointed on the nomination of the Superintendent Minister at a Trustees' Meeting, or where no such meeting is held, by the Circuit Executive.

Time of Appointment

12.16 The appointment of all local officials and leaders not covered by the provisions of Chapter 11 shall normally take place at the last meeting in the Calendar Year of the Church Council or Circuit Executive, as appropriate. Terms of office will normally begin on January 1st. Any vacancies occurring during the year may be filled by the Church Council or Circuit Executive, as appropriate.

CHAPTER 13

MINISTERS' RESIDENCES

Manse Provision, Maintenance and Finance

13.01 The Circuit Executive shall ensure that

- (a) suitable comfortable and properly furnished residences with adequate sanitary facilities are provided for the ministers appointed to that Circuit.
- (b) residences and furniture therein are kept in proper repair.
- (c) All rates and taxes relating to ministers' residences are paid.

It shall be the duty of the Superintendent of the Circuit to make an annual report to the District Synod in relation to their condition and repair.

13.02 The General Committee shall have powers and responsibilities of a Circuit Executive in regard to the residences of the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department, and any other ministers working under the direction of the Home Mission Department. The General Purposes Fund shall hold similar powers with regard to the residence of the Secretary of the Conference. Committees of Departments, Institutions and Missions shall likewise be responsible for the provision and upkeep of residences of ministers connected with the Departments, Institutions and Missions.

13.03 In December the Circuit Executive shall appoint a manse inspection committee to assist the Manse Steward, which shall consist of a representative group drawn from the Circuit membership. The Circuit shall provide a Furniture Book for each manse on the Circuit in which shall be entered a full and proper inventory and description of the furniture and effects in the house, with the signature of the Circuit Steward or Manse Steward to the inventory.

13.04 The Circuit Executive shall allocate a reasonable sum of money each year for the purpose of maintaining the fabric and quality of decor of the manse. This amount shall be identified in a separate manse account and shall be included in the Circuit accounts. Expenditure on property or furniture during the year shall be recorded in the Circuit Schedule Book, Manse Furniture Book and Home Mission Department schedule. No application for Home Mission Department grants will be considered without a current schedule.

13.05 When leaving a Circuit, a minister shall obtain the signature of the Circuit Steward or Manse Steward to the inventory and shall be held accountable for any want of good order and condition in which the furniture may be found prior to the minister's departure from the Circuit.

13.06 The Minister shall be responsible for:

- (a) the care of all items provided by the Circuit as listed in the Furniture Book.
- (b) the provision of general furnishings not provided by the Circuit (as required in the document “Manses — Basic Accommodation required” issued by the Home Mission Department and approved by Conference.)
- (c) damage to furniture, and all breakage or loss, arising from neglect or fault by the resident minister. Such damage, breakage or loss shall be repaired and made good by him/her at the time of the occurrence.

13.07 The Conference annually, on the recommendation of the Home Mission Department, shall approve an amount for the provision of furnishing grants which shall be paid through the Comprehensive Assessment by the Circuits and disbursed by the General Purposes Fund.

13.08 All Circuit accounts, which shall include a statement of the total assets of the Circuit, shall be audited and a statement to this effect submitted to Spring Synod.

Standardisation of Manses

13.09 In situations where manse accommodation is not of the required standard for the appointment of a minister, the Stationing Committee may leave the station vacant.

Vacant Manses

13.10 A vacant manse is defined as one where no minister appointed by the Conference is resident.

13.11 Where a vacant manse meets the required standards, no letting shall be considered until a decision is made by the Connexional Team that it is not likely to be required for ministerial accommodation in the foreseeable future. Where a manse has been vacant for 5 years, and where legally permissible, the Home Mission Department shall have vacant possession in order to use the property in the best interests of the Connexion.

13.12 Most manses are the property of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland. Local Circuits are the stewards of the properties and are charged with providing and maintaining them for the use of the ministers appointed to the Circuit. The proceeds of the sale of manses shall normally be allocated to the Home Mission Fund on the understanding that, should a manse be required at a future date on a Circuit where a manse has been sold, it will be provided with the assistance of the Home Mission Department.

13.13 The letting of a manse requires the permission of the Property Board. The letting agreement must be drawn up by a solicitor acting on behalf of the Circuit, and must be approved by the Property Board. The rental proceeds shall be lodged in the Circuit manse account, and used only for maintenance of the manse or, where agreed with the Home Mission Department, other manses on the circuit. Any surplus remaining at the end of the year shall be paid to the Home Mission Department. Manses shall be rented at a rate based on the valuation given by a local estate agent, and letting arrangements must take account of the exigencies of Stationing.

Lay workers living in vacant manses shall be required to pay a commercial rent, and there shall be a formal letting agreement.

13.14 If a manse does not meet the required specifications, it must either be:

- (a) brought up to the required standards within a time specified by the Connexional Team, in consultation with the Home Mission Department and Property Board, or
- (b) replaced, for which the approval of the Home Mission Department and Property Board is required.

Non-Stipendiary Ministers

13.15 Non-Stipendiary Ministers normally reside in their own home. Office space should be provided for their use, if required, by the Circuit, ideally on church premises.

Ministers residing in their own property

13.16 The discipline and practice of Itinerant Ministers living in the manse provided by the Circuit, Department or Institution is re-affirmed. However, ministers who are within two years of retirement from the active ministry may be permitted to live in their own residence, provided it is convenient and accessible to the members of the Circuit, Department or Institution to which the minister has been appointed. Permission must be obtained from the District Superintendent and the Home Mission Department. Any minister who chooses to exercise this option will receive no allowances towards manse expenses. No extra travel allowance shall be paid.

13.17 Ministers who are not within two years of retirement and choose not to live in the manse provided are in breach of the Discipline of the Church and the matter will be referred to the President and the President's Advisory Committee.

Manse handover

- 13.18** In the year that a minister is due to move, the Circuit Executive shall arrange for the inspection of the condition and structure of the manse by a competent group, not to exceed five people, appointed by the District Superintendent.
- 13.19** The inspection shall be carried out against a Surveyors' checklist which will be supplied by the Home Mission Department and all items considered to be unsatisfactory shall be made good before the new minister moves into the appointment. An independent report shall be sent to the District Superintendent, who will bring the report to the notice of the Property Board. It shall be the responsibility of the Circuit Executive to implement the recommendations of the report.
- 13.20** In the event that unsatisfactory items are not made good at the appropriate time, the newly appointed minister, the District Superintendent, the officers of the Home Mission Department and Circuit Officials will prepare a report for the Connexional Team and shall address the implementation of the recommendations of the report. A report confirming that unsatisfactory items have been made good, and confirming the satisfactory condition of the property on hand-over shall be presented to the Connexional Team.
- 13.21** When the draft of Stations is circulated at the beginning of March, each minister expecting to move, and Superintendents and the Circuit Stewards expecting a change on their Circuit, will be given an outline of their obligations in relation to manse property by the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department.
- 13.22** Prior to the date when the new minister is due to take up residence in the manse, the manse property must be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines supplied by the Home Mission Department. If the condition of the manse is considered to be unsatisfactory, the Manse Steward, with the approval of the Circuit Superintendent, (or the District Superintendent, if the Circuit Superintendent is the person occupying the manse) shall make arrangements for the necessary work to be undertaken. If alternative accommodation is required during the period when the manse is being prepared for the new minister, it shall be provided at the expense of the Circuit. In the event that the resident minister is the District Superintendent, or a minister on a separated appointment, or the President, the matter shall be referred to the General Committee.

Funding/Grants

- 13.23** Where a manse is being let, the excess of income over expenditure necessary to maintain the premises shall be remitted to the Home Mission Department. Details of expenditure on such maintenance must be recorded in the Circuit accounts.
- 13.24** Furniture grants may be paid by the Home Mission Department to ministers who are unable, from their own resources, to provide personal furnishing for a manse. This is in addition to the grant paid to ministers who have moved to a new station.
- 13.25** Applications from Circuits for assistance with the funding of repairs and/or refurbishment shall be submitted on the appropriate application form, with current Circuit accounts and a copy of the previous year's audited accounts appended. Expenditure on repairs and /or re-decorating each year must be entered into the Circuit accounts, the Circuit Schedule book and the Furniture Book.

Storage of furniture

- 13.26** The storage of manse furniture must be undertaken at the expense of the minister, in consultation with the Circuit Superintendent or Manse Committee. Manse furniture stored must be returned to the manse in good condition.

Accommodation for Married Students in College

- 13.27** Furnished accommodation shall be provided for married students while at Edgehill College. In cases where it is deemed necessary, the Governors of Edgehill College may consult with the Officers of the Home Mission Department regarding the provision of such accommodation.

CHAPTER 14

CIRCUIT AND CONNEXIONAL FINANCE

Circuit Income

- 14.01** It is a principle in Methodism that every Circuit is expected to take upon itself the responsibility of providing the funds necessary for the maintenance of its ministers, and the expenses incidental to the work within its bounds; but Circuits may receive assistance from the Home Mission Department, so long as the necessity for it is proved to exist.
- 14.02** When bequests or donations made for assisting in the support of the ministry, or for other purposes in connection with Circuits, are intended to be invested, and the annual proceeds applied for the purposes mentioned, the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland are authorised to receive such bequests and donations for the proper investment thereof, and the payment of the income thereof to the duly authorised recipients.
- 14.03** Except by permission of Conference, Circuits shall not hold bequests or donations upon Trust unless when local Trustees have been appointed by name in the Deed creating the Trust. In each such case an entry shall be made in the Circuit Schedule Book reciting the purposes of the Trust, the securities held and the names of the Trustees. A memorandum giving this information shall also be sent to the Secretary of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

It is highly desirable, however, that in all cases local Trustees shall exercise the powers given to them by the Methodist Church in Ireland Act (1915), to transfer such funds to the custody of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Circuit Expenditure

- 14.04** The ordinary expenditure of a Circuit includes:
- (a) the maintenance of the ministers.
 - (b) the rent and taxes payable in respect of their residences, and such proportion of their lighting and heating costs as the Conference may from time to time determine.
 - (c) the cost of repairs to the residences, and of providing and maintaining suitable furniture;
 - (d) the assessment on behalf of Connexional Funds.

- (e) travelling expenses in the Circuit.
- (f) the allowances for stationery and postage.
- (g) the expenses incurred for maintaining, repairing, lighting, heating and cleaning the various churches or places of worship in the Circuit.
- (h) the adequate insurance of Connexional property.

Circuit Accounts

14.05 Superintendents are required to see that their Treasurers keep accurate quarterly accounts of income and expenditure. The financial year shall be the calendar year. As soon as possible after the close of the December quarter, the annual Statement of Income and Expenditure shall be made out in the manner prescribed by the Conference from time to time.

Society Accounts

14.06 Superintendents are required to see that societies keep accurate quarterly accounts of income and expenditure for all bank accounts. The financial year shall be the calendar year. Each society must submit their accounts in the format proscribed by Conference by 28th February of the year following the year to which they relate to the Secretary of the Conference. These should include backup documentation as laid out from time to time to ensure the accounts can be reviewed as part of the overall accounts of the Methodist Church.

Bank Loans

14.07 Apart from the usual facilities in respect of Circuit overdrafts, no bank loans shall be negotiated by any Circuit/Society without the previous sanction of the General Committee.

Ministerial Support

14.08 A governing principle of the financial structure of Methodism is that ministers receive support according to the requirements of themselves and their families, and not salaries according to the value which may be placed upon their services.

Presentation of Circuit and Connexional Accounts

14.09 All Departments, Institutions, Missions and Circuits which are under the jurisdiction of the Conference shall prepare annual Financial Statements as follows:

- (a) an Income and Expenditure Account for each of their Funds;
- (b) a Balance Sheet with appendices covering movement of reserves.

Each of these documents shall be prepared in such a manner as to show comparative figures with the previous year and such notes as are necessary for a clear understanding of them.

- 14.10** The audited accounts of all Missions shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Conference not later than 30th April of the year following the year to which they relate.
- 14.11** The annual accounts of all Connexional Funds, Departments and Institutions shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Conference not later than 28th February of the year following the year to which they relate to be included as part of the annual audit of the Methodist Church.
- 14.12** The Conference shall determine and direct from time to time which Accounts shall be published and in what manner. The Accounts of all Funds, Departments, Institutions, Missions and Circuits shall be available at the office of the Secretary of the Conference for inspection by request.

Auditors

- 14.13** The Conference shall appoint Auditors annually to audit the Consolidated accounts of the Methodist Church.

Duties of Auditors

- 14.14** In addition the Conference shall appoint a minister and layperson, hereinafter referred to as Conference Auditors to ascertain that the administration of the Fund is in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Conference relating thereto. This shall be completed by 30th April of the year following the year to which they relate. It shall be the duty of the accountant and Conference Auditors jointly to report to the Conference any matter relating to the accounts affecting the proper, efficient, and economical management of the Fund.

Connexional Finance and Comprehensive Assessment

- 14.15** In order to ensure the equalisation of responsibility in maintaining Connexional Funds, a Comprehensive Assessment has been established for the support of such Funds as may be designated by the Conference.
- 14.16** The Connexional Finance Committee shall be appointed annually by the Conference. The Constitution of the Committee shall be:

The President of the Conference,
The Lay Leader of the Conference
The Secretary of the Conference,
The Chairperson of the Committee,

The Secretary of the Committee,
Four lay representatives and two ministers
One Treasurer from each of the following Connexional Funds:
 The Retirement Funds
 The Ministers' Children's Fund
 The Ministerial Training Fund
 The Church Development Fund
 The General Purpose Fund
 The Methodist Youth and Children's Department
 The Home Mission Department
 The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland

The Chairperson, the Secretary and members of the Committee shall be nominated to the Conference by the General Committee for appointment, the maximum term of appointment being six years. The Chairperson shall be appointed for a period of three years, with a possible re-appointment for a further three years, the maximum term of office being six years.

14.17 The Connexional Finance Committee shall:

- (a) scrutinise and monitor the budgets for the next financial year submitted by the Treasurers of those Connexional Funds which receive income from the Comprehensive Assessment and ensure that the prepared budgets are reasonable, in accordance with the rules of the Conference and in line with financial requirements already determined by the Conference.
- (b) recommend to the Conference the amount required for the support of these Funds, taking into consideration provisions for expenditure already determined by the Conference or its Committees.
- (c) review and recommend for adoption the annual consolidated Connexional Accounts to be signed by the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Secretary of the Conference
- (d) advise the Conference on the effective management of the Connexion's resources

14.18 All Funds and Departments concerned shall present with their requests for grants their estimated accounts, in the form requested by the Committee, with explanations of increases and decreases in items of income and expenditure (nineteen copies of each throughout) to the Secretary of the Committee before 31st January. They shall also indicate the amount of money required for the next Connexional year. These shall be scrutinised by the Committee, whose recommendations shall be sent to the Treasurers of the Funds by the

third Thursday in February. This statement shall include the amounts requested by, and recommended for, all the Funds. If any Fund wishes to appeal, the Convener of the Appeals Panel shall be informed before the last day in February. He/she shall arrange a meeting of the Panel, the Treasurers concerned, and the representatives of the Connexional Finance Committee so that agreement shall be reached by the Panel by 15th March.

- 14.19** To meet the requirements of the Comprehensive Assessment, all Circuits and such Departments and Institutions as may be directed by the Conference shall be assessed each year. The amounts payable by Circuits, Departments and Institutions shall be based on a formula to be determined and adjusted from time to time by the Conference.
- 14.20** All Circuits shall submit their accounts, in the standard method as laid down by the Conference, to the Secretary of the Conference not later than 28th February each year. Where this direction is not observed the Circuit income and expenditure shall be estimated and the assessment based thereon.
- 14.21** The Circuits shall be given, not later than 8th April, the relevant details of the calculations affecting their own assessment. Any appeal must be lodged before 15th April, after which no appeal shall be considered. Before 15th May each year agreement shall be reached between the Secretary of the Conference and each Circuit as to the amount of assessment to be paid.
- 14.22** Circuits shall make payments of their assessments in quarterly instalments in March, June, September and December. Assessments shall be collected and disbursed by the Secretary of the Conference. The financial year of the Comprehensive Assessment shall be from 1st January to 31st December.
- 14.23** An Appeals Panel shall be appointed by the Conference or the General Committee each year. Any Fund drawing income from the Comprehensive Assessment or any Circuit paying assessment may appeal in the event of major disagreement as to the amount to be allowed to the Fund concerned or the amount of assessment to be paid by any Circuit.
- 14.24** For the purposes of the Comprehensive Assessment all notices shall be addressed to the Superintendent of the Circuit, with a copy to the Circuit Steward.
- 14.25** In cases of stations left vacant or the re-arrangement of Circuits, or in the event of a minister resigning or being removed from a Circuit, or in the event of the death of a serving minister, the appropriate Committee shall have authority to adjust the assessments on the Circuits concerned.

Disposal of Legacies, etc.

14.26 The following procedure shall be adopted in the disposal of legacies:

- (a) Details of any gifts received either inter vivos or by will by any Fund or Department which itself is in receipt of money from the Comprehensive Assessment shall be given to the Budget Committee each year at the same time as the other information required.
- (b) These gifts shall be set out under two headings:
 - (i) Gifts which by the conditions imposed by the donor must of necessity be invested so that the Fund or Department has only the right to the income therefrom.
 - (ii) Gifts which have been received unconditionally.
- (c) The Budget Committee shall be informed by the officers of the Fund or Department as to whether they intend to treat such unconditional gifts, or any portion thereof, as an addition to capital or as income.
- (d) The Budget Committee shall have the right to disagree with such a decision and to make its own recommendations. In such a case the recommendation, together with the reasons for it must be sent to the officers of the Fund or Department concerned within fourteen days.
- (e) The Fund or Department shall have the right to appeal against such a recommendation to the Appeals Panel, and the same procedure will apply as for other appeals to the Panel.
- (f) The officers of the Funds or Departments mentioned in paragraph (a) above shall keep a record of any gifts received unconditionally which have been treated as capital, so that the availability of these monies will not be overlooked if at any future date it appears to be in the interest of the Fund or Department or of the whole Church that part or all of these monies be used as income.
- (g) The officers of Funds or Departments not in receipt of money from the Comprehensive Assessment shall keep a record similar to that mentioned in paragraph (f) above.

Audit Committee

14.27 (a) The Conference will appoint annually an Audit Committee, which will report to it through the Connexional Finance Committee. The Chair and members will be appointed on the recommendation of the Finance Committee. The

Committee will have seven members – three of whom are Trustees of MCI and three members of the Connexional Finance Committee along with the Secretary of Conference.

- (b) The quorum for meetings shall be four members including the Chair. The President of the Conference shall not be eligible for appointment as Chair of the Committee but may be in attendance as and when required.
- (c) Any appointment to the Committee shall be a period of three years, but individuals may be re-appointed for additional periods of up to three years at a time. However, the Conference may terminate an appointment at any time. The Committee will appoint its own Secretary
- (d) The Chief Financial Officer of the MCI will normally attend the meetings of the Committee. Other Connexional Treasurers shall attend if requested by the Committee.

14.28 The Committee will meet at least three times per year. A meeting may be called by any member of the Committee or by the Secretary.

14.29 The Committee will draw on best practices which apply in the public and in the private sectors as are relevant to the Methodist Church in Ireland.

14.30 The Committee is an advisory body with no executive powers. However, it is authorised by the Conference to investigate any activity within its terms of reference, and to seek any information it requires from ministers and/or lay staff, who are required to cooperate with the Committee in the conduct of its enquiries. Committee requests for work, and reports received by the Committee from internal audit will be channelled through the Secretary of Conference.

14.31 The Committee is authorised, subject to consultation with the Treasurer of the General Purposes Fund, to obtain independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of persons with relevant experience and expertise, as it considers such to be necessary.

14.32 The specific duties of the Committee shall be:

- (a) To review management's annual financial statements and reports to ensure they reflect best practice
- (b) To discuss with the External Auditors the nature and scope of each forthcoming audit and to ensure that they have the full cooperation of staff
- (c) To consider the adequacy of the processes used to prepare relevant reports, including Strategic Plans; Risk registers; Budgets; Management accounts; the Annual accounts; and any other reports including responses by Management,

issued by the Auditors, and to consider the implications of such reports with respect to governance and risk monitoring and to make recommendations to Conference.

- (d) To review the effectiveness of the Internal Control system and Risk management processes to ensure that the aims, financial results and key performance targets are achieved in the most accurate, efficient and timely manner possible across the Connexion
- (e) To ensure, in the absence of an internal audit function, that a scoping exercise is coordinated with the External Auditors – or a similar Accountancy entity – at least annually, with the areas to be examined having been previously agreed with the Committee. Such exercise is to be additional to the external annual audit conducted by the External Auditors
- (f) To review where appropriate the adequacy of the tendering process for items of expenditure (either specifically or grouped as part of a series of similar transactions) in excess of £50,000 (or other such sum as may from time to time be deemed appropriate) and to make recommendations for improvement as the Committee see fit
- (g) To meet with external auditors at least once a year without staff being present
- (h) To review and advise the Conference on best practice in relation to Corporate Governance
- (i) To consider and advise the Conference as to the adequacy and scoping requirements of the Committee
- (j) To review annually the Connexional treasurers' policies and procedures manuals and make recommendations for improvements/additions in line with best practice
- (k) To consider the adequacy of MCI procedures and policies on capital expenditure, alteration of buildings, centralisation and custody over title deeds and investments, adequacy of insurance arrangements, cash handling and banking procedures and investment benchmarking and custody arrangements
- (l) To consider in conjunction with the relevant officers of the Conference and the external auditors the appropriateness of the key accounting policies; the impact of any changes to accounting policies; the basis for arriving at any significant estimate judgements applied in the financial statements, to give consideration to the appropriateness of the going concern concept conclusions and the key overall financial and operational risks to which the organisation is exposed

- (m) To consider the completeness and accuracy of all financial returns prepared by Societies, Circuits, Missions and Connexional Funds personnel in conjunction with management and the training arrangements operated by management to train treasurers to prepare accurate and complete pro forma returns
- (n) To consider the adequacy of systems maintained by other departments to ensure compliance with laws and regulations (including but not restricted to environmental; health and safety; fire regulations; data protection; employment; pension; child protection; taxation and charity laws
- (o) To ensure there is an adequate whistle blowing policy for clergy, lay staff and volunteers in place
- (p) To consider any other matters when requested to do so by the Conference
- (q) To make a statement in the Annual report about its activities, membership of the Committee and number of meetings over the course of the year
- (r) To report annually to the Conference on the discharge of its duties
- (s) Where any of the above provisions require consideration or review of any matter they shall be deemed to include the required provision of the appropriate recommendations for action where this is not already specifically stated.

14.33 Legal entities within the Circuit

- (a) From time to time, a Circuit may need to set up a separate legal entity outside the structure of the Circuit or Society in order to access funding for a project or for other reasons. As soon as the Circuit Executive has agreed that such an approach is necessary, the Superintendent must contact the Secretary of Conference for guidance. The Secretary of Conference will bring this for consideration by the Audit Committee and subsequent approval by the General Committee.
- (b) All such legal entities have fiduciary duties dictated by the law of the land. The individual trustees of these legal entities must keep aware of these duties and comply with them.
- (c) A copy of any reports filed with Companies House and The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland or The Companies Registration Office and The Charities Regulatory Authority for the Republic of Ireland shall be forwarded immediately to the Secretary of Conference.

- (d) The most recent annual financial statements of each such legal entity shall be sent to the Secretary of Conference at the same time as Circuit and Society accounts. A copy of the most recent financial statements in the format required by The Charity Commission will suffice for this purpose.

A register of all separate legal entities will be maintained by the Secretary of Conference.

CHAPTER 15

HOME MISSION DEPARTMENT

15.01 The object of the Home Mission Department is to be a vehicle through which the Methodist Church in Ireland helps Districts, Circuits and local congregations to glorify God through worship and witness.

The Department seeks to enable this by:

providing grants to circuits without which they could not support the ministers appointed to them.

providing grants for the development of mission projects that have been approved by the Conference or its agents.

support the inauguration and development of worship and witness in Ireland, as approved by Conference

working with others to provide information, guidance, resources and training for the Methodist Church

15.02 The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland are authorised by Statute (Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915) to hold real, leasehold, or personal estate, devised or bequeathed, or legally assured to them upon or for any trusts connected with the Home Mission work of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and by direction of the Conference all such Trust moneys or estates are held by the Statutory Trustees.

15.03 In the autumn of each year, the Home Mission Department shall ensure that arrangements are made for Home Mission services or meetings to be led by a team of ordained and lay people in every Circuit. The aims are to share information about the work of God throughout Ireland and to encourage financial support for the Department, including Mission Ireland.

Administration

15.04 The Department is administered under the direction of the General Committee, which may discharge its responsibility through the Church Development Board.

15.05 Two Treasurers, a minister and a layperson, shall be appointed annually by the Conference. The Treasurers shall keep an account in a Bank in the name of "The Methodist Home Mission Fund"; and all collections, contributions, grants, and legacies shall be remitted to them, or to either of them, for account of the Fund, and shall be lodged to the credit of this account, and payments shall be

made from the Fund in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Conference.

- 15.06** A minister, whose support shall be chargeable to the Fund, may be set apart as the General Secretary of the Department, to whom all communications on its business (other than remittances to the Treasurers) shall be addressed. An Administrator and such clerical staff as approved by the General Committee, may be engaged to assist the Secretary and Treasurers, and their salaries and expenses shall be a charge on the Department.
- 15.07** Grants which are made from the Fund, whether for ordinary or for other expenditure, shall be grants to Circuits, and not to individual ministers or other workers, except in the case of approved individual expenses. The Grants shall be sent when due, to the Superintendent minister, or other person nominated by the Superintendent, who shall account for them to the Circuit Executive. Grants for ordinary expenditure shall be paid quarterly by the Treasurers in September, December, March and June. In cases of vacancies in Stations and re-arrangements of Circuits the officers of the Home Mission Department shall have authority to adjust the grants to the Circuits concerned. Other grants shall be paid when the conditions of the grants are fulfilled or as the General Committee shall direct.
- 15.08** The General Committee is directed to frame its recommendations so as to bring the proposed expenditure of the Department within the estimated income.

Ordinary Expenditure

- 15.09** District Superintendents shall inquire into the needs of those Circuits applying for grants from the Department, and shall recommend to the Department the amount considered needful in each case for the ensuing year. Such applications shall be examined by the Church Development Board and the applications and the recommendations or decisions of the Church Development Board shall be reported to the General Committee and included in the Minutes of the Committee.
- 15.10** Applications for grants shall be made on the prescribed form, and shall be accompanied by a complete set of Circuit accounts, including those of the Society in respect of which the grant is being sought, audited according to the directions of the Conference.
- 15.11** Grants towards Ordinary expenditure are considered to be grants towards the whole of the Circuit's expenditure, as set out on the Application Form, and not as grants towards the cost of property. Circuit Accounts, (including project

budgets and Investment Accounts) as requested by the Department, shall accompany all applications for grants from the Department.

- 15.12** When required by the Officers of the Home Mission Department, a report on the life and work of the local Church and/or Circuit, the mission, needs and opportunities of the Circuit receiving the grant, shall be furnished through the Superintendent of the Circuit.

Other Expenditure

- 15.13** Subject to such conditions as may be directed by the General Committee, and in each case on the approval of the Committee, (or the Church Development Board), the Department may provide grants or loans towards the cost of:
- (a) the purchase of manses
 - (b) furnishing of manses
 - (c) repair of, or structural alterations to, manses
 - (d) serious need in ministers' families, in conjunction with the Ministers' Medical Fund, which shall administer such grant.
 - (e) supplies rendered necessary by the death, illness or unavoidable absence of ministers.
 - (f) the needs of ministers in special circumstances as in Paragraph 13.24
- 15.14** All applications for manse grants or loans must be sanctioned by the Executive of the Circuit concerned, and recommended by the District Superintendent before being considered by the Connexional Team and General Committee.
- 15.15** Grants within the limit set by the Conference may be approved by the Treasurers of the Home Mission Department in consultation with the Officers of the Church Development Board.

Ministers' residences (see also Chapter 13)

- 15.16** Application for permission to purchase, or build, to repair or structurally alter any minister's residence shall be made through the District Superintendent to the Property Board. Grants for such expenditure shall normally be payable by the Home Mission Department.

- 15.17** In processing applications for manse grants for circuits, or in assessing the adequacy of a manse, the Department may request that the District Superintendent or other person deputed by him/her, and the Manse Steward of another Circuit, make a report to the Department.
- 15.18** Grants for repairs of manses shall not be made, unless previous to the expenditure being incurred, the sanction of the Home Mission Department (and in the case of structural change the Property Board) has been obtained.
- 15.19** Application for permission to appoint new Trustees of any Trust property shall be made through the Property Board, the Home Mission Department or the General Education Department, according as the property concerned consists of churches, manses or schools. If any grant be made towards the cost of the Deed of Appointment, it shall be borne by the Property Board, Home Mission Department, or Education Fund as may be decided by the Conference.

Revision of Circuits and Appointment of Additional Ministers

- 15.20** In every case in which a realignment of a Circuit is proposed, details of the number of members and the mission rationale shall be furnished to the District Superintendent for consideration by the Connexional Team.
- 15.21** In any case of alteration or division of Circuits the opinions of any Circuit Executive shall receive careful consideration, but the final decision shall be made by the Conference, on the recommendation of the Connexional Team.
- 15.21** When any changes have been made in the boundaries of a Circuit by the transfer of members and preaching places to another Circuit, the Superintendent of the Circuit from which such transfer has been made shall furnish a list of such members and preaching places to the Superintendent to whose care these have been transferred, with such information as may assist in securing their sympathetic association with their new Circuit.
- 15.22** In cases of vacancies in Stations and re-arrangements of Circuits the officers of the Home Mission Department shall have authority to adjust the grants to the Circuits concerned.
- 15.23** An application for an additional minister to be engaged in the regular work shall not be entertained unless a plan, stating distinctly how and where he/she is to be employed, how he/she shall be provided for, and where he/she shall reside, accompany the application.

Removal Expenses of Ministers

15.24 All removal expenses shall be paid by the General Purposes Fund to all ministers changing Circuits on conditions determined by the General Committee.

Circuit Supplies

15.25 The General Committee shall determine from time to time, the scale of payment to be adopted in providing for supplies rendered necessary by the illness, or death, or suspension of ministers, having regard to the respective requirements of the Circuits concerned and the rates of statutory assistance available.

15.26 The General Committee shall have all the powers necessary to deal with such problems of the work and finance of Circuits as may require immediate attention during the year.

Finance

15.27 Immediately on their receipt, all collections and subscriptions for the Funds of Home Mission shall be forwarded by the Circuit Treasurer to the Ministerial Treasurer of the Department. The Circuit accounts for Home Mission shall be closed on a date determined by the previous Conference. The Schedule shall be forwarded to the Department as soon as possible. Any monies received after 31st December will not be included in the Circuit total for that year, but entered to the credit of its account the following year.

15.28 All applications for grants must be forwarded to the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department.

15.29 When a bequest is left, or a donation given, to the Methodist Church in Ireland, or to the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland, without any individual Circuit, Department, or Organisation being specified or indicated, such bequest or donation, unless it exceeds £10,000 shall be considered as belonging equally to the Home Mission Department and General Purposes Fund and shall be paid to the respective Treasurers.

Student Chaplaincy

15.30 University Chaplaincy shall be supported by necessary grants approved by the General Committee and paid by the Home Mission Department.

The Belfast University Chaplaincy Committee

15.31 The Belfast University Chaplaincy Committee is appointed to oversee chaplaincy work carried out, either solely by the Methodist Church in Ireland or

ecumenically with other denominations, in third level education establishments in the city.

- 15.32** The committee is eligible to apply for any necessary Home Mission grants to fund its work.
- 15.33** Persons appointed for work amongst students shall be nominated each year by the Conference to the various institutions.
- 15.34** The Belfast University Chaplaincy Committee, which shall be appointed by the District Superintendent, shall be constituted as follows:
- The District Superintendent (who shall act as the chairperson)
 - The Secretary of the Conference
 - The Superintendent responsible for Belfast South Methodist Church
 - Two representatives of the District nominated by the District Superintendent
 - Two representatives of (and nominated by) the Home Mission Department
 - Up to two members of university staff (who need not be Methodist), to be nominated by the Chaplaincy Committee
 - Up to two third level education students nominated by the Chaplaincy Committee
 - The Chaplain(s) (who shall convene the Committee)
- The Secretary and Treasurer shall be appointed by the Committee.
- 15.35** The Belfast University Chaplaincy Committee shall meet at least once a year and shall report to the Connexional Team.

Mission Ireland

- 15.36** Mission Ireland is the name given to the work of the Department associated with initiating, encouraging and supporting new and existing special mission ventures in Ireland. Its activities shall be funded from the annual contributions from the Circuits and such other monies as the Department is able to allocate from its own resources.
- 15.37** Application for Mission Ireland grants shall be processed by the District Superintendents who shall carefully examine such applications for assistance, and shall recommend to the Department the amount considered needful in each case for the ensuing Connexional year. Such applications shall be examined by the Church Development Board and the recommendations or decisions of the Church Development Board shall be reported to the General Committee and included in the Minutes of the Meeting. Projects employing lay workers shall

only be considered if operating under legislation of the Employment Advisory Group.

- 15.38** Church Councils and Circuit Executives along with District Home Mission Committees shall initiate and monitor suggestions for Mission Ireland ventures at Circuit and District level and shall approve applications for support. Applications for support for Mission Ireland projects shall be made on the appropriate form. All Mission Ireland causes shall be guided and controlled by a Circuit Executive with the exception of such causes as are under the direction of Departments of the Church. When a Mission Ireland project is to be considered as a Church Development cause, application shall be made under existing Church Development legislation.
- 15.39** The Conference shall appoint a Home Mission Forum which shall have the responsibility to bring forward, and where authorised by Conference implement, proposals to further the Work of God in the Methodist Church in Ireland in the spirit of the Connexions process. A chairperson shall be appointed by Conference and the Forum shall consist of equal numbers of ordained and lay people. The President, President-Designate and Ex-President shall all be entitled to attend.

CHAPTER 16

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT BOARD

16.01 The purpose of the Board shall be to explore and support opportunities for outreach and service, by enabling, facilitating and encouraging Societies to fulfil their calling in the community. This includes entirely new schemes where no church buildings already exist, innovative schemes offering opportunity for outreach within existing congregations and projects that can serve to revitalise the witness and focus of existing congregations.

16.02 The terms of reference of the Board shall be to:

- (a) respond to suggestions from Church Councils, Circuits and Departments regarding development of new projects in Church life. Initial contact from a Church Council or Circuit will be made with the Secretary of the Board through the Circuit Superintendent.
- (b) take the initiative and be pro-active in identifying areas of opportunity throughout the Connexion.
- (c) develop and formulate strategies for Church Development.
- (d) set up an Investigative Group to carry out an in-depth enquiry in respect of each prospective project. The Investigative Group shall assess and confirm opportunities, consult with the local Societies and Circuit and reflect on the opportunities in the light of their Mission Statement. It shall seek to quantify and encourage local ownership and possible involvement, assessing existing resources, both property and personnel, report to, and bring recommendations to the Board.
- (e) recommend how finance can be provided, including the realisation of assets.
- (f) appoint a team with the skills and the gifts needed to implement the recommendations made in respect of each project.
- (g) monitor and review each situation on an on-going basis and determine the length of time a team spends on any project.
- (h) approve Church Development Status on the recommendation of the District Home Mission Committee.

16.03 The membership of the Board shall be:

The President of the Conference
The Lay Leader of the Conference
The Secretary of the Conference

The Chairperson of the Board
The Officers of the Home Mission Department
The Officers of the Property Board
The General Secretary of the Methodist Youth and Children's Department
The Superintendents of Districts
A representative of the General Purposes Fund
A representative of the Connexional Finance Committee
A representative of the Pioneer Mission Committee
A representative of the Prison and Healthcare Chaplaincy Committee
The appointed representative for Ecumenical Affairs
Two representatives from Edgehill College
One lay representative from each District
A representative from the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland

16.04 The Board shall be appointed annually by the Representative Session of the Conference.

16.05 Appointments to the Board shall be made as follows:

The Chairperson, who shall not be an Officer of the Home Mission Department or the Property Board appointed by the General Committee to serve for a period of three years with the option of re-appointment for a further three years.

A Secretary/ Convener appointed from within the Board

The District Lay Representatives shall be appointed by their respective District Superintendents, after consultation with the District Advisory Committee.

16.06 The Board shall meet at least twice a year and report to the General Committee and the Conference.

16.07 For purposes of monitoring and dealing with business, the Board can delegate any or all of its functions to an Executive, comprising the Chairperson and Secretary of the Board, the Secretary of Conference, the Officers of the Home Mission Department, the Officers of the Property Board and representatives, as required, from Districts or Committees which have business on the Agenda.

16.08 The Board shall not be responsible for providing finance, but projects approved by the Church Development Board shall be eligible for funding from Home Mission and/or Property Board.

16.09 The Church Development Board shall be entitled to one Representative to the Conference.

CHAPTER 17

WORLD MISSION PARTNERSHIP

- 17.01** Every member of the Church is called to share in the whole Church's mission to offer Christ to every person. The organisation within the Methodist Church in Ireland for promoting mission around the world shall be known as World Mission Partnership. Every member of the Methodist Church belongs to this World Mission Partnership, which is none other than the Methodist Church itself sharing in world mission.
- 17.02** The aim of World Mission Partnership is to facilitate partnership with every Irish Methodist, with the Methodist Church in Britain, with Churches and organisations around the world, and with other parts of Irish Methodism also involved in mission.
- 17.03** The Methodist Church in Ireland conducts its work around the world primarily through partnership with the Methodist Church in Britain.
- (a) World Mission Partnership shall work together with the World Church Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain to facilitate this.
 - (b) To further facilitate this partnership, Conference shall:
 - (i) annually appoint representatives to relevant committees of the Methodist Church in Britain;
 - (ii) place designated and approved funds at the disposal of the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain;
 - (iii) offer, on behalf of the Methodist Church in Ireland, men and women who present themselves for service as Mission Partners;
 - (iv) authorise its members and ministers to serve as staff or committee members within the structures of the Methodist Church in Britain, if requested by that Church.
- 17.04** Conference controls how its support for the World Mission Fund and the World Church Relationships Team is organised.
- (a) World Mission Partnership shall liaise fully with the Methodist Church in Britain regarding the recruitment, training, and terms of service of Mission Partners, and all other relevant matters.
 - (b) The General Secretary of World Mission Partnership, together with the Team Leader of the World Church Relationships Team, shall make arrangements for

those being offered for service as Mission Partners to be recommended for such service by the Methodist Church in Ireland.

- (c) The Irish Conference shall have the final authority in all matters of discipline affecting the ministerial or membership status of an Irish Methodist Mission Partner.

Connexional Structures

- 17.05** The Conference shall appoint annually the following officers of World Mission Partnership:
- (a) a General Secretary, who shall be an ordained minister;
 - (b) two Treasurers, one ministerial and one lay, who shall receive all monies collected, subscribed or bequeathed to the Methodist Church in Ireland for world mission, present an annual financial statement to Conference, and operate bank accounts in the name of “World Mission Partnership”.
- 17.06** Conference shall appoint annually a World Mission Partnership Committee, consisting of the World Mission Partnership officers, the World Mission Secretary of Methodist Women in Ireland, together with one additional minister and three additional laypersons, of whom at least two shall be women. World Mission Partnership staff shall also attend, as required.
- 17.07** The responsibilities of the World Mission Partnership Committee shall be:
- (a) to develop strategic vision;
 - (b) to provide support and resources to underpin the work of mission around the world;
 - (c) to make operational decisions, in consultation with other Connexional committees, under the guidance of the Conference;
 - (d) to organise each year Connexional events which communicate the work of World Mission Partnership and promote world mission;
 - (e) to organise the production of annual world mission service material;
 - (f) to equip and enable World Mission Partnership Secretaries to communicate the work of World Mission Partnership and promote world mission.
- 17.08** Each District Superintendent, after consulting with the District Advisory Committee, may appoint a World Mission Partnership Committee, together with Ministerial and Lay World Mission Partnership Secretaries.

17.09 Each Circuit shall appoint a World Mission Partnership Secretary, who will be responsible for promoting world mission on the Circuit. Where possible, each Society should also appoint a World Mission Partnership Secretary.

17.10 World Mission Partnership is the legal successor to Methodist Missionary Society (Ireland).

Junior Mission for All

17.11 Every Society is encouraged to engage with Junior Mission for All (JMA) as a means of encouraging children and young people to learn about the world and become involved in the Church's mission in every part of it.

- (a) Each District Superintendent may appoint a JMA Secretary, who shall, with the assistance of local JMA secretaries, be responsible for promoting JMA and its work among children and young people in the churches of the District.
- (b) Money raised for mission work by JMA shall be divided between Home Mission and World Mission.

Missionary Intercession and Information

17.12 District, Circuit, and Society World Mission Partnership Secretaries shall, together with ministers:

- (a) stress the importance of intercession for mission partners and churches around the world;
- (b) encourage the widest possible circulation of prayer handbooks;
- (c) stress the importance of the wide circulation of world mission literature and the full use of multi-media material;
- (d) encourage the observation of the last Sunday in November as a Day of Missionary Intercession.

CHAPTER 18

METHODIST WOMEN IN IRELAND

18.01 Methodist Women in Ireland is the organizing body for those women's groups within the Church who wish to affiliate and who are in agreement with its Aim and Mission Statement. The organisation is part of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (henceforth referred to as World Federation) and thus adopts the Mission Statement: 'To know Christ and to make Him known'.

18.02 The aims of the organisation shall be:

- (a) to enable members through fellowship with each other to deepen their personal commitment to Jesus Christ.
- (b) to relate the teaching of Jesus Christ to life in the Home, the Church, the Community and the World.
- (c) to share in the Mission of the World Church.
- (d) to provide a link with the women of other Churches in Ireland and throughout the world.

18.03 The constitution of Methodist Women in Ireland is as follows:

(a) The General Officers shall be:

The President, who shall serve for a period of two years

The General Secretary, who shall serve for a period of three years

The Assistant Secretary, who shall serve for a period of three years

The Treasurer, who shall serve for a period of six years.

The World Mission Secretary, who shall serve for a period of three years

The Past President or President Designate who shall serve for a period of one year.

(b) **The General Executive is the decision-making body of the organisation and its membership is:**

The General Officers

The MWI District Presidents or their substitutes

The Past General Secretary

The Past General Treasurer

- (c) The Forum includes District reports and workshops or discussion groups and it shall consist of
- The General Officers
 - The MWI District Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers
 - The Media Secretary
 - The Past General Secretary
 - The Past General Treasurer

- (d) The Central Committee shall consist of:

- The General Officers
- The Past General Secretary
- The Past General Treasurer
- The MWI District Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers
- The Media Secretary
- The World Federation Unit Correspondent
- Any Area or World Officers resident in Ireland
- MWI Honorary Members
- Designated Representatives to other Connexional Committees and such other bodies as may be deemed appropriate.

- 18.04** Methodist Women in Ireland shall have representation on the General Committee, the World Mission Partnership and Mission Ireland Committees, and the Conference.
- 18.05** Each MWI District shall appoint a President, Secretary and Treasurer and have a District Executive composed of these three officers together with at least one representative from each affiliated group, the District representative to the Irish Unit of the World Federation and the District Mission Secretary.
- 18.06** At Circuit/Society level each group shall appoint a representative to the MWI District Executive. Each group may develop its own structure as appropriate to its needs.
- 18.07** The financial basis and regulations shall be approved and sanctioned by the Conference.

CHAPTER 19

WORLD DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF

19.01 The Conference shall annually appoint a Committee on World Development and Relief, to promote throughout the Church the study of the problem of world poverty.

19.02 The Membership of the Committee shall be as follows:

The Office Bearers

The General Secretary of World Mission Partnership

Eight members appointed by the Conference.

Non-voting advisors who are invited by the Committee to attend.

Two Lay Secretaries, one from Northern Ireland and one from the Republic of Ireland, shall be appointed by the Committee from among its own members.

19.03 The Committee shall administer a fund for World Development and Relief. It shall receive such a percentage of the annual Connexional Comprehensive Assessment as may from time to time be determined by the Conference.

It shall work through and in closest consultation with World Mission Partnership and the Methodist Relief and Development Fund, and shall report to the Conference each year on its allocations of all sums received.

19.04 A Secretary for World Development and Relief shall be appointed in each Circuit or Society.

CHAPTER 20

THE METHODIST YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

- 20.01** The Youth and Children's Department of the Methodist Church in Ireland is responsible for the development and co-ordination of work among young people and children. The Department shall serve young people of every age group through a comprehensive and unified programme, seeking the wellbeing of the whole young person, personal commitment to Jesus Christ, active involvement in the Christian community and practical action in the world. The Department shall work through the Youth and Children's Council at Connexional, District and Local levels. It shall encourage and develop in partnership with other departments and where appropriate other churches or agencies:
- (a) Christian education in Youth groups, Sunday Schools and in all-age Church.
 - (b) Youth and children's work within the local church and community.
 - (c) The training and development of young people for leadership in Church and community.
 - (d) The training and development of leaders for work with young people and children.
 - (e) New and adventurous forms of evangelical, educational, cultural, social, recreational, cross community and international activity for young people and children.
 - (f) The nurture and care of every child and young person within the community of God's people.
- 20.02** The Methodist Youth and Children's Department shall be structured as follows:
- (a) The Connexional Officers:
 - The General Secretary who shall be appointed by Conference.
 - Ministry Co-ordinators for Youth and Children's Work, as may be appointed from time to time by Conference.
 - Two Treasurers - a minister and a lay person.
 - (b) The Methodist Youth and Children's Department Executive.
 - (c) The District Youth and Children's Team.
 - (d) The Society or Circuit Youth and Children's Team.

The Executive

20.03 (a) The Constitution of the Executive shall be:

The Chairperson, appointed by Conference, who shall be a Minister.
The Connexional Officers.

Four Representatives of Youth and Children's Work, consisting of two for youth (one volunteer and one employed in the local church) and two for children (one volunteer and one employed in the local church).

The Connexional Officers of the Methodist Child Care Society.

Co-opted members: two Laypersons and two Ministers.

Other co-opted members as may be required.

(b) The Executive shall:

(i) Meet at least four times a year.

(ii) Consider the needs and interests of young people and children, and seek to interpret and facilitate the carrying out of the stated Policy and Aims of the Department at all levels.

(iii) Report to the General Committee.

(c) The Executive may appoint sub committees, not necessarily from its own membership, to deal with particular sections of its work. Such sub-committees shall have power to co-opt. The Officers of the Department shall be ex-officio members of all such sub-committees.

The District Youth and Children's Team

20.04 The District Superintendent in consultation with the Department may appoint a Team to facilitate youth and children's work on the District.

Circuit/Society Youth and Children's Team

20.05 Each church council is responsible for Youth and Children's work and shall make appropriate arrangements for this.

CHAPTER 21

BOARD OF EDUCATION

21.01 The Board of Education is appointed annually by the Conference to have the direction and statement of the education policy of the Church and the oversight of matters affecting the education of young people in schools, colleges and universities.

The Board is responsible for the interests of the Methodist Church in all matters concerning the educational welfare of the young people connected with the Methodist Church. It shall be involved in consultations with other Churches in arranging religious education courses for Methodist (and other) pupils and for the visitation of the schools where they are being educated. It shall also seek, preferably in consultation with other Churches, to arrange for meetings of teachers engaged in religious education.

While the main duty of the Board shall relate to religious education in schools, it shall give consideration to the promotion of religion in the homes of our people, and shall consider, in co-operation with other departments of our Church, the best method of securing the observance of family devotions and the daily reading of the Scriptures in the homes of our people.

21.02 All matters relating to school property and to the administration of the General Education Fund, and matters in which the rights of the Methodist Church are involved, shall be the responsibility of the Board.

21.03 The Board shall be constituted as follows:

The President of the Conference

The Lay Leader of the Conference

The Secretary of the Conference

The President-Designate of the Conference

The Officers of the Board of Education

The General Secretary of the Methodist Youth and Children's Department

The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department

Four ministers and six lay persons to be elected by the Conference

The Board may co-opt up to three other members.

21.04 The Board shall appoint Executive Committees for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, to deal with the special matters relating to their respective areas and to report to the Board from time to time, and at least annually.

The respective Executive Committees shall be composed of the members of the Board resident in the area concerned, with the addition of the District Secretaries from that area, and not more than six additional members co-opted by the Executive Committee concerned. Co-opted Executive membership shall not confer membership of the main Board.

The Secretary of the Board shall be the Secretary of the Executive serving the area in which he/she is resident. The Ministerial Treasurer, if resident in the other area, shall act as Secretary for its Executive. Otherwise the Board shall appoint a person to act as Secretary for that Executive Committee.

- 21.05** The Board shall nominate representatives of the Methodist Church on the Boards of Managements of Schools, Area Education and Library Boards, Stranmillis University College, Belfast, and all other bodies where such representation is requested and approved by the Board.

District Education Secretaries

- 21.06** Each District Superintendent may, after consulting with the District Advisory Committee, appoint an Education Secretary, whose duty it shall be to arrange for the visitation of the schools.

- 21.07** Arrangements shall be made, where possible, by the District Education Secretary for pastoral oversight and religious education in schools attended by Methodist children.

The District Education Secretary shall make inquiry concerning the observance of the regulations relating to pastoral visitation and religious education in all day schools.

General Education Fund

- 21.08** The Board shall administer the General Education Fund. Two Treasurers, a minister and a lay person, and a Secretary shall be appointed annually by the Conference. The Treasurers shall keep the account of the Fund in a bank in the name of the "Methodist General Education Fund."
- 21.09** In every case in which the officers of the General Education Fund are involved in any financial responsibility because of their office, they shall be indemnified from and against personal loss. Any necessary payment in this connection shall be a charge on the Fund.
- 21.10** Resources available to the Board of Education shall be used to support schools at primary and secondary level, and other educational purposes in which the

Church has a participatory interest. Financial support may be given to Methodist parents who choose to send their children to be educated at post primary schools where charges are payable. All applications for financial assistance shall be supported by adequate information, and the officers shall assess the need and level of support to be given.

- 21.11** The Board shall have the power to withdraw its aid from any school in which its directions have not been observed.

Schools under Methodist Management

- 21.12** The Superintendent of the Circuit in which such a school is situated is appointed the manager of this school, except in such cases where other arrangements may be necessary.

- 21.13** The schools shall be systematically visited by the ministers of the Circuit wherein such schools are situated. Inquiry shall be made by the District Education Secretary concerning the observance of these regulations regarding religious education.

- 21.14** A manager shall not appoint or dismiss a Principal or assistant teacher in any school without first consulting the Board through the officers of the General Education Fund. If any dispute may arise between managers and teachers, the General Committee shall be a court of appeal.

Insurance of Teachers and Pupils

- 21.15** The managers of the schools under Methodist management shall arrange for the insurance of the teachers and pupils in these schools against the liabilities imposed by the relevant Acts of Parliament.

With regard to other schools on Methodist Trust property, Superintendents are directed to enquire in each case whether the responsibility for the insurance rests upon the Circuit, and whether it is being met.

Ulster Royal Schools

- 21.16** Under the scheme of management of Royal Schools in Counties Armagh, Fermanagh, and Tyrone, a representative of the Methodist Church on the Governing Body of each school is annually appointed by the Conference.

CHAPTER 22

WESLEY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

- 22.01** In the year 1845 the Conference approved of a proposal for the establishment of a Preparatory Grammar School, which was opened in that year as "The Wesleyan Connexional School" and was situated at Nos. 78 and 79 St. Stephen's Green South, Dublin. In 1879 the School was removed to premises on a nearby site and designated "Wesley College."
- 22.02** In the year 1911 co-education was introduced. Because of the rapid development and expansion of the city of Dublin, the College was removed in the year 1969 to a fifty-acre site at Dundrum in the southern suburbs of the city on which had been erected a campus-style school for 650 pupils, with five separate buildings, including assembly, catering and management, classrooms, science, gymnasium and separate residences for boys and girls. A substantial conditional grant was received from the Department of Education in respect of the school buildings only. All the premises are vested in the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 22.03** A new Constitution for Wesley College, which is printed in full in the Conference Agenda 1972, was presented to and approved by the Conference of that year. Under this Constitution the Governors, the Principal, the Chaplain and the Treasurer are appointed by the Conference, with certain powers of appointment, including that of the Principal, being delegated if necessary to the General Committee. The Constitution further deals with such matters as the varying of the Constitution, the purposes and powers of the Governors of the College, Conference Visitors, religious education, together with financial and administrative matters. The Constitution ensures that Wesley College continues under the control of the Conference; it also provides that the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland is an ex-officio member of the Board of Governors of the College.
- 22.04** In 2000 the Conference amended the Constitution of the College to enable a Board of Management to be established as required by the 1998 Education Act, Section 14. A Board of Management was appointed by the Conference in 2002. In accordance with the same act the Methodist Church in Ireland was designated as 'Patron' of the College.

CHAPTER 23

METHODIST COLLEGE, BELFAST

Origin and Design

23.01 This College was originally intended to meet the increased necessity for higher education felt by the Methodists of Ireland, and for the training of theological students. It was erected and endowed by means of contributions received mainly from Methodists in Ireland, England, and America, amounting in the aggregate to nearly £60,000. It was opened for the reception of students and pupils on the 19th day of August, 1868.

After a period of twenty years the College was placed under the management of Governors, who by the Scheme of the Commissioners of Educational Endowments (Ireland) No. 16, 18th May, 1888, were constituted a Body Corporate by the name of "The Governors of the Methodist College, Belfast," with perpetual succession and a common seal.

Acts of Parliament

23.02 The Methodist College Act (Northern Ireland) 1928, separated and transferred the theological endowments of the Methodist College, Belfast, and incorporated the Governing Bodies of the Methodist College, Belfast and of the Edgehill Theological College, Belfast. It also provided for the management and administration of the said respective Colleges and the endowments thereof respectively and for other purposes.

The provisions of this Act have now to be read in conjunction with those clauses of the public legislation which affect voluntary grammar schools, i.e., the Education Acts (Northern Ireland) of 1947 and 1968 and subsequent Statutory Rules and Orders.

Governing Body

23.03 The Education Act (Northern Ireland) 1968 provided that the total number of Governors of the College shall not exceed twenty-seven. Under the provisions of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order of 1984, fifteen shall be appointed by the Conference (including ex-officio members), six shall be appointed by the Minister of Education, Northern Ireland, three shall be elected by parents of children attending the school from amongst the parents of such children and three shall be elected by assistant teachers at the school from amongst such assistant teachers. The Conference appointments shall consist of:

- (a) Three ex-officio Governors:
The President of the Conference,
The Secretary of the Conference,
The Ministerial Treasurer of the Children's Fund, together with:
- (b) Twelve additional members (of whom six shall be ministers and six lay-persons), who shall hold office for three years.

- 23.04** The twelve elected Governors shall be elected by the Conference. At every yearly meeting of the Conference, one-third of the elected Governors shall retire from office. Each retiring Governor shall be eligible for re-election provided that during the twelve months previous to his/her retirement he/she shall have attended at least two meetings of the Governors or of a committee of the Governors.
- 23.05** Such persons only shall be eligible to, or qualified for, the office of Governor as shall be either ministers in connection with the Methodist Church, or shall profess themselves members thereof. Whenever any Governor who, at the time of his/her appointment as a Governor, was a minister in connection with the said Church, shall cease to be, or to be recognised as a minister in connection therewith, he/she shall thereupon cease to be a Governor.
- 23.06** Whenever any elected Governor shall die, or resign by writing under his/her hand, or become bankrupt, or refuse to act, or become incapable of acting, or shall permanently cease to reside in Ireland, or shall cease to profess himself/herself a member of the Methodist Church, his/her office shall thereupon become vacant, and the fact of every such vacancy, with the cause thereof, shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Governors, and shall be by them reported to the Conference at its next yearly meeting.
- 23.07** Whenever the number of elected governors shall from any cause be reduced below twelve, the remaining Governors for the time being shall co-opt such and so many qualified persons to be Governors as may be required to make up the number to fifteen elected Governors, but every Governor so co-opted shall hold office only for the unexpired residue of the term of three years, for which the elected Governor to whose place he/she has been co-opted was elected.
- 23.08** The Governors appointed by the Minister of Education take up office simultaneously for a period of three years. If any of these Governors cease to serve for any reason before the expiry of this term the Board shall inform the Minister of Education and await his/her action in the matter.

Chaplain

23.09 The Governors shall nominate a minister in connection with the Methodist Church for appointment by the Conference as Chaplain to the College.

Purposes of the College and of the Endowments

23.10 The purposes of the College shall be:

- (a) To maintain the College for the use, benefit and advantage of the members of the Methodist Church and others.
- (b) To make provision for the education therein of students in the manner and subject to the conditions and provisions herein prescribed.
- (c) With the previous sanction of the Conference to apply or expend any part of the endowments as occasion shall require for the purpose of adding to, improving, repairing or beautifying the College and premises occupied therewith or otherwise for the benefit of the same or in building upon, laying out, or otherwise permanently improving the College and premises in such manner as the Governors shall deem to be advantageous or profitable.
- (d) To apply endowments held under any special trusts according to the terms of such trusts.

Headmaster and Other Officers

23.11 The Governors shall from time to time determine the qualifications and duties of and appoint the Principal of the College, the Warden of the McArthur Hall, and all other teachers, male and female, the Bursar, and all other officers, agents, and servants, whom they shall think it necessary or expedient to engage or employ in or about the College, or for the efficient conduct of the affairs thereof, or for the management of the endowments or otherwise howsoever; and the Governors may from time to time remove every or any persons so appointed for such cause as the Governors shall deem adequate without notice or on reasonable notice or on such notice as may have been agreed on not exceeding in any case six months' notice, or on payment of a reasonable sum in lieu of notice. The Governors shall and may from time to time fix the remuneration to be paid and the allowances to be made to all persons appointed by them, and pay and make the same respectively. Provided always that no appointment of the Principal of the College shall be final until the same shall have been submitted to and approved by the Conference.

(N.B. The Conference 1943 delegated to the Standing Committee (now incorporated in the General Committee) power to confirm on behalf of the Conference the appointment of a Principal of the College under the terms of a resolution which is recorded in the Journal of the Conference.)

Powers of Visitation and Amendment by Conference

23.12 It shall be lawful for the Conference at any time to take the management of the College and of the endowments either wholly or partially into consideration, and for that purpose if thought expedient to appoint a visitor or visitors or such Committee or Committees as the Conference shall think fit, and to vary or rescind all or any of the by-laws and regulations theretofore at any time made or promulgated by the Governors and to direct the removal or abatement of any abuse connected with the management of the College or endowments or otherwise and to rectify or remove any just cause of complaint or dissension existing therein or with reference thereto. The Conference may, with the approval of the Ministry of Finance for Northern Ireland, from time to time at any yearly meeting, subject to the restrictions hereinafter mentioned, by Deed under the hand and seal of the person for the time being presiding at such Conference attested by three or more members of the said Conference present at such yearly meeting alter, vary or annul any of the administrative provisions of Part II of the Methodist College Act, 1928 or any provisions relating to the numbers qualification tenure of office or mode of election of the Governors of the College and enact and declare other clauses and provisions in the place and stead of those so altered, varied or annulled, or in addition to those in Part II of this Act contained. Save as hereinbefore provided every act, matter or thing which the Conference is by this Act authorised or empowered to do or sanction may be done or sanctioned by resolution of the yearly meeting of the Conference and may be evidenced and attested by writing under the hand of the Secretary for the time being of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

(For the Constitution and Administration of the Methodist College, see the Methodist College Act (Northern Ireland), 1928, and subsequent amendments to this Act).

CHAPTER 24

GURTEEN COLLEGE

- 24.01** Following the resolution of the Conference of 1946 to establish an Agricultural College, lands and premises were purchased at Gurteen, County Tipperary and the Conference of 1947 approved the founding of Gurteen Agricultural College. The Trust Deed of the College (hereafter called “The Principal Indenture”) was dated 2 September 1948. Under that Deed, new Trustees were appointed on 16 November 1978 and on 10 January 2001. Pursuant to Clause 27 in the Schedule of the Principal Indenture, an Indenture, supplemental to the 1948 Trust Deed, was made on 8 June 2002, in which the lands then vested in the Trustees were listed as those scheduled in the appointment of Trustees dated 8 January 2001 together with the lands in Folio 29579F, Co Tipperary comprising 31.35 hectares of the lands of Arragh Beg, County Tipperary acquired during 2001, and whereby the provisions of the Principal Indenture were annulled and replaced by the following provisions and trusts.
- 24.02** The College shall henceforth be known as and called “Gurteen College”.
- 24.03.** The Governors shall henceforth cause to be paid all outgoings payable in respect of the said lands and premises.
- 24.04.** The Governors shall cause the said lands and premises and all additions which may be made thereto to be maintained in good and proper repair and condition and adequately insured from loss or damage by fire or otherwise.
- 24.05** Gurteen College was established by the Methodist Church in Ireland and is responsible to it. It exists to promote the welfare of rural communities in Ireland and elsewhere, based on Christian principles, by developing and teaching agricultural science, animal and crop husbandry, horticulture, equine studies and such other courses as it shall from time to time see desirable to facilitate the care, conservation, and development of the land and the quality of rural life. The College acknowledges, respects and, in so far as possible, facilitates the religious convictions of all members of staff and students.
- 24.06** The Conference shall have the right from time to time to appoint two or more persons being members of or Ministers in full connexion with the Conference to visit the said College and to enquire into the management thereof and into the discipline and order thereof and into the nature and particulars of the instruction given thereat and to report on all such matters and it shall be lawful for the Conference at any yearly meeting to take the management of the said College either wholly or partially into consideration and to vary or alter all or

any of the rules and regulations theretofore at any time promulgated by the Governors.

- 24.07** The Governing Body of the College to be called “The Governors” shall be responsible to the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland (hereinafter called “the Conference”) for the management and supervision of the College and shall be annually nominated by the Governors to the Conference and shall consist of the Principal of the College, together with not more than sixteen persons to be appointed by the Conference, of whom not less than three and not more than five shall be ministers in full connexion with the Conference and with up to seven persons not necessarily members of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the remainder lay members of the Methodist Church in Ireland. Four of the Trustees shall be included amongst the Governors. The Governors shall meet together at least three times in the year and additional meetings shall be held at the request of five Governors or the Chairperson and the Principal. It shall be compulsory on the Governors to report annually to the Conference. The Governors may annually appoint sub-committees from its members to deal with certain aspects of the work of the College which shall meet as frequently as the Governors shall decide and all competent decisions of such sub-committees shall be reported to the Governors for consideration and decision on same by the Governors. In the event of vacancies arising between meetings of the Conference the Governors may co-opt additional persons who are qualified as hereinbefore provided to act as Governors but such appointment shall be operative only until the ensuing Conference. Whenever any Governor shall resign by writing under his or her hand or become bankrupt or refuse to act or become incapable of acting or shall permanently cease to reside in Ireland or shall during the twelve months ended on the 1st day of June in any year have failed to attend at least one meeting of the Governors, he/she shall cease to be a Governor.
- 24.08** It shall be lawful for the Conference at its Annual Meeting to nominate and appoint a Principal for the College and the Governors, save while the Principal is a Methodist Minister, shall from time to time determine the remuneration and define the duties of such Principal provided further that previous to such appointment by Conference the Governors may submit a nomination of the person to fill such office such nomination to be subject to the approval of the Conference. In the event of the necessary suspension or cessation of the Principal’s functions during the year it shall be lawful for the General Committee of the Methodist Church in Ireland to act with Conference powers in the appointment of a Principal.

- 24.09** The Governors shall in each year nominate a Methodist Minister or other suitably qualified person to the Conference for appointment as Chaplain of the College. The person so appointed by the Conference shall act as Chaplain of the College subject however to the discipline and administration of the Principal.
- 24.10** The Governors shall at their first meeting after the Annual Conference elect a Chairperson from their number for the year and such Chairperson and in his/her absence such person as shall be elected by the meeting as Chairperson from among the Governors present shall preside at such meeting of the Governors.
- 24.11** The Conference shall annually upon the nomination of the Governors appoint a fit and proper person to fill the office of Honorary Treasurer to the College for the ensuing year and it shall be lawful for the Governors from time to time to define the duties of such Treasurer.
- 24.12** The Conference may from time to time and at any Annual Meeting by Deed under the hand and seal of the President and Secretary for the time being of the Conference and attested by three or more members of the Conference present at such meeting vary or annul any of the provisions of this Deed herein contained and enact and declare other Clauses, provisions and Trusts in the place and stead of those so varied or annulled or in addition to those herein contained.
- 24.13** The Gurteen College premises shall always be vested in not less than six persons who are members of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 24.14** When and so often as it shall happen that any Trustee for the time being shall die or shall refuse or become incapable to act or shall reside outside Ireland for in excess of one year or shall be adjudicated a bankrupt or discharged as an insolvent debtor or shall cease to be a member of the Methodist Church in Ireland or shall resign as Trustee in writing then in any such cases such person shall cease to be a Trustee and a vacancy shall be considered as having occurred in the number of Trustees and in a vacancy having occurred the surviving or continuing Trustees (i) may nominate a new Trustee or Trustees qualified to so act and (ii) shall nominate new Trustees if the number of Trustees has fallen to eight, or less, and if the Conference approves the new Trustee or Trustees such person or persons shall be appointed a Trustee or Trustees by Deed executed by the remaining or continuing Trustees.
- 24.15** In case the surviving or continuing Trustees shall for twelve months after the number of Trustees shall have fallen below six fail or neglect to nominate any

person or persons to fill up such vacancy or vacancies it shall be lawful for the Conference by writing under the hand of the President or Secretary for the time being to fill up such vacancy or vacancies by appointing a new Trustee or Trustees as the case may require without reference to the continuing or surviving Trustees.

- 24.16** The Trustees shall at their meeting prior to the Annual Conference elect a Chairperson for the year and such Chairperson and in his/her absence such person as shall be elected by the meeting shall preside at such meeting of the Trustees.
- 24.17** The Trustees shall have power to borrow money to purchase or acquire on lease property and with the consent of the Conference to sell or mortgage the property of the College following on a decision to that effect of the Governors.
- 24.18** If it shall happen that the income of Gurteen College shall fail to meet the current expenditure and the excess of expenditure over income shall have accumulated to such a sum as in the opinion of the Conference renders it inadvisable to continue the working of the said College it shall be incumbent on the Trustees to wind up the College and to sell the property, premises, lands and effects of the College and the Trustees if the Conference for any reason deem it advisable shall have the power of so winding up the College and selling its premises at any time and under any circumstances whatever and it is hereby declared that if after such sale as aforesaid and after payment of all expenses, debts and liabilities there shall still remain any sum over and above such payment the surplus shall be at the disposal of the Conference for any purpose that the Conference may direct.

CHAPTER 25

EDGEHILL THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

25.01 Under the provisions of the Methodist College Act (Northern Ireland), 1928, the Governors of the Edgehill Theological College have become an Incorporated Body acting under Statutory Regulations.

The members of the Board of Governors will be trustees of Edgehill Theological College under the provisions of the Charities regulations for Northern Ireland

Constitution of the Governing Body

25.02 The Governors of the College shall consist of the ex-officio Governors and of eighteen elected Governors who shall be appointed by the Conference and shall hold office for three years. These shall include the Secretary of the Home Mission Department and the Ministerial Treasurer of the Ministerial Training Fund, who shall be members of the Board for so long as they hold these offices. In electing governors, the Conference will pay regard to the balance of membership of the Board with respect to lay and ordained, gender, geography and skills and experience of value to the College.

The ex-officio Governors shall be:

- The President of the Conference
- The Secretary of the Conference
- The Senior Secretary of the Board of Examiners
- The Principal of the Edgehill Theological College

At every yearly meeting of the Conference one-third of the elected Governors shall retire from office. Each retiring Governor shall be eligible for re-election for a second term of three years, provided that during the twelve months previous to her/his retirement he/she shall have attended at least two meetings of the Governors, or of a Committee of the Governors. After two terms of service a Governor will not be eligible for re-election until at least one further year has elapsed.

25.03 Whenever any elected member shall die, or resign by writing under his/her hand, or become bankrupt, or refuse to act or become incapable of acting, or shall permanently cease to reside in Ireland, or shall cease to profess himself/herself a member of the Methodist Church, or shall during the twelve months ending on the first day of June in any year have failed to attend as in Section Five of this Act mentioned, or being at the time of his/her appointment a minister in connection with the said Church shall cease to be or to be

recognised as a minister in connection therewith, his/her office shall thereupon become vacant, and the fact of every such vacancy with the cause thereof shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Governors, and shall be by them reported to the Conference at its next yearly meeting.

25.04 Whenever the number of elected members shall from any cause be reduced below eighteen the remaining Governors for the time being shall co-opt such and so many duly qualified persons to be Governors as may be required to make up the number of eighteen elected Governors but every Governor so co-opted shall hold office only for the unexpired residue of the term of three years for which the elected Governor to whose place he/she has been co-opted was elected.

The Officers of the Board of Governors shall be the Chairman, Honorary Secretary and the Lay Treasurer of the Ministerial Training Fund. The Officers shall be elected by the Board from among its members for a term of office of three years. They shall be eligible for re-election for a second and final term of up to three years. The office-bearers will continue to serve their existing term of office as members of the Board and be eligible for re-election for one further term of three years.

The Officers and the Principal, meeting together, shall have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Board in urgent matters which arise between Board meetings and shall report these to the next meeting of the Board. The Board may delegate to the officers and Principal, meeting together, authority to take decisions on its behalf on specified matters. Any such decisions shall be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

The Board may set up such Sub Committees and Working Groups as it sees fit and set out the terms of reference of the Sub Committees and Working Groups. The Chair/Convener of each Sub Committee or Working Group shall be a member of the Board and shall report on the business of the Sub Committee or Working Group to the Board. The Board may co-opt members to Working Groups who are not members of the Board.

The Board shall adopt Standing Orders for the conduct of business at its meetings.

Purposes of Edgehill Theological College and its Endowments

25.05 The endowments of the College are held for the following trusts and purposes:

- (a) to maintain the Edgehill Theological College for the purpose of the theological and general education of candidates and probationers for the ministry of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (b) so long as the Edgehill Theological College is maintained for the purpose aforesaid, to permit the said College to be used for the board residence and education of such other students as may be approved by the Edgehill Governors.
- (c) with the previous sanction of the Conference to apply or expend any part of the Edgehill endowments as occasion shall require for the purpose of adding to, improving, repairing or beautifying the Edgehill Theological College and premises occupied therewith or otherwise for the benefit of the same, or in building upon, laying out, or otherwise permanently improving the Edgehill Theological College and premises in such manner as the Governors shall deem to be advantageous or profitable.
- (d) to apply endowments of the College held upon any special trusts according to the terms of such trusts.

Principal and Tutors

25.06 (a) The Principal of the Edgehill Theological College shall be a minister in connection with the Methodist Church in Ireland. Remuneration and allowances, and the conditions of the appointment shall be determined from time to time by the Edgehill Governors. The appointment of the Principal shall be made by the Conference. He/she shall hold office for the term of one year, and the appointment or re-appointment shall be made by the Conference in accordance with its rules and regulations for such appointments. Should the Principal die, resign, be suspended, or dismissed during the course of the year, the Edgehill Governors shall, if they think proper, nominate to the President of the Conference some other fit, proper and qualified person for appointment to act in his/her stead until the ensuing Conference. If and whenever any Principal of the Edgehill Theological College shall cease to be a minister in connection with the Methodist Church, he/she shall thereupon vacate the office and a vacancy shall thereupon be considered to have occurred in such office in the same manner as if the Principal had then died.

- (b) Any tutor who shall be a minister of the Methodist Church shall be appointed and re-appointed in like manner and subject to the same conditions as the Principal.

Appointment of Principal and Tutors

25.07 In accordance with provisions in paragraph 43 (1), (2) of the Methodist College Act, the Conference has made the following regulations for the appointment of the Principal and tutors:

- (a) The appointment of the Principal, and any tutors who are ministers of the Methodist Church, shall be in accordance with the regulations set out in paragraph 5G.16 of the Manual of Laws.
- (b) The extension of the appointment of the Principal, and any tutors who are ministers of the Methodist Church, shall be in accordance with the regulations set out in paragraph 5F.05 of the Manual of Laws.

Annual Report

25.08 A report covering the management of the College, the financial position, and the education of the students, shall be made each year to the Conference by the Principal or a member of the Governing Board of the College.

Management of the College

25.09 For the regulations regarding students at the Edgehill Theological College see paragraphs 5D.01-5D.06.

For the Statutory Regulations which govern Edgehill Theological College see the Methodist College Act (Northern Ireland), 1928.

CHAPTER 26

MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND

- 26.01** The Ministerial Training Fund is established by the Conference for the purpose of preparing accepted candidates for the ministry of the Church. The Fund shall be administered under the direction of the General Committee.
- 26.02** The income of the Fund is derived from dividends from the Theological Endowment Fund, legacies and donations, payments or part payments from theological students, grants from the Comprehensive Assessment and from such other Funds as the Conference may determine.
- 26.03** The Fund is expended in the maintenance of the Edgehill Theological College, Belfast, and in the tutorial, boarding and other expenses, incidental to the work of the College.
- 26.04** The Treasurers of the Fund shall be appointed annually by the Conference. Their Report shall be presented annually to the Conference.

Candidates' Grants Fund

- 26.05** The Candidates' Grants Fund is available for the payment of grants to students in Edgehill Theological College at a rate to be determined from time to time by the Conference, the amount of such grants to be reduced by the amount of any other grant or grants receivable by eligible students from any other source.
- 26.06** The Fund shall be administered by the Officers of the Ministerial Training Fund in accordance with regulations approved by the Conference. It shall be financed by annual grants from the Comprehensive Assessment.
- 26.07** Applications for grants shall be made to the Ministerial Treasurer who shall act as Secretary of the administrators and shall be the Treasurer of the Fund.
- 26.08** The maximum grant to any one student in any one year shall not exceed a sum to be determined by the Conference. Grants shall be paid three times a year, in October, January and April.

CHAPTER 27

COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

- 27.01** The Conference shall annually appoint a Committee on Faith and Order. The functions of the Committee shall be:
- (a) to scrutinize and make recommendations regarding any doctrinal statements and documents to be issued in the name of the Church.
 - (b) to consider and make recommendations concerning any proposed revisions in orders of worship.
 - (c) to study and report to the Conference on relevant issues of significance, subject to the approval either of the General Committee or of the Conference itself.
 - (d) accept and carry out any other assignments which are remitted to it by the Conference.
- 27.02** The Committee shall consist of:
- The President of the Conference
 - The Lay Leader of the Conference
 - The Secretary of the Conference
 - The ex-President of the Church
 - The President-Designate of the Church
 - The Convener of the Committee
- Twelve other members of whom not more than six shall be ministers.
- 27.03** The Convener shall be appointed by the Conference from among the membership of the Committee and shall hold office for a subsequent period of not more than six years. Other members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Conference for a period of four years. They shall be eligible for re-appointment by the Conference for a second period. A period of at least one year should elapse before any subsequent appointment.

CHAPTER 28

THE TRUSTEES OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

28.01 The Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915 (see Appendix 2), constituted and incorporated a body of Trustees known as "The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland," with perpetual succession and a common seal, and vested in them the properties and funds formerly held by the Trustees of the Methodist Ministers' Sons' Fund, the Trustees of the Methodist Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund, the Trustees for Donations and Bequests, and the Statutory Trustees, appointed under the provision of the Primitive Methodist Society of Ireland Act, 1871. Provision is made for the administration by these Trustees of these properties and funds, and any other properties or funds which may from time to time be vested in them. The Act transferred to the new body of Trustees, these various properties and funds, subject to the trusts set out in the deeds and documents under which the various bodies of Trustees had formerly administered them, and subject to any directions and powers contained in the Act.

The principal deeds and documents declaring the trusts transferred by the Act are set out in the Schedules to the Act.

28.02 The Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, (see Appendix 3) conferred additional powers upon the Statutory Trustees incorporated by the Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915.

- (a) Section 7 of the Act gave power to the Conference by resolution to declare that certain local trusts shall be transferred and vested in the Statutory Trustees under conditions set forth in the Act.
- (b) Sections 8 and 9 of the same Act gave power to the Trustees with the sanction of Conference to sell, grant, lease, mortgage, exchange or otherwise dispose of real or chattel real property, and also empowered them to appoint local trustees to administer any property vested in them.

Rules and Regulations

28.03 Section 25 of the Act of 1915 provides for the making of Rules and Regulations by the Trustees, with the consent of the Conference, for the management and disposition of the various trusts vested in them by the Act. These Rules are found in Appendix 4.

CHAPTER 29
CHURCH PROPERTY

The Property Board

- 29.01** The Property Board shall be responsible for the administration of the Chapel Fund and the Property Board Development Account.
- 29.02** The Chapel Fund is provided and maintained for the assistance of the following objects:
- (a) The purchase, erection, and repair of Churches and other Connexional property in Ireland.
 - (b) Legal and other expenses incidental to the maintenance of Connexional Trusts.
- 29.03** The Property Board Development Account is provided and maintained to encourage and assist in the purchase, erection or rental of buildings in areas where facilities for worship and witness do not exist, or are deemed to be inadequate, due to growth.
- (a) Applications for Church Development status shall be dealt with by the Church Council, the Circuit Executive, the District Home Mission Committee and the Church Development Board.
 - (b) When the Church Development Board gives approval for Church Development status, the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department shall so inform the Secretary of the Property Board and the Superintendent of the Circuit through whom applications for grants and loans shall be submitted.
- 29.04** The Board shall be appointed annually by the Representative Session of the Conference.

The constitution of the Board shall be:

The President of the Conference

The Lay Leader of the Conference

The Secretary of the Conference

One minister and one lay member nominated annually by each District Superintendent, after consulting with the District Advisory Committee

Six persons to be elected annually by the Conference

A maximum of four persons co-opted by the Board.

29.05 The terms of reference of the Board are:

- (a) to deal with all matters relating to Plans, Buildings, Sales, Purchases, Loans, Grants, Lettings, Insurance, Transfers and Appointment of Trustees, Organs, Circuit Visitations, Deeds and Documents, Inspection of Manses, District Property Reports (where structural alterations are involved).
- (b) to consider applications to initiate legal action, and applications for permission to negotiate bank loans and overdrafts, and to submit its recommendations to the General Committee for decision.
- (c) to receive from the General Committee any policy recommendations regarding new churches, manses or other buildings. To proceed with such building plans to such cost limit as the Conference approves. If the estimated cost exceeds such a figure, to proceed until the scheme is ready for implementation and then to submit it to the General Committee for final approval.
- (d) to be responsible for the erection, repair, purchase, sale and letting of manses. Such negotiations will be initiated at Circuit level and will be transmitted to the care of the Property Board by the District Superintendent.
- (e) to administer the Chapel Fund and the Property Board Development Account. Two Treasurers (a minister and a lay person) shall be appointed. They shall keep the accounts in a bank which, after audit, shall be presented annually to the Conference.
- (f) to nominate to the Conference annually, a Registrar of Deeds and Documents who shall report each year to the Conference.
- (g) to appoint a Secretary who is responsible for plans and contingent matters.
- (h) to nominate to the Conference a Secretary of Visitation Commissions, who will arrange the Commissions and report on them to the Property Board, the Home Mission Department and the Districts and Circuits concerned.
- (i) to receive and disburse monies received from allocations from sales of property, donations, legacies, grants from the Connexional Assessment Fund, and other sources.
- (j) to be responsible for keeping under review the matter of compensation for church property and to report where necessary to the General Committee.
- (k) to convene at least twice in each connexional year.

- (l) to delegate its functions, or any of them, to an Executive of not less than six members. When business is being transacted at an Executive meeting, the Superintendent of any District from which business has come will be invited to attend, and all present will be voting members of that meeting. In the event of a District Superintendent being dissatisfied with the decision being reached by the Executive in respect of any item of business from their District, he/she shall have the right to have the business deferred to the next full meeting of the Board.

Erections, Enlargements, Purchases, etc.

29.06 (a) Before engaging in the business of building, or buying, a Circuit shall make certain that its contemplated plans are in line with the Mission of the Church.

- (b) Every application for permission to erect, enlarge, improve, purchase, demolish or sell a church, school, hall, manse, lands, or any other buildings used for Connexional purposes, to introduce a heating apparatus or to install, enlarge, rebuild an organ in Trust property (where structural alterations are involved), shall be made with the consent of the Church Council and Circuit Executive. It shall be presented on the prescribed form, signed by the Superintendent and by the Circuit Steward or by one or more of the acting or proposed Trustees, through the District Superintendent to the Property Board.

(c) The sanction of the Property Board shall be obtained for:

- (i) all cases of erection, purchase or structural alteration of Trust premises.
- (ii) all minor cases of improvement of any sort where a debt is likely to occur, or a loan or grant be required.

(d) Before sanctioning any scheme the Property Board shall be satisfied either that the entire outlay will be met, or that at least two-thirds of the money has been promised or subscribed.

The sanction of the Property Board is required for any additional expenditure which may be ten per cent beyond the amount of the scheme originally sanctioned.

The Property Board shall also be satisfied that all land required for the purpose of the scheme has been or will be legally secured to the Connexion for the intended object, and duly vested in Trustees.

(e) In applications to build, alter, repair, enlarge Trust premises no stipulation for any particular amount of grant shall be entertained.

- (f) Where the Property Board has purchased a site the ground shall be vested in the Statutory Trustees.
- (g) The Property Board may acquire by mutual agreement with the Circuit concerned the site of any strategically placed property, the development of which would be of benefit to the Connexion. The property so acquired shall be vested in the Statutory Trustees.
- (h) The provisions of sections (a) to (h) above shall not apply to Wesley College, Dublin, Methodist College, Belfast, Edgehill College and Gurteen College.

Grants and Loans

- 29.07** (a) Applications for grants shall be made on the prescribed form when the work has been completed. Grants cannot be given where the rules have not been observed.
- (b) Where a grant is authorised, an audited statement of income and expenditure in connection with the scheme shall be presented before the grant is paid.
 - (c) A grant shall not be paid in respect of any building that is not adequately insured with the Methodist Insurance Company, or that is not secured to the Connexion.
- 29.08** (a) A Loan Fund being in existence within the Property Board for the relief of causes where large bank interest charges would have to be borne, the Property Board is empowered to make loans, as far as the Fund will permit, subject to the conditions specified.
- (b) Applications shall be made on the prescribed form and shall be approved by the District Superintendent before being presented to the Property Board.
 - (c) In each case a loan can only be granted where a satisfactory security for payment within the prescribed time has been given on the proper form.
 - (d) Loans shall be subject to an agreed rate of interest. The period of the repayment of such loans shall not exceed five years.

Sales or Lettings

- 29.09** (a) Trust property held upon the Statutory Trusts may in whole or in part be mortgaged, granted in Fee Farm, demised let or sold by the Trustees, or the majority of them, with the sanction of the Conference subject to the limitations, restrictions and provisions (if any) contained in the Lease, Deed or Grant, under which the Trust property is held.

- (b) Pursuant to the provisions of Section 6 of the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, the Conference delegated its powers affecting or relating to the sale or letting or other dealing with Trust property to the Standing Committee; and by resolution of Conference, 1971, further delegated those powers to the Property Board with full powers of the Conference between its sittings in all of the said matters which the Property Board shall deem to be matters of urgency.
- (c) Sales of Trust property involving questions of policy relating to the mission of the Church shall be initiated by the Conference or the General Committee.
- (d) Applications for permission to sell, let or mortgage churches, halls, schools, manses, houses, grounds or any other property held by the Connexion, shall be made through the District Superintendent, on the prescribed form, signed by the Circuit Superintendent and a Circuit Steward, having been approved by the Trustees concerned, the Church Council and Circuit Executive.
- (e) All sales of property shall be subject to:
 - (i) The approval by the Property Board of the terms of sale.
 - (ii) The prior agreement between the Circuit concerned and the Property Board as to the allocation of the proceeds of sale.
 - (iii) Certification of the sale by the President and Secretary of the Church. Certificates of Sanction are printed as in Appendix 6.
- (f) Sales of property shall be deemed to include compensation or insurance monies received for replacement of Church property.
- (g) All sales of Church property sanctioned by the Conference or Property Board shall be printed in the Report of the Property Board and in the *Minutes of Conference*, together with the directions of the Conference as to the allocation of the proceeds of sales.
- (h) Before sanction is given to the sale of any place of worship bearing an inscription such as "Methodist Church," a promise shall be given by the Trustees or vendors to have the inscription removed before parting with the property. Where sales have been effected and old inscriptions allowed to remain, friendly efforts shall be made to have these inscriptions removed or effaced.
- (i) In all sales of Trust property the Superintendent concerned shall at the time of such sale inform the Secretary of the Property Board regarding the custody of the records and vessels belonging to the property.

- (j) Final negotiations for sale or letting of any Trust property shall not be undertaken until the Property Board has given its approval.
- (k) It is a condition of all grants for the purchase, enlargement or structural alteration of property for Connexional purposes, that if and when it is sold or let or transferred to other use, the funds from which the grants were made shall be recouped for their expenditure.
- (l) In all lettings of Trust property there shall be an Agreement, properly executed, safeguarding the Trustees against any liability for rates and taxes incurred through such lettings, and against claims for accidents during the tenancy. Such Form of Agreement must be obtained from the Secretary of the Property Board (See Appendix 7).

Allocation of Proceeds of Sales

- 29.10** (a) Subject in certain cases to the approval of the Conference the purposes to which proceeds from Trust property are to be applied are laid down in the Statutory Trusts and must be strictly observed. Where the Statutory Trusts have not been adopted powers of sale or letting may vary considerably. Trustees contemplating sale or letting are advised to read the Deed carefully before taking any decision.
- (b) Circuits which have received permission to effect sales of property and which have completed such sales shall without delay send that part of the proceeds of these sales which is to be allocated by the General Committee, to the Treasurer of the Statutory Trustees who shall receive these monies in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1915 and 1928.

The Joseph Rank Trust

- 29.11** All applications for financial assistance from The Joseph Rank Trust must be made through the Property Board.

All schemes for which assistance will be sought shall seek the guidance of the Property Board before an application is submitted to the Trust.

Should the Property Board be unable to approve an application to the Trust, the Circuit concerned shall be advised accordingly and the decision of the Board with a full report shall be brought to the General Committee for review and final decision.

Trust Deeds

- 29.12** (a) As the legal security of Connexional property is of great importance the Conference has declared the Trusts on which it is desired all such property should be held. These Trusts are now embodied as a Schedule to the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, and they thus have statutory effect except where the Conference may direct otherwise.
- (b) Superintendents are directed to have the sites for new churches, halls, schools, manses, and other Connexional property settled on the Statutory Trusts. They are also directed to have all existing property transferred from their former Trusts to the Statutory Trusts on the appointment of new Trustees. Forms for use in the appointment of Trustees adopting the Statutory Trusts must be obtained from the Secretary of the Property Board. It is expected that solicitors will adhere to these forms and that where any substantial departure therefrom is found necessary in the drafting of a Deed such drafting shall not be completed without the approval of the Property Board. (See Appendix 7).
- (c) Difficulty and possible loss can arise from the neglect to have a Trust declared and the Deed executed before buildings have been placed on the grounds. It is earnestly urged upon all concerned to see that such neglect shall not arise. Buildings should never be occupied and used, whether for church, manse or school, until they have been legally settled.
- (d) Superintendents are directed to make careful inquiry in relation to the Trust Deeds of all property on their Circuits, to take all necessary steps for the legal security of the property and the safety of the Deeds.
- (e) Superintendents are directed to have entered in the Circuit Schedule Book the main items of information regarding each Trust and to have the Deeds and other legal documents of their Circuit duly lodged with the Connexional Registrar of Deeds and Documents.
- (f) Where no safe is provided in connection with a Circuit the Policies of Insurance shall be forwarded to the Representative in Ireland of the Methodist Insurance Company for safe custody.
- (g) General information regarding terms of Deeds, etc., shall be supplied by the Registrar to Superintendents on their application for such, but without issue of documents, except in cases of Deeds required for legal purposes which have been sanctioned by the Conference or the Property Board; in which case the Superintendent shall acknowledge, not only by personal receipt but also by duplicate receipt from the acting solicitor.

- (h) A Superintendent, who, when leaving a Circuit is still responsible for documents obtained from the Conference Safe relating to the Circuit, shall leave for his/her successor, in the Schedule Book, all particulars as to when and for what purpose they were obtained and their place of custody, in order that as soon as possible the object for which they were taken out may be accomplished, and the documents returned to the Safe. He/she shall also furnish similar particulars to the Registrar.
- (i) Persons sending or returning documents to the Registrar should forward them by registered post; if through neglect of this the documents are lost the sender shall be held responsible for the expense of replacing them.
- (j) When Trust property has been sold the Superintendent of the Circuit shall inform the Registrar of the date of the sale, the price obtained, and the manner in which the money has been or is to be applied, in order that a record of the transaction may be entered in the Register.
- (k) With regard to new Deeds and Leases, or the appointment of new Trustees, the following rules shall be observed:
 - (i) The consent of the Property Board shall be obtained before any action is taken.
 - (ii) The drafts of all new Deeds shall be sent for approval to the Property Board.

A grant towards the cost of such Deeds shall not in any case be given unless these rules are observed.
- (l) With the idea of economising, the Lease and Trust Deed may sometimes be embodied in one document. This is not always desirable and may, contrary to the intention of the Lease, bring the landlord into privity with the Trusts and involve the question of reversion in the event of the property ceasing to be used for Trust purposes.

Care of Property and Visitation Commissions

- 29.13** (a) All property belonging to the Methodist Church in Ireland shall have an annual visual inspection, carried out by locally appointed Church officials, paying attention to woodwork for signs of infestation, rot, dampness, severe mould on walls; and where there is any concern, should seek professional advice in relation to remedial works.
- (b) All Circuits shall be visited from time to time by a Connexional Visitation Commission which shall inquire into the work of the Circuit and the condition of all

trust property on the Circuit. This is in addition to the annual visual inspection referred to in 29.15(a). Manses and other property attached to Institutions and Departments of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall be subject to visitation as are manses on Circuits. Such visitations are to be arranged by the Secretary for Visitations and shall take place once in five years. Two members of the Commission will be appointed by the Board of Governors, or other Committee involved, and two by the Property Board. The report of such visitation shall be made to the Property Board. This is in addition to the annual inspection visual inspection referred to in paragraph 29.15 (a).

- (c) The Visitation Secretary shall inform District Superintendents of the circuits due for a Commission in the following year.
- (d) District Superintendents shall:
 - (i) appoint three persons, including a person properly qualified to give a professional opinion of the property.
 - (ii) receive a report from the Visitation Secretary on the Commissions completed during the year.
- (e) The Visitation Secretary shall receive the names of the District appointees and shall appoint two representatives as from the Property Board.
- (f) In the Autumn, the Visitation Secretary shall send out all the forms (including the Home Mission form on Life and Mission) to the Circuit Superintendents. Visitation Chairpersons shall be given the names of the Commission members. Superintendents and Chairpersons shall negotiate a suitable date for the Visitation as early in the Connexional year as possible.
- (g) As early as possible the report on Life and Mission shall be completed by the Superintendent, in consultation with other staff and stewards, and returned to the Chairperson for copying and distribution to the Commission members to give them time to familiarise themselves with the work of the circuit. The response on this form shall form the basis for the discussion of the life and mission of the circuit at the Circuit Executive Meeting convened for the purpose.
- (h) Inspections of the Electrical Installations by a Registered Contractor and the Fabric of the Building by a Qualified Building Surveyor or Timber Preservation Company shall be carried out at five and ten year intervals respectively and the reports forwarded to the Commission Chairperson two weeks before the visit. This will give the members of the Commission with expertise in these matters an indication of areas of concern. In cases where an installation is new or where alterations have been carried out then a test certificate should be

provided for the COMPLETE installation and this will be valid for a five-year period. These reports should be prepared by an approved NICEIC Contractor in Northern Ireland and a RECI approved Contractor or the ESB in the Republic of Ireland.

- (i) The Superintendent shall have all necessary receipts for deeds available for the report on the day of the Visitation Commission.
- (j) There shall be no Circuit Executive Meeting on the day of the Visitation but the Chairperson of the Commission shall complete the report and send it to the Secretary for Visitation Commissions for immediate duplication and distribution.
- (k) The Secretary for Visitation Commissions shall retain the original report but send a copy of the full report to the Circuit Superintendent, and the Chairperson. Copies of the summary will be sent to other ministers of the circuit and the stewards in each society, for consideration by the Circuit Executive Meeting [see 29.15(g)].
- (l) Within six weeks of the visit the Chairperson of the Commission, with any members of the Commission the Chairperson feels should attend, and any other members who wish to be present, shall meet with the Circuit in an Executive Meeting to discuss the reports. Significant time shall be allocated to the discussion of the Life and Mission of the Circuit prior to any discussion on property. All relevant points of the discussion shall be agreed, recorded and forwarded to the Visitation Commissions Secretary immediately following the meeting.
- (m) *Copies of the relevant points of the discussion shall be sent to the Secretary for Visitation Commissions who shall forward them with the Commission Report Summary, to the District Superintendent, the Secretary of the Property Board and the Secretary of the Home Mission Department.*
- (n) *The District Superintendent shall discuss all reports with the circuits regarding prioritising and funding the work to be done and planning a time scale. It is the responsibility of the District Superintendent to ensure that the recommendations of Visitation Commissions are implemented.*
- (o) *The District Superintendent shall submit this consultation report to the Property Board and the Home Mission Department.*
- (p) *Progress shall be monitored by the District Superintendent.*

Insurance of Trust Property

- 29.14** (a) Superintendents shall pay special attention to the insurance of churches, manses and other buildings against loss or damage by fire or any other cause. They shall enter particulars of such insurance, including amounts, in the Circuit Schedule Book and shall furnish these particulars annually on the prescribed form to the Secretary of the District. Attention is drawn to the importance of having the Circuit furniture in the ministers' residences, and the personal property of the ministers, insured against fire. It is recommended that the heating apparatus in churches and halls be insured against damage by frost or any other cause.
- (b) All ministers are advised to take out a comprehensive insurance in respect of their own property and liabilities.
- (c) District Secretaries shall enquire annually whether all Trust property within their Districts is adequately insured. The Secretary of the Property Board shall furnish annually to the Superintendent of each District a list of such properties in his/her District as are considered to be inadequately insured, in order that an enquiry may be made at the Synod.
- (d) Superintendent Ministers, Trustees and Circuit Executive meetings shall take adequate action to obtain compensation or insurance payments in respect of damage to property.

Insurance of Church Officers

- 29.15** (a) The attention of Superintendent ministers is called to the necessity of making provision by insurance to meet the serious liabilities imposed by third party and common law liability on Trustees and Circuit Executives to pay compensation in their capacity as employers for accidents happening to organists, care-takers, and others employed on or about Trust premises which may arise out of, or in the course of their employment, causing death or disablement.
- (b) School teachers, lay evangelists and other workers shall be insured by the Circuits or Committees employing them.
- (c) Trustees and members of Circuit Executive meetings should note that in the event of non-insurance they may be held personally liable for compensation for persons injured while in their employment.

Day and Sunday School Insurance

- 29.16** (a) Certain legal liabilities are imposed on any person or persons in charge of or in control of a child or children in connection with accidents that may occur

while the child or children are on their premises or under their supervision. If through any defect in the premises or negligence in arrangement, a child meets with an accident while on school premises, or while under the care of a school authority, that authority will be held to be liable. It is therefore directed that Circuit Executive meetings shall effect adequate insurance to cover all such risks and that the policies shall extend to all meetings, organisations and all other functions connected with week-day and Sunday School work, wherever and whenever held.

- (b) All teachers and pupils of schools under Methodist management shall be insured by the officers of the Institution concerned against liabilities imposed by the relevant Acts of Parliament. With regard to other schools on Methodist property, Superintendents are directed to ensure that adequate insurances have been effected at the charge of the lessees.

Property Owners' Liability

29.17 Property Owners' Liability Policy (Third Party Risks) shall be taken out to cover all Trusts on each Circuit. Circuits shall make provision to insure all voluntary workers of whom they make use.

Legal Proceedings

29.18 No lawsuit relating to churches, schools or other Trust property shall be commenced without the consent of the General Committee through the Property Board, except by direction of the Conference. Unless such consent or direction has first been obtained, the parties proceeding shall be held responsible for all expenses incurred by such lawsuit.

CHAPTER 30

STIPENDS AND ALLOWANCES

30.01 The Board shall be appointed annually by the Representative Session of the Conference.

The constitution of the Board shall be:

The President of the Conference

The Lay Leader of the Conference

The Secretary of the Conference

One minister and one lay member nominated annually by each District Superintendent, after consulting with the District Advisory Committee

Six persons to be elected annually by the Conference

A maximum of four persons co-opted by the Board.

30.02 The following are the terms of reference of the Stipends and Allowances Board:

- (a) To be responsible for all matters relating to ministerial stipends and allowances, retirement allowances, children's allowances, Ministers' Medical Fund, National Health Insurance, and other similar matters determined by the Conference.
- (b) To prepare a comprehensive statement of any proposed scales of stipends and/or allowances payable from all sources to ministers, probationers and ministers' widows/widowers.
- (c) To recommend to the Conference how, to what extent and in what proportion such scales should be amended annually or otherwise according to fluctuations in the cost of living index and any other relevant factors.
- (d) To indicate:
 - (i) which items in such scales, or what proportion of the stipends and/or allowances, should be fixed by the Conference annually or otherwise and which, or what proportion, should be discretionary;
 - (ii) the factors and conditions which should govern the exercise of such discretion;
 - (iii) who should be authorised to exercise the discretion;
 - (iv) the manner in which the Board should assume responsibility for the discharge in a comprehensive and unified manner of the functions of its several constituent interests and/or groups.

- (e) To make recommendations from time to time for promoting knowledge and understanding throughout the Connexion of all matters pertaining to stipends and allowances.
- (f) To carry out such additional or other duties, powers or discretions as may be delegated to it from time to time by the Conference or by the General Committee.
- (g) To appoint sub-committees for particular assignments within its terms of reference.

CHAPTER 31

MINISTERS' RETIREMENT SCHEMES

Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund

31.01 The object of the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund is to secure provision for ministers connected with the Methodist Conference in Ireland who have retired, and for the widows of ministers who were in connection with the Conference at the time of their death.

31.02 A Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary and a Lay Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Conference. The Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary shall keep a register of all claimants on the Fund, and shall perform such other duties as are required of him/her. The Treasurers shall keep an account in a Bank in the name of the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund. The Fund shall be administered by the Stipends and Allowances Board.

31.03 The income of the Fund is derived from the following sources:

- (a) a share of the Comprehensive Assessment
- (b) subscriptions, donations and legacies
- (c) the interest and dividends arising from the invested capital

The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland are authorised by Statute (Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915), to hold real, leasehold, or personal estate, devised or bequeathed, or legally assured to them upon or for any trusts connected with the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund, and by direction of the Conference all such moneys or estates are held by the Statutory Trustees.

31.04 The scale of allowances shall be determined annually by the Conference and shall be printed in the *Minutes of Conference* each year. Allowances shall be paid monthly in arrears.

31.05 The minimum age of retirement is sixty-five years. The Conference may permit a minister to retire for exceptional reasons. Ministers wishing to apply for permission to retire at the ensuing Conference shall submit their application in writing to the District Superintendent before 30th September.

31.06 A minister who is required by the Conference to retire for some specific reason other than age or ill health shall receive such allowance as the Conference may determine.

- 31.07** When a retired minister, or minister's widow, by reason of extreme infirmity or any other cause, is deemed to be unfitted to receive the allowance personally, the Treasurers may appoint some competent person to receive the allowance on his/her behalf.
- 31.08** If a minister who retired at or after the Conference of 1948 subsequently marries, his widow becomes eligible for a widow's pension under the National Insurance Act, or a corresponding allowance from the Fund, provided she was over fifty years of age when her husband died, and had been married for three years or more. If previous to such marriage she had been a beneficiary of the Fund her original allowance shall be revived.
- 31.09** A minister's widow who re-marries shall cease to be eligible for allowances from the Fund.
- 31.10** A retired minister or minister's widow ceasing to be a member of the Methodist Church shall cease to be eligible for any allowances from the Fund.
- 31.11** When, through death or otherwise, a retired minister or minister's widow shall cease to be a beneficiary of the Fund, the Superintendent of the Circuit in which he or she resided shall forthwith inform the Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary of the Fund. He/she shall also report any change of residence which may take place in the case of retired ministers or ministers' widows residing on his/her Circuit.
- 31.12** When a minister dies before reaching retirement his widow shall receive from the Circuit in which he had been stationed his stipend for the remainder of the connexional year
- 31.13** A minister who served the Church and had resigned prior to 1 July 1984 is eligible for a proportion of an allowance from the Fund in accordance with our Rules and Regulations.
- 31.14** By Deed of Settlement the late Mr. Charles Cookman McMillan, of New Zealand, donated a sum of money to found the "Rev. Gibson McMillan Supernumerary Fund" in memory of his father. The endowments of the Fund are vested in the Trustees of Charitable Funds under a Scheme of Management, dated 9th May, 1930, established by an order of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, the income thereof being paid to the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland by whom the Fund is administered.

The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland acting under the provisions of the aforesaid Scheme of Management, have made Rules and Regulations for the Administration of the Fund.

Ministers Serving Overseas: Retirement Allowances

31.15 Retired ministers of the Irish Conference who have served overseas, and widows/widowers of same, shall be entitled to the allowance from the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund based on the full period of service at home and overseas.

Retirement Benefits Scheme

31.16 The Retirement Benefits Scheme is administered in accordance with the provisions of a Trust Deed dated 1 July 1984, amended by a Supplementary Deed dated 22 December 1992 and the definitive Trust Deed and Rules dated 23 September 1996. The Scheme is approved by the Pensions Scheme Officer of the Inland Revenue.

31.17 The Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland has the power to appoint and remove the Trustees, who have been appointed in accordance with the Trust Deed and Rules. Decisions of the Trustees are taken in accordance with the Scheme Rules by a majority of Trustees present at any meeting.

31.18 All persons in receipt of a Stipend, including missionaries, who are aged not less than eighteen years and not more than sixty-five years, who do not have permission to be without pastoral charge and are either Ministers or Probationers are eligible to join the scheme.

A person who has not otherwise become eligible to join the Scheme may, with the permission of the Church and the Trustees, be admitted to membership of the Scheme on such terms and conditions as to benefits and otherwise, and with effect from such date as may be agreed with the Church and the Trustees.

31.19 The Trustees are required to produce a Statement of Investment Principles in accordance with Section 35 of the Pensions Acts 1995. In the preparation of the Statement the Trustees obtain appropriate professional advice and consult the principal employer. The Trustees review the Statement annually in conjunction with the Scheme advisers and the Scheme Actuary, taking particular note of any changes in the Scheme liabilities and of the position regarding the Minimum Funding Requirements.

31.20 The day to day management of the Scheme investments has been delegated by the Trustees to investment managers. The custody and safekeeping of the Scheme is provided by the custodians appointed by each of the investment managers. As part of the statement of investment principles the Trustees

have determined that the Custodian will supply, where appropriate, a statement to the effect that all dividends, interest payments and tax repayments due to the Scheme have been allocated and all transactions settled in timely manner. The Trustees review from time to time the suitability of the Custodians and arrange for any necessary replacement.

- 31.21** The audited accounts, made up to the anniversary date of the Scheme as required by the Pensions Act 1995, are presented to the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 31.22** A minister or probationer about to be married shall inform the Treasurer of the Ministers' Retirement Fund, in writing, of her/his intention, and of the respective ages of herself/himself and the intended spouse.
- 31.23** The provisions and regulations in respect of the Scheme are printed annually in the *Minutes of Conference*.

Ministers' Disability Fund

- 31.24** The Fund was established by the Conference in 1995. The purpose of the Fund is to provide defined financial benefits when a minister is unable, through sickness or disablement, to perform the duties of the Ministry.
- 31.25** For the purpose of the Fund "sickness" or "disablement" means a continuous period of illness or disablement in respect of which evidence satisfactory to the Church has been produced showing that the minister because of her/his illness or disablement has not been able to perform the duties of the Ministry and as a result is no longer stationed.
- 31.26** (a) All ministers in Full Connexion who were receiving a stipend and were in full time service prior to their disability, who have not yet reached their normal retirement date or taken early retirement under The Methodist Church in Ireland Retirement Benefits Scheme are eligible to benefit.
- (b) At the discretion of the Fund Administrators, ministers in the service of the Connexion who do not satisfy the above conditions may be granted eligibility.
- (c) At the discretion of the Fund Administrators, eligibility may be subject to satisfactory medical evidence being obtained.
- (d) At the discretion of the Fund Administrators, special terms, exclusions, waiting periods and premiums may be applied to the minister and/or the Church.
- (e) A minister who leaves service or who reaches her/his normal retirement date will no longer be eligible to benefit.

- 31.27** Those eligible shall make application on the appropriate form to the Special Committee which shall make a recommendation to the Conference after consultation with the Fund Administrators. Application Forms may be obtained from the Secretary of Conference. It is assumed that the applicant is in receipt of all State Benefits to which he/she is entitled before applying to the Fund for financial assistance.
- 31.28** The benefits are:
- (a) Fifty per cent of stipend escalating at the Retails Prices Index, per annum compound, subject to a maximum of five per cent.
 - (b) The payment of the Church's and the member's pension scheme contributions.
 - (c) The payment of the Employer's National Insurance Contribution.
- Payment will be deferred until such time as the stipend ceases to be paid. Where a minister is not eligible for State Benefits, consideration will be given to making a payment in lieu of them. The Fund Administrators shall have discretion to pay an additional benefit (reviewable annually) on a means tested basis.
- 31.29** Benefit shall cease when the minister is certified as medically fit to resume her/his full ministerial duties, or if earlier, at the date the minister leaves service, takes early retirement or, reaches her/his normal retirement date.
- 31.30** (a) Where a minister undertakes part-time remunerative work whilst still receiving benefit from the Fund he/she must notify the Fund Administrators of this fact and declare the amount of the remuneration.
- (b) Where a minister resumes her/his employment after having received benefit but later has to cease work, a new application shall be required.
 - (c) Any person receiving benefit from the Fund may be requested periodically to submit further medical evidence.
- 31.31** (a) Members of the Ministers' Disability Fund shall contribute a set percentage of annual stipend, deducted at source, as determined by the Conference from time to time.
- (b) The Church shall contribute an amount through the Connexional Assessment, as determined by the Conference each year through the Connexional Finance Committee.

31.32 The Fund Administrators consist of the following:

- The Secretary of the Conference
- A Treasurer of the Ministers' Benevolent Fund
- The Chairman of the Stipends and Allowances Board
- One elected member of the Stipends and Allowances Board
- Two trustees of the Retirement Benefits Scheme
- The Secretary of the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund.

31.33 Where a minister qualifies for benefits from the Disability Fund but instead elects to take ill-health early retirement from the Retirement Benefits Scheme, the Fund will contribute an amount to the Retirement Benefits Scheme, as determined by the Scheme Actuary. This amount will reflect the cost to the Scheme of not applying an early retirement reduction factor to the minister's Scheme benefits.

Methodist Ministers' Retirement Income Augmentation Fund

31.34 The Fund was established by the Conference in 2003 to ensure that ministers who were received into Full Connexion at or before the Conference of 1984 and their widows/widowers should have a minimum income from all sources as approved by the Conference. The approved minimum income levels are printed annually in the *Minutes of Conference*.

31.35 The Conference of 2010 extended eligibility to ministers and widows/widowers received into Full Connexion after the 1984 Conference.

31.36 The Conference of 2011 introduced a range of new conditions:

- (a) Ministers who served in the Stipendiary ministry of the Methodist Church in Ireland and belonged to the IMMRF or RBS, and served the required minimum period of service in this capacity, and spouses of same, are eligible to apply to the Fund.
- (b) For those who retired at Normal Retirement Date (or earlier due to ill health, but remained a member of the IMMRF or RBS to Normal Retirement Date), the minimum period of service is 10 years.
- (c) For those who left the Stipendiary ministry of the Methodist Church in Ireland before Normal Retirement Date, the minimum period of service is 20 years.
- (d) Eligible Ministers must have 20 years' service in order to qualify for the normal level of benefits under the Fund. For eligible Ministers with less than 20 years' service, the Minimum Income Levels (as published in the Minutes of Conference) will be reduced on a pro-rata basis, e.g. 50% for 10 years' service.

- (e) In cases of need, the independent Administrators can use their discretion to allow eligibility or increase the standard benefits, in consultation with the Stipends & Allowances Board if necessary.
- (f) Payments will normally be made monthly in arrears, once eligibility has been established and the appropriate amount calculated.
- (g) Potential applicants should make contact with either of the two independent Administrators listed in the Minutes of Conference.

CHAPTER 32

METHODIST MINISTERS' MEDICAL FUND

The Name and Objects of the Fund

32.01 The name of the Fund shall be the "Methodist Ministers' Medical Fund."

32.02 The objects of the Fund shall be to provide:

- (a) Grants in respect of medical, dental, and optical expenses of a minister, a dependent member of a minister's family, or a minister's widow.
- (b) Maternity grants in respect of the confinement of a minister or a minister's wife while stationed in the Republic of Ireland.
- (c) Funeral grants in respect of the death of a minister, a dependent member of a minister's family, or a minister's spouse.

In determining the amount of any grant, account shall be taken of the provisions of the National Insurance Acts (Northern Ireland), or of any similar Acts in the Republic of Ireland, in order that parity of benefits may be maintained, so far as possible, between beneficiaries residing in Northern Ireland and those residing in the Republic of Ireland.

Administration

32.03 (a) The Fund shall be administered under the direction of the Stipends and Allowances Board which shall appoint a sub-committee to deal with all applications.

- (b) The sub-committee shall meet at least twice yearly and shall submit its business to the Board.
- (c) The officers of the Fund, who shall be appointed annually by the Conference, shall be a Ministerial Secretary/Treasurer, and a Lay Treasurer.
- (d) The officers of the Fund shall report annually to the Conference through the Stipends and Allowances Board. A financial statement, certified by Conference appointed auditors, shall be presented to the Conference.
- (e) The financial year of the Fund shall terminate on the 31st December.

32.04 (a) The term 'Minister' shall mean a preacher in full connexion with the Conference, or a probationer appointed by the Conference to a Station.

- (b) The term 'dependent' shall mean the father, mother, children, or other relative who at the time of the minister's death are wholly or partially supported.

- (c) The term 'representative' shall mean the widow, widower or other dependent of a minister, but failing such, may be a person approved by the Board.

Income

32.05 The income of the Fund shall be derived from:

- (a) Subscriptions from stipendiary ministers. These shall be based upon such scale as the Conference may from time to time determine.
- (b) Assessments on Circuits, Departments and Institutions as determined by the Conference.
- (c) Donations, legacies, and dividends on invested funds.

Payment of Contributions

32.06 Contributions from ministers, Circuits, Departments and Institutions shall be paid quarterly to the Treasurer of the Trustees who shall remit them to the Ministerial Treasurer of the Fund.

Assets of the Fund

32.07 The capital and income of the Fund, except where such are impressed for a specific purpose, shall be available for payment of grants as the Board may determine.

Benefits of the Fund

32.08 The benefits of the Fund shall be available to stipendiary ministers, and those related to them, to retired ministers (and those related to them) who at the time of their retirement, were contributors to the Fund and to widows of ministers.

Ministers 'without pastoral charge' in Ireland, and those 'permitted to serve' elsewhere, shall be considered to be outside the scope of the Fund both in regard to contributions and benefits. A minister who has been given leave of absence for not more than four years may apply to have his/her case considered.

A minister who resigns or ceases to be recognised as such with the Methodist Church in Ireland shall have no claim on the Fund.

1. SICKNESS GRANTS

In determining the amount of grants in respect of the illness of a minister, a dependent member of a minister's family, or a minister's widow or widower, account shall be taken of the provisions made by the National Insurance Acts (Northern Ireland), or any similar Acts in the Republic of Ireland, to meet such

cases. Only in circumstances for which State provisions are deemed to be inadequate will grants be made from the Fund. Those who enter hospital, either in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, shall avail themselves of all the benefits provided by the appropriate Health Authority. Any grants which may be made from the Fund shall be calculated on this basis, except in cases of extreme urgency, or of exceptional circumstances approved by the Board. Any grant given shall be on the basis of Hospital General Ward charges.

Ministers stationed in the Republic of Ireland who are insured under the National Insurance Acts (Northern Ireland) shall acquaint themselves of the benefits available under the Health Services - these include medical, dental and optical treatment.

Ministers residing in Northern Ireland and those related to ministers whose expenses by reason of illness exceed the amount provided by State aid, may apply to the Fund for a grant in respect of the deficit.

Where extra expenses for which the State makes no provision are incurred by a minister, a dependent member of his/her family, or by a minister's widow or widower, the applicant shall submit full details of such expenses for consideration by the Board. Grants in such cases shall be confined to payments in respect of the cost of medicines and treatment not covered by the Health Services, additional expenses incurred in the home by reason of the illness, and such travelling expenses as the Board may approve.

2. FUNERAL GRANT

On the death of a minister, the officers of the Fund are empowered to make a grant immediately to the surviving spouse or representative of the deceased. The amount of such grant shall be determined by the Conference. In exceptional circumstances the officers may supplement the amount of the grant approved by Conference. Should the minister be unmarried, a widow or widower, the amount payable to the representative shall be decided by the officers of the Fund. At their discretion the officers of the Fund may make such a grant as they consider appropriate towards the funeral expenses of a minister's widow or widower, or a dependent member of her/his family.

Regulations Sanctioned by Conference

32.09 (a) All applications for grants shall be submitted on the prescribed form obtainable from the Secretary of the Fund. Receipts must be sent with each application.

- (b) No grant shall be given where the total expense has been less than a sum to be determined by the Conference.
- (c) In calculating expenses in respect of medical, dental, or optical treatment it shall not be permissible to bring forward expenses from a previous year.
- (d) The Treasurers are authorised to make payments where the application is straightforward and in order. All other applications shall be dealt with by the sub-committee. Where a large amount is under consideration, the Treasurers may make an interim payment in consultation with the Chairman and Secretary of the Board, the balance to be dealt with at the next meeting of the sub-committee.

CHAPTER 33

FUNDS FOR MINISTERS' CHILDREN

The Children's Fund

- 33.01** The Children's Fund provides allowances for the maintenance and education of the children of ministers, probationers and theological students in connection with the Irish Conference.
- 33.02** The income of the Fund is provided from the Comprehensive Assessment Fund, as the Conference may from year to year determine.
- 33.03** The Conference shall annually appoint as Treasurers of the Fund a minister and a lay person, and a Secretary who shall be a minister. The Treasurers shall keep an account in a bank in the name of "The Methodist Ministers' Children's Fund." The Secretary shall keep an up-to-date register of children who are claimants on the Fund.

Administration

- 33.04** The Children's Fund shall be administered under the direction of the Stipends and Allowances Board.
- 33.05** Payments of allowances to children shall be made to their parents or guardians; but the officers of the Fund, with the approval of the President of the Conference, shall have power under exceptional circumstances to determine otherwise with regard to the payment of the allowances.
- 33.06** Those entitled to the benefits of the Fund shall be children, step-children or legally adopted children of ministers and probationers, and of retired and deceased ministers, within such limits of age as may from time to time be determined by the Conference. The period of probation includes time spent in the Theological College. If a minister has been given permission to be without pastoral charge, his/her children shall cease to receive allowances from the Fund. An exception may be made where the minister is unwaged, subject to the discretion of the officers of the Fund.
- 33.07** Where an application for an exceptional payment is made for educational purposes, and does not fall within the existing rules of the fund, the officers of the fund, with the consent of the Stipends and Allowances Board, may make a payment for the benefit of the child. Such application shall be made no later than the 30th September in the year in which it applies.
- 33.08** Maintenance allowances shall commence in the quarter following a child's birth. In the event of a child beginning to earn his or her own living or in the

event of a child's death the maintenance allowance shall cease with the payment made in the following quarter.

- 33.09** If a minister shall marry after having permanently retired, the children of such marriage shall have no claim upon the Fund.
- 33.10** Children of ministers who from any cause cease to be recognised as being in full connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland, have no claim upon the Fund.
- 33.11** The allowances from the Fund for maintenance and education shall be as the Conference may from time to time determine.
- 33.12** The birth, legal adoption, death, employment of a child or the continuance of secondary education beyond the age of eighteen must be reported immediately to the Secretary of the Children's Fund.
- 33.13** Allowances from the Fund become due at the end of September, December, March, and June, and shall be paid not later than the fifteenth of the following month.

The Ministers' Sons' Fund and The Ministers' Daughters' Fund

- 33.14** In addition to the allowances for education provided by the Children's Fund, special provision is made for the education of the sons of Irish Methodist ministers at the Colleges in Ireland by means of the "Ministers' Sons' Fund." The income of this Fund consists of the interest on certain sums of money which, from time to time, have been allocated for this purpose.
- 33.15** By means of allocation from the "Thanksgiving Fund" and the "Jubilee Fund," and through the benefactions of the late Sir William McArthur, K.C.M.G., special provision is made for the board and education of the daughters of Irish Methodist ministers at the Methodist College and the McArthur Hall, Belfast, in addition to the allowances for that purpose from the Children's Fund. The sums constituting the endowment for ministers' daughters are held in trust by the Governors of the Methodist College, Belfast.
- 33.16** The annual proceeds of the Funds shall not be distributed in grants to the parents, but shall be applied in part payment of the charges for board and education of the children of our ministers in Wesley College, Dublin, and the Methodist College, Belfast, and be paid to the Treasurers of these Colleges.
- 33.17** Admission to the benefits of the Funds shall be granted, if the income will allow, to all sons and daughters of ministers between such ages as the Confer-

ence may determine. If the number of applications exceeds the number of vacancies, these shall normally be filled in the following order of priority, subject to due regard being had to the circumstances of each applicant and to the benefits already received from the Fund by the family concerned:

- (a) Children of ministers stationed in the Republic of Ireland, outside Dublin.
- (b) Children of ministers stationed in Northern Ireland where there is no suitable school within reasonable distance.
- (c) Children of other ministers.

Within these priorities those not previously benefited by the Funds shall have preference. If there is still an excess of applications, precedence shall be decided by the seniority in the ministry of the father/mother; in a case in which this is equal the child of a deceased father/mother shall have preference over the child of a living one. If both fathers/mothers are living, or both deceased, precedence shall be given to the senior child, or as the Conference may decide.

33.18 Elections to the benefits of the Ministers' Sons' Fund, Ministers' Daughters' Fund, and Miss Houston's Bequest Fund (see paragraph 33.25) shall be for one year. An applicant shall be eleven years of age at least on 30th June in the connexional year in which application for admission to the benefit of the Funds is made. Applications for election or re-election to the benefit of the Funds must be sent to the Secretary of the Children's Fund not later than 25th April in any year.

No pupil shall be given the benefit of the Ministers' Sons' Fund, or the Ministers' Daughters' Fund, for more than six years, unless there is a vacancy in the Foundation concerned, in which case the Conference may re-elect for a seventh or subsequent year.

33.19 The amount to be paid by the Funds, and the total number of boys and girls admitted to their benefits, shall be determined by the Conference from time to time.

33.20 The officers of the Children's Fund are authorised to make any necessary adjustments occasioned by stationing, in accordance with the rules.

33.21 The sons and daughters of ministers of the Methodist Church in Ireland serving overseas who are being educated in Ireland shall be eligible for the benefits of the Ministers' Sons' and Daughters' Funds on the same conditions as children of ministers in the home work, provided that no payment from the

Funds shall be made during the period when such children are in receipt of the education grant from the World Church Office.

- 33.22** The number of boys and girls to be admitted to the benefits of the Funds shall be communicated to the Headmaster of Wesley College and the Headmaster of the Methodist College by the Secretary of the Children's Fund immediately after Conference.
- 33.23** The Secretary of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall report annually to the Conference the number of boys and girls who may be admitted to the benefits of the Funds.
- 33.24** The Accounts of the Funds shall be presented annually to the Conference.

Miss Houston's Bequest

- 33.25** Under the will of Miss Mary Houston, in the year 1818, the sum of £1,400 was bequeathed for the benefit of daughters of Irish Methodist ministers. The following are the regulations of the Conference with reference to this Fund:
- (a) The capital of the Fund is vested in the Statutory Trustees.
 - (b) The income of the Fund shall be applied for the benefit of the daughters of ministers of the Irish Conference, subject to the following regulations:
 - (i) The terms of Miss Houston's Will regulate the distribution of the Fund, provided applicants answering the conditions therein prescribed shall present their claims.
 - (ii) If no such applicants present themselves, from year to year, or if any surplus remains undisposed of after their claims have been considered and dealt with, it shall be lawful to allocate the annual proceeds, or the surplus as the case may be, to assist ministers' daughters who are boarders at Wesley College, Dublin, with their education after the age of eleven. Should any surplus remain after such claims have been dealt with, it shall be lawful to allocate such surplus to assist ministers' daughters to continue their education at a University or similar institution until the age of twenty-one on 30th June in the year in which the grant is made.
 - (c) The Stipends and Allowances Board shall be the committee for selecting girls to be admitted to the benefits of Miss Houston's bequest.
 - (d) The Accounts of the Fund shall be presented annually to the Conference.

CHAPTER 34

COUNCIL ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

34.01 The Council on Social Responsibility is charged with undertaking on behalf of the Connexion, informed study and analysis of social, economic, political and international issues. It shall consider such issues with theological insight, and shall seek to do so in a manner which effectively both represents and re-sources the Church. The Council shall report annually to Conference.

In connection with any of the issues being addressed, the Council or its Executive Committees are authorised to take action in harmony with existing declarations or resolutions of the Conference, and to communicate regarding these matters with the Governments of each jurisdiction in Ireland.

34.02 The Council, in undertaking its work, shall have regard to the following principles:

It shall seek to maximise the examination of issues on an all-Ireland basis, with joint activities between the two Executive Committees, and ongoing sharing of information between the Executive Committees.

It shall seek to ensure good communication and flow of information between the Council and other relevant Connexional bodies.

It shall seek to effectively communicate its work to local churches and individuals within the Connexion and shall seek to promote discussion and consideration of relevant issues being considered by the Council throughout all levels of the Church. This may be done through, for example, the use of workshops and seminars, publications, maintaining web pages, regular email communication with interested members of the church and other means as considered appropriate.

It shall ensure that the areas outlined below are treated as matters of particular interest, and shall ensure that members of each Executive are designated to be particularly concerned with keeping such matters under review. These areas of special interest which are not exclusive or prevent other areas being addressed are:

Environmental Issues

Health and Well-being

Medical Ethics and Bio-Ethics

EU and International Affairs

Political Developments and Parliamentary Business

34.03 (a) The membership of the Council shall be as follows:

The President of the Conference

The Lay Leader of the Conference

The Secretary of the Conference

The President Designate of the Conference

The Chairpersons of the Northern and Southern Executives

The Secretaries of the Northern and Southern Executives

The Treasurer

Twenty-two other members to be appointed by the Conference, twelve of whom shall be resident in Northern Ireland and ten in the Republic of Ireland.

Up to six additional persons with relevant expertise, three of whom may be co-opted annually by each Executive, subject to the approval of Conference.

Officers of the Council appointed by Conference in the year prior to taking up office.

(b) The positions of Chairperson and Secretary of each Executive shall be held by a Minister and a Layperson, who will also serve as co-chairpersons and co-secretaries respectively of the Council.

(c) These officers of the Council (Chairpersons, Secretaries and Treasurer) shall hold office for a term of five years and shall serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. They shall be ex-officio members of the Conference. Nominations for these positions shall normally be made to the Conference the year before the planned commencement of their term.

(d) Members shall be appointed for terms of three years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. One third of the members shall be appointed each year. Nominations and appointments accompanied by reasoned statements, shall be brought to Conference that ensure that the Council remains effective and relevant to its current activities, maintains a balance between ministerial and lay members and maintains an equitable representation with respect to age, sex and ethnicity. At least one member in each jurisdiction shall be less than 26 years of age at the time of appointment or be a person currently working with people of that age group.

34.04 The Council may meet in plenary session at least once in each year, normally in the first quarter of each calendar year, and shall be chaired by the President or another member designated by the President. These meetings shall take place in alternate years in each jurisdiction, and shall be hosted by the relevant Executive Committee. A quorum for these meetings shall be one third of the total membership plus one.

At other times, the work of the Council shall be undertaken through two Executive Committees (for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, respectively), which shall be composed of those members and officers of the Council resident in the relevant jurisdiction. The terms of reference of the Executive Committees shall be as determined by the Council.

The Executive committees shall meet as required to undertake their work and generally at least four times in each year. Particular issues may be delegated to working groups for initial consideration, drawn from members of either Executive Committee or from both. The Council, its Executive Committees and duly appointed working groups shall have the power to consult with external persons with relevant expertise. The Council, or its Executive Committees shall also have the power to approve the co-option of such persons on to working groups where deemed appropriate.

The Officers of the Council shall also meet together in the fourth quarter of the calendar year and at other times as deemed necessary in order to facilitate the business of the Council.

34.05 A grant shall be made annually from the Comprehensive Assessment towards the expenses of the Council.

34.06 The President of the Conference may direct the summoning of the Council, whenever he/she deems it necessary, or shall, on receiving a requisition signed by ten members of the Council, direct that the Council be summoned for the consideration of particular business specified in such a requisition, and for no other business.

CHAPTER 35

THE METHODIST CHILD CARE SOCIETY

(Founded in 1870 as the Methodist Orphan Society)

Name and Objects

- 35.01** The name of the Society shall be “The Methodist Child Care Society”.
- 35.02** The objects of the Society shall be to provide financial assistance in the maintenance, welfare and safety of children in need who are connected with the Methodist Church.

Management of the Society

- 35.03** The management of the Society shall be under the Methodist Youth and Children’s Department Executive with the Officers of the Child Care Society being members of the Executive.
- 35.04** A Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary and Lay Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Conference. The Treasurers shall keep the account of the Society in a bank in the name of The Methodist Child Care Society.

The Property of the Society

- 35.05** The property and funds of the Society, and all devises, bequests and donations made and given thereto at any time, shall vest in the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland, who shall be deemed Trustees of the Society's property and funds, and shall hold and dispose of the same as the Officers of the Society and the Executive of I.M.Y.C. may from time to time determine. The receipt of the Treasurers for the time being shall be a good discharge for money or property given or bequeathed to the Society. The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland are empowered by the Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915, to accept such devises, bequests and donations, and to deal with them in accordance with the terms of their Statute.

Legacies and Donations

- 35.06** Legacies or donations left to Methodist child care interests in Ireland shall be applicable, in such manner as the Conference may determine, to the Institutions responsible for Methodist child care concerns in Ireland, recognising that legacies or donations specifically made to any one of the Institutions by name must be so applied.

The Officers of the Society shall have power to suggest from time to time the allocation of any legacies or donations for Methodist child care purposes not definitively bequeathed or donated to a particular Institution.

Admission to the Benefit of the Society and Payments of Grants

35.07 Applications shall be:

- (a) made on the prescribed form, which can be obtained from the Secretary or Lay Treasurer of the Society
- (b) signed by the Superintendent of the Circuit, or a Circuit Minister in Full Connexion.
- (c) forwarded to the Secretary or Lay Treasurer of the Society.

35.08 The officers of the Society shall have authority to place on the Society's roll such applicants as have been recommended by a Minister in Full Connexion provided that they meet the criteria for financial assistance.

35.09 Families who are beneficiaries of the Society are expected to maintain a close connection with the congregation through which the grant is paid and the children should be encouraged to be involved in the life of the Methodist Church by attending Sunday School, Youth Organisations and Church services.

35.10 Grants shall be paid quarterly (March, June, September, December) to the Superintendent of the Circuit or the Minister of the Church to which the beneficiaries belong for distribution to the families concerned as detailed on the payments schedule.

35.11 In March of each year, a review form shall be completed by the Superintendent or Minister for each family which is receiving benefit from the Society. If the report of the review is not satisfactory the officers of the Society shall have authority to discontinue payment of the grant.

35.12 A list of the beneficiaries in each Church, with full particulars shall be left by each Superintendent/Minister for her/his successor. If the Superintendent/Minister becomes aware that a family no longer qualifies for financial support from the Society he/she shall inform the Secretary or Lay Treasurer immediately.

35.13 The amount of the annual grant shall be determined by the Conference on the recommendation of the Officers. The Society may award special payments for school clothing and sports outfits as funds permit, to children on the roll.

35.14 The continuance of grants from the Society shall be dependent upon the rules of the Society being observed; and guardians of children receiving grants shall comply with such rules and directions as shall from time to time be prescribed by the Officers, and sanctioned by the Conference.

35.15 Claims upon the funds of the Society shall cease:

(a) when the child

(i) becomes a wage-earner.

(ii) attains 18 years of age unless he/she is going into third-level education.

(b) when the parent/s or guardian/s, in the opinion of the Officers, fails to meet the criteria, as laid out in the rules for the payment of grants.

The Superintendent/Minister shall notify the Secretary or Lay Treasurer of any such changes.

35.16 Ministers having beneficiaries under their care shall withhold and return to the Treasurers the quarterly grant in any case in which the rules of the Society have not been observed.

35.17 A public collection or allocation for the funds of the Society shall be made annually in every Church.

Twentieth Century Fund Foundationers

35.18 The sum of £925 was allocated from the Twentieth Century Fund for the benefit of "Twentieth Century Fund Foundationers" in the Methodist Female Orphan School. This sum has been placed in the custody of the Statutory Trustees, and Conference directs that the income derived from it shall be paid annually to the Governing Body of the Methodist Orphan Education Fund (formerly the Methodist Female Orphan School).

CHAPTER 36

THE CHILDHAVEN AND CRAIGMORE HOMES

36.01 The Craigmores Children's Home, opened in 1903, was the direct outcome of the Twentieth Century Fund. In connection with that movement the late Mr. T. Foulkes Shillington, J.P., presented to our Church, for the purpose of founding the Home, a large residence, farm buildings, church, and a valuable farm of about 145 acres, situated at Aghalee, on the Moira Circuit. A grant of £2,000 was given from the Twentieth Century Fund towards the expenses of equipment. In 1902 the Conference formally undertook to carry on the work of the Home, in which provision had been made for the accommodation of forty boys. The Conference of that year appointed Trustees and approved of the Trust Deed which provided for:

- (a) the maintenance, religious and secular education, support, training in industrial, domestic, or agricultural pursuits, and starting in life of children (either boys or girls, or both) who may, by the death of either parent, or of both, or from any other cause, need the assistance of the Home.
- (b) the training of persons of either sex to be managers or assistants of or in the Home, or any other similar Institution.
- (c) such religious services as the Committee should appoint. As regards (a) the Deed contained no distinction or limitation of age, sex, creed, or class, but it provided that in case there should at any time be more applications than vacancies, preference should be given in the following order:
 - (i) to children, either or both of whose parents, were, or if deceased, had been, declared Methodists.
 - (ii) to the children of parents of any other Protestant denomination.
 - (iii) all other applicants.

This rule could be relaxed by the Committee at its discretion in exceptional cases of special need. In all other respects, admissions to the Home and length of residence, as well as all other matters relating to the management of the Home, were to be subject to such regulations as the Committee should from time to time determine.

36.02 The Conference of 1902 also made directions regarding the appointment and constitution of the Committee, the appointment of officers, visitors, audit, doctrine and other matters.

36.03 The Conference of 1937 approved of the amalgamation of the Craigmores Children's Home with Childhaven, situated at Millisle. Childhaven, the property of the Belfast Central Mission, is governed by the Committee of that Mission. It was the gift to the Mission of the late Mr. Hugh Turtle, LL.D. Originally a large country residence, it was renovated and enlarged and opened by the Mission as a Children's Home in 1930, and as such carried on the work among children formerly undertaken by the Mission in Whitehead and elsewhere.

36.04 By its resolutions of 1937 the Conference:

- (a) approved of the transfer of the Home and investments of Craigmores to the Trustees of Childhaven to be carried on as one Home at Childhaven under the title "The Childhaven and Craigmores Homes".
- (b) directed that the management of the Home shall be in the control of the Belfast Central Mission, the Committee of which is appointed annually by the Conference and subject to the provisions of the Trust Deed which had been drafted as aforesaid.
- (c) directed that the residue of the premises, not transferred to the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland, should be sold by the Trustees of Craigmores Home and the proceeds of such sale including the balance of the proceeds of sales already affected subject to the discharge of the liabilities of the Home and to payment of the costs and expenses of such sale and the costs and expenses otherwise incurred of and incidental to the aforesaid transfer be applied for the purposes of the Childhaven and Craigmores Homes.
- (d) sanctioned a successful application to the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland or to the Charities Committee of the Ministry of Finance in Northern Ireland, as the case may be, for the transfer of the invested funds held by the Trustees of the Craigmores Home to the Trustees of the Childhaven and Craigmores Homes to or for the purposes of the said Homes subject to payment thereof of so much (if any) of the aforesaid costs and expenses as the sale of the residue of the lands may be insufficient to meet, and if necessary for the settlement of a scheme.

CHAPTER 37

THE METHODIST ORPHAN EDUCATION FUND (formerly the Methodist Female Orphan School)

Origin

37.01 The late Solomon Walker, of the City of Dublin, in the year 1803 bequeathed certain sums of money "for the purpose of founding and supporting a Female Charity School in the City of Dublin, to be called 'The Methodist Female Orphan School'," and a School was founded in Whitefriar Street in pursuance of his will in the year 1805. In the year 1825 "a sum of £500 was allocated for the purpose of the said School out of the assets of the late Rev. John Barrett, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin". Certain other benefactions have been since received for the purposes of the School. In 1853 the School was transferred to premises in Harrington Street, Dublin.

Schemes of Management

- 37.02** (a) The Commissioners under the Educational Endowments Act, after due enquiry framed a Scheme dated 11th June, 1887, for the future government and management of the School, and directed that the endowments "shall be held, governed, and managed and applied for the purposes, with the powers, under the conditions and provisions, and in the manner set forth" in the scheme. This Scheme was slightly modified in an Amending Scheme dated 30 September, 1893.
- (b) In 1976 a new Scheme of Management was approved by the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests for Ireland on the application of the Governors of the Methodist Female Orphan School. This Scheme was submitted to and accepted by the Conference in June, 1976.
- 37.03** The following are the main provisions of the Scheme of Management 1976:
- (a) The name of the Endowment shall be "The Methodist Orphan Education Fund".
- (b) From and after the date of the Scheme, the persons who are for the time being Governors of Wesley College, Dublin, shall be the Governing Body for the future management of the Fund by the name of "The Governors of the Methodist Orphan Education Fund."
- (c) The provisions regarding the handling of existing and future investment are set out in the approved form.

(d) All moneys to be dealt with as income together with the surplus income of the Fund shall be applied by the Governors in manner following:

- (i) in payment of the costs and expenses incurred by the Governors in carrying out the functions assigned to them by this Scheme.
- (ii) in providing or aiding in providing in such manner as the Governors in their absolute discretion shall think fit for the education (including university, higher and specialised education in Ireland) the advancement and support during such education (including the provision of school or college clothing, books and equipment) and the making of an initial grant for advancement in adult life subsequent to completion of such education of the class or classes of children hereinafter in this clause mentioned in the order of priority as hereinafter set out provided always that in the allocation of the income as aforesaid priority shall be given to providing or aiding the secondary education of such children at Wesley College, Dublin if accommodation is available.
- (iii) The classes of children are as follows:

Firstly, the daughters of parents, one or both of whom are or were Methodists and one or both of whom shall have died.

Secondly, the sons of parents, one or both of whom are or were Methodists and one or both of whom shall have died.

Thirdly, the daughters of parents, one or both of whom are or were members of any other Protestant church and one or both of whom shall have died.

Fourthly, the sons of parents, one or both of whom are or were members of any other Protestant church and one or both of whom shall have died.

- (iv) No child under the age of eight years (except at the discretion of the Governors under exceptional circumstances) shall be entitled to receive any benefits from the Fund and no such benefits shall continue after the age of twenty-three years.

37.04 The Chairman of the Governors of Wesley College, Dublin, for the time being shall be the Chairman of the Governors of the Fund.

Three Governors shall constitute a quorum. In every case of equality of votes the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

37.05 There are the standard provisions for meetings of Governors, appointment of Chairman, maintenance of records and accounts. etc.

The full text of the Amending Scheme may be inspected by any interested parties on application to the Chairman or the Secretary of the Governors of the Fund.

CHAPTER 38

EASTWELL RESIDENTIAL HOME

Methodist Widows' Home

- 38.01** In the year 1766 a Home was founded in Whitefriar Street, Dublin, by the Rev. John Wesley "for reduced widows and aged females". It was known as the Methodist Widows' Alms House and Aged Female Charity, commonly known as the Methodist Widows' Home. For many years the Home was situated in Grantham Street, Dublin, but it is now at "Eastwell", Palmerston Park, Dublin.
- 38.02** Regulations for the administration of the Institution and the charitable funds connected with it are set forth in a Schedule to the Deed of Declaration of Trust, and were approved by the Conference, 1926. Certain changes were decided by the Conference, 1973. The following are the present regulations for the appointment of the Governing Body and the administration of the Home:
- (a) The administration of the Charity shall be undertaken by a Governing Body constituted as follows:
 - (i) The Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer of the Governing Body who shall be appointed annually by the Governors at their meeting in April.
 - (ii) Two persons to be appointed annually by the Conference.
 - (iii) One Governor from each of the Societies in the Dublin area.
 - (iv) Governors, not more than four in number, to be elected by the Annual General Meeting of the Charity.
 - (v) The Chairperson of the Ladies' Committee.
 - (b) The Treasurer of the Governing Body shall receive and disburse moneys and contributions belonging to the Charity in such manner as the Governing Body may from time to time determine, and his/her receipt shall be sufficient discharge for all moneys and contributions received for or on behalf of the Charity.
 - (c) The Governing Body shall:
 - (i) appoint a committee of ladies to assist it and such other committees as it considers necessary.
 - (ii) shall be responsible for the admissions, and all other matters relating to the residents of the Home.

(iii) shall meet in April and at least on one other occasion each year.

(iv) shall report annually to the Conference.

CHAPTER 39

THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY OF HEALING

- 39.01** The Conference shall annually appoint a Committee on the Church's Ministry of Healing.
- 39.02** The aims of the Committee shall be:
- (a) to explore and study further the Church's involvement in the ministry of healing,
 - (b) to encourage the sharing of insights and experiences and facilitate the exercise of this ministry at circuit and society levels,
 - (c) to report annually to the Conference
- 39.03** The Committee shall consist of:
- The President of the Conference
 - The Lay Leader of the Conference
 - The Secretary of the Conference
 - The Chair of the Committee
 - The Secretary of the Committee
 - Six other members of whom not more than two shall be ministers
- The Ex-President and President Designate of the Conference and the Lay Leader of the Conference shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Committee.
- 39.04** The Chair and Secretary shall be appointed by the Conference and shall hold office for a period of four years. Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Conference for a period of three years, and shall be eligible for reappointment.

CHAPTER 40

PRISON AND HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE

- 40.01** The Conference shall appoint a Prison and Healthcare Chaplaincy Committee, which shall report through the Church Development Board.
- 40.02** The Mission of the Committee shall be ‘to support and promote Christian chaplaincy ministries of healing, care and restoration among vulnerable people’.
- 40.03** The Committee shall consist of a maximum of ten members including the officers.
- 40.04** Membership of the Committee shall reflect the number and diversity of chaplaincies throughout Ireland with no less than two representatives from either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland; no less than two representatives from either hospital or prison ministries; and no less than two laypersons or ministers.
- 40.05** The officers shall be a Chairperson and a Convener/Secretary. Each may serve for a period of three years with the possibility of a second period of up to three years. After this second period the Chairperson and Convener/Secretary may remain as members of the Committee but shall be ineligible for office for a minimum of one year.
- 40.06** The Committee shall be entitled to one representative on the Church Development Board, who shall normally be the Chairperson or Convener.

CHAPTER 41

THE COMMUNICATIONS CONVENER

41.01 The role of the Communications Convener is:

- (a) To source advice for the Connexion on information technology and media issues relevant to the work and witness of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (b) To oversee the ongoing development and management of the official website of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (c) To support the work of the Press Officer of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (d) To liaise with those responsible for any publications relating to the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (e) To arrange training as required for those engaging with broadcast and print media.

41.02 The Convener shall report annually to the General Committee, which may appoint others as appropriate to support the Convener in her/his responsibilities.

CHAPTER 42

THE COMMITTEE FOR INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

- 42.01** The Conference shall appoint a Committee for Ecumenical Relations which shall report annually to the Conference.
- 42.02** The Committee shall address those issues which concern relationships with other Churches within Ireland and keep the Church informed concerning ecumenical issues at a national (Britain and Ireland), European and world level.
- 42.03** (a) The Committee shall consist of not more than ten members, including the Secretary of the Conference, the Convener for Inter – Church Relations, a representative from the Faith and Order Committee, a representative of the Covenant Council and up to six other members.
- (b) The Conference shall appoint a Chair of the Committee from among the membership.
- (c) The Convener for Inter- Church Relations shall be the Secretary of the Committee.
- (d) The Committee shall have power to co-opt such persons to assist with particular areas of work.