



**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: Study Commission on Doctrine

ANNUAL CONFERENCE NAME: _____
Great Plains and Mid-America

WRITTEN BY: Rev. Alexander Mace and
Rev. Dr. Bruce Cromwell

General Conference Secretary - OFFICE USE ONLY

Resolution No. 308

Received Date: 12/16/2022

Resolution Committee Grade: _____

BOA Consideration: _____

GC Consideration: _____

RELATED TO PARAGRAPH - 3421

Referred to Ministry Team Number:

SUBJECT OR TITLE: Determinism in Gambling

Final Vote: Yes No

WHEREAS:

The Free Methodist Church has a clear statement on the “Stewardship of Possessions” in BOD ¶3421, including clear guidance on the dangers of gambling, yet

WHEREAS part of that counsel says, “Gambling contradicts faith in God who rules all the affairs of His world, not by chance but by His providential care,” inadvertently introducing the danger of determinism, and

WHEREAS such a deterministic approach to God could be taken to say that God chooses who is or who is not saved by His providential care, which is not consistent with Free Methodist doctrine, and

WHEREAS such deterministic approach to God further could be taken to say that God determines everything, including who wins or loses in gambling, and we do not believe that God (for example) picks the Powerball numbers or determines who wins sporting events, and

WHEREAS the remainder of the statement is sufficient for explaining why we caution against gambling,

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the first sentence in in the second paragraph of Paragraph 3421 in the *Book of Discipline* be amended, such that the reading will be:

Although as Christians we accumulate goods, we should not make possessions or wealth the goal of our lives (Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 12:16-21). Rather, as stewards we give generously to meet the needs of others and to support ministry (2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-13). The Scriptures allow the privilege of private ownership. Though we hold title to possessions under civil law, we regard all we have as the property of God entrusted to us as stewards.

Gambling contradicts faith in God ~~who rules all the affairs of His world, not by chance but by His providential care~~ whose covenants in the Old Testament promise to care for God’s people and whose Son in the New Testament taught us to trust in the goodness and generosity of the Father toward all (Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Matthew 6:6-15; 25-33).

Gambling lacks both the dignity of wages earned and the honor of a gift. It takes substance without yielding a fair exchange. Because it excites greed, it destroys the initiative of honest toil and often results in addiction. Government sponsorship of lotteries only enlarges the problem. We refrain from gambling in all its forms because of the evils it encourages, for conscience’ sake and as a witness to the faith we have in Christ.

While customs and community standards change, there are changeless scriptural principles that govern us as Christians in our attitudes and conduct. Whatever we buy, use or wear reflects our commitment to Christ and our witness in the world (1 Corinthians 10:31-33). We therefore avoid extravagance and live in simplicity.

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

No

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

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: