

APPENDIX II: CONFERENCE DECISIONS, 1997–2004

1. Decisions of 1997

1. Preparatory Schools shall become Conference educational institutions.
2. Conference shall extend assistance to Mo‘unga ‘Olive College because of hardship caused by Cyclone Hina, which destroyed classrooms and damaged teachers’ residences.
3. Hōfangahau College shall continue to Form 3 in 1998.
4. Hango College shall borrow \$150,000 from the Church in 1997 for development of the school. The following conditions apply:
 - (a) the \$150,000 loan is approved for the proposed development;
 - (e) the prices of equipment proposed by the Principal shall be reviewed;
 - (f) members of the Finance Committee shall assist the Principal in identifying suppliers able to provide equipment and resources at lower cost;
 - (h) the Principal shall provide a monthly progress report to the Conference Committee and Finance Committee;
 - (i) the money shall remain in the Church Office and be released only as approved work is carried out, following normal Church financial procedures;
 - (k) Hango College shall repay the Church according to the Principal’s proposal together with interest at five per cent per annum.
5. Basic carpentry and bookkeeping shall be taught at the Theological College. The matter shall be referred to the Sia‘atoutai Committee and Education Board.
6. A total of \$48,000 shall be requested from the 74th Conference for the training of three Sia‘atoutai College lecturers:
 1. one lecturer for a three-year M.Th., \$4,000 through a distance programme from Tonga;
 2. one lecturer for a two-year M.Th. overseas in New Zealand, \$22,000;
 3. one lecturer for a two-year PhD in New Zealand, \$22,000.
7. The Full Conference shall further discuss Tonga’s relationship with overseas Churches in accordance with the annual report of the Overseas Mission Board, with particular attention to the specified requests. The Conference Committee, Overseas Mission Board, Ministers’ Conference Committee and Constitution Committee shall give the matter special attention.
8. The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga shall continue sending missionaries overseas to peoples who have not yet heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
9. A new Centre shall be constructed in Nuku‘alofa to bring together the Departments of the Church as the Year 2000 Memorial Project and “Fakamo‘oni 2000” initiative.

10. The Education Committee shall consider establishing a Church scholarship for legal studies because of the strong need for such expertise.
11. The equipment allowance for Ministers beginning work in a new Circuit shall increase from \$70 to \$100, and the Constitution shall be amended to include Conference Stewards in this provision.
12. The death benefit for a Conference Steward shall increase from \$50 to \$500.
13. All years of service by a person employed in the Church, whether in a Department or educational institution, shall count towards that person's service record. Service shall continue to accumulate when the person transfers between Departments or institutions.
14. The Constitution shall be amended so that Ordained Ministers may take three months' furlough after five years of service while retaining the option of taking six months after ten years as under the existing provision.
15. Conference shall purchase a vehicle and photocopier for the Regional Chairperson and Church Office in Ha'apai.
16. The President's Office shall investigate why Trustees' money from Niua Fo'ou was used to lease the town's bush allotment.
17. The 74th Conference shall be asked to approve \$301,980 to train one hundred teachers by the year 2000, continuing the teacher-training programme already begun.
18. Each year the Full Conference shall participate in receiving the testimony of Ministers who have completed their service and are preparing to retire at age seventy.
19. Conference shall provide \$14,968 for the Missionary History project for 1997–98.
20. A Church Trust/Investment Fund shall be established, open to Departments and Trustees wishing to participate, with the purpose of providing a source from which Departments or Trustees may borrow.
21. The Church's financial obligations shall be recognised, and the annual Mission Offering target shall be reviewed with a view to increasing it so that major responsibilities can be met.
22. School fees shall be increased from 1997 according to the schedule adopted by Conference:

Level	Day Students	Boarding Students
Forms 1–2	\$150	\$200
Forms 3–4	\$170	\$220
Form 5	\$190	\$240
Form 6	\$210	\$260
Intermediate, Forms 1–2	\$125 per year	—
Hango	\$270 per year or \$135 per semester	—

23. When a Minister reaches seventy years of age, Conference shall present a certificate or written commendation acknowledging the Minister's service in the year of retirement.
24. Trustees are asked to give particular care and assistance to poor and disadvantaged people within their communities.
25. The 1995 financial report of the Principal of Sia'atoutai, the Rev. Dr Sālesi Havea, shall be completed by the President, Conference Secretary, Chair of the Finance Committee Hon. Dr Hu'akavameiliku, Finance Secretary and Legal Adviser. The completed report shall be presented to the Conference Committee and then to the following year's Conference.

2. Decisions of 1998

1. The Departments of Christian Education, Evangelism and Women shall prepare full-time Church workers who can assist Ministers and Stewards in local congregations. Ministers shall communicate their needs, and the Departments shall allocate workers accordingly.
2. The constitutional provision concerning Conference Stewards' furlough shall be amended from six months after fifteen years' service to three months after five years' service.
3. The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga shall undertake a Church-wide evangelistic ministry towards religious groups and faiths that are not Christian.
4. Money raised in the name of the Church shall be regarded as Church money and must appear in the Church's financial statements.
5. A fund shall be established to protect and assist Church employees who encounter unforeseen hardship or emergency.
6. The Conference Committee and Constitution Committee shall consider the proper tribunal or process for hearing disciplinary cases involving Conference Stewards.
7. The Conference Committee and Constitution Committee shall consider how the Constitution should address what the printed decision calls "Sodomite life".
8. The request for financial assistance towards the Steward's residence and church building at Matuku, Ha'apai, shall be noted and referred to the Conference Committee.
9. The Department of Christian Education shall include teaching about the doctrines of other religions in the Sunday School syllabus.
10. The Church Education Office shall attend to the agreement with Government concerning the High School in Niua Toputapu, particularly Church property and resources used by the school.

3. Decisions of 1999

1. A kindergarten shall be established at Fatai in accordance with the Education Department development programme, under the oversight of the Church Education Department.
2. The Church Education Department shall survey the former Ma'ufanga school property and assess student numbers to determine whether the school can be re-established.
3. Mo'unga 'Olive shall become one of the Conference Colleges.
4. Fua'amotu Intermediate College shall be re-established because of the large number of children not attending school and the potential future loss of Church members. The Church Education Office shall consult the Trustees of Fua'amotu regarding the details.
5. Conference shall continue to give attention to Tongan Churches in New Zealand and Australia in relation to the matter described in the source as "Sodomite life", particularly the Tongan Methodist Church in New Zealand.
6. The Ministers' Conference Committee shall also serve as the Faith and Order Committee responsible for doctrine and worship practice.
7. Any responsibility relating to the Church as a whole shall first be communicated through the Office of the President.
8. If a Minister wishes to participate in political activity, it shall be made clear that the Minister acts in a personal capacity and does not represent the Church. Where representation of the Church is required, the President of the Church shall be invited.
9. The Overseas Mission Board shall consider requests concerning the relationship of overseas Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga congregations to the Tongan Conference.
10. The Retirement Fund provision shall be corrected so that a Minister begins, at the end of the quarter following the Conference at which the Minister retires, to receive an annual allowance calculated at \$10 for every year served in active appointment, paid in quarterly instalments until the quarter preceding the Minister's death.
11. Local congregations shall be free to establish their own kindergartens.
12. All proposals and notices of motion concerning Tongan Churches overseas shall be noted, and the President and Overseas Mission Board shall continue the work already begun.
13. The Conference Committee and Constitution Committee shall reorganise the procedures governing notices of motion to Conference.

4. Decisions of 2000

1. **Dress of female Ministers.** When conducting rites of the Church, female Ministers shall wear a high-necked, long-sleeved blouse or dress, *tupenu*, *ta'ovala* and jacket. If no jacket is worn, the garment shall still be high-necked

and long-sleeved. Lace, transparent, shiny or tight-fitting material shall not be worn. A clerical collar may be used.

2. At a funeral held in a church, the bell shall be rung in the preaching-service manner as the body is brought to the church, and in the funeral manner as it proceeds to the cemetery.
3. Ministers employed as teachers shall receive from the Promise Fund only the amount corresponding to the ministerial portion of their remuneration, with the educational institution completing the remainder of their salary.
4. A new junior class shall be introduced into Preparatory Schools, following the model used in Nuku'alofa.
5. Hōfangahau College shall participate in the Tonga School Certificate examination in 2001.
6. Repayment of the Hango Agricultural College loan, due to begin in 2000, shall be extended from three years to six years, with completion in 2005.
7. The Tungi Arcade Board shall be included among Conference committees and inserted in the Constitution.
8. The Doctrines, Teachings and Social Principles of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga shall be consolidated and moved from the former Chapter X so that they appear at the beginning of the Constitution.
9. The provision concerning membership of the Parish Meeting shall be amended by adding "and Catechumens" to the end of the relevant clause.
10. Conference shall refer to the Constitution Committee the task of preparing a proper constitutional procedure for proposed corrections or amendments. Constitutional amendments shall not be accepted merely through a notice of motion; any such notice shall be referred back through the lower Church meetings.
11. Two or three suitable persons shall be appointed as a small Lands Committee to undertake a comprehensive review of all land owned by or associated with the Church, report to the Constitution and Inter-Conference Lands Committee, and ensure appropriate action according to the nature of each property.
12. The Full Conference shall give attention to Government legislation that directly conflicts with Church Doctrine, the Casino Licensing Act 1998 being cited in the source as an example.
13. Businesses of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga shall be formally established as limited-liability entities. The Constitution Committee, Finance Committee and Conference Committee shall organise the necessary arrangements and report to the next Conference.
14. The Full Conference is reminded of the proposal previously received from the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga in New Zealand requesting that overseas

Churches become full member Regions of the Tongan Conference. The President and Overseas Mission Board shall continue work on this matter.

5. Decisions of 2001

1. The Finance Secretary shall attend the quarterly meeting of the President of Education and School Principals to review the financial position of each institution.
2. School Principals shall not simply expend the full approved expenditure budget without attending to the income budget. Failure to achieve projected income approved by the Finance Committee and Conference Committee can create significant year-end deficits. School leaders shall therefore manage according to approved plans and report material changes to the Finance Committee and Conference Committee.
3. Trustees of Preparatory Schools that remain open are asked to assist with the salary of one teacher.
4. Trustees shall pay for sacramental wine used each month, and the Church Office may charge Trustees for bottles supplied to them.
5. The designation "Human Rights Sunday" shall be changed to *Sunday of the God-given Rights of Humanity*.
6. Sia'atoutai College is reminded of the approved distance-learning programme. The Sia'atoutai Committee and Director of Christian Education shall implement it.
7. The constitutional question concerning Church property shall be reworded from "What is the condition of the church building and its equipment?" to "What is the condition of the equipment and property of the Church, and are there any decisions to be made concerning them?"
8. Earlier Conference resolutions shall be reviewed to identify decisions that may not yet have been implemented, and appropriate action shall follow.
9. Family Week shall again begin on Mother's Sunday and conclude on Father's Sunday, because Conference has moved to June.
10. The debt-repayment method adopted in the previous year shall be more clearly explained because misunderstanding among Church members has caused disagreement. The proposal of the Finance Committee shall be used.
11. Conference Stewards shall also receive allowances from the Promise Fund. The Constitution shall therefore be amended so that the Promise Fund is used for allowances to Ministers and Conference Stewards, and related provisions shall be revised accordingly. The Constitution Committee shall implement the necessary amendments.
12. For the Ha'apai Region only, the existing \$3 contribution shall be increased by a further \$4, making \$7, to assist Regional work.

13. The constitutional requirement that every person appointed as a Trainee Minister complete three years of theological study shall be reviewed by the Sia'atoutai Committee. The Committee accepted the following arrangements proposed by the Principal and Tutors:

- (a) candidates for ministry shall continue to be nominated through the established Tongan process and according to the Constitution: a candidate must have been a Fully Accredited Lay Preacher for at least one year, and names shall be presented at the December Quarterly Meeting;
 - (e) the President shall determine the number of ministerial candidates from each overseas FWCT Region formally recognised as a Region linked to Tonga, and those Regions shall select candidates for presentation to Conference;
 - (f) candidates from overseas Regions and Tonga shall be considered together at Conference, from which the number determined by the President shall be selected;
 - (h) Ministers selected by Conference from Tonga and overseas Regions become Ministers of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, whether serving overseas or in Tonga. The President shall determine stationing through the Conference process;
- ministers may continue to be selected whether or not they have already completed theological study, but those without such study must fulfil the constitutional requirement for three years of theological education through the approved arrangements;
- (a) a selected Minister who has not previously undertaken theological study shall complete at least one year of full-time residential study, at a time determined by the President;
 - (e) all Ministers, whether previously theologically trained or not, shall participate fully in the part-time programme for Trainee and Probationary Ministers;
 - (f) a Trainee or Probationary Minister wishing to pursue a theological qualification through Sia'atoutai programmes shall first consult the President;
 - (h) those not undertaking full-time residential study but studying part-time shall complete a sufficient period, determined through the Trainee and Probationary Ministers' programme, to demonstrate theological knowledge satisfying the constitutional requirement;
 - (i) Ministers selected from recognised overseas FWCT Regions shall also come within these arrangements.

The Constitution Committee shall determine the proper place in the Constitution for these provisions.

14. Conference accepted the recommendation of the Overseas Mission Board, confirmed by the Conference Committee, that the Full Conference be advised to recognise the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga in New Zealand and Australia as Regions linked to Tonga, together with the related proposals.

6. Decisions of 2002

1. The Constitution Committee and Conference are reminded to correct the constitutional question concerning Trustees' property so that it reads: "What is the condition of the equipment and property of the Church, and are there any decisions to be made concerning them?"
2. The new membership record approved in 2000 shall begin to be used for the annual Mission (*Tukumo'ui*) celebrations, replacing the older record.
3. Ha'afeva requested an outboard motor for the Church vessel serving the Lulunga District. The request was approved and referred to the Conference Committee and Finance Committee to identify funding.
4. The Church school shall be re-established when the existing College moves to its new campus. When the College buildings are completed, Government shall repair all Church buildings that it had used.
5. The 79th Conference shall accept in principle the request of the FWCT in the United States and Hawai'i to become Regions linked to Tonga. The matter shall return to the Overseas Mission Board for detailed work, then to the Conference Committee for confirmation. Discussion may be held with representatives attending Conference. The Board noted that a similar request had been made by the San Francisco FWCT in 1985 together with the New Zealand FWCT. A proposal to involve a "Caucus" was considered, but the Board noted that no Conference decision had established a relationship with such a body and that existing relations with the United States continued through the United Methodist Church. The matter was eventually deferred for further work by the Overseas Mission Board and Conference Committee before returning to Conference.
6. For a further three years, 2003–2005, one-third of any surplus from the Annual Mission Offering shall be applied towards eliminating Church debt. Trustees with a different particular need may write to the Conference Committee explaining that need. The matter was also to be referred back through lower Church meetings, with Regional responses from their September Quarterly Meetings sent promptly to the President's Office.
7. A small Lands Committee of two or three suitable persons shall comprehensively review all Church land and report to the Constitution and Inter-Conference Lands Committee. The Conference Committee named 'Amanaki Puniani, 'Etueni Tupou and the Lands Officer and subsequently approved adding two more persons.
8. Church businesses shall be established as limited-liability entities. The Constitution, Finance and Conference Committees shall complete the arrangements for presentation to the following Conference. The Conference Committee accepted corresponding proposals from the 'Otumotu Anga'ofa Bookshop Board and Tungi Arcade Board, and registration with Government proceeded.

9. Trustees shall pay for sacramental wine used each month, and the Church Office may charge them for bottles supplied.
10. Every project proposed by a Department, school or other branch of the Church shall clearly identify its value to the Church's work, its establishment cost and its recurrent operating costs. Approval shall be obtained from the Conference Committee after review by the relevant branch, Department and Conference committee.

7. Decisions of 2003

1. English titles for Church offices shall be added to transfer documents to assist Lay Preachers, Advisers and Catechumens transferring to English-speaking Churches overseas.
2. Ballot papers used in written ballots at Church meetings shall be retained until all requirements of that meeting have been fully completed.
3. Conference Stewards preparing to retire at age seventy may join Ministers who are similarly preparing to retire in giving testimony to the Ministers' Conference. They may give testimony but do not thereby become members of the Ministers' Conference.
4. Further attention shall be given to Church land at 'Esia, since the 79th Conference had already resolved that action be taken but no report had yet been received. The Church Lawyer and Lands Officer shall attend to the Church land at 'Esia, Niua Fo'ou, and report to the 2004 Conference.
5. For the additional three years 2003–2005, one-third of any Annual Mission Offering surplus shall continue to be applied to repayment of Church debt. Trustees with a different need may write to the Conference Committee explaining it.
6. The name of the "\$3 Fakamo'oni 2000" contribution shall be changed, since the year 2000 had passed. It shall become the *Church Development Fund*, including the contribution towards construction of the President's residence.
7. Conference shall investigate a means by which Conference can financially assist small and financially weak congregations.
8. Final confirmation of the FWCT in Australia as a Region linked to Tonga shall be deferred to 2004 while further work continues.
9. The requests from the FWCT in the United States and Hawai'i to become Regions linked to Tonga shall also be deferred while further work is undertaken.
10. Final confirmation of the consolidated Constitution, which had been printed and distributed as a Draft Constitution, shall be deferred while further corrections and improvements are made before it is returned to Conference.

8. Decisions of 2004

1. The decision of the 80th Conference concerning persons who smoke and their participation in camp leadership and preaching shall be reviewed because of

concern about its implementation by the Department of Evangelism in 2003. The revised approach asks preachers, speakers, camp leaders and others undertaking ministry to make a particular effort not to smoke in the places where they are carrying out Sunday responsibilities. This practice is to continue and be reviewed in the future.

2. The Taulama Committee shall establish clear procedures concerning involvement in and use of Church property—such as departmental letterhead—in political matters. The decision was adopted in the terms of the proposal.
3. An additional \$1 per person shall be added to the Tongatapu Region Mission contribution and used as a Tongatapu Regional Fund for Regional responsibilities. The Region shall administer the arrangement.
4. The Finance Committee and Conference Committee shall investigate and establish the reasons for the growth of Church debt that led to the further request for one-third of surplus mission income from local congregations for another three years. Trustees shall not be required to pay unrelated debts such as school debts, commercial loans or personal debts of Church employees.
5. The provision concerning Tongan people overseas attending Conference as Fraternal Delegates shall be amended by adding “or an overseas person” after “Tongan people”. This does not include honoured guests personally invited by the President.
6. Where a Region hosting Annual Conference requests financial assistance for Conference preparations, the amount requested shall not exceed \$20,000.
7. The Lands Committee shall extend the lease of the Church tax allotment at Lapaha, which expired at the end of April 2004. The Lands Officer shall undertake the work.
8. The request for Conference assistance to Sapa‘ata and Mata‘aho for their two churches destroyed by Cyclone “Loni” shall be referred back to Niua Fo‘ou for a detailed report.
9. The request that all Conference Stewards in Niua Fo‘ou receive allowances from the Promise Fund until the small congregations become financially stronger shall be referred to the Conference Committee and Finance Committee to identify a separate source of money rather than using the Promise Fund.
10. Conference again records concern about the Church land at ‘Esia. The Lands Officer, Church Lawyer and Lands Department shall continue work on the matter.
11. Regions hosting Annual Conference are asked to provide an opportunity for the Niua Fo‘ou Region to bring a choir to Conference. Niua Fo‘ou shall make direct contact with the host Region.
12. Recognition of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga in Australia as a full Region shall be implemented in accordance with the decision deferred from the 80th Conference of 2003.

13. The second Sunday of January each year shall be designated *Creation Sunday* and entered in the Church Calendar, emphasising care for Creation and the need to address climate change that threatens human communities. The President shall select appropriate Scripture passages for this emphasis.
14. The Conference Committee and Finance Committee shall address debts carried forward from 2003 and the 2004 deficits of Departments and educational institutions and report to the following Conference.
15. The request of Queen Sālote College to replace the asbestos roof on one school building was approved. The Finance Committee and Conference Committee shall act urgently because of the health risk to teachers and students.
16. The head of Tupou High School shall be titled *Director*, and the head of Mailefihi/Siu'ilikutapu College shall be titled *Manager*. The Church Education Office shall implement the decision.
17. The Overseas Mission Board shall attend to the use of the name *Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga* by Tongan people in overseas countries.
18. The Overseas Mission Board shall clarify its status among the Departments of the Church and its job description. Procedures for communication with overseas Churches and all working agreements or arrangements shall proceed through the Overseas Mission Board and shall not be regarded as approved unless processed through the Board.
19. The Ministers' Conference Committee shall consider nominations of candidates, or proposals for ordination of a Tongan Minister, originating from an overseas country.