



**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:

ANNUAL CONFERENCE NAME: _____
Sierra Pacific, Great Plains,
and Mid-America

WRITTEN BY: Rev. Jen Starr-Reivitt and
Rev. Dr. Bruce Cromwell

General Conference Secretary - OFFICE USE ONLY

Resolution No. 502

Received Date: 11/29/2022

Resolution Committee Grade: _____

BOA Consideration: _____

GC Consideration: _____

RELATED TO PARAGRAPH: 5110, 5220 and 6710

Referred to Ministry Team Number:

SUBJECT OR TITLE: Equity in Hiring Practices and
Appointments

Final Vote: Yes No

WHEREAS: The Free Methodist Church values the worth of all humans, stating in the BOD ¶ 3221 that we will do so “regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, color, socio-economic status, disability, or any other distinctions (Acts 10:34-35) and will respect them as persons made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and redeemed by Christ’s death and resurrection. And

WHEREAS: the Free Methodist Church believes racism is a particularly egregious affront to the dignity and worth of a person BOD ¶ 3221 (B) and we oppose any forms of racism including “systemic racism – the way in which human institutions or structures can both actively and passively preserve patterns of discrimination and exclusion – is less perceptible, but no less harmful than overt, individual racist acts.” And

WHEREAS: we believe men and women are equally qualified to the role of ordained ministry and leadership at all levels in the church (BOD ¶ 5300). And we consistently put forth our historical freedoms as a denomination, including “freedom for women and men to be treated respectfully and use their gifts equally in the church, in the home, and in the world.” (The Freedoms of Free Methodists, Light and Life, Denny Wayman). And

WHEREAS: the Free Methodist Church believes equitable treatment in the workplace as described in the BOD ¶ 3231 where it says “Our concern for justice is primarily a concern to be just and only secondarily a concern to obtain justice. We believe that all persons have the privilege to be gainfully employed irrespective of gender, race, color, national origin, or creed (Romans 10:12). And

WHEREAS: our history is one that values openness, honesty and fairness over institutions that make decisions in secret, causing us to be aligned with the power of men and inadvertently aligned with systems of discrimination. (BOD ¶ 3132 and ¶ 3221) And

WHEREAS: we have expressed our values as a denomination in The Free Methodist Way, including “Love-driven Justice,” that acknowledges that we have more work to do when it comes to equality, equity and justice for minorities and women in our world and churches. We must resist oppression and devote ourselves to stand against oppression of any kind. And

WHEREAS: we have expressed our values as a denomination in The Free Methodist Way for “cross-cultural” collaboration and the beauty that comes from diverse people coming together in a collaborative partnership and modeling unity in the church (Galatians 3:28). And

WHEREAS: Our highest levels of leadership are significantly lacking in representation from women and minorities.

- Superintendents: 15% minority and 12% female.
- Executive Leadership 9% minority and 18% female.
- Area Directors: 9% minority and 0 women (1). And

WHEREAS: In the 2020 yearbook, only 7 women pastored churches of 200 or more and in 2021 only 6 women pastored churches over 200. (2) And

WHEREAS: A significantly larger number of women are pursuing ordination, with less opportunities for advancement to higher levels of leadership. (In 2022 the Free Methodist Church brought in 54 men and 34 women as Conference Ministerial Candidates.) (3) And

WHEREAS: Paul states in Ephesians 1:10 that the climax of all times is for us to be one with Christ and with each other, and as Christ-followers who are Kingdom-minded, we suffer when we are not striving for oneness as a body and with each other. When there is a slant towards certain people, gender, race, or means, to have more opportunities, even if these opportunities are unintentional, we are not bringing unity, harmony, and oneness to the body of Christ. Instead, we are inadvertently upholding worldly strongholds that keep people oppressed.

1 See www.fmcusa.org, under “all leaders” in the dropdown menu.

2 See The Free Methodist Church Yearbook (Personnel, Organization and Statistics of the Free Methodist Church), 2020 and 2021.

3 Info obtained from Brad Wilcox, Board of Bishops Executive Administrator

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the following be included as a new paragraph in the BOD ¶ 5110 as an addition under ¶ 5110 A. (suggested after “the Superintendent Selection Committee shall determine the qualifications desired in a superintendent.”)

“The Superintendent Selection Committee will make known a superintendency job opening and desired qualifications in a centralized portal that is accessible to all ordained elders in the Free Methodist Church, so as to give equitable consideration to all who are qualified.

That the following be included as a new paragraph in 5220 B.

“The Ministerial Appointments Committee will make known a senior pastor position opening and desired qualifications in a centralized portal that is accessible to all ordained elders and conference ministerial candidates in the Free Methodist Church, so as to give equitable consideration to all who are qualified.”

That the following be included as a new paragraph in 6710 B.

“The senior pastor, the board of administration and the personnel committee should make known any pastoral positions open at a church and desired qualifications in a centralized portal that is accessible to all ordained elders and conference ministerial candidates in the Free Methodist Church, so as to give equitable consideration to all who are qualified.

That the following be added to an appropriate location in the BOD.

“Any openings at the denominational leadership level (such as ADLT, XLT, COO and SCOD) should be made known in a centralized portal with specifications for all qualified candidates to be considered, and to give equitable consideration to any who might be qualified, paid or unpaid.”

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: