



Leading in the Free Methodist Church

*A Resource for Superintendents, Pastors,
Ministerial Candidates and Leaders*





The Free Methodist
Mission

Love God

Love People

Make Disciples

The Free Methodist *Vision*

To bring wholeness to
the world through healthy
biblical communities of
holy people

*multiplying disciples,
leaders, groups, and
churches.*



The Free Methodist Way



Free Methodists are first and foremost a Kingdom people. Yet throughout church history God has raised up distinct movements like ours to enrich the larger body of Christ. Building on the legacies of John Wesley and B.T. Roberts, but always discerning where God is moving today, our identity is shaped by values that are both historical and aspirational. Of the many values we hold dear, these five lie at the heart of our movement. We view them as a

whole, each one bringing necessary balance to the others. In a time of rising polarization in our nation, we resist the pull toward both fundamentalism and theological liberalism — not out of a spirit of compromise, but from a radical commitment to what Wesley called “the middle way.” It is a path that takes the whole gospel seriously and continually calls us to “both/and” convictions in an “either/or” world. We call it *The Free Methodist Way*.

Life-Giving *Holiness*

God's call to holiness was never meant to be a burden, but a gift that liberates us for life that is truly life by delivering us from the destructive power of sin.

All who are born again are made right with God by the finished work of Jesus Christ and called to experience the fullness of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Forgiven and filled, we approach life with confidence that we are acceptable to God even as He continues to transform our character and behavior to become more and more like Jesus. Life-giving holiness, then, is the fruit of full surrender to the loving reign of God over every aspect of our lives, establishing within us love that is truly love.

Leaving behind the legalism that once hindered our movement, *The Free Methodist Way* invites every believer to embrace the transforming work of the Holy Spirit that empowers us to love and serve God and others in joyful obedience.



Love-Driven *Justice*

Love is the way we demonstrate God's heart for justice by valuing the image of God in all men, women, and children, acting with compassion toward the oppressed, resisting oppression, and stewarding Creation.

We devote ourselves to our founders' deep convictions around matters of injustice as they took their stand against the evils of slavery, the oppression of the poor,

the marginalization of women, and the abuse of power in the church. Our heart for justice continues and expands today, fueled by God's holy love for the unborn, the vulnerable, oppressed, marginalized, and people of all races and ethnicities.

The Free Methodist Way is not only to realize a better society, but that all may be reconciled to God and one another in ways that reflect God's just character.

Christ-Compelled *Multiplication*

The gospel of Jesus Christ — the message He proclaimed, the life He lived, and the ministry He modeled — set into motion a redemptive movement destined to fill the whole earth.

Jesus' approach to discipleship was primarily a relational one in which He poured His life into a few with the full expectation that they would follow His example. His aim was not merely the transmission of information, but the transformation of lives by empowering those who followed Him to do what He had

been doing. His mission is now our mission. We believe this redemptive movement of multiplication applies to every believer and should permeate our Free Methodist culture at every level: the found reaching the lost, disciples making disciples, leaders developing leaders, churches planting churches, and movements birthing movements.

The Free Methodist Way is to see God's kingdom expand exponentially as ordinary people are equipped by God's power to do extraordinary things.





Cross-Cultural *Collaboration*

From the beginning, God's intent was to have a people from every nation, culture and ethnicity, united in Christ and commissioned to carry out His work in the world.

Today we celebrate the beauty of a multicultural and multiethnic church both in the U.S. and in over 100 countries around the world. In the U.S., we cling to the promise that we have been made one in Christ even as we dedicate ourselves to becoming a more diverse church that looks like the kingdom of God. Globally, we continue to send missionaries to other nations even as we rejoice that the nations are increasingly

coming to us. Freely sharing our own gifts and resources, we are also challenged and inspired by the faithfulness, perseverance, ceaseless prayer, theological insights, and spiritual wisdom of our international brothers and sisters. Without question, we are better together.

The Free Methodist Way aspires to move beyond colonialism and ethnocentrism in favor of a collaborative partnership in God's global work in anticipation of the day when a great multitude from every tongue, tribe, people and language makes up the eternal throng before the throne of God (Revelation 7:9).

God-Given *Revelation*

We hold unwaveringly to our conviction that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and our final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

Drawing on our Wesleyan heritage of engaging with Scripture through the lenses of tradition, reason, and experience, we keep Scripture primary. While the church will

always be tasked with authentically communicating and applying biblical truths with sensitivity to cultural dynamics, we do not subjugate the Bible's timeless truths to cultural norms or social trends.

The Free Methodist Way is to fully align our lives and our movement on the unshakeable foundation of God's Word.

The Free Methodist *Mission Measures**

Spirit aliveness:

Because we aim to ignite a Spirit-fueled movement within the FMCUSA, we start by seeking God's presence with all our hearts and devoting ourselves to prevailing prayer with the expectation that we will see evidence of God's work among us.

1. We have an observable passion for God's presence when our congregation gathers. (1-10)
2. We intentionally cultivate a commitment to prayer in our church both individually and corporately. (1-10)
3. We regularly see God's supernatural work moving in and through our congregation (conversions, restored marriages, healings, other miracles, impact in our community, etc.). (1-10)

Evangelistic disciple-making system:

Because we believe evangelism and discipleship are essential to the mission of the church, we expect every congregation to develop a clear plan for reaching the lost and ensuring that every believer is disciplined to be a disciple-maker with the expectation that we will regularly see the fruit of conversions and baptisms.

1. Our pastors and/or staff personally model relational evangelism and disciple-making. (1-10)
2. We are confident in the effectiveness of our current evangelism and discipleship system. (1-10)
3. We regularly celebrate conversions and baptisms in public worship. (1-10)

* Conference leadership will engage in a regular process of evaluation with every local church to assess the relative strength of each measure on a scale of 1 to 10.

Mentoring pipeline:

Because leadership is essential to the long-term impact of any spiritual movement, we invest deeply in the development of both lay and pastoral leaders with the expectation that we will have both the quality and quantity of leaders to meet the needs of a growing movement.

1. We are confident in our church's system for developing leaders. (1-10)
2. Our pastors and/or staff are actively being mentored by and/or are mentoring another FM pastor. (1-10)
3. We have persons in our congregation who are currently engaged in the path to ordination. (LMC/CMC) (1-10)

Multiplication step:

Because multiplication is a clear indicator of missional health, we challenge every church to take the next step toward a more fruitful ministry with the expectation that we will see new ministries launched and churches planted.

1. We are in dialogue with our conference about our next breakthrough as a church. (1-10)
2. We are confident in our effectiveness in reaching our local community. (1-10)
3. We are currently involved in a church planting strategy. (1-10)





The Freedoms of Free Methodists

A 21st Century Articulation of our Historic Freedoms

1. Freedom of all races to worship together in unity.
2. Freedom for the poor to be treated with dignity in the church and with justice in the world.
3. Freedom for women and men to be treated respectfully and use their gifts equally in the church, in the home, and in the world.
4. Freedom for laity to be fairly represented in the governing bodies of the church.
5. Freedom from spiritual, political, social or conceptual alliances that compromise or subvert the exclusive allegiance we profess to Jesus Christ.
6. Freedom to engage in worship that is moved and inspired by the Holy Spirit.
7. Freedom from sin's power through full surrender to God.

Flexible Leadership Structures *for Churches*

Non-Negotiables

1. We may not live in violation of the Scriptures
2. We may not live in violation of the Articles of Religion, the Constitution, the Membership Covenant, or the mission of the Free Methodist Church.
3. Our pastors may not live in violation of their ordination vows.
4. Our leaders may not lead the church in ways which detract or divert from our mission.

**Placing mission
ahead of method,
pastors and leaders
are *free* to
establish structures
and create ministries
that accomplish the
expected outcomes
without violating the
non-negotiables.**

Expected Outcomes

1. Every society a **prayer-saturated** congregation.
2. Every society a **worshiping** congregation.
3. Every society a **discipling** congregation.
4. Every society an **evangelizing** congregation.
5. Every society a **reproducing** congregation.
6. Every society a **culture-engaging** congregation.
7. Every society a **world-mission** congregation.





Helpful *Resources*

- Website of the FMCUSA: [fmcusa.org](https://www.fmcusa.org)
- Legal and Administrative Resources: [legal.fmcusa.org](https://www.legal.fmcusa.org)
- The Center for Pastoral Formation: [leadership.fmcusa.org](https://www.leadership.fmcusa.org)
- FM Books and Resources: [freemethodistbooks.com](https://www.freemethodistbooks.com)
- Light + Life Magazine Online: [lightandlife.fm](https://www.lightandlife.fm)
- Read the Book of Discipline Online: [fmcusa.org/resources/2019bod](https://www.fmcusa.org/resources/2019bod)
- Leaders of the FMCUSA: [fmcusa.org/leaders](https://www.fmcusa.org/leaders)
- Free Methodist World Missions: [fmwm.org](https://www.fmwm.org)
- ICCM: [childcareministries.org](https://www.childcareministries.org)
- The Set Free Movement: [setfreemovement.com](https://www.setfreemovement.com)
- FMCUSA Human Resources: [hr.fmcusa.org](https://www.hr.fmcusa.org)
- The Free Methodist Way: [fmcusa.org/thefmway](https://www.fmcusa.org/thefmway)



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