

CHAPTER IV: MINISTERS

1. The Twelve Rules for Those Engaged in the Work of the Lord

The office of a Minister of the Lord is to care for souls. For this work the Minister must give account: to care for and lead the flock. How can so demanding a work be accomplished? It can be done only through a right relationship with God, singleness of purpose in His work, understanding, and the loving observance of all our regulations. Therefore, give careful attention to the following counsels:

1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be employed in what is useless. Do not waste time, nor allow it to pass in idleness.
2. Live a disciplined life. Make holiness unto the Lord your aim. Avoid frivolous conversation and improper speech.
3. Male Ministers shall avoid unnecessary familiarity in conversation with women, particularly young women; female Ministers shall likewise avoid unnecessary familiarity in conversation with men, particularly young men.
4. If you intend to marry, pray to the Lord and inform the Ministers, for this is a matter requiring careful and reverent consideration before God.
5. Do not think evil of anyone unless there is clear evidence. Do not be quick to believe evil reports. Endeavour to put the best construction on everything. Remember that judgement properly belongs to the person whose circumstances are being considered.
6. Do not speak evil of anyone. If you do, your words may consume you like an inward poison. Keep your judgement within your own heart until you have met the person to whom it relates.
7. Tell people plainly what you believe they are doing wrong, but do so in love, justly, and without unnecessary delay, lest resentment remain and corrupt your own heart. Deal promptly with what must be removed from the heart.
8. Do not seek status or lordship over others. Whoever preaches the Gospel is a servant of all.
9. Be ashamed of nothing except sin. There is no dishonour in honest work, whether cutting firewood, drawing water, or any other task done with a willing heart.
10. Do everything at its proper time. Attend carefully to the proper ordering of every matter. Do not seek to alter our regulations merely to suit yourself; faithfully observe them so that your conscience may remain clear.
11. Your proper work is the salvation of souls. Therefore, devote yourself wholly and gladly to it. Go to those who are spiritually poor, giving first attention to those in greatest need.
12. Do not conduct yourself merely according to your own wishes, but in everything remember that you are a son of the Gospel and are to act in fellowship with your fellow believers. If you are indeed a son, order your time according to the duties

laid down for you: in frequent preaching and visiting the people, reading, meditation and prayer.

Moreover, if you labour with others as fellow-workers of the Lord, willingly accept the work assigned to you by Conference and do all things for the glory of the Lord's Name. Remember that the purpose of your ministry is not simply to preach often or to administer work in one place after another. Your highest calling is the salvation of souls and to do all that you can to build people up in that holiness without which no one shall see the Lord. Every office-holder of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga must therefore be faithful, in matters great and small, to the teachings and regulations of our Church. Read these regulations attentively, act wisely, and seek the Grace sufficient for the work.

2. Regulations for Ministers

1. Let us yield ourselves to God and, humbly trusting in His Grace, resolve to attend carefully to our own spiritual lives and to order our families according to the rule of Christ.
2. Let us prepare and deliver our sermons with care, repeatedly and emphatically setting forth clearly the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel traditionally proclaimed by Wesleyan Ministers, and doing so graciously so that the hearts of hearers may be reached.
3. Let us devote ourselves to our proper work as servants of Christ and His Church, guarding against losing time in anything that distracts us from the great work of saving souls and caring for the flock of the Lord.
4. Let us continually encourage our people to use the means of grace and graciously invite those seeking salvation to participate in them.
5. Let us visit the classes regularly, ensure that the Class Ticket records are properly maintained, and encourage our people faithfully to attend their class meetings, testimony meetings and gatherings for mutual support.
6. People are often lost to the Church when they move from one town to another. We shall therefore explain the Church's procedures to our members, and those intending to move to another town shall obtain a transfer letter from their Minister.
7. Let us remember, and remind our people, that the Church does not exist for party interests or similar divisions. We are to act as Christians towards all people and show partiality to none.
8. Let us maintain family worship and strongly encourage the members of the Church to do likewise, guiding and teaching our children in proper conduct and behaviour.
9. Let us give careful attention to ministry among children and establish instruction classes that prepare a pathway for them into the Church.
10. Let us uphold the work of the Sunday School, visit it regularly, and support its teachers, remembering that the Sunday School is the Church of the future.

11. Let us frequently make pastoral visits, especially to the elderly, the sick and those in difficulty, and also to those who have become spiritually cold or neglectful. If anyone backslides or falls into wrongdoing, act promptly, do all that can be done, and carefully seek that person's restoration.
12. Let us encourage our people to participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and remind parents that it is the duty of Christians to bring their children for Baptism.
13. Let us meet regularly with the Class Leaders, examine their Class Record Books, correct the Membership Roll, and do all that we can to encourage both Class Leaders and Lay Preachers so that together we may advance the holiness of our people and the work of the Lord.
14. Let us encourage our people to keep the Sabbath holy and to devote it to those things that nurture spiritual life.
15. Although many different activities may be useful, let us remind our people not to neglect the weightier matters of worship, such as preaching on the Lord's Day and the means of grace.
16. Let us conduct all Church meetings carefully, avoiding partisan conduct and quarrelling, and doing everything in a manner and according to a process worthy of the Church of God.
17. In relation to a Minister's garden or plantation, provision shall be made sufficient for the successor. If this cannot be done, the President, Chairperson, or Regional Superintendent shall be informed before the Conference of the following year.
18. We recognise that the work of God cannot be advanced merely through rules and human activity without the Holy Spirit. We therefore resolve to remain continually before the Lord in prayer, asking Him to pour out His blessing.

3. Trainee Ministers

1. Before a person may be nominated as a Trainee Minister, that person must have served for at least one year as a Fully Accredited Lay Preacher. The Superintendent Minister shall make the nomination, which shall then be put to the Quarterly Meeting for approval by show of hands. Selection of Trainee Ministers shall take place in the December Quarter, and in the March Quarter a sufficient number shall again be selected to allow the President to respond to anticipated needs during that year.
2. If the Quarterly Meeting approves a person for Trainee Ministry, that person shall be presented to the Regional Meeting and shall preach before Ministers appointed to assess the sermon. The candidate shall also sit the examinations in the subjects prescribed by Conference.
3. When the Chairperson or Superintendent Minister presents a candidate for Trainee Ministry to the Regional Meeting, a written report shall be provided concerning the person's conduct, character, health, Christian life, fitness for the

work of the Church, freedom from debt, and other relevant matters. The Regional Meeting shall vote on the candidate, who shall also undergo an oral examination in theology.

4. The name of every person approved by the Regional Meeting for Trainee Ministry shall be submitted to Conference. The candidate shall then be examined in preaching and in the prescribed courses of study. Reports of these examinations shall be presented to Conference, which shall decide the matter by a show of hands and majority vote.
5. Conference shall determine whether Trainee Ministers are to remain available as reserves or be appointed to a Department.
6. The names of Trainee Ministers shall be entered on the Conference Roll.
7. Every person nominated for Trainee Ministry shall undertake three years of biblical and theological study and successfully complete the course at the Theological College. Those studying at the Theological College shall be known as **Theological Students**. In a year when Conference requires persons for Trainee Ministry, candidates shall be nominated from among the graduates in accordance with clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 above. The Principal and Committee of the Theological College shall advise the Regional Meeting and Conference. A Trainee Minister shall continue to undertake annual examinations for four years. When those four years have been completed, and the person has served not less than two years in pastoral charge of a Circuit or ministerial work area—making six years in all—the probation shall be regarded as complete and the person may be ordained.
8. Conference may reduce the required period of study in the following circumstances:
 - (a) A person who has served as a Conference Steward or Church Teacher for three years or more may receive a reduction of one year.
 - (e) A person who has successfully completed study at the Theological College may receive a reduction of one year.
 - (f) A person who has obtained the L.Th. Diploma through the Melbourne College of Divinity examination, or an equivalent or higher qualification, may receive a reduction of one year.
9. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Committee of the Theological College may advise the Regional Meeting and Conference to accept a person who did not attend that College but who has completed equivalent or higher biblical and theological studies, or where another reason of sufficient weight is recognised by the Committee. The procedure in clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 above must nevertheless be followed.
10. Where a Minister from another Church transfers to this Church and wishes to continue in ministerial office, the appropriate Church meetings shall consider whether that Minister's theological and ministerial education has reached the standard prescribed by this Church. Those meetings may recommend the person

to Conference for recognition of ministerial status, which shall be confirmed by majority decision of the Ministers' Conference.

11. Where Conference has accepted a person as a Probationary Minister but the person fails an examination because of academic weakness, his or her ministerial standing shall not thereby be completely removed as though the person had failed in character or conduct.
12. A Minister who has failed academically shall give an oral sermon only and shall not be required to repeat the written examination or record component.
13. Trainee Ministers shall participate in the appropriate Church meetings.

4. Probationary Ministers

1. A **Probationary Minister** is a Trainee Minister who has been appointed to a Circuit or ministerial work area. The combined period as Trainee Minister and Probationary Minister shall normally be six years.
2. Conference shall prescribe courses of study. The Probationary Minister shall be examined every year and shall preach an examination sermon each year before Ministers appointed by Conference. Reports of these examinations shall be submitted to Conference.
3. Before a Probationary Minister is received into full ministerial standing, the Regional Meeting shall examine that person in theology and in the sermons of John Wesley. A report shall also be presented concerning the person's preaching and the manner in which he or she has carried out ministry in the Circuit or work area served.
4. If the Regional Meeting agrees to recommend the person to Conference, the candidate shall state his or her convictions, explain his or her belief in the Doctrines and Laws of the Church, and promise faithfully to observe the Laws and Constitution. If at any future time the Minister ceases to believe the Doctrine or is no longer willing to observe the Law, he or she shall peacefully resign from ministerial office.
5. Reports of the Regional Meeting concerning Probationary Ministers recommended for full ministerial standing shall be submitted to Conference. Conference shall determine whether each person is to be received into full ministry, continued on probation, or dealt with in another appropriate manner.
6. The names of Probationary Ministers received into full ministerial standing shall be entered on the Conference Roll, and the decision made concerning each shall be recorded in the Conference Minutes.
7. When a Minister is received into full standing, he or she shall be ordained by the laying on of hands by the President, the General Secretary and two Senior Ministers, in accordance with the form of ministerial ordination used in the Wesleyan Church.
8. Where Conference has accepted a person as a Probationary Minister but that person fails an examination because of academic weakness, his or her ministerial

standing shall not thereby be completely removed as though the failure were one of character or conduct.

9. A Minister who fails academically shall give an oral sermon only and shall not be required to repeat the written examination or record component.

10. Probationary Ministers shall participate in the appropriate Church meetings.

5. Ministerial Duties

1. It is the duty of every Minister to seek the salvation of the people within the Minister's Circuit or work area, to do everything possible to nurture them in Christian life, and to labour for preaching that is spiritually alive.
2. The **Superintendent Minister** is the Minister responsible for the Circuit or work area and shall ensure that all its work is conducted according to the Law of the Church.
3. The duty of the Superintendent Minister, together with all Ministers, is to preach the Gospel, administer the means of grace, and ensure that all work in every congregation within the Circuit is carried out according to the Law of the Church.
4. The duties of the Superintendent Minister in the Circuits are:
 - (a) To admit new Catechumens or remove persons from Catechumen membership.
 - (e) To chair the New Monthly Meeting, with authority to appoint another Minister to act in his or her place.
 - (f) To ensure that Catechumens have paid for their Membership Tickets.
 - (h) To give a transfer letter to Catechumens moving to another Circuit so that the Minister of the receiving Circuit is informed of their transfer.
 - (i) To visit the people and assist them in their spiritual life.
 - (k) To visit the Classes, inspect their Rolls and instruct them in observing the laws of the Church.
 - (l) To chair Parish Meetings, inspect the Catechumen Roll each quarter, and submit the report to the Quarterly Meeting.
 - (m) To chair the Preparatory Meeting and submit its reports to the Quarterly Meeting.
 - (n) To supervise the arrangements relating to preaching, revival or devotional meetings, the Sacraments, Baptisms and funerals throughout the Circuit.
 - (ng) To keep safely and in good order the relevant books and records, including the Catechumen Roll and the names of office-holders, and upon transfer to another Circuit to hand them to the succeeding Minister.
 - (o) All Church books connected with the work—including Parish Meeting books, Trustees' Meeting books and other official records—shall, when no longer in

active use, be deposited with the Regional Chairperson or Superintendent Minister for safekeeping.

(p) The Circuit Minister shall visit the Sunday School on one Sunday in each quarter. The Inspector shall conduct an examination in the prescribed lessons and submit a report to the Quarterly Meeting.

(s) Ministers shall regularly visit the Church preparatory schools and all Government schools within their Circuits, as permitted by the Government, not less than once each month. Enquiry concerning these visits shall be made at the Quarterly Meeting.

(t) To chair the Trustees' Meetings within the Circuit.

5. After ten years of ministerial service, a Minister shall be entitled to six months' furlough; after five years of service, to three months' furlough.

6. Stationing Ministers to Circuits and Departments

1. An Ordained Minister may accept appointment as Minister to His Majesty the King.
2. Each year the President shall station Ministers to the Circuits and Departments in which they are to serve. The President has authority to transfer a Minister from a Circuit or Department even where the Minister has not completed three years in that appointment. Ministers serving in overseas Regions shall normally serve for four years. If an extension is desired, a written application shall be submitted to Conference for a further two years; the total period shall not exceed six years.
3. No Ordained Minister or Probationary Minister shall remain in the same Circuit for more than four years, except where serious circumstances arise and the General Conference gives approval. This restriction does not apply to Regional Chairpersons or Ministers holding appointments in schools or Church Departments.
4. Where a Minister undertakes service overseas and subsequently returns in good standing, the Minister shall retain his or her ministerial status.
5. Conference may leave a Minister without appointment to a Circuit or Department and may determine whether or not that Minister is to receive an allowance.
6. All colleges participating in Tonga's national leaving examination shall be regarded as ministerial work areas. Where a Trainee Minister is stationed to work in such a college, that person shall become a Probationary Minister while continuing to complete the requirements of Trainee Ministry.
7. A Minister shall be specifically designated for the continuing education of Ministers.

7. Retired Ministers

1. A **Retired Minister** is a Minister whom Conference has released from active service by formal decision.
2. A Minister who reaches sixty-five years of age may retire from active ministry at the following Conference, but shall retire no later than the Conference held when the Minister reaches seventy years of age.
3. Conference has authority to direct a Minister to retire, and the Minister shall comply whether or not he or she personally desires to retire.
4. The name of a Retired Minister and the Circuit in which that person resides shall be entered in the Conference record. The Retired Minister shall belong to the meeting of that Circuit, answer the roll call at the Regional Meeting unless excused, and remain subject to the regulations of the Church.
5. Every Minister intending to retire at a particular Conference shall provide a biographical and service record for inclusion in the Conference Minutes.

8. Trial and Removal of Ministers

1. Where a Minister is accused of misconduct, breach of the Law, or departure from Doctrine, the President or Regional Chairperson, together with the Ministers' Conference Committee, shall enquire into the matter and may temporarily suspend the Minister from duty until the Ministers' Quarterly Meeting is held to hear the case. If the charge is established, those Ministers may direct that the Minister remain suspended until the next Conference. Conference has authority to remove the Minister from office or make another appropriate determination.
2. A Minister temporarily suspended from service pending trial shall not receive an allowance during the period of suspension. If the Minister is acquitted, Conference shall determine the matter of any allowance withheld.
3. Conference has authority to remove a Minister from ministerial office and to exclude that person from Conference for conduct which, in the judgement of Conference, warrants removal from service.
4. A Minister who has been removed from office shall not thereafter hold another office in the Church except with the approval of Conference.
5. Where an allegation concerns the President or a Regional Chairperson, that person shall appoint a suitable Senior Minister to preside over the Ministers' Conference Committee while the allegation is being heard.

9. Regional Chairperson

1. (a) The President shall appoint a Minister as Chairperson of each Region, and the appointment shall be confirmed annually.
(e) The Chairperson shall ensure that the work of the Church in the Region is conducted in accordance with the Law and Constitution.
2. The duties of the Chairperson are:
(a) To determine the time of the Regional Meeting and to chair it. If the President is present, the President may preside.

(e) To examine the Probationary Ministers belonging to that meeting by asking:

1. What is the character of the Minister's conduct and Christian life?
2. Does the Minister believe the Doctrines?
3. Does the Minister preach those Doctrines?
4. Does the Minister faithfully observe our practices and disciplines?
5. Is the Minister fit for the work?

(f) To conduct the work of the meeting in accordance with the directions of Conference. [See the provisions concerning the Regional Meeting.]

(h) To keep the record book of the Regional Meeting over which the Chairperson presides.

(i) To transmit to Conference the decisions and petitions of the Regional Meeting and to provide reports concerning the work of the Region, including matters relating to Ministers and the Church.

(k) To have responsibility for Regional funds, Departmental funds and Trustees' funds. The Chairperson or Regional Superintendent shall administer all Church funds within the Region according to the procedures prescribed by the General Treasurer and Conference.

(l) To administer and apply Regional and Departmental funds to the work of the Church with the continuing approval and confirmation of the committees responsible for those Church funds. The Chairperson or Regional Superintendent shall administer the Church funds in his or her custody in accordance with the annual budget and the decisions of Conference.

10. General Secretary of the Church

1. The growth and development of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga will be strengthened through wise leadership grounded in Tongan forms of leadership. This does not mean that the service of people from overseas is to be excluded; rather, where suitably qualified people are available, it is preferable to appoint leadership from within the fellowship of the Church.
2. The President of the Church carries extensive responsibilities in both ministerial and pastoral leadership. The General Secretary shall enable the President to be relieved of much routine office administration so that the President may give greater attention to the spiritual and pastoral ministries required by the people of God.
3. **Election of the General Secretary.** Each Conference shall elect its General Secretary. Any Ordained Minister in active appointment who is a member of that Conference may be elected. Election shall be by ballot and majority vote.
4. The Church Office shall make provision, as necessary, for a Communications Secretary, a Church Secretary and other staff to assist the General Secretary.

The duties of the General Secretary are:

- (a)** To prepare for and carry out the business of Conference and the Conference Committee.
- (e)** To implement the decisions of Conference and the Conference Committee.
- (f)** To assist the President in the administration of the work of the Church, acting in consultation with and under the President's guidance.
- (h)** To manage and administer the work arrangements of Church Office staff.
- (i)** To manage and administer the operation of the Church offices.
- (k)** To chair meetings of the Tongatapu Region when directed by the President.
- (l)** To maintain relationships with overseas Churches, including the World Council of Churches.
- (m)** To act as caretaker in the office of President whenever the President of the Church is absent from Tonga.

11. The President

1. His Majesty shall make the initial appointment of the first President of Conference from among the Ordained Ministers holding appointment. Thereafter, the President shall be elected annually by Conference. Any Ordained Minister in active appointment who is a member of that Conference may be elected. Election shall be by ballot and majority vote, subject to confirmation by His Majesty.
2. The powers and duties of the President are:
 - (a)** To appoint a Minister to a Circuit or work area when the Minister serving there dies or is otherwise unable to continue in the appointment.
 - (e)** To preside over Conference.
 - (f)** To receive the resignation of a Minister.
 - (h)** To carry out the stationing and transfer of Ministers in accordance with the decision of Conference.
 - (i)** To have responsibility for the financial books and funds of the Church and to appoint another person to assist in carrying out this responsibility.
 - (k)** To determine an appropriate method for auditing the financial books of the Church and to present an annual report to Conference.
 - (l)** Together with one or more authorised persons, to deposit Church funds in a bank in Tonga or overseas for safekeeping and investment. Before such funds are withdrawn or otherwise used for the work of the Church, the proposal shall be reported to the Conference Committee for confirmation. An annual report shall be made as provided in paragraph (k) above.
 - (m)** During each Conference year, to authorise suitable persons to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Such authority may be given to:
 1. A Probationary Minister in charge of, or assisting in, a Circuit.

2. A Trainee Minister serving or assisting in a school.
3. A Conference Steward serving a town or locality that is difficult for the Circuit Minister to visit regularly.

(n) A person who has held the Presidency for three consecutive years shall be entitled to three months' furlough. The Conference Committee shall confirm the time at which that furlough is to be taken.

3. If the President dies, suffers an incapacity, or is called to another responsibility so that the duties of President cannot be performed, the powers and duties of the office shall pass to the most suitable former President who previously held that office. If no former President is suitable or available, His Majesty shall appoint a person to act as caretaker President.