



# GLOBAL

**METHODIST CHURCH**

# **THE BOOK OF DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE**

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## **PREFACE**

Since its inception, God’s Spirit has enlivened the Methodist movement. In the 1720s John and Charles Wesley and friends at Oxford University met together to deepen their Christian faith through daily, practical spiritual disciplines. Derided by others as a “new sect of Methodists” for their “methodical” ways of practicing the faith and holding one another

accountable to it, the small group embraced the insult and persevered in their fellowship. And so they and the millions who followed after them have ever since been known as “the people called Methodists.”

In that spirit, this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church is intended to serve as a resource for all who wish to join in a “methodical,” practical, and warm-hearted pursuit of loving God and serving others as Jesus’ disciples in the world. Beginning with confessions rooted in Scripture and shaped by the great teaching of the Church universal, what follows is the Global Methodist Church’s outline for a new expression of Methodism that will be legally launched at a future date. It will provide an essential structure for the new church until its convening General Conference. Respecting the Methodist Episcopal Church’s established convention in its original *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* (1784), this book is arranged using the paragraph (§) system to allow for amendments and expansions as desired. It is offered with the prayer that it will help guide us in a new season of the church's life as we *make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly*.

We acknowledge with gratitude the work of a drafting team that assisted us in the development of this document: Rev. Thomas Lambrecht (*Wisconsin*), Rev. Dr. Chappell Temple (*Texas*), and Rev. Jay Therrell, Esq. (*Florida*).

This *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* will only be effective once the Global Methodist Church is legally formed and will provide governance until the time specified by the Global Methodist Church’s convening General Conference.

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## **PART ONE DOCTRINE**

**¶ 101. OUR HERITAGE OF FAITH.** 1. As a Wesleyan expression of Christianity, the Global Methodist Church professes the Christian faith, established on the confession of Jesus as messiah, the Son of God, and resurrected Lord of heaven and earth. This confession, expressed by Simon Peter in Matthew 16:16-19 and Acts 2:32, is foundational. It declares Jesus is the unique incarnate Word of God, and He lives today, calling all to receive Him as savior, and as the one to whom all authority has been given.

2. This faith has been tested and proved since its proclamation by Mary Magdalene, the first witness to the resurrection. It was defended by the women and men of the early church, many of whom gave their lives as testimony. Their labor, enabled and inspired by the Holy Spirit, resulted in the canon of scripture as the sufficient rule both for faith and practice (the Greek word *kanon* means rule). It formulated creeds such as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian definition as accurate expressions of this faith.
3. In the sixteenth century, the Protestant reformers preserved this testimony, asserting the primacy of Scripture, the necessity of grace and faith, and the priesthood of all believers. Their doctrinal summations, the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Schleitheim Confession*, the *Anglican Articles of Religion*, and the *Heidelberg Catechism*, bore witness to this faith.
4. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Pietists in all traditions sought to emphasize the experiential nature of this faith, as direct encounter with the risen Lord. They worked to develop the fruit of this faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in individual and communal life. These pietistic movements influenced many in the reformation traditions, including two Anglican brothers, John and Charles Wesley.
5. Through the organization and published works by these brothers, a distinctly Methodist articulation of Christian faith and life, of "practical divinity," emerged. Methodism placed particular emphasis on the universal work of grace, the new birth, and the fullness of salvation, entire sanctification or perfection. Methodists created structures and communities alongside the established church to facilitate the mission "to reform the nation, especially the church, and spread scriptural holiness over the land."
6. As Methodists moved to America, they brought this expression of faith with them. Although Methodism in England remained loyal to the established church until after John Wesley's death, the American revolution dictated the formation of a new church, independent of the Church of England. Accordingly, in 1784, while gathered in Baltimore for the "Christmas Conference," the Methodist Episcopal Church was formally constituted.
7. This new church adopted John Wesley's revision of the Anglican Articles of Religion, the Methodist General Rules, a liturgy, and ordained the first Methodist clergy. Two other sources of authority were identified: the four

volumes that included fifty-three of Wesley's sermons and his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*. When a constitution was adopted in 1808, the Restrictive Rules protected the Articles and General Rules from revocation or change.

8. Other Methodist expressions of “primitive Christianity” and “the scripture way of salvation” emerged. German-speaking Americans from pietistic Reformed, Anabaptist, and Lutheran traditions, created organizations with doctrine and discipline nearly identical to the English-speaking Methodist Episcopal Church. The work of Phillip William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, and Jacob Albright established the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. A number of African American Methodists, including Richard Allen, Jarena Lee, and James Varick, helped

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establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Zion to address racial discrimination and the injustices of slavery, while preserving doctrine and discipline.

9. Through separations and mergers, Methodist Christians have preserved testimony to the risen and reigning Christ by holding themselves accountable to standards of doctrine and discipline. Beginning with early Methodist work in the Caribbean, this Wesleyan understanding of doctrine has now spread across the globe, flourishing with the unique contributions of many cultures. When The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968, with the merger of The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren, both the Methodist *Articles of Religion* and the Evangelical United Brethren *Confession of Faith* were accepted as doctrinal standards and deemed “congruent” articulations of this faith. For fifty years, the growing voices of Methodists in Africa, the Philippines, and Europe have joined in the engagement to maintain our doctrinal heritage, promoting fidelity to the doctrinal principles that launched our movement. The Global Methodist Church preserves this heritage.

¶ **102. THE WESLEYAN WAY OF SALVATION.** 1. The gift of grace is available to all persons. Our Father in Heaven is not willing that any should be lost (Matthew 18:14), but that all may come to “the knowledge of truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). With St. Paul, we affirm the proclamation found in Romans 10:9, “That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and

believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

2. Grace is the manifestation of God’s love toward fallen creation, to be freely received and freely given. This undeserved gift works to liberate humanity from both the guilt and power of sin, and live as children of God, freed for joyful obedience. In the classic Wesleyan expression, grace works in numerous ways throughout our lives, beginning with the general providence of God toward all. 3. God’s *prevenient or preventing grace* refers to “the first dawning of grace in the soul,” mitigating the effects of original sin, even before we are aware of our need for God. It prevents the full consequences of humanity’s alienation from God and awakens conscience, giving an initial sense of God and the first inclinations toward life. Received prior to our ability to respond, preventing grace enables genuine response to the continuing work of God’s grace.

4. *God’s convincing grace* leads us to what the Bible terms “repentance,” awakening in us a desire to “flee the wrath to come” and enabling us to begin to “fear God and work righteousness.”

5. God’s *justifying grace* works by faith to bring reconciliation to God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, what God does for us. It is pardon for sin and ordinarily results in assurance, “God’s Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God.”

6. God’s *sanctifying grace* begins with God’s work of regeneration, sometimes referred to as “being born again.” It is God’s work in us as we continually turn to Him and seek to be perfected in His love. Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit works to replace sin with the fruit of the Spirit. With John Wesley, we believe that a life of holiness or “entire sanctification” should be the goal of each individual’s journey with God.

7. Our ultimate hope and promise in Christ is glorification, where our souls and bodies are perfectly restored through this grace.

¶ **103. PRINCIPLES OF OUR LIFE TOGETHER.** Wesley said, “there is no holiness but social.” By referring to “social holiness,” Wesley meant that the road to holiness was one that we could not travel by ourselves, but rather involved the community of faith at every step along the way.

Our longing and hope are that our church may:

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1. Remain rooted and grounded in the scriptures and in the historic teachings of the Christian church as defined in our Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith, and understood through the Wesleyan lens of faith.
2. Aspire to introduce all people, without exception, to Jesus Christ, recognizing that the mission in which we are engaged has eternal consequences. We are committed to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 to go into all the world to make disciples of Christ, teaching and baptizing in His name.
3. Lead all those who experience new birth in Jesus to deepen and grow in their relationship with Him, inviting the Holy Spirit to produce spiritual fruit within their lives as they similarly manifest the gifts of that Spirit. We encourage all to participate in discipleship and accountability groups, such as Wesleyan class and band meetings, and to utilize all the other means of grace to achieve this end.
4. Model the love of God in order to respond to the summons to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. To this end we are committed to fulfill the commandment in John 21 of lovingly feeding and tending to the flock of God and others, worshiping God in spirit, and in truth and watching over one another in love. This the church does until, perfected in love, it experiences the fullness of God's restored Kingdom with Christ.
5. Recognize the laity as the people of God and a royal priesthood, chosen and empowered for the work of God in this world in full partnership with our clergy. We affirm the participation and leadership of those of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, sexes, and ages in the Body of Christ.
6. Encourage and affirm the call of God in the lives of clergy who are grounded in the authoritative witness of the Scriptures, set apart by the church, and recognized to possess the necessary gifts and graces for ministry in alignment and accountability with our settled doctrines and discipline.
7. Display a "catholic spirit" to the church universal, cherishing our place within the greater Body of Christ through mutual respect, cooperative relationships, and shared mission with others wherever possible. We envision a global church in which all work together, resourcing and learning from one another, to fulfill the tasks of the church given to it by God.

8. Provide an organization and structure that is able to accomplish its primary functions of support, with a connectional polity that can empower and multiply the gifts of all for the sake of Christ's work in the world.

¶ **104. HOLY SCRIPTURE.** The canonical books of the Old and New Testaments (as specified in the Articles of Religion) are the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service, against which all other authorities must be measured.

¶ **105. FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS FOR OUR DOCTRINAL STANDARDS.** The following summaries of the apostolic witness disclosed in Scripture have been affirmed by many Christian communities, and express orthodox Christian teaching.

### 1. **THE APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,

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suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.

On the third day He rose again;

He ascended into heaven,

Is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic\* church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

\*\* universal

### 2. **THE NICENE CREED (A.D. 381)**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came

down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic\* and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

\* universal

### **3. THE DEFINITION OF CHALCEDON (A.D. 451)**

Following the holy fathers, we teach with one voice that the Son of God and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same Person, That He is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body consisting of one substance with the Father as regards

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His Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards His manhood, like us in all respects, apart from sin.

Begotten of His Father before the ages as regards His Godhead,

But in these last days born for us and for our salvation of the Virgin Mary, the God- bearer.

This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, must be confessed to be in two natures, without confusion, without changes, without division, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of Him,

And our Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us,

And the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.



¶ **106. CONSTITUTIVE STANDARDS.** As is the case in many Christian communities, we recognize additional statements of faith that are consistent with the creedal tradition of the church universal, but which also express our church’s particular emphases and concerns, as well as our theological heritage of faith. These constitutive standards embody the “faith once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3) and serve as a bulwark against false teaching, providing the framework for the praise of God in our teaching (orthodoxy), the development of our collective theology, and the launching point for our living and service (orthopraxis). Recognizing the complementary streams of the Methodist and the Evangelical United Brethren faith communities, both the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith define the doctrinal boundaries of our church, until such time as a combined Articles of Faith may be approved by the church.

### **1. THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE METHODIST**

**CHURCH.** Thirty- Nine Articles of Religion were finalized in 1571 to define the doctrine of the Church of England. When Methodism emerged as a church, independent of the Church of England two centuries later, John Wesley abbreviated the formulation to 24 Articles. An additional article dealing with the duty of Christians to civil authority was added by the Methodist Episcopal Church when it was formed in 1784. The Articles were officially adopted by the General Conference of 1808, when the first Restrictive Rule was also implemented, and revised by the Uniting Conference of 1939 when three Methodist communions within America became one. The Twenty-Five Articles are as follows:

#### **Article I - Of Faith in the Holy Trinity**

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and good; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

#### **Article II - Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man**

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided;

whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried,

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to reconcile us to His Father, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

### **Article III - Of the Resurrection of Christ**

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

### **Article IV - Of the Holy Ghost**

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

### **Article V - Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation**

The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments of whose authority was never any doubt in the church. The names of the canonical books are:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings,

The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the Greater, Twelve Prophets the Less.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

### **Article VI - Of the Old Testament**

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man.

Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look

only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

#### **Article VII - Of Original or Birth Sin**

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

#### **Article VIII - Of Free Will**

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

#### **Article IX - Of the Justification of Man**

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We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

#### **Article X - Of Good Works**

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

#### **Article XI - Of Works of Supererogation**

Voluntary works—besides, over and above God's commandments—which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto

God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly: When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

#### **Article XII - Of Sin After Justification**

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

#### **Article XIII - Of the Church**

The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

#### **Article XIV - Of Purgatory**

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

#### **Article XV - Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand**

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

#### **Article XVI - Of the Sacraments**

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

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Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted

for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

#### **Article XVII - Of Baptism**

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The Baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

#### **Article XVIII - Of the Lord's Supper**

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

#### **Article XIX - Of Both Kinds**

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

#### **Article XX - Of the One Oblation of Christ, Finished upon the Cross**

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone.

Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

#### **Article XXI - Of the Marriage of Ministers**

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

#### **Article XXII - Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches**

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It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

#### **Article XXIII - Of the Rulers of the United States of America**

The President, the Congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States and by the constitutions of their respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

#### **Article XXIV - Of Christian Men's Goods**

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast.

Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

#### **Article XXV - Of a Christian Man's Oath**

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle, so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

#### **Of Sanctification (*from the Methodist Protestant Discipline*)**

Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement cleanseth all from sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, but are washed from its pollution, saved from its power, and enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts and to walk in His holy commandments blameless.

[The following provision was adopted by the Uniting Conference (1939).

#### **Of the Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority**

It is the duty of all Christians, and especially of all Christian ministers, to observe and obey the laws and commands of the governing or supreme authority of the country of which are citizens or

The following Article from the *Methodist Protestant Discipline* was placed here by the Uniting

Conference (1939). It was not one of the Articles of Religion voted upon by the three churches.]

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subjects or in which they reside, and to use all laudable means to encourage and enjoin obedience to the powers that be.

## **2. THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH**

In 1809, the Evangelical Association adopted a German translation of the Methodist

Episcopal Church's Articles of Religion, adding an article on the last judgement from the Augsburg Confession. These were reduced to twenty-one in 1816, omitting polemical articles against Roman Catholics and Anabaptists, and later condensed to nineteen. In 1815, the United Brethren in Christ adopted a Confession of Faith based on an 1814 Confession and 1789 *Lehre* by Philip William Otterbein. A more comprehensive Confession was composed in 1889, including an article on sanctification reflecting the influence of the Heidelberg Catechism. The 1946 conference that formed the Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted both the Confession of Faith of the United Brethren in Christ and the Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Church. In 1962 a new Confession of Faith was completed, including articles on "Sanctification and Christian Perfection" (Article XI) and "The Judgement and Future State" (Article XII). This was adopted in the 1968 merger with the Methodist Church that produced the United Methodist Church.

### **Article I - God**

We believe in the one true, holy and living God, Eternal Spirit, who is Creator, Sovereign and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. He is infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness and love, and rules with gracious regard for the well-being and salvation of men, to the glory of his name. We believe the one God reveals himself as the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, distinct but inseparable, eternally one in essence and power.

### **Article II - Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man, in whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united. He is the eternal Word made flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father, born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. As ministering Servant he



lived, suffered and died on the cross. He was buried, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to be with the Father, from whence he shall return. He is eternal Savior and Mediator, who intercedes for us, and by him all men will be judged.

### **Article III - The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from and is one in being with the Father and the Son. He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He leads men through faithful response to the gospel into the fellowship of the Church. He comforts, sustains and empowers the faithful and guides them into all truth.

### **Article IV - The Holy Bible**

We believe the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, reveals the Word of God so far as it is necessary for our salvation. It is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice. Whatever is not revealed in or established by the Holy Scriptures is not to be made an article of faith nor is it to be taught as essential to salvation.

### **Article V - The Church**

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We believe the Christian Church is the community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. We believe it is one, holy, apostolic and catholic. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by men divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers and the redemption of the world.

### **Article VI - The Sacraments**

We believe the Sacraments, ordained by Christ, are symbols and pledges of the Christian's profession and of God's love toward us. They are means of grace by which God works invisibly in us, quickening, strengthening and confirming our faith in him. Two Sacraments are ordained by Christ our Lord, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We believe Baptism signifies entrance into the household of faith, and is a symbol of repentance and inner cleansing from sin, a representation of the new birth in Christ Jesus and a mark of Christian discipleship.

We believe children are under the atonement of Christ and as heirs of the Kingdom of God are acceptable subjects for Christian Baptism. Children of believing parents through Baptism become the special responsibility of the Church. They should be nurtured and led to personal acceptance of Christ, and by profession of faith confirm their Baptism.

We believe the Lord's Supper is a representation of our redemption, a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and a token of love and union which Christians have with Christ and with one another. Those who rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until he comes.

#### **Article VII - Sin and Free Will**

We believe man is fallen from righteousness and, apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is destitute of holiness and inclined to evil. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. In his own strength, without divine grace, man cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God. We believe, however, man influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit is responsible in freedom to exercise his will for good.

#### **Article VIII - Reconciliation Through Christ**

We believe God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The offering Christ freely made on the cross is the perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, redeeming man from all sin, so that no other satisfaction is required.

#### **Article IX - Justification and Regeneration**

We believe we are never accounted righteous before God through our works or merit, but that penitent sinners are justified or accounted righteous before God only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe regeneration is the renewal of man in righteousness through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature and experience newness of life. By this new birth the believer becomes reconciled to God and is enabled to serve him with the will and the affections. We believe, although we have experienced regeneration, it is possible to depart from grace and fall into sin; and we may even then, by the grace of God, be renewed in righteousness.

#### **Article X - Good Works**

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We believe good works are the necessary fruits of faith and follow regeneration but they do not have the virtue to remove our sins or to avert divine judgment. We believe good works, pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, spring from a true and living faith, for through and by them faith is made evident.

### **Article XI - Sanctification and Christian Perfection**

We believe sanctification is the work of God's grace through the Word and the Spirit, by which those who have been born again are cleansed from sin in their thoughts, words and acts, and are enabled to live in accordance with God's will, and to strive for holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every regenerate believer may obtain by being delivered from the power of sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one's neighbor as one's self. Through faith in Jesus Christ this gracious gift may be received in this life both gradually and instantaneously, and should be sought earnestly by every child of God. We believe this experience does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes common to man, nor from the possibilities of further sin. The Christian must continue on guard against spiritual pride and seek to gain victory over every temptation to sin. He must respond wholly to the will of God so that sin will lose its power over him; and the world, the flesh, and the devil are put under his feet. Thus he rules over these enemies with watchfulness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **Article XII - The Judgment and the Future State**

We believe all men stand under the righteous judgment of Jesus Christ, both now and in the last day. We believe in the resurrection of the dead; the righteous to life eternal and the wicked to endless condemnation.

### **Article XIII - Public Worship**

We believe divine worship is the duty and privilege of man who, in the presence of God, bows in adoration, humility and dedication. We believe divine worship is essential to the life of the Church, and that the assembling of the people of God for such worship is necessary to Christian fellowship and spiritual growth.

We believe the order of public worship need not be the same in all places but may be modified by the church according to circumstances and the

needs of men. It should be in a language and form understood by the people, consistent with the Holy Scriptures to the edification of all, and in accordance with the order and *Discipline* of the Church.

#### **Article XIV - The Lord's Day**

We believe the Lord's Day is divinely ordained for private and public worship, for rest from unnecessary work, and should be devoted to spiritual improvement, Christian fellowship and service. It is commemorative of our Lord's resurrection and is an emblem of our eternal rest. It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian Church, and important to the welfare of the civil community.

#### **Article XV - The Christian and Property**

We believe God is the owner of all things and that the individual holding of property is lawful and is a sacred trust under God. Private property is to be used for the manifestation of Christian love and

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liberality, and to support the Church's mission in the world. All forms of property, whether private, corporate or public, are to be held in solemn trust and used responsibly for human good under the sovereignty of God.

#### **Article XVI - Civil Government**

We believe civil government derives its just powers from the sovereign God. As Christians we recognize the governments under whose protection we reside and believe such governments should be based on, and be responsible for, the recognition of human rights under God. We believe war and bloodshed are contrary to the gospel and spirit of Christ. We believe it is the duty of Christian citizens to give moral strength and purpose to their respective governments through sober, righteous and godly living.

### **¶ 107. NORMATIVE WESLEYAN STANDARDS**

Representing the normative contributions and emphases of Methodism's articulation of the Christian faith, the Wesleyan Standards have, to one degree or another, been broadly shared between the spiritual descendants of the eighteenth-century evangelical renewal led by John and Charles Wesley. These standards teach us what it means to be Methodist and the teachings of our communities should be consistent with them. These include the following:

1. **THE STANDARD SERMONS OF JOHN WESLEY** Intended to provide patterns of preaching and teaching for the people called Methodists, John Wesley published several editions of his sermons, beginning in 1746, to set down what he found as “the way to heaven, with a view to distinguish this way of God from all those which are the inventions of men.” The compilation of forty-four of those sermons were intended to provide a “model deed” for what was preached from a Methodist pulpit in the ongoing life of the church. These particular sermons were regarded by Wesley as being of distinct value, and intended to serve as “standards” for teaching Christian doctrine in the church:

1. *Salvation by Faith* 2. *The Almost Christian*
3. *Awake, Thou That Sleepest* 4. *Scriptural Christianity*
5. *Justification By Faith* 6. *The Righteousness of Faith*
7. *The Way to the Kingdom* 8. *The First-Fruits of the Spirit*
9. *The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption* 10. *The Witness of the Spirit - Discourse I*
11. *The Witness of our own Spirit* 12. *The Means of Grace*
13. *The Circumcision of the Heart* 14. *The Marks of the New Birth*
15. *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*
- 16-28. *Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (13 Discourses)*
29. *The Original, Nature, Property and Use of the Law*
- 30-31. *The Law Established through Faith Discourse (2 Discourses)*
32. *The Nature of Enthusiasm* 33. *A Caution against Bigotry*
34. *Catholic Spirit* 35. *Christian Perfection*
36. *Wondering Thoughts* 37. *Satan's Devices*
38. *Original Sin* 39. *The New Birth*
40. *The Wilderness State* 41. *Heaviness through Manifold Temptations*
42. *Self-Denial* 43. *The Cure of Evil Speaking*
44. *The Use of Money*

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¶ 108.

The 1771 edition of Wesley's *Works* included nine additional sermons:  
*The Witness of the Spirit, II*

*On Sin in Believers*

*The Repentance of Believers*

*The Great Assize*

*The Lord Our Righteousness*

*The Scripture Way of Salvation*

*The Good Steward*

*The Reformation of Manners*

*On the Death of George Whitefield*

In addition to the forty-four, these nine sermons were adopted as standards of doctrine for the American church in 1784. The 1787-88 edition of Wesley's sermons included only the forty-four, in keeping with the stipulations of the model deed.

The additional nine sermons supplement the original forty-four, providing additional

teaching on matters of practical divinity and other topics.

**THE EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT** First published in

1755, John Wesley's New Testament text is based upon the King James Version and Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. The notes were aimed at the "unlearned reader" and provide historical context for and Wesleyan theological interpretation of the Scriptures, drawing upon work of four earlier commentaries.

**THE GENERAL RULES OF THE UNITED SOCIETIES.** In order to make explicit the expectations upon those who are members of the Methodist societies, John Wesley first devised a set of rules in 1738, publishing it five years later. The General Rules were subsequently adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1785, one year after its formation.

The General Rules provide a helpful summation of the kind of intentional discipleship which marked early Methodism, summed up in three simple rubrics: do no harm, do good to all, and stay connected to the sacramental and devotional life of the church. The Rules thus remain a part of the Constitution and are protected by the Restrictive Rules.

### **The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies**

"In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them, and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

This was the rise of the United Society, first in Europe, and then in America. Such a society is no other than ‘a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.’

That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called **classes**, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in a class, one of whom is styled the leader. It is his duty:

1. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order: (1) to inquire how their souls prosper; (2) to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occasion may require; (3) to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church, and poor.

2. To meet the ministers and the stewards of the society once a week, in order: (1) to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly and will not be reprov'd; (2) to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding. There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies: ‘a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.’ But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits.

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

*First:* By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.

Drunkenness: buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

Slaveholding: buying or selling slaves.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing;

the using many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.



The giving or taking things on usury—i.e., unlawful interest.  
Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.  
Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.  
Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:  
The putting on of gold and costly apparel.  
The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.  
The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.  
Softness and needless self-indulgence.  
Laying up treasure upon earth.  
Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.  
It is expected of all who continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

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*Secondly:* By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men:

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that ‘we are not to do good unless *our hearts be free to it.*’

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them *falsely*, for the Lord’s sake.

It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

*Thirdly:* By attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are:

The public worship of God.

The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded. The Supper of the Lord.

Family and private prayer.

Searching the Scriptures.

Fasting or abstinence.

These are the General Rules of our societies; all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul as they who must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.”

## **PART TWO SOCIAL WITNESS**

**. THE RESTRICTIVE RULE.** In continuity with our Wesleyan heritage, the governing body of the Global Methodist Church shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or Confession of Faith, or establish any new standards of rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

¶ **201. OUR SOCIAL HERITAGE** 1. Following both the example and teachings of Jesus, we believe that God calls us to love and serve others around the world in His name. Since God first stirred the hearts of John and Charles Wesley to feed the hungry, visit those in prison, oppose slavery, and care for those less fortunate, Methodists have believed in meeting people at their point of need and offering them Jesus. We are convinced that faith if it is not accompanied by action is

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dead (James 2:17) and that, as Jesus reminded us, when we do not do what is needed to care for the least of our sisters and brothers, we likewise have

not done so for Christ either (Matthew 25:45).

2. It was in that spirit that the Methodist Episcopal Church became the first denomination in the world to adopt a formal Social Creed in 1908, spurred by the Social Gospel in response to the deplorable working conditions of millions. Though reflective of its own time, the statement is still remarkably relevant even today, calling for, among other things, “equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life, principles of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions, abolition of child labor, the suppression of the ‘sweating system,’ a reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practical point, a release from employment one day in seven, and for a living wage in every industry.” In turn, that prophetic witness was subsequently embraced by each of the other branches of Methodism and the Evangelical United Brethren Church and continues this day within the Global Methodist Church. As a global church, our Social Witness represents a consensus vision transcending cultures of what it means to be faithful disciples in a world that remains in rebellion against its Creator, wracked by violence and unfettered greed. It is a summons to prayerfully consider how to “do good” and “do no harm” to all as we put our faith into practice.

## ¶ 202. OUR WITNESS TO THE WORLD.

1. We believe that all persons irrespective of their station or circumstances in life have been made in the image of God and must be treated with dignity, justice, and respect. We denounce as sin racism, sexism, and other expressions that unjustly discriminate against any person (*Genesis 1-2, Deuteronomy 16:19-20, Luke 11:42, 19:9, Colossians 3:11*).
2. We believe that life is a holy gift of God whose beginnings and endings are set by God, and that it is the particular duty of believers to protect those who may be powerless to protect themselves, including the unborn, those with disabilities or serious illness, and the aged (*Genesis 2:7, Leviticus 19:32, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:41-44*).
3. The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the wellbeing of the mother and the child are at stake. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of Life to

prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources (*Exodus 22:23-23, Psalm 139:13-16, James 1:27*).

4. We believe that all should have the right to work in safe conditions with fair compensation and free of grinding toil or exploitation by others. We respect the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining to protect their welfare. We pray that all should be allowed to freely follow their vocations, especially those who work on the frontiers of truth and knowledge and those who may enrich the lives of others with beauty and joy. We acknowledge that science and technology are gifts of God intended to improve human life and we encourage dialogue between faith and science as mutual witnesses to God's creative power (*Deuteronomy 5:12-14, Luke 10:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 5:18*).
5. We believe that God has called us to share His concern for the poor and to alleviate the conditions and policies which have produced vast disparities in wealth and resources, both among individuals and nations, giving rise to poverty. We are called to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all God's people as we share the good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed (*Leviticus 19:9-10, Matthew 25:37-40, Luke 6:20-25, James 2:1-5*).
6. We believe that all have been summoned to care for the earth as our common home, stewarding its resources, sharing in its bounty, and exercising responsible and sustainable consumption so that there is enough for all (*Genesis 2:15, Leviticus 26:34-35, Psalm 24:1*).

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7. We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman (*Exodus 20:14, Matthew 24:3-9, Ephesians 5:22-33*).
8. We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior, including pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for His children. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive

grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives (*Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20*).

9. We believe that children, whether through birth or adoption, are a sacred gift to us from God, and we accept our responsibility to both protect and nurture the youngest among us, particularly against such abuses as enforced child labor, involuntary conscription, human trafficking, and other such practices in the world (*Deuteronomy 4:9-10, Psalm 127:3-5, 1 Timothy 5:4,8,16*).
10. We believe that followers of God have been called to exercise self-control and holiness in their personal lives, generosity and kindness in their relations with others, and grace in all matters of life (*Romans 12:9-21, Galatians 5:22-23*).
11. We believe in the rule of justice and law in society, in the right of individuals to follow God's call and to lawfully immigrate to new places, and in the pursuit of peace both between nations and individuals. We offer ourselves to work in order to reduce the bitterness that has overflowed in God's world (*Genesis 12:1, Isaiah 11:1-9, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 2:19-10*).
12. We believe the practice of the Golden Rule, treating others as we would wish to be treated, can effectively guide our social and business relationships. We seek to cultivate the mind of Christ and a heart for others (*Matthew 7:12, Romans 12:1-2*).
13. We believe that each person should have the right to exercise their religious beliefs without fear of persecution and that governments should respect freedom of religion and the important role of faith communities within the greater society. We further denounce discrimination or persecution which may target any because of their gender, economic status, ethnic or tribal identity, age, or political views (*Isaiah 1:17, Matthew 5:44, Romans 8:35*).
14. We believe in the final triumph of righteousness when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ, and we accept our calling to work towards that end as Christ's light and the salt of the earth (*Matthew 5:13-16, Revelation 11:15-17, Revelation 21-22*).

## PART THREE

### THE COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

#### Section I. Foundational Principles

¶ **301. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.** The mission of the Global Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

Anchored in our belief in Jesus Christ, the Church is of God and will be preserved to the end of time to worship God in spirit and in truth, to faithfully preach God's Word and offer the holy sacraments, to edify all who believe and encourage them to grow in their lives of holiness and service to others, to minister to those who are in special need, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to present the world with a clear and compelling invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord. All those of every age and station stand in need of the grace that God has promised to extend to others

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through His Body, the Church. While it is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit to change the hearts of individuals, ours is the task of sharing the good news of God as we respond to the summons of Christ in Matthew 28: *"As you are going, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,"* even as Christ has promised to remain with us always, *"even to the end of the age."*

Following the example of early Methodists, we believe God has raised us up in order to "spread scriptural holiness across the land," embodying that "grand *depositum*" of the faith that John Wesley believed had been entrusted to "the people called Methodists," the continued striving for entire sanctification in our lives. As individual believers in Christ, and as those gathered together in local congregations, our calling is to connect with the communities and the world around us, extending both grace and mercy. Growing in our personal faith, and effectively discipling others, are both life-long expressions of loving the Lord with all of our hearts, all of our being, and all of our minds, as well as loving our neighbor as ourselves.

¶ **302. A GLOBAL CHURCH.** John Wesley famously declared in his journal on June 11, 1739, "I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of

salvation.” Since that time Methodists have recognized that at the core of our church’s mission is ensuring that the Good News of Jesus Christ is shared around the globe. From Britain, to the Americas, to the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Methodists who came before us shared Jesus’ message of salvation. Today our mission receives this rich inheritance and moves forward boldly into a new chapter. We recognize the world is the parish of the Global Methodist Church. We are active in advancing the cause of Christ on multiple continents, and our faith communities will continue to do so.

Ours is a global church that recognizes the gifts and contributions of each part of our communion in Christ, working together as partners in the gospel with equal voice and leadership. Learning from each other and sharing best practices across cultures, we follow the admonition of St. Paul that “to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good,” that together we are the Body of Christ, sharing in “an equal concern for one another” (1 Corinthians 12). Our vision of a global church is one marked by mutual love, concern, sharing, and accountability.

¶ **303. OUR COVENANT IN CHRIST.** We believe that God has called us to live together in a faithful covenant that expresses our commitments both to God and to each other. With John Wesley, we affirm that the scriptures know of no such thing as "solitary religion," but that we have been designed to grow in our discipleship in the company of others. As a church, we are committed to a connectional organization that is meant to encourage such sharing and accountability, with the end goal of all being partners in the gospel and in our outreach to the world. This connection is founded in both our common doctrinal understandings, as well as in our core mission of sharing the gospel with the world. Towards that end, we celebrate our unity with one another at the table of the Lord that extends across the globe, crossing all boundaries of language, culture, customs, and social and economic distinctions.

¶ **304. THE MINISTRY OF THE LAITY.** God has entrusted His work in this world to the whole people of God. All Christians are called through their baptism to be in ministry to others, both as individuals and as a part of the church, using the gifts and graces with which they have been equipped by the Holy Spirit. Every layperson bears the responsibility for carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), but likewise each

have been given the power by God to do so. For like the variety of spiritual gifts described in the scriptures, the diversity of our outreach efforts

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knows no limit either when we serve Christ with joy and thanksgiving. With other heirs of the Protestant Reformation, we embrace the notion of "the priesthood of all believers" and we call upon both laity and clergy to work together in a partnership of servant hood. As suggested in Ephesians 4:12-13, Christ has not given to pastors the task of doing the ministry by themselves, but of equipping those in the church for such works of service, so that "the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

We believe that it is only as each individual, whether lay or clergy, bears witness to God's grace that the world may come to know Christ and respond to His invitation to have life in abundance. Each member is therefore expected to be a witness for Christ in the world, a light and leaven in society, and a reconciler in a culture of conflict, identifying with the agony and suffering of the world and radiating and exemplifying the Christ of hope. As the people of God, we must either win the world to Christ, or abandon it to those forces that oppose Him. Beyond the diverse forms of ministry is this ultimate concern: that all persons will be brought into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and be renewed after the image of their creator (Colossians 3:10). This means that all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free. Toward that end, the full participation of all who believe is vital and cannot be evaded if the gospel is to be heard and received.

¶ **305. TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP.** In light of the mission of the Church and our covenant in Christ, the Global Methodist Church engages the commandment to make disciples of Jesus through an intentional process grounded in Scripture and in our Wesleyan heritage. The Global Methodist Church defines a disciple as a person whose life reflects the character of Christ and extends the mission of Christ in holy love of God and neighbor. The disciple's character and practice are informed by the Scriptures, nurtured by the community of faith, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The disciple's mission is to continue the



mission and ministry of Jesus through works of teaching, service, multiplication, mercy, and justice making more obedient disciples who will reflect the character and mission of Christ and expanding the boundaries of Christ's Kingdom further out into the world.

The goal of transformational discipleship ministry in the Global Methodist Church is to make, develop, and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ through small groups where each person is invited, challenged, supported, and held accountable in living sanctified lives that reflect the practices, character, and mission of Christ.

¶ **306. CALLED TO INCLUSIVENESS.** We recognize that God made all creation and saw that it was good. As a diverse people of God who bring special gifts and evidences of God's grace to the unity of the Church and to society, we are called to be faithful to the example of Jesus' ministry to all persons. Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the spiritual life of the Church and its service to the community and the world. Therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or gender (defined throughout this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* by a person's immutable biological traits identified by or before birth). The services of worship of every local church of the Global Methodist Church shall be open to all persons and church activities wherever possible should take place in facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Similarly, inclusiveness means the freedom for the total involvement of all persons who

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meet the requirements of our *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in the membership and leadership of the Church at any level and in every place.

¶ **307. LEGAL DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH.** Affirming the spiritual dimensions of the ministry of all Christians, it is recognized that this ministry exists in the secular world and that civil authorities may seek legal definition predicated on the nature of the Global Methodist Church in seeking fulfillment of this ministry. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the meaning of "Global Methodist Church," "the general Church," "the entire Church," and "the Church" as used in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* should be consonant with the traditional self-understanding of Methodists as to the meaning of these words. These terms refer to the

overall denomination and connectional relation and identity of its many local churches, the various conferences and their respective councils, boards, and agencies, and other Church units, which collectively constitute the religious system known as Global Methodism. Under the procedures set forth in this *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, the “Global Methodist Church” as a denominational whole is not an entity, nor does it possess legal capacities and attributes. It does not and cannot hold title to property, nor does it have any officer, agent, employee, office, or location. Conferences, councils, boards, agencies, local churches, and other units bearing the name are, for the most part, legal entities capable of suing and being sued and possessed of legal capacities.