

Free Methodist Church

Board of Bishops
P. O. Box 535002
Indianapolis, IN 46253

fmcna
INFO

TO: General Conference Delegates, Pastors, Superintendents, Ministers in Special Appointments and Relations, World Ministries Center Staff, Missionaries, Retired Bishops, Retired Ministers, AFMEI Presidents, AHSM Presidents, WMI President, MMI Executive Director, MMI President, FMF President, Chaplaincy Endorsing Agent

FROM: Joseph James, World Ministries Center Overseer
Hank Bode, Board of Administration Chair

RE: **FMCNA INFO** (Vol. 1, No. 3) November 2000

Board of Bishops Report

The Board of Bishops has met four times since the April 2000 report, as well as meeting four times by conference call. Some specific decisions that may be of interest to you include:

In consultation with the chairs of the Board of Administration and the Communications Committee, named **Doug Newton** as director of the Integrated Media Group. This is a part of Light & Life Communications which focuses on the *Light and Life* Magazine, an annual FM video, and the revised FM website to be launched in the spring of 2001.

Approved church planting grants in the amount of \$6,000 each to:

- 2nd year - Iglesia La Trinidad, St. Petersburg - Florida
- 1st year - New Horizon Ministries, Gladston, MI - North Michigan
- 2nd year - New Hope, Greensboro, PA - Pittsburgh
- 1st year - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - Southern California
- 1st year - Amanuel Church, Los Angeles - Southern California
- 2nd year - Cornerstone, Pendleton, OR - Columbia River
- 1st year - Jackson, MS - Florida
- 1st year - Eagle Ridge, Bowling Green, KY - Southeastern Regional
- 1st year - Mount Vernon, NY - New York
- 2nd year - Evangelical FMC, Naples, FL - Florida
- 1st year - Camino de Gracio, Downey, CA - Southern California
- 1st year - Norwalk Haitian, CT - New York
- 1st year - White Plains Haitian, NY - New York
- 2nd year - Long Branch Brazilian, NJ - New York

Submitted Disney Boycott update to the BOA for approval (see attached).

Held Superintendents/Board of Bishops Consultation in Indianapolis on September 14-16. All superintendents were present, and the following new superintendents were introduced:

- Rev. Joel McLaughlin, Arizona Conference
- Rev. Douglas Bailey, Columbia River Conference
- Rev. David Hino, Pacific Coast Japanese Conference

Completed revision of Superintendents= Manual and distributed to all superintendents.

Board of Administration Report

The Board of Administration met at the World Ministries Center in Indianapolis on October 12 through 14. Members present included: Eric Baird (Mid-America); Carol Bartlett (Pacific Northwest); Robert Bedford (Florida); Hank Bode (Southern California); Forest Bush (Sierra Pacific); William Cryderman (Southern Michigan); Josh Fajardo (Florida); Stephen Fitch (Southern California); Byron Forbes (Pacific Northwest); Zonda Haase (Ohio); Roger Haskins (Western Area); Joseph James (Central Area); Gene Keene (Pacific Northwest); Leslie Krober (Heartland Area); Pearson Miller (Wabash); Larry Roberts (Columbia River); Dan Shinabarger (East Michigan); Richard Snyder (Eastern Area); Vernon Snyder (New England); Matthew Thomas (Columbia River); Rob Turner (Southern Michigan); Mark Van Valin (Wabash); Mark Whitlock (Gateway); Brenda Young (Ohio); Charite Noel (Haiti); and Mauro Bravo (Philippines). Unable to attend: Hector Fernandez (New York) and Mark Logan (Genesee).

Reports were received from the following:

Light & Life Communications — John Van Valin
Integrated Media Group — Douglas Newton
Free Methodist World Missions — Arthur Brown
Administration and Finance — Gary Kilgore
Women's Ministries International — Beth Webb
Men's Ministries International — Lucien Behar/Jim Stetler
Audit Report — Debra Ladyman from Olive auditing firm
Benefits Committee — Pearson Miller
Budget and Finance Committee — Gene Keene
Free Methodist Foundation — Stanley Thompson
Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions — Phil Eaton
Association of Human Service Ministries — David Bates
Board of Bishops — Leslie Krober (see State of the Work Report on website at fmcna.org)
Operating Committee — Joseph James
Book of Discipline Editorial Committee — Carol Bartlett
Nominating Committee — Byron Forbes
Communications Committee — Larry Roberts
World Missions Committee — Steve Fitch
General Conference 2003 — Joseph James

Personnel Updates:

Rev. John Van Valin, Executive Director of Light & Life Communications, has accepted a position as senior pastor at the Indianapolis, Aldersgate Free Methodist Church. He will continue to serve as Executive Director of Light & Life Communications until December 31.

Rev. Lucien Behar retired as Executive Director of Men's Ministries International. **Rev. Jeff Johnson** has been named as the new Executive Director.

The following actions were taken:

By mail vote:

Approved Disney Boycott update (see attachment).

Approved leasing of space at the World Ministries Center to Christian Stewardship Association.

Approved changes in Employee Handbook.

Approved Robert McDowell as 2003 General Conference Coordinator.

Approved increased funding for Light & Life Communications in 2000 for Integrated Media Group initiatives.

The following actions were taken at the October 12-14 BOA meeting:

Acknowledged John Van Valin for his more than ten years of commitment, passion, and excellent service as Publisher of Light and Life Press and, subsequently, Executive Director of Light and Life Communications.

Acknowledged with appreciation the work of Lucien Behar over the fifteen years of his ministry through Light and Life Men.

Rejected General Conference Paper No. 305 regarding pastoral experience counting toward elder's orders since there is no longer deacon's ordination, and conference boards of ministerial education and guidance have latitude regarding giving credit for years of experience toward elder's orders.

Approved a resolution to General Conference 2003 regarding employment of executive personnel.

Accepted a paper from the Board of Bishops entitled "Suggested Goals for Growth Ministries."

Approved a paper entitled "Guidelines for Ecclesiastical Endorsement and Certification" for chaplaincy.

Approved the Constitution for the North American Area Fellowship.

Approved formation of a task force to conceptualize the format of the 2003 Book of Discipline, and hire an editor.

Approved audit reports for year ending 12/31/99.

Elected Rev. Abner D. Chauke as the first suffragan bishop of the Zimbabwe Provisional General Conference.

Approved the request from the Dominican Republic Provisional General Conference to become a full general conference effective January 2001.

Approved a 3.4 percent cost of living increase for all Defined Benefit Plan retirees who retired before January 1, 1999, effective July 1, 2000.

Approved a 13th check in December 2000 for all Defined Benefit Plan retirees who retired before January 1, 2000.

Approved increased death benefit to \$2,000 for Defined Benefit Plan retirees.

Approved a \$150 minimum monthly benefit under the Defined Benefit Plan (life only option) to present and future retirees who retire from active service, effective January 1, 2001.

Approved the revised benefit formula for the Defined Benefit Plan.

Approved other editorial changes to pension plan documents.

Adopted papers outlining the roles of the Benefits Committee, the Missions Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee, and the Communications Committee.

Approved up to 100% of an ordained ministers' pension as housing allowance for the year 2001.

Changed the name of the Study Commission on Bioethics and Genetic Engineering to Study Commission on Bioethics.

Referred the paragraph regarding Technology (from the Study Commission on Doctrine report to general conference) to the Study Commission on Bioethics.

Elected additional members to the Study Commission on Bioethics. The full committee is as follows: Leslie Krober, Glenn Teal, Robert Cranston, James Mannoia, Steve Weber, Tim Teusink, Tim Kratzer, David Crane, Kamilia Snyder, Marie Siefken, Roger Haskins, Joseph James, and Richard Snyder.

Approved revision by the Missions Committee of the policy for retiree medical reimbursement, allowing a couple to be reimbursed for up to \$4,000 in medical expenses, regardless of which person incurred the expenses.

Accepted resignation of Steve Fitch as chairman of the Missions Committee. Matthew Thomas was elected as chair of the Missions Committee.

Approved the Track IV ordination report for inclusion in the *Book of Discipline* as follows:

D. TRACK IV X The Apollos Model (for those persons of unusual giftedness, fruitfulness and experience as determined by the conference MEG board according to criteria described in the MEG Board Manual) as defined for Track IV:

1. Is initially approved by the local church and granted local ministerial candidacy license;
2. Is granted conference ministerial candidacy by the annual conference after determination of the candidate=s satisfaction of the criteria for Track IV;
3. Maintains an Ordination Readiness File which collects the data documenting assessments, reports and progress through the process as described in the MEG board manual;
4. Completes the prescribed process of coaching, assignments and assessment under MEG board guidance;
5. Is recommended by the MEG board for ordination with a report to Ministerial Credentialing Services;
6. Is ordained by the presiding bishop or appointee.

Approved the Equal Participation Plan for UMC Home Ministries giving.

Instructed Light and Life Communications to dialogue with leaders of various non English speaking churches and networks regarding translation needs.

Elected members to the Board of Directors of the Free Methodist Foundation with terms to expire December 31, 2003 as follows: Robert N. Bedford, Lloyd G. Ganton, David R. Goodnight, and John W. Minshall.

Confirmed Stanley Thompson as president of the Free Methodist Foundation for year 2001.

Approved a Ministerial Grant/Loan document outlining policy for John Wesley Seminary Foundation, African-American and Ethnic funding through UMC.

Approved editing changes to Section B of the *Book of Discipline* as reported by the Editorial Board.

Approved report from the Study Commission on Bioethics to be included in the *Book of Discipline* as follows:

4. **Human Dignity** (Substitute for A/330)

As a faith community, we believe that human beings are created in the image of God and therefore have inherent dignity and intrinsic value. This conviction forms the foundation of our approach to the principle of human dignity. Human life in any of its stages is sacred to us as Christians, because of our confidence that life exists in relation to God. Thus all human life must be valued, respected and protected through all its stages, whether nascent, mature or senile.

We affirm the intrinsic value and inherent dignity of every human being regardless of gender, ethnicity, age or disability. We confess our sinful human tendency toward prejudice and turn from it. We call on people everywhere to respect the worth of all persons and to actively seek justice for all.

5. **Bioethics** (Substitute for A/331)

Our convictions about the inherent worth of human life form the foundation of our approach to bioethics. These complex bioethical issues involve religious and moral values, as well as medical and legal realities. Therefore, Christians may not determine their rights and privileges only by the extent of the permissiveness of the law of the state or the possibilities of safe medical procedures.

A/331.1 Supremacy of God

God is sovereign: the world and all that is in it belongs to God. Though God's eternal purposes may never be thwarted by human action, we are still free and responsible to make God-consistent choices in matters of life and death. Christians live in the reality that human beings are created for an eternal purpose. As we attend to human suffering, we acknowledge that the ability of medical technology to end human suffering is finite.

Therefore, we accept our responsibility to use this technology with wisdom and compassion; honoring God, who is ultimately supreme.

A/331.2 Abortion

The intentional destruction of human life is murder when any degree of malice or selfishness accompanies the decision and act. Therefore, induced abortion is morally unjustifiable except when the act has been decided upon by responsible and competent persons, including Christian and professional counsel, for the purpose of saving the life of a pregnant woman.

Abortion, when it serves the ends of population or birth control, personal preference of convenience, and social or economic security, must be considered as selfish and malicious. Therefore, the intentional abortion of nascent life from conception on, except when extreme circumstances requires termination of a pregnancy to save the life of the pregnant woman, must be judged to be a violation of God's command, *AYou shall not commit murder.*≡

We recommend that Free Methodists offer compassionate alternatives and long-term care to women considering abortion. We recommend similar long-term care for all persons impacted by previous abortions. We also urge continuing support for those involved in parenting and in the adoption and fostering of children.

While firmly opposed to abortion, we recognize that those whose views contrary to ours should be treated with respect and dignity and that God's forgiveness is offered to all.

A/331.3 Euthanasia

There is no justification for euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide. It is understood that a terminally ill person's request that life not be sustained by heroic measures, does not constitute euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide. We recognize that it is permissible to use painkillers and other medications, which carry the risk of shortening life so long as the intent is to relieve or otherwise benefit the patient, rather than to cause death. We further recognize the responsibility of medical professionals to alleviate pain within these parameters. Christians must discourage the assumption that some lives are not worth living. We believe that there is no such thing as a Auseless≡ life. The value and worth in our lives rests primarily in our relationship with a God who loves us.

A/331.4 Reproductive Technology

Reproductive technologies generate a large number of ethical, medical, legal and theological questions even as they offer hope. The guiding principle, that all human life must be valued, respected and protected throughout all its stages must be carefully and consistently applied to every new development. A Christian theology of family (A/341.1) must also inform these decisions. Simply because technology makes a procedure possible and civil law defines it as legal, does not mean a procedure is morally acceptable.

A/331.5 Other

These biblical principles, which guide our approach to bioethics will need to be applied on an ongoing basis to other ethical dilemmas rising from advances in medical technology. Such ethical dilemmas may include but not be limited to: the allocation of finite resources, organ transplantation, end-of-life concerns, genetic engineering and testing, gender identity issues and others.

A/331.6 Suffering and Sovereignty

Though God's love is steadfast, he has chosen to not protect us from suffering. God meets us in our suffering, to comfort us, to shape a Christ-like character within, and to make us instruments of his healing. Chronic disease, diminished physical capacity or ongoing disability do not constitute the end of life and need not compromise one's trust in God.

For the Christian death is not the end of life, but the transition into eternity. Therefore, physical death is not the ultimate enemy, but part of our journey. God's love sustains us in our suffering. He ministers to us personally and through the healing environment of Christian community. Divine wisdom in the face of suffering comes to us through scripture, prayer, godly counsel and the work of the Holy Spirit. As we are comforted, we are called to extend God's comfort to those who suffer.

- Y Formed task force composed of Vernon Snyder, Roger Haskins, Zonda Haase, and Richard Snyder to review options regarding the maintenance of historical Centenary Park in Sanborn, NY.
- Y Referred to the Board of Bishops a request for clarification of the process for a provisional general conference to become a general conference.
- Y Approved 2001 Church Calendar as follows:

FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA 2001 Church Calendar

January 3-10 **Note:the first day of each month is a day of fasting and prayer**
Continuing Education January Interterm (J-Term 1) Greenville College

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January 7	Fasting and Prayer for the famine stricken (Bishops' Famine and Relief Offering)
January 6-7	Free Methodist National Prayer Weekend (Sponsored by MMI & WMI)
January 10-17	Continuing Education January Interterm (J-Term 2) Greenville College
January 12-15	Large Church Pastors' Event
January 15-20	Continuing Education January Interterm, Florida
January 21	Men's Ministries International Sunday
February	World Missions Compassion Month
February 19-21	FM Urban Ministries Conference (Formerly CUE)
February 25	World Missions Compassion Sunday
March	Celebrating Christian Holiness Month
March 2	World Day of Prayer
March 22-23	Missions Conference, Spring Arbor College
April 8	John Wesley Seminary Foundation Sunday
April 13	Good Friday
April 15	Easter
April 29	Free Methodist Colleges/Universities Sunday
May	National Family Month
May 6	National Day of Prayer
June 25-29	Bible Quiz Finals, Central Christian College, McPherson, KS
August 23	Founding Date, Free Methodist Denomination (1860)
September	WMI Awareness Month
September 9	WMI Sunday Free Methodist Colleges/Universities Prayer Emphasis
September 10-12	New Pastor's Orientation
September 13-15	Superintendents/Board of Bishops Consultation
September 28-30	Graduate Student Theological Seminar, World Ministries Center
October	Clergy Appreciation Month
October 7	World Communion Sunday
October 5-7	WMI President Leadership Summit, World Ministries Center
October 11-13	Board of Administration Meetings
November	Thank Offering Month for Missions (WMI)
November 11	Day of World Missions Sunday
November 28	Membership Sunday
December 25	Christmas

Dates for upcoming Board of Administration meetings:

Spring Meeting	April 5-7, 2001
Fall Meeting	October 11-13, 2001

We welcome your comments, reflections, concerns. You may contact us by:

FAX	317-241-8897
Phone	800-342-5531

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*For additional information, visit our website at
fmcna.org.*

Re: DISNEY BOYCOTT

May 24, 2000
Board of Bishops

In October 1997 the Board of Administration of the Free Methodist Church endorsed a recommendation from the Board of Bishops that the members of the church boycott the Disney Corporation. The primary reasons for this included:

- B An intentional shift of policy by Disney which began promoting violence and anti-family values.
- B A desire on the part of the Free Methodist Church to again call upon our people to think clearly about those institutions of the world that can subtly dampen the fires of holiness within us.

Disney was targeted, not because they were the world's worst offender, but because they had so blatantly changed directions from the wholesome to the perverse. We joined many other denominations and groups (including the state of Texas that withdrew its financial investments with Disney), in an effort to protest their contributions to a loss of healthy values in our country and beyond and to alert ourselves to the tricks of the enemy regarding small compromises which erode our walk with God.

It seems prudent now to call us all to a renewed commitment to a holy approach to the whole entertainment industry. We are reminded of the Scriptures which warn, AIn the last days...people will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God≡ II Timothy 3:1-4.

Therefore, rather than continuing a specific boycott on a particular institution, we are calling upon every Free Methodist to re-examine the Scriptures and consider Paragraph A/336.2.1,3 of

our *Book of Discipline* (as stated below), giving careful thought to the way we will live in this A perverse and adulterous generation.

7. Many forms of entertainment (television, videos, movies, recorded music, printed material, electronically distributed media, etc.), though not inherently evil, may have content that arouses fleshly impulses, rather than nurturing life in the Spirit.

In an increasingly secular society, Christians must carefully evaluate every form of entertainment in light of biblical principles (Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:103, Galatians 5:13-26), avoiding every form of evil, while honoring Christ in everything (Colossians 3:17, I Thessalonians 5:22).

3. Evaluate all entertainment. Questions such as the following should, therefore, be considered regarding any form of entertainment: Is this activity compatible with my witness as a Christian? Is it consistent with a conscience responsive to the Holy Spirit? Will participation or observation expose me to unnecessary temptation? Are my motives pure?

We expect Free Methodists to evaluate all forms of entertainment in the light of biblical standards for holy living, and to abstain from those that do not meet such standards.