

CHAPTER III: OFFICES OF THE CHURCH

1. Holding Office

1. No person shall hold office in the Church unless that person is a Catechumen and believes the fundamental doctrines of Wesleyan faith. Every office-holder shall be accountable to the Church meetings connected with that office. Those meetings have authority to examine the office-holder and to appoint or remove that person when he or she is found unsuitable for the office.
2. The Conference may from time to time determine more fully the meaning and scope of the term **Office**.

2. Class Leaders

1. A **Class Leader** is a person appointed by the Parish Meeting upon the nomination of the Superintendent Minister of that Circuit or work area. The Class Leader shall care for the Catechumen Class assigned to him or her and shall be a member of the Parish Meeting of the congregation to which he or she belongs. By virtue of this office, the Class Leader may also attend the Quarterly Meeting of the Region to which the congregation belongs.
2. An Assistant Class Leader may be appointed to assist the Class Leaders where the Minister and the Parish Meeting consider this desirable.
3. A Class Leader or Assistant Class Leader shall not be removed arbitrarily, but only with the agreement of the Parish Meeting.
4. The duties of a Class Leader in Tonga are:
 1. To meet once each week with the members of the class.
 2. To enquire into the state of their spiritual lives.
 3. To give instruction, admonition or assistance appropriate to what they report.
 4. To collect their contributions for the work of the Lord.
 5. To attend the Parish Meetings called by the Minister or Steward.
 6. To report to the Minister or Steward any person who is ill, disorderly in conduct, or persistently disregards correction.
 7. To collect and deliver to the Minister or Steward the contributions of the class, together with the Class Record Book in which those contributions are entered.

3. Women Advisers (Catechists)

1. A **Woman Adviser** is a female Catechumen whom the Church has appointed to hold this office in the congregations.
2. The Minister of the Circuit shall nominate a person to the Quarterly Meeting of each Circuit. She shall first have been a Catechumen for one year and be a person of good Christian character. The Circuit Minister shall then nominate

her; the matter shall be decided by a show of hands, and if the majority of the meeting agrees she shall be recognised as a Woman Adviser of the Church.

3. At the Preparatory Meeting in the September Quarter, enquiry shall be made into their conduct and fitness for office, and the Circuit Quarterly Meeting shall make the appropriate decision concerning them.
4. All Advisers shall be members of the Parish Meetings of the congregations to which they belong and shall also attend the Quarterly Meetings of their Region.
5. **Intoxicating liquor.** No woman who uses intoxicating liquor shall hold the office of Adviser, except where its use has been authorised by a medical doctor.

4. Lay Preachers

1. A **Lay Preacher** is a Catechumen appointed by the Church to preach in its congregations. Women may also serve as preachers.
2. The Minister shall nominate a person to the Lay Preachers' Quarterly Meeting. The person shall first serve for one year as a **Preacher on Trial**. When that period has been satisfactorily completed, the person shall undertake the examination prescribed by Conference and shall be of good Christian character. The Minister who chairs the meeting shall then nominate the person; the matter shall be decided by a show of hands, and with the agreement of the majority the person shall be recognised as a **Fully Accredited Lay Preacher**.
3. The Preparatory Meeting shall enquire into the conduct of all Lay Preachers and their fitness for the preaching office, and the Lay Preachers' Quarterly Meeting shall make the appropriate decision concerning them.
4. All Lay Preachers shall belong to the Parish Meetings of the congregations to which they belong and shall also attend the Quarterly Meetings of their Region.
5. **Intoxicating liquor.** Intoxicating liquor is prohibited. No person who uses intoxicating liquor shall be appointed as a Lay Preacher, except where its use is authorised by a medical doctor.
6. If a Lay Preacher has been imprisoned by the State, or has been subjected to a financial penalty or a bond for good behaviour, the Lay Preachers' Meeting shall determine that person's standing as a preacher.
7. A person who has previously ceased to be a Lay Preacher and wishes to return to preaching shall complete four quarters as a Catechumen before being nominated as a Preacher on Trial. If the person had formerly been a Fully Accredited Lay Preacher, he or she shall serve two quarters as a Preacher on Trial before being nominated again as a Fully Accredited Lay Preacher, subject to the agreement of the majority in the relevant meetings.
8. Where a Fully Accredited Lay Preacher transfers from another Church and wishes to become a Lay Preacher in this Church, that person shall belong to this Church for one quarter before being nominated by the Minister, with the agreement of the majority in the relevant meetings, to the status of Preacher on Trial. After serving two quarters on trial, the person may be nominated as a

Fully Accredited Lay Preacher. If the person transferred only as a Preacher on Trial, the trial period shall continue until four quarters have been completed, after which the examination for Fully Accredited Lay Preacher shall be undertaken.

9. When preaching, women shall wear a white long-sleeved garment with a collar reaching the neck, together with a *ta'ovala lōkeha* or another suitable *ta'ovala*.
10. Prisoners may retain the status of Preacher on Trial while serving a prison sentence. They may also preach in congregations of the Church where those congregations consent and receive them for that purpose.

5. Stewards of the Quarterly Meeting

1. The Chairperson or Superintendent Minister shall nominate two Stewards to the Quarterly Meeting held in the December Quarter each year. They shall be elected by a show of hands and by majority decision, and each must be under seventy years of age.
2. The duties of the two Stewards are:
 - (a) To receive at the Quarterly Meeting the income brought by the Ministers of the Circuits, including the Promise Fund and the monetary contributions of each Circuit.
 - (e) To distribute the Ministers' allowances from the Promise Fund and other monetary contributions in accordance with clauses 1 and 2 of the regulations concerning gifts to Ministers, and with the approval of the Chairperson or Superintendent Minister. Any money remaining after distribution shall be returned to the Regional Chairperson or Superintendent Minister, who shall deposit the balance at the end of each quarter.
 - (f) To maintain an accurate cashbook of all income and expenditure relating to the Promise Fund and any balance, to reconcile it, and to report it to the Quarterly Meeting.
 - (h) To record accurately in the Quarterly Meeting minute book all resolutions and reports of the meeting.
 - (i) To pay the allowances of all Ministers serving in the Departments of Christian Education and Evangelism from the Promise Fund so that the needs of those two Departments may be met from annual income.

6. Conference Stewards

A **Conference Steward** is a Fully Accredited Lay Preacher appointed by Conference to serve as Steward in a town or congregation without a resident Minister, subject to the agreement of the Trustees of that congregation. The President and Conference shall respond to the congregation's need for a Steward and shall maintain the system of stationing and transfer relating to such appointments.

1. **Support for Conference Stewards.** Where the congregation has more than 110 members, the Trustees shall bear the cost. Where it has fewer than 110 members, the cost shall be shared equally by Conference and the Trustees.
2. Conference Stewards shall be entitled to six months' furlough after fifteen years of service, or three months' furlough after five years of service.
3. The names of deceased Conference Stewards and Church Teachers shall be included in the record of deceased workers in the Minutes of each Conference.
4. Where a Conference Steward is involved in alleged misconduct, breach of the Law, or departure from Doctrine, the President or Chairperson, together with the Ministers' Conference Committee, shall enquire into the matter. The President or Chairperson may suspend the Steward temporarily from duty until the Ministers' Quarterly Meeting is held to hear the case. If the charge is found to be true, those Ministers may direct that the person remain removed from duty until the next Conference. The Ministers' Conference has authority to remove the person from office or to make another appropriate determination.