

Free Methodist Church



Board of Bishops
Board of Administration
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: Bishop Joseph James, World Ministries Center Overseer
Larry Roberts, Chairman, Board of Administration

RE: *fmcna INFO* (Vol. 5, No. 1) November 2005

PURPOSE: The *fmcna INFO* is intended as an information piece to share significant actions of the Board of Bishops and the Board of Administration with leaders across the church.

Board of Bishops Report

The *One More Soul* initiative has concentrated the focus of local churches on Being Disciples and Making Disciples. A wealth of stories about people coming to faith in Christ brings tears and claps of joy across the church. More small groups of people who are interceding in prayer for those outside of Christ and His church have been formed. These earnest Christians are finding ways to connect with the unsaved, paving the way for witness about Christ. We believe God is calling the Free Methodist Church to a fresh outpouring of His Holy Spirit and to a renewed passion for God's cherished missing. (State of the Work Report, October 2005)

On May 16, 2005, announcement was made of the election of Dr. David W. Kendall to the office of bishop in the Free Methodist Church of North America to fill the unexpired term of Bishop Leslie Krober who had requested that the church release him from his appointment as bishop to pursue new avenues of ministry. This was the first time a bishop has been elected by a general conference that was not in session. Prior to a revision of the Governing Rules in 1999, unexpired terms were filled by a vote of the denominational Board of Administration. The revision stipulates that an unexpired term now be filled by a vote of the general conference delegates instead. This voting process was implemented.

On September 23-30, bishops from fourteen Free Methodist general conferences around the world were invited to participate in the first meeting of the FM Council of Bishops. The meeting was held in Oostende, Belgium. Bishops from four countries were unable to secure visas to attend the meeting; however, twelve bishops and spouses gathered for a time of fellowship, sharing, study and prayer. The main item of consideration was the Article of Religion on Sanctification. Dr. David Kendall presented three papers on this subject.

Free Methodist Leadership Conferences (formerly Bishops Schools for Renewal) have been held in four locations around the country during 2005. The emphasis on *One More Soul* has been enhanced by presentations on "The Purpose Burdened Church." Two FM Leadership Conferences are scheduled for 2006:

March 8-10, 2006

May 7-9, 2006

Simpsonwood Conference Center, Atlanta, GA

Ministers Institute of the Northeast (MINE), Lancaster, PA

The Board approved church planting grants in the amount of \$6,000 each to:

1st Year Grants

The Lakes, Sammamish, WA – Pacific Northwest
Word of Hope, Seattle, WA – Pacific Northwest
Solid Rock, Claremont, NH – New England
Four Corners Redemption, Davenort, FL -- South Atlantic
Battle Creek, Salem, OR – Oregon
Oneeighy, Littleton, CO – Rocky Mountain
Iglesia Aqua de Vida, Minneapolis, MN – North Central
Brazilian of Miami, FL – South Atlantic
Swans Island, Maine – New England
Grace Corridor, Alta Loma, CA – Southern California
Silverton, OR – Oregon
South Tualatin, OR – Oregon
Clinica Del Alma, Chicago, IL – North Central
New Life, Wataga, IL – North Central
Bridgeport Haitian, CT – New York
Clermont Spanish, FL – South Atlantic
Victorville Arabic, CA – Southern California
Azusa Chinese, CA – Southern California
Luz y Vida, Lakewood, CO – Rocky Mountain

2nd Year Grants

New Vision in the City, Washington, DC – Maryland-Virginia
Comunidade Logos Int'l, Waterbury, CT – New York
Trinity Fellowship So. New Jersey – New York
Brazilian of Orlando, FL – South Atlantic
Jackson Comunidad Aqua Viva, MI – Southern Michigan
Living Faith Community, Albany, OR – Oregon
Church of Hope, Corinth, ME – New England
White Plains Haitian, CT – New York
Waipahu, Hawaii – Southern California
Revolution, Azusa, CA – Southern California

Board of Administration Report

God is continuing to do great things across His church through the *One More Soul* initiative! Each of the 3 meetings of the B.O.A. held during 2005 has celebrated reports of increased numbers of people giving their lives to Christ and churches focusing anew on the basics of being disciples and making disciples. Our most recent statistics show increases in both Sunday morning worship and church membership across the Free Methodist Church of North America. For all of this, we give thanks to our Holy Father, who is worthy of all praise!

The board met in special session August 15-16, in Detroit, to consider God's direction regarding the structure of the top leadership of the Free Methodist Church. We spent considerable time in prayer, and enjoyed a wonderful sense of His presence.

Three conclusions came from the deliberations: First, we clarified the "role" of a bishop as spiritual leader, vision-caster, builder of leaders, and catalyst.

Second, we summarized the big picture "functions" of bishops to articulate the mission of the church,

demonstrate commitment to the mission of the church, disciple superintendents, provide general oversight to the church, develop spirit-filled leaders, protect the church from error, and multiply godly, competent leaders.

And, we adopted as a goal the presentation of a resolution to the 2007 General Conference to define a single-leader model of church governance with appropriate supporting structure to empower the local church to fulfill the *One More Soul* initiative. A task force was formed to study the matter further and report to the BOA.

Highlights of our regular spring meeting, held April 14-16, 2005...

Approved the 2005 India *Book of Discipline*.

Approved the India Provisional General Conference Constitution.

Elected Dr. Narendra John, Dr. John Gollapalli, and Dr. Joab Lohara as bishops of the Provisional General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of India.

Approved the Constitutions of the Nigeria Pioneer Annual Conference and the Nigeria South Central Provisional Annual Conference.

Approved formation of the Georgia/Alabama Mission Conference.

Approved revision of Paragraph 5450.A in the *Book of Discipline* to read as follows:

“Conference ministerial candidates are required to complete the equivalent of three years of full-time ministerial service under conference appointment to be eligible for ordination as elder. **Such service may be rendered beyond the local church as approved by the MEG Board.**”

Approved an “electronic” process to elect a new bishop to replace Bishop Leslie Krober who is resigning effective August 31, 2005.

Approved an annual background check on chaplains by the Association of Free Methodist Chaplains, and requested that chaplains submit a copy of the Chaplains Annual Report to their conference office.

Elected Superintendent Matthew Thomas as BOA member from Western Area replacing Superintendent Steve Fitch.

Approved Gerald Coates as Executive Director of Free Methodist Communications.

And highlights of the regular fall meeting of the B.O.A., held October 20-22, 2005...

As a part of the One More Soul initiative, we approved sending the Light & Life Magazine FREE to the homes of ALL members of ALL Free Methodist churches in the United States. We’re excited to be able to provide this terrific resource to the constituents of our local churches and pray that God will use it to help people learn more about what it means to be a Christian, a Free Methodist, and a disciple making disciples.

Approved a plan to assist overseas delegates to General Conference, whereby Annual Conferences in the United States are asked to cover the travel expenses of their delegates to General Conference, so that funds budgeted by the F.M.C.N.A. can go to support travel expenses of international delegates who would otherwise be unable to attend. It will be left up to the individual Annual Conferences in the U.S. to determine whether or not they are willing to take this action to support our overseas delegates. U.S. Conferences are requested to inform the FMCNA B.O.A. of their decision, no later than August 1st of next

year. So please add this item to your Annual Conference agenda next spring or summer.

Approved designation of \$200,000 of undesignated Home Ministries bequests (received directly or via The Free Methodist Foundation after January 1, 2006) to provide assistance to retirees whose Defined Contribution benefits are fully depleted.

Recommended approval of amended trust clause (Par. 6400.D in the *Book of Discipline*) to read:

“**Irrevocably** in trust for the use and benefit of the Free Methodist Church of North America, incorporated under the name of ‘The Free Methodist Church of North America,’ subject to the *Book of Discipline*, usages, and ministerial appointments of said church, as from time to time authorized and declared; and, if sold, the proceeds shall be disposed and used in accordance with the provisions of said *Book of Discipline*, and the civil law; and in further trust and confidence that in the houses of worship now constructed or that may hereafter be constructed on said promises hereby conveyed, the seats shall be forever free; and in further trust and confidence that the said trustees and their successors in office shall permit at all times the preachers who may be duly authorized according to the *Book of Discipline* of the said Free Methodist Church, to hold religious services in said houses of worship according to said *Book of Discipline*.”

Approved the new Constitution submitted by the Association of Human Service Ministries as amended.

Approved an update in executive spousal travel policy and documentation to meet IRS regulations.

Approved continued accreditation for the following Association of Human Service Ministries: The Gerry Homes and Related Corporations, Life Line Homes, Warm Beach Health Care Center, New Life, Inc.-Clawson Manor, The Birth Connection, Woodstock Christian Life Services and Subsidiary, Oakdale Christian High School, Deaconess Home, Butterfield Memorial Foundation.

Elected the following to the Board of Directors of The Free Methodist Foundation for a three-year term, term to expire December 31, 2008: Joseph F. James, Norman P. Leenhouts, Kerry D. Kettinger.

Elected Superintendent John Grover as a member of the BOA (Heartland Area) to fill the remaining term of Superintendent David Kendall who vacated that seat on the board by becoming Bishop.

Approved up to 100% of an ordained minister’s pension as housing allowance for the year 2006.

Dates for upcoming meetings:

Spring Board of Administration meeting	April 6-8, 2006
Fall Board of Administration meeting	October 19-21, 2006
2007 General Conference	July 7-13, 2007

We welcome your comments, reflections, concerns on any of the above. You may contact us by:

FAX 317-241-8897
Phone 800-342-5531
Email fmc_bishops@aol.com

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For additional information, visit our website at www.freemethodistchurch.org

**FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
2006 Church Calendar**

Note: the first day of each month is a day of fasting and prayer

January 8	Fasting and Prayer for the famine stricken (Bishops' Famine and Relief Offering)
January 9-14	Continuing Education January Interterm (J-Term 1)
January 15	Men's Ministries International Sunday
January 16-21	Continuing Education January Interterm (J-Term 2)
January 16-19	Multiplying Pastors Event
January 17-20	Large Church Pastors Event
January 22	Sanctity of Life Sunday
February	World Missions Compassion Month
February 11-12	Prayer and Fasting Weekend – sponsored by MMI and WMI
February 21-23	AFMEI Annual Meeting
February 19	World Missions Compassion Sunday
March	Celebrating Christian Holiness
March 3	World Day of Prayer
March 6-8	Free Methodist Leadership Conference – Simpsonwood, Atlanta, GA
March 13-14	“Search for the FM Soul” Symposium III – Indianapolis
April 2	John Wesley Seminary Foundation Sunday
April 6-8	Board of Administration
April 9	Palm Sunday
April 13	Maundy Thursday
April 14	Good Friday
April 16	Easter
April 20-23	Wesleyan/Holiness Clergy Women's Conference – San Diego
April 23	Free Methodist Colleges/Universities Sunday
May	National Family Month
May 5	National Day of Prayer
May 7-9	Free Methodist Leadership Conference – MINE, Lancaster, PA
June 2	Pentecost Sunday
June 26-30	National Quiz Finals – Spring Arbor University
August 23	Founding Date, Free Methodist Denomination (1860)
September	WMI Awareness Month
September 10	WMI Sunday
September 11-13	Free Methodist Colleges/Universities Prayer Emphasis
September 13-15	Starting Strong (New Pastors' Orientation)
September 22-24	Bishops/Superintendents' Consultation
September 26-27	Graduate Student Theological Seminar
October	Consultant Training Event
October 1	Clergy Appreciation Month
October 19-21	World Communion Sunday
November	Board of Administration
November 12	Thank Offering Month for Missions (WMI)
November 26	Day of World Missions Sunday
December 25	International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church
	Membership Sunday
	Christmas

**State of the Work
October 2005
Board of Bishops report to the Board of Administration**

The final verses of Colossians 1 give more than an adequate summary of our hopes for the Free Methodist Church:

“So everywhere we go, we tell everyone about Christ. We warn them and teach them with all the wisdom God has given us, for we want to present them to God perfect in their relationship to Christ. I work very hard at this, as I depend on Christ’s mighty power that works in me.” (Col. 1:28-29 NLT)

The Free Methodist vision, that we be a healthy, biblical community of holy people, multiplying disciples, leaders, groups and churches continues to gain the hearts of our pastors and lay leaders and often aids in directing prayers and decisions. We celebrate a growing unity of purpose and greater hunger for God in the Free Methodist Church of the USA.

The *One More Soul* initiative has concentrated the focus of local churches on Being Disciples and Making Disciples. A wealth of stories about people coming to faith in Christ brings tears and claps of joy across the church. More small groups of people who are interceding in prayer for those outside of Christ and His church have been formed. These earnest Christians are finding ways to connect with the unsaved, paving the way for witness about Christ. We believe God is calling the Free Methodist Church to a fresh outpouring of His Holy Spirit and to a renewed passion for God’s cherished missing.

Further development of Learning Communities among our superintendents and pastors is slowly but surely filtering into the life of local churches. Here, earnest Christians are focusing on the development of transformational communities that see lifelong learning, mutual encouragement and healthy accountabilities as essential. This is contributing to the discipleship of believers intent on perfecting their relationship to Christ.

It is wonderful to observe increasingly healthy partnerships among pastors, superintendents, the Board of Bishops, the Board of Administration, the Free Methodist Foundation, Free Methodist Communications, and Free Methodist World Missions to see the *One More Soul* initiative become systemic in the life of every local church.

All this is not to say that everything is satisfying:

1. There is need for us to recover fully a wholesome and biblical proclamation of the Wesleyan message of holiness / sanctification. The first ever meeting of the Council of Bishops was held in Oostende, Belgium, in September 2005, and the entire agenda of the meeting focused on teaching, prayer and dialogue about sanctification. Soon the revised Article of Religion ¶119 on sanctification will be formally placed into referendum by the World Conference in each of the twelve general conferences. We hope this will serve to stir the hearts of our pastors and people to seek hard after God’s fullness, living life totally set apart to His glory.

2. There is need for better and more consistent teaching on stewardship in all of its aspects. There was a time when the Free Methodist Church, every year, led all denominations in giving. While we are not in competition with our sister denominations, we do long to be obedient to God in the giving of tithes and offerings. If our people gave the same percentage today to the Free Methodist Church that they gave in 1968, we would have an additional \$31,000,000 per year for Kingdom work. We encourage pastors and churches to seek guidance from organizations such as Crown Ministries (www.crown.org) to help guide the stewardship ministries of the church.

3. There is need for every church to understand that making disciples of Jesus Christ is our mission and to make this the central focus of our training and action. We praise God for those churches that are equipping leaders to guide small groups of people into the character and ministry of the Lord. We will not be satisfied until every Free Methodist Church is focused on making disciples of Jesus Christ.

As the growth patterns of the church are studied, we find that during the six year period 1992-1998, 5,317 people were added to the worship attendance. The last six years, 1998-2004, saw this doubling to a growth of 10,573. If this pattern continues, we will gain about 21,000 over the next six years. Most of this growth, however, comes from 332 of our 999 churches. We hope and pray that the momentum being realized, along with the call to be a Purpose Burdened Church focused on making disciples, will renew plateaued and declining congregations. We also hope and pray that church planting will become a part of the missional plan of every healthy Free Methodist Church.

4. There is need for a renewal of extraordinary intercessory prayer. Everyone, it seems, is busy. Busyness does not empower the church nor its leaders, though it constantly claims our attention. To see the transformation of our cities and towns, and a return to an extravagant generosity, it will take a renewed commitment to life on our knees.

Finally, it is clear that God is at work across the Free Methodist Church in the U.S. This year, four Free Methodist Leadership Conferences have been held (Spring Arbor, MI; Des Moines, IA; Oak Glen, CA; and Warm Beach, WA) attended by pastors, spouses and lay leaders. God's presence has been obvious; people have openly sought the Lord's fullness; evidence of unity is clear; excitement about the *One More Soul* initiative is building.

We do not know all that God has for us, but we do know that we are called to tell everyone about Christ everywhere we go. We want all of God, all of His plans, and all of His Holy Spirit – nothing held back.