

Editions of the Constitution

First Edition

Explanation and Authority for the First Edition

In 1743, John and Charles Wesley prepared a document called “**The Rules**” for the guidance of those who had joined together in their desire for the truth of godly living and in order to help one another. From this arose the Rules governing the people and the requirements for becoming Catechumens, in keeping with the Laws and Regulations of the Wesleyan people of Australia.

Mr Thomas arrived in Tonga in 1826 under the direction of the Conference of the Wesleyan Church of Britain and began his work of evangelising the people. With the help of God, the work advanced, the people turned to the Christian faith, and the nation experienced new life. At the beginning of this work, Tāufa‘āhau, who later became King and took the name George Tupou I, was converted. He devoted himself to the work of God and to the advancement of his people. The success of the Church’s work in Tonga was due in large measure to his perseverance and the wisdom of his leadership.

It was also his desire that the Church in Tonga should become a Conference. This took place in 1885, when it was called the **Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga**. Some of the people, however, remained connected with the Conference of the Wesleyan Church of New South Wales. Through God’s guidance, the will of Her Majesty Queen Sālote Tupou, together with her patience and wise leadership, enabled the intention of George Tupou I to be fulfilled by bringing the people together in the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga in connection with the General Conference of the Wesleyan Church of Australia. At the Conference held in Nuku‘alofa in May 1924, the Constitution of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga was adopted with the additions and amendments made by that Conference and was entitled **The Constitution, Laws and Regulations of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga**. It was to take effect from the date on which it was confirmed by His Majesty the King and signed by the President. The Conference therefore directed that this Constitution, as amended, be published and become the Constitution, Laws and Regulations of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga.

I confirm this on 30 May 1924.

(Signed) Sālote Tupou (Seal)

(Signed) Setaleki Manu, President of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga

(Signed) Tungī

(Signed) Kisi Taulani, Secretary of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga

Second Edition

Introduction to the Second Edition

The Conference of 1948 resolved that the Constitution and Laws of the Church should be revised and redrafted. Accordingly, that Conference appointed a Committee consisting of:

Prince Tungī; the President and Secretary; Moulitoni Fīnau; Sione Filipe Tongilava; and Afu Taumoepeau. In January 1953, the President also invited Sālesi Mānoa Havea to join the Committee.

The Secretary collated the decisions of Conferences from 1924 to 1952. The Committee presented its work to the Conference that met on 7 July 1953. The Conference approved the work of the Constitution Committee and requested the General Conference to authorise its use. (See the Minutes of the General Conference 1954, F. 6, pp. 15–19.)

We certify that the clauses appearing in this Constitution are the true provisions voted upon and approved by the Conference of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga at Vava'u in 1953, and that they were authorised by the General Conference of 1954.

I confirm this on 30 June 1954.

(Signed) A. E. McKAY
President

(Signed) J. S. FAUPULA
Secretary

Third Edition

We have collated the new proposals and amendments to the Constitution of the Church from 1954 to the present year. The Constitution Committee has reviewed and examined this work and is satisfied with it. We therefore certify on behalf of the Committee that the new clauses and amendments are fully consistent with the decisions of Conference and have all been confirmed by the General Conference.

Done on 21 May 1969.

(Signed) GEORGE C. HARRIS
President

(Signed) S. 'AMANAKI HAVEA
Secretary

I certify that the Conference has confirmed the Constitution as revised by the Committee.

Done on 10 June 1969.

(Signed) JUSTIN GOODERHAM
President

Fourth Edition

The 1995 Conference resolved that the 1969 Constitution be consolidated by incorporating all constitutional amendments, Laws and Regulations relating to the Constitution from 1970 to 1995 that had become part of the Constitution.

The task was entrusted to the Constitution Committee and, in particular, to Lōpeti Tāufa, Sione Lepa To'a, Hon. Tēvita Pōasi Tupou, 'Alisi Taumoepeau, Pālavilala Tapueluelu, Sīmote Mēsuilame Veā and 'Alifaleti Malakai Mone. When the work was completed, it was presented to the Conference held at Pangai, Ha'apai, in 1996.

We certify that the clauses appearing in this Constitution are the true provisions voted upon and approved by the Conference of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga in Ha‘apai in 1996, including the amendments accepted by that Conference. That Conference authorised this Constitution.

I confirm this on 9 April 1998.

(Signed) Lōpeti Tāufa
President of the Church

(Signed) ‘Alifaleti M. Mone
General Secretary of the Church

Fifth Edition

At the 78th Conference in 2001, it was resolved that the Constitution of the Church be consolidated for reprinting in 2002. One important matter to be included was the **Teachings of the Church**. The Constitution Committee undertook this work and referred it to the Ministerial Conference Committee and Sia‘atoutai Theological College. It was then returned and approved by the Conference Committee. It was also resolved that relevant passages of Scripture should be attached to the sections of the Teachings in order to support them. It was further resolved that the **Basic Beliefs of the Church**, prepared by the Taulama Committee and approved by the Conference Committee, should be incorporated into the Constitution.

The Constitution Committee, with the approval of the Conference Committee, appointed a Working Committee to carry out the consolidation. Its members were Tēvita Pōasi Tupou, Pālavilala Tapueluelu, Malolo Fuka, Dr ‘Ahio, Sīmote Mēsuilame Veā, Tēvita Vaipuna, Tōmasi Fakahua and the Secretary of Conference. This Working Committee sought to restructure and consolidate the Constitution and to incorporate all amendments and new clauses approved by previous Conferences.

The Constitution was submitted to the 79th Conference in 2002 for approval, printing and use by the Church. The Conference approved the completed work and directed that it be printed.

It was signed by the President of the Church and the Secretary of Conference
on the day of 2005.

(Signed)
President

(Signed)
Secretary

First Conference of the Church

Affirmations Made at the Beginning of the First Conference of the United Church, 21 May 1924

1. The Catechumens of the Wesleyan Church shall become Catechumens of the Church.

2. The Class Leaders and Advisers of the Wesleyan Church shall retain those offices in the Church.
3. The Lay Preachers of the Wesleyan Church shall retain that office in the Church.
4. The Ministers and Ordained Ministers of the Wesleyan Church shall retain those offices in the Church.
5. The Principal Trustees shall retain that office in the Church; and the leases and property of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga shall become the lands and property of the Church.