



**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. Dr. Mindi Cromwell

ANNUAL CONFERENCE NAME: Great Plains and Mid-America
The River Conference

WRITTEN BY: Rev. Mindi Grieser Cromwell, Ph.D., and
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General Conference Secretary - OFFICE USE ONLY

Resolution No. 803

Received Date: 12/21/22

Resolution Committee Grade: _____

BOA Consideration: _____

GC Consideration: _____

Referred to Ministry Team Number:

SUBJECT OR TITLE: Clergy Sexual Abuse

Final Vote: Yes No

WHEREAS: Sexual abuse by clergy, church staff, ministry volunteers, and congregation members is not infrequent, with one study documenting over 7,000 claims of sexual abuse filed to just three insurance companies over a 20-year period¹, and

WHEREAS the FMCUSA does not have a consistent, trauma informed policy in regards to elders credibly accused or found guilty of sexual abuse or misconduct, and

WHEREAS in August of 2022, the Southern Baptist Convention, the second-largest faith group in the United States, reported that they were being investigated by the Justice Department for their lack of a clearly articulated and consistent policy and their mishandling of sexual abuse cases², and

WHEREAS, states have passed and are passing new clergy sexual abuse and misconduct laws in response to scandals and cover ups with the Catholic, Southern Baptist, and ACNA denominations, and

WHEREAS the current “Restoration Process—A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards” was last updated in 2015, and

WHEREAS the current “Restoration Process—A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards” does not contain sexual abuse specific policies or trauma informed victim processes, and

WHEREAS there is not training for clergy sexual abuse prevention and response for MEG Boards,

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Board of Administration, in partnership with the Center for Pastoral Formation (CPF), review with legal counsel and trauma-informed sexual misconduct victim advocates/counselors the current Free Methodist Church USA policies and procedures to be in line with trauma-informed victim processes and current state and federal laws in regards to clergy sexual misconduct. This process should result in updating the current written policies, procedures, and supporting documents and making them available to all FMCUSA conferences within the next twelve months.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the CPF include clergy sexual misconduct training for MEG boards in annual trainings in addition to working with the BOA and legal counsel to regularly update the policies and trainings at minimum, every two years, in the year prior to each upcoming General Conference, so that policies remain current.

¹ Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 2007

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2022/08/12/fbi-southern-baptist-sexual-abuse/>

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: