

CHAPTER V: MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

1. The Parish Meeting

1. The Parish Meeting shall include the Superintendent Minister and all Ministers resident in the town or Circuit, with the Superintendent Minister presiding or appointing another Minister to preside. It shall also include the Class Leaders, Stewards, Trustees, Lay Preachers, the Sunday School Superintendent, Catechumens resident in the town or Circuit, and Women Advisers.
2. The questions used at a town Parish Meeting and a Circuit Parish Meeting shall be the same.
3. The meeting shall proceed through the following questions:
 - (a) Who is present?
 - (e) What is the state of the Classes?
 - (f) Is anyone sick?
 - (h) Is there any decision to be made concerning Catechumen Classes, Class Leaders or Advisers, or concerning the time and place of class meetings?
 - (i) Are there any new converts?
 - (k) Is anyone absenting himself or herself from Catechumen membership?
 - (l) (i) What is the report of the Department of Christian Education?
 - ii. What is the report of the Department of Evangelism?
 - (m) (i) What is the report of the Education Department?
 - ii. What is the report of the Women's Department?
 - iii. What is the report of the Translation and Publications Committee?
 - (n) What can be done to improve the work of the Lord?
 - (ng) (i) Have the sick been visited?
 - ii. What is the state of the Trustees' musical instruments and equipment?
 - (o) What can we do to assist the sale of the *Tohi Fanongonongo*?
 - (p) Has any Catechumen died during this quarter?
 - (s) Has any Woman Adviser died during this quarter? [To be summarised in the September Quarter.]
 - (t) Whom shall we elect as representatives to the Regional Meeting? [Two persons shall be elected in the March Quarter.]
 - (u) Whom shall we elect to participate in the ballot for Conference? [Two persons shall be elected in the March Quarter.]

2. Preparatory Meeting of Lay Preachers

1. A meeting of Lay Preachers shall be held once each quarter in every Circuit.

2. The Superintendent Minister shall preside and may appoint another Minister to act in his or her place. The meeting shall call and examine the Lay Preachers individually. If a serious matter adversely affects a preacher, this meeting shall advise the Lay Preachers' Quarterly Meeting whether that person should be temporarily stood down or removed.
3. The meeting shall use the following questions:
 - (a) Who is present?
 - (e) Is there any matter adversely affecting a Lay Preacher? Each Lay Preacher shall be called individually and asked:
 1. What is the character of the person's conduct and Christian life?
 2. Does the person believe and preach the Doctrines?
 3. Does the person observe our laws and fulfil the preaching appointments assigned?
 4. Is the person fit for the office of Lay Preacher?
 - (f) Who is to be received into full standing this quarter?
 - (h) Which Preachers on Trial are to continue on trial?
 - (i) Which Preachers on Trial do we propose to receive into full standing next quarter?
 - (k) Is there anyone to nominate as a Preacher on Trial?
 - (l) Is there anyone who previously ceased to be a Lay Preacher whom we propose to receive again as a Preacher on Trial?
 - (m) Has any Lay Preacher transferred from this Circuit during the quarter?
 - (n) Is there any Lay Preacher whom we receive from another Circuit?
 - (o) What can we do to improve the work?
 - (p) Where and when shall the next meeting be held?
 - (s) Has any Lay Preacher died during the quarter?

3. The Quarterly Meeting

1. Before a Quarterly Meeting is held, the President, Regional Chairperson or Regional Superintendent shall convene a meeting of Ministers to discuss the work.
2. The Quarterly Meeting shall include the President, Regional Chairperson or Regional Superintendent, who shall preside and may appoint a Minister to act in his or her place; all Ministers in the Circuit or work area; the Stewards; Class Leaders; Lay Preachers; Advisers; and Trustees of the towns or congregations in that Circuit.
3. The business shall be conducted as follows.

(1) Annual Meeting of Class Leaders and Advisers [September Quarter]

1. Who is present?
2. What is the state of the Class Leaders, Assistant Class Leaders and Advisers in this Region?
3. What can be done to further strengthen the Church of the Lord?
4. Has any female Class Leader, Assistant Class Leader or Adviser died during the year?

(2) Ministers' Quarterly Meeting

The Secretary shall be elected at the first meeting after Conference. The following questions may be used:

1. Who is present?
2. What is the state of the spiritual work in the Circuits?
3. Is there any matter adversely affecting a Lay Preacher?
4. Who should be received into full preaching standing this quarter?
5. Is there anyone who previously ceased preaching and should be restored as a Preacher on Trial?
6. Whom do we newly nominate as a Preacher on Trial?
7. Is there any proposal to be presented to tomorrow's Quarterly Meeting?
8. Where and when shall the next Quarterly Meeting be held?

(3) General Quarterly Meeting

(a) Who is present?

(e) How many Catechumens are there this quarter? [The Senior Steward shall read from the consolidated Catechumen Roll, reporting the number for each town. The annual membership record shall be compiled in March.]

(f) How much has been received into the Promise Fund this quarter?

(h) What is the total income received?

(i) What reports have been received from:

1. the Department of Christian Education;
2. the Department of Evangelism;
3. the Education Department;
4. the Women's Department;
5. Church Music;
6. the Half Hour programme;
7. Translation work;
8. the Continuing Education Department for Ministers and Stewards;

9. the 'Otumotu Anga'ofa Bookshop;
10. Taulua Printing Press;
11. Tungi Arcade;
12. the *Tohi Fanongonongo*;
13. the Overseas Mission Board?

(k) Have the Ministers visited Government schools to give biblical instruction?

(l) What can we do to assist the sale of the *Tohi Fanongonongo*?

(m) What work has been done during this quarter?

(n) What can we do to improve the work?

(ng) Whom shall we elect as Senior Stewards? [Two persons, to be elected in the December Quarter. Each shall be under seventy years of age.]

(o) Who have already been elected as representatives to the Regional Meeting? [This shall be done in the March Quarter. All Ministers holding Circuit appointments in the Region shall attend, together with two representatives from each Circuit.]

(p) Whom shall we elect as representatives to Conference? [This shall be done in the March Quarter.]

(s) Whom shall we recommend to the Regional Meeting for Trainee Ministry? [Names shall be proposed in the December Quarter, with selection and confirmation in the March Quarter before forwarding to the Regional Meeting.]

(t) Has any Woman Adviser died during the year? [This shall be asked in September.]

(u) Where and when shall the next Quarterly Meeting be held?

4. Lay Preachers' Meeting

1. A meeting of Lay Preachers shall be held once each quarter.
2. The President, Regional Chairperson or Regional Superintendent shall preside and may appoint a Minister to act in his or her place. The meeting shall call and examine the Lay Preachers. Where a serious matter adversely affects a preacher, the meeting may temporarily suspend or remove that person.

Women who wish to serve as Preachers on Trial shall be brought forward through the Minister and shall follow the same process as other Lay Preachers when seeking full recognition.

3. The meeting shall use the following questions:

(a) Who is present?

(e) Is there any matter adversely affecting a Lay Preacher?

(f) Who is to be received into full standing this quarter?

(h) Which Preachers on Trial are to remain on trial?

- (i) Which Preachers on Trial do we propose to receive into full standing next quarter?
- (l) Is there anyone who previously ceased preaching whom we propose to restore as a Preacher on Trial?
- (m) Has any Lay Preacher transferred from this Circuit during this quarter?
- (n) Is there any Lay Preacher whom we receive from another Circuit? [Including transfer from another Region.]
- (ng) Is there any advice we wish to give Conference concerning the courses and examinations of Lay Preachers? [March Quarter.]
- (o) What can we do to improve the work?
- (p) Where and when shall the next meeting be held?
- (s) Has any Lay Preacher died during the quarter?

5. The Regional Meeting

(a) Secretary

The Regional Meeting shall elect by ballot one Ordained Minister as Secretary. The Secretary shall compile the minutes of the Regional Meeting and provide a copy to Conference.

(e) Ministers' Meeting

1. The meeting shall include all Ministers holding appointments within the Region and all Retired Ministers residing there. All members are required to attend unless formally excused and the apology is accepted by the meeting. Probationary and Trainee Ministers shall attend, but shall not vote by show of hands. The President, Regional Chairperson or Regional Superintendent shall preside.
 - (a) Selection of Trainee Ministers shall be undertaken in the December Quarter and revisited in the March Quarter so that a sufficient number is available in accordance with the President's assessment of the needs of that year.
 - (e) Probationary and Trainee Ministers shall participate in the appropriate Church meetings.
 - (f) If a person accepted by Conference as a Trainee or Probationary Minister fails an examination because of academic weakness, that person shall not thereby lose ministerial standing as though guilty of a moral or disciplinary failure.
 - (h) All colleges participating in Tonga's recognised secondary leaving examination shall be regarded as ministerial work areas. A Trainee Minister stationed to work in such a college shall become a Probationary Minister but shall continue to complete all requirements of Trainee Ministry.
 - (i) A Minister shall be entitled to six months' furlough after ten years of ministry in a Circuit, or three months after five years.

(k) A Minister who has failed academically shall give an oral sermon only and shall not be required to repeat the examination or record component.

(l) Every Minister preparing to retire at Conference shall provide a biographical and service record for inclusion in the Conference Minutes.

2. At the commencement of the meeting a Secretary shall first be elected, and the time for conducting the meeting shall be determined. The following questions shall then be considered:

(a) Who is present?

(e) Has stationing and transfer been carried out in accordance with Conference decisions?

(f) Is there any matter adversely affecting a Minister? If so:

1. What is the Minister's conduct and Christian character?
2. Does the Minister believe and preach the Doctrines?
3. Does the Minister observe our Laws?
4. Is the Minister fit for ministerial office?

(h) Is there any Minister whom we recommend for retirement this year?

(i) Is there any Minister whom we recommend should continue in retirement?

(k) Which Retired Minister do we recommend for return to active service?

(l) Is any Minister to be left without a Circuit appointment?

(m) Which Probationary Minister do we recommend to Conference for reception into full ministerial standing?

(n) Which Probationary Minister should continue on probation?

(ng) Whom do we recommend to Conference to enter Probationary Ministry?

(o) Whom do we recommend to Conference for Trainee Ministry?

(p) Is any Minister seeking appointment to overseas work?

(s) Are the Baptism and Marriage Registers properly kept in the Circuits?

(t) Are Parish Meetings held regularly and are the Catechumen records examined?

(u) Do we have any advice for Conference concerning the training of younger Ministers, the selection of Trainee Ministers, or the examination of Probationary Ministers?

(v) [Question concerning election of Ministers to attend Conference—transferred in the printed text to the Ministers' Quarterly Meeting questions.]

(aa) What can we do to further improve the work?

(f) General Regional Meeting

1. This meeting shall include all those entitled to attend the Ministers' Meeting, the Senior Stewards, and representatives elected by Circuit Meetings. Each Circuit with fewer than 300 Catechumens shall elect two representatives; where there are more than 300 Catechumens, three shall be elected, with one additional representative for each further 100 members. It shall also include overseas missionaries who are Catechumens of this Church; two representatives of Tongan teachers who are Catechumens, nominated by the Education Committee; and persons who attend Conference by virtue of office, such as the Manager of the 'Otumotu Anga'ofa Bookshop, the Business Manager and the Manager of Tungi Arcade, or any office-holder required to submit an annual report to the Regional Meeting.

All Ministers holding Circuit appointments in the Region shall attend, together with two representatives from each Circuit.

2. The meeting shall use the following questions:

(a) Who is present?

(e) Since the previous Conference, has there died:

1. any Minister?
2. any representative?
3. any Conference Steward?
4. any Church Teacher?

(f) Do we propose to divide any Circuit?

(h) Do we propose to establish a new Circuit?

(i) What is the state of our Membership Roll?

(k) What are the reports from:

1. the Department of Christian Education;
2. the Department of Evangelism;
3. the Education Department;
4. the Women's Department;
5. the Continuing Education Department for Ministers and Stewards;
6. Translation and Publications?

(l) What are the reports from the educational institutions:

1. preparatory schools;
2. intermediate schools;
3. colleges;
4. Tupou High School;
5. Hango Agricultural School;

6. Sia‘atoutai Theological College?

(m) Whom shall we appoint as representatives to Conference? [Regional Superintendents shall attend by virtue of office.]

(n) What is the state of the Regional financial accounts?

(ng) What is the state of Church property, including:

1. new buildings erected or established;
2. buildings presently under construction;
3. extensions and improvements;
4. property sold or leased;
5. property proposed for purchase;
6. land proposed to be leased;
7. applications for permission to construct buildings or other works;
8. land leased during the year;
9. land not yet leased;
10. Trustees' debts that are increasing through neglect;
11. any advice to Conference concerning: Taulua Printing Press, the Church Office, the vessel, the *Tohi Fanongonongo*, the Half Hour programme, the 'Otumotu Anga'ofa Bookshop, Church musical instruments and equipment, Tungi Arcade, and the Overseas Mission Board?

(o) Are the Trustees' records properly maintained?

(p) Have mission offerings been taken in all our congregations? If not, why not?

(s) How much money have the towns contributed this year to the overseas offering?

(t) Do we have any advice for Conference concerning matters referred to us by the previous Conference?

(u) What is the state of the spiritual work, and what may be done to strengthen it further?

(v) Where and when shall the next Regional Meeting be held?

3. With the agreement of the President, the Regional Chairperson or Regional Superintendent may call an additional Regional Meeting whenever sufficient cause arises.

6. Conference

1. Conference shall include the President, who shall preside; Regional Chairpersons; overseas Ministers then serving within the Conference; former Presidents in retirement; the General Secretary; the Directors of the Departments of Christian Education and Evangelism; Principals of the Colleges;

Regional Superintendents; the President of Education; the Church Lawyer; the Lands Officer; the Finance Secretary; the Secretary of the Women's Department; the Manager of the 'Otumotu Anga'ofa Bookshop; the Manager of Tungi Arcade; the Business Manager; Retired Ministers able to attend; elected Ordained Ministers; any Ordained Minister holding a Conference appointment overseas who is present in Tonga during Conference; any Ordained Minister authorised to work elsewhere in Tonga or overseas; elected representatives; and such Senior Trustees as the President shall appoint, their number corresponding to the number of overseas Ministers. The President shall also appoint representatives corresponding to the number of Retired Ministers attending. The President may complete the required number of Ministers or representatives if numbers are deficient.

2. Conference may include fraternal representatives. The President and Conference Committee shall determine their number.
3. Equal numbers of Ministers and lay representatives shall be elected from the Regions and Departments as follows:

Region / Department / Overseas Area	Number of Ministers	Number of Representatives
Tongatapu Region	30	30
Ha'apai – Lulunga	3	3
Ha'apai – Hahake	9	9
Vava'u	15	15
'Eua	5	5
Niua Toputapu	2	2
Niua Fo'ou	2	2
Australia Region	4	4
New Zealand Region	4	4
Department of Christian Education	3	3
Department of Evangelism	3	3
Women's Department	3	3
Continuing Education for Ministers/Stewards	2	2
<i>Tohi Fanongonongo</i>	2	2
Education Department	14	14
New Zealand	4	4
Australia	4	4
United States of America	6	6
Hawai'i	4	4
Fiji	2	2
Samoa	2	2

4. Lay representatives must have been Catechumens for not less than four years.
5. The powers of Conference include:

(a) Election of the President. The President shall be elected annually by Conference from among Ordained Ministers in active appointment who belong to that Conference. Election shall be by ballot and majority vote, subject to confirmation by His Majesty.

(e) Election of the General Secretary. Each Conference shall elect its General Secretary from among Ordained Ministers in active appointment who belong to that Conference. Election shall be by ballot and majority vote.

6. The duties of the General Secretary in relation to Conference are:

(a) To prepare and maintain the Conference Roll.

(e) To compile the proceedings of Conference in written form.

(f) To prepare any correspondence directed by Conference.

(h) To carry out other matters as directed by Conference.

(i) To prepare for and carry out the work of Conference and the Conference Committee.

(k) To implement the decisions of Conference and the Conference Committee.

(l) To assist the President in administering the work of the Church in accordance with the President's guidance.

(m) To manage the work arrangements of Church Office staff.

(n) To manage the operational arrangements of the Church offices.

(ng) To chair meetings of the Tongatapu Region when directed by the President.

(o) To maintain relationships with overseas Churches, including the World Council of Churches.

(p) To act as caretaker President during periods when the President is absent from Tonga.

7. The General Secretary shall be elected annually and may be re-elected from one year to the next.

8. Conference shall meet once each year and shall determine the time, place and duration of its meeting.

9. The examination of Ministers shall be conducted by the Ministers at a suitable time after Conference has commenced. Matters concerning ministerial standing, reception and appointment shall be determined by the Ministers themselves.

10. All other Conference business and decisions shall involve both Ministers and lay representatives.

11. A proposal that has not been accepted by the Quarterly and Regional Meetings of the Regions may not simply be introduced at Conference by a member as a notice of motion. It shall first be referred back through the lower Church meetings and proceed through the proper process.

(a) Ministers' Conference

1. The Ministers' Conference shall consider the following questions:

(a) Whom do we propose to receive into full ministerial standing this year?

(e) Who should continue on probation?

(f) Whom do we recommend to Conference?

(h) Whom do we propose to receive as Probationary Ministers?

(i) Who should continue as Trainee Ministers?

(k) Whom do we propose to receive as Trainee Ministers?

(l) What proposals does Conference have concerning:

1. selection of Probationary Ministers;

2. training of Trainee Ministers;

3. examination of Probationary Ministers?

(m) Is any Minister to return overseas?

(n) Which Minister is being received from another Conference of the Wesleyan Church? [If that Minister wishes to return to Tonga, reception shall take place only when the Conference in Tonga accepts the recommendation and transfer letter from the Conference in which the Minister previously served.]

(ng) Which Minister do we propose should retire this year?

(o) Which Retired Minister should return to active service?

(p) Which Retired Minister should continue in retirement?

(s) Is there any matter adversely affecting a Minister?

(t) Is there any Minister whom we shall leave without a Circuit appointment?

(u) What decisions shall be made concerning the stationing and transfer of Ministers?

(e) Full Conference

1. The Full Conference shall include all Ministers elected to the Ministers' Conference, the elected representatives, and the Senior Trustees appointed by the President.

2. The first business shall be the election of the President and the General Secretary.

3. The meeting shall then proceed through the following questions:

(1) (i) Who are the members of Conference?

(ii) Who has been appointed to the detailed subcommittees of Conference?

(iii) Has any Minister died since the previous Conference?

(iv) Has any representative died since the previous Conference?

(v) Has any Conference Steward died since the previous Conference?

(vi) Has any Church Teacher died since the previous Conference?

For obituary records of Ministers, representatives, Conference Stewards and Church Teachers, the following order shall be used: name; date of birth; father and mother; education and institutions attended; marital status; number of children; work and service; religious standing; and date of death.

(2) Are there applications from Circuits requesting a Minister?

(3) Do we propose to divide or alter any Region or Circuit?

(4) Do we propose to establish any new Circuit?

(5) What is the state of our Membership Roll?

(6) What are the reports from: 1. the Department of Christian Education; 2. the Department of Evangelism; 3. the Women's Department; 4. the Continuing Education Department for Ministers and Stewards?

(7) What are the reports from the educational institutions: 1. preparatory schools; 2. intermediate schools; 3. colleges; 4. Tupou High School; 5. Hango Agricultural School; 6. Sia'atoutai Theological College?

(8) What decisions shall be made concerning overseas work?

(9) What is the state of Church property, including: 1. new buildings erected or established; 2. buildings under construction; 3. extensions and improvements; 4. property sold or leased; 5. property proposed for purchase; 6. places proposed to be leased; 7. applications for permission to construct a building or other work; 8. land leased during the year; 9. land not yet leased; 10. Trustees' debts increasing through neglect; 11. reports and advice concerning Taulua Printing Press, the Church Office, the vessel, the *Tohi Fanongonongo*, the Half Hour programme, Translation and Publications, the Bookshop Board, Church Music, Tungi Arcade, and the Overseas Mission Board?

(10) Who shall serve on the committees appointed by Conference? [The Conference Committee on Committee Appointments shall include the Senior Trustees, Superintendent Ministers and the General Secretary as Chair.] The committees and boards include: 1. Senior Trustees; 2. Conference Committee; 3. Ministers' Conference Committee; 4. Regional Advisory Committees for Vava'u, Ha'apai, 'Eua, Niua Toputapu and Niua Fo'ou; 5. Education and Scholarship Committee; 6. Sia'atoutai and Continuing Education Committee for Ministers and Stewards; 7. Development Committee; 8. Property and Lands Committee; 9. Constitution Committee; 10. Department of Christian Education Committee; 11. Department of Evangelism Committee; 12. Finance Committee; 13. Building Committee; 14. Communications Committee; 15. Taulua Board; 16. Bookshop Board; 17. Council of Churches; 18. Music Committee; 19. Women's Department Committee; 20. Taulama Committee; 21. Overseas Mission Board; 22. Tungi Arcade Board.

(11) What is the spiritual condition of the Circuits, and what can be done to improve the work?

(12) What decisions shall be made concerning the Retirement Fund?

(13) What is the report concerning Church finances?

(14) What responses are there to matters entrusted to particular persons by the previous Conference?

(15) Is there any matter to be referred to the next Conference?

(16) Are there any other decisions to be made?

(17) Where and when shall the next Conference be held?