



**Free Methodist Church USA
39th General Conference
RESOLUTION**

INSTRUCTIONS:

Complete requested information, adding additional pages as necessary. Save and e-mail completed form to your Annual Conference office.

INTRODUCED BY: Rev. Derik Heumann

ANNUAL CONFERENCE NAME: Southern Michigan

WRITTEN BY:

Rev. Alexander Mace; Lead Pastor, Wichita NW FMC
Rev. Derik Heumann; Lead Pastor, Evergreen Church
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General Conference Secretary - OFFICE USE ONLY

Resolution No. 302

Received Date: 11/18/2022

Resolution Committee Grade: _____

BOA Consideration: _____

GC Consideration: _____

RELATED TO PARAGRAPH 3213

Referred to Ministry Team Number:

SUBJECT OR TITLE: Resolution on the Abuse of Substances
and Sobriety

Final Vote: Yes No

On the Abuse of Substances and Sobriety

WHEREAS The Free Methodist Way necessarily incorporates a focus on the central principles of the Faith: love of Jesus and passion for his mission, and

WHEREAS the abuse of mind-altering substances is capable of great harm to individuals, communities, and the witness of the Church, and

WHEREAS cross-cultural collaboration and life-giving holiness are core values of our Wesleyan heritage, an emphasis on discernment helps provide an expression of these traditional values in ways that are transferable across cultural boundaries, and

WHEREAS the ways that a good creation can be used in distorted ways are many and varied, requiring that Christians exercise caution in the exercise of our freedoms, and

WHEREAS alcohol and cannabis are not the only mind-altering substances, Spirit-led discernment is essential to safeguard Christians in their pursuit of holy living - giving wisdom regarding the use of all food, drink, or medication, and

WHEREAS there exist uses of these substances that are medicinal and beneficial or harmful and detrimental, we must allow for the exercise of Godly caution and discernment as new situations arise, and

WHEREAS the desire of disciples of Christ is that we live godly lives of sobriety, keeping alert for the ways that we may be ensnared by sin.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following changes to the Book of Discipline paragraph 3213 on the misuse of substances be made, in order that the church may be lifted up and godly discernment centered in our lives and witness:

Original Language:

As Christians we believe that life is full, abundant and free in Jesus Christ (John 8:35; 10:10). Therefore, we abstain from whatever damages, destroys or distorts His life in us.

Illicit drugs are prime offenders. We avoid their use because various forms of narcotics cause untold damage to people and relationships, such drugs restrict personal development, damage the body and reinforce an unrealistic view of life.

Though alcohol and marijuana are legal drugs in some jurisdictions, both have a history of damaging individuals, families, and society. Both are unpredictably addictive and their destructive effects cannot be fully measured. Their misuse leaves a trail of broken marriages, family violence, crime, industrial loss, ill health, injury and death. Christ admonishes us to love God with all our being and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). Therefore, we advocate abstinence for the sake of health, family and neighbors.

We advocate abstaining from the use of tobacco because we believe Christians are to treat their bodies as sacred trusts. It is a major cause of a variety of cancers and other diseases, as well as being an expensive and socially-offensive addiction. Likewise, the intemperate consumption of food is a form of abusing the body which may result in illness and obesity. We eat healthily so as to preserve the strength of our bodies and so extend our years of usefulness as servants of Christ. We take seriously the words of Paul, the apostle, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

We guard against the indiscriminate use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs because drug dependency often inhibits fullness of life in Christ. Though the therapeutic value of such substances may be great, their potency, proliferation and easy accessibility require that as Christians we be vigilant against their misuse.

Revised Language (with markups):

As Christians we believe that life is full, abundant and free in Jesus Christ (John 8:35; 10:10). Therefore, we abstain from whatever damages, destroys or distorts His life in us.

Mind-altering substances deserve special attention. ~~Illicit drugs are prime offenders.~~ We avoid their abuse ~~use~~ because they can ~~various forms of narcotics~~ cause untold damage to people and relationships, ~~such drugs~~ restrict personal development, damage the body, and reinforce an unrealistic view of life.

Though many of the substances in question ~~alcohol and marijuana~~ are legal ~~drugs~~ in some jurisdictions, they ~~both~~ have a history of damaging individuals, families, and society. Many ~~Both~~ are unpredictably addictive and their destructive effects cannot be fully measured. We are taught in scripture that while "everything is permissible, I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Cor 6:12). Christ admonishes us to love God with all our being and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). Therefore, we live in such a way that we are "sober-minded and alert" (1 Pet 5:8) to demonstrate God's love in our actions. ~~Their misuse leaves a trail of broken marriages, family violence, crime, industrial loss, ill health, injury and death. Christ admonishes us to love God with all our being and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). Therefore, we advocate abstinence for the sake of health, family and neighbors.~~

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Suggested Final Language:

As Christians we believe that life is full, abundant and free in Jesus Christ (John 8:35; 10:10). Therefore, we abstain from whatever damages, destroys or distorts His life in us.

Mind-altering substances deserve special attention. We avoid their abuse because they can cause untold damage to people and relationships, restrict personal development, damage the body, and reinforce an unrealistic view of life.

Though many of the substances in question are legal in some jurisdictions, they have a history of damaging individuals, families, and society. Many are unpredictably addictive and their destructive effects cannot be fully measured. We are taught in scripture that while "everything is permissible, I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Cor 6:12). Christ admonishes us to love God with all our being and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). Therefore, we live in such a way that we are "sober-minded and alert" (1 Pet 5:8) to demonstrate God's love in our actions.

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Annual Conference Resolutions Committee Worksheet:

Mission: To love God, love people and make disciples.

Vision: To bring wholeness to the world through healthy biblical communities of holy people multiplying disciples, leaders, groups and churches.

1. Does the resolution have a direct relationship to the vision and mission of the Free Methodist Church?

Yes

2. How will the proposed change help us accomplish our vision and mission?

This resolution offers an updated robust statement about these seminal issues which negatively impact communities and erode individual lives.

3. The Resolutions Committee rates this resolution as:

(A) Support - recommend adoption

Other Comments:

Annual Conference Resolutions Committee Worksheet:

FROM WABASH

Mission: To love God, love people and make disciples.

Vision: To bring wholeness to the world through healthy biblical communities of holy people multiplying disciples, leaders, groups and churches.

1. Does the resolution have a direct relationship to the vision and mission of the Free Methodist Church?

Yes

No

2. How will the proposed change help us accomplish our vision and mission?

We believe that this resolution addresses an important issue that needs clarity in our discipleship practice at the local church level. By moving fully into a principled stance on substance abuse, the FM gives the local pastor and leaders the ability to work with individuals in their discipleship in order to work out their personal beliefs in this area.

3. The Resolutions Committee rates this resolution as:

(A) Support - recommend adoption

(B) Recommended - worthy of review

(C) Rejected - anticipate General Conference rejection

Other Comments: Our delegation was not unanimous on this resolution. We have delegates on both ends of the spectrum concerning alcohol use. But we recognize that the practice across the denomination varies from area to area. So this issue needs addressed. We were also confused as to why the writers would keep tobacco use separate and included rather than include it in substance abuse.

Superintendent John Lane on behalf of the Wabash Conference