

GREAT PLAINS CONFERENCE
of the FREE METHODIST CHURCH of
NORTH AMERICA, Inc.

*ORGANIZATION & POLICY
MANUAL*

reviewed May 2014

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STANDING RULES

Business Rules

- A. *Robert's Rules Of Order*, latest edition, shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure (*Discipline* paragraph 5030).
- B. The conference secretary may select an assistant secretary.
- C. Honorary seats shall be granted to all persons making reports to the conference.
- D. Honorary seats shall be granted to all ministerial candidates and licensed pastors. The names of those who attend shall be noted in the minutes.
- E. The names of ministers deceased during the year shall be removed from the roll and referred to the memorial service committee.
- F. Those making detailed motions shall present them in writing to the conference secretary.
- G. When voting by ballot, if the second ballot does not complete the election of a Board/Committee, the third ballot will consist of those, equivalent in number to the positions remaining to be filled plus one (1), who received the highest number of votes in the second ballot. In the third and any subsequent ballot, 50% of the ballots cast plus one (1) will be required for election.
- H. The conference secretary shall revise the Standing Rules and Procedures annually by incorporating pertinent conference action.
- I. Newly elected conference officers and team members shall assume office at the close of Annual Conference unless otherwise specified.
- J. Conference Ministry Teams, committee and board chairpersons shall be responsible to send to the conference office by the end of the fourth week of April their recommendations requiring action by the Annual Conference.
- K. Annual Conference Report Book
 1. The conference will utilize the Annual Conference Report Book (ACRB) to facilitate action and provide information.
 2. The conference office will provide for the publishing and distribution of an Annual Conference Report Book 2 weeks prior to Annual Conference. It will be distributed to all members of the conference and elected delegates and will include the following:
 - a. Local delegates' and pastors' reports
 - b. Reports from ministers in special relations, ministerial candidates, supplies, and retired ministers
 - c. Reports from all Ministry Teams, committees, boards, and other conference personnel, including recommendations requiring action
 - d. Financial statements
 - e. Review of year's activities and future plans
 - f. Audit statements (where applicable)

L. Routine orders for the opening of Annual Conference:

1. The bar of the conference be fixed according to the rows of seats provided
2. The conference have one regular sitting each day as printed in the agenda
3. The chairman of the conference be invited to address the conference during the beginning of the first session and at the public service(s)
4. The conference superintendent will be seated on the platform
5. Minutes of the first sitting be distributed at the second sitting for review and approval

M. Routine orders for the closing of Annual Conference:

1. The minutes of the second sitting be referred to the Board of Administration for correction and approval and that a copy of the corrected and approved minutes be sent to all members of the Annual Conference
2. Any business overlooked by this Annual Conference be referred to the Board of Administration with power to act
3. The Board of Administration shall have power to act on property matters of the conference between sittings of the annual conference
4. We stand adjourned with the reading of the appointments & prayer
5. We adjourn to meet at the call of the area bishop

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION and STRUCTURE

Paragraph references are to the *Book of Discipline*, current edition. In case of conflict between these articles and the *Discipline*, the *Discipline* shall govern.

I. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COMPOSITION: Refer to the Bylaws, Article III

FUNCTION: To assure all secular corporate and legal duties and functions prescribed by the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America are performed by the Kansas corporation known as The Great Plains Annual Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America, Inc. References in the *Discipline* to corporate trustees shall mean and refer to the Board of Directors (paragraph 6400).

A. *Nebraska Registered Office and Registered Agent*

FUNCTION: To comply with the laws of the State of Nebraska which require a corporation to maintain a registered office (the agent's home address) and a registered agent within the State for purposes of service of legal process.

B. *Missouri Registered Office and Registered Agent*

FUNCTION: To comply with the laws of the State of Missouri which require a corporation to maintain a registered office (the agent's home address) and a registered agent within the State for purposes of legal process.

II. MINISTRY TEAMS

Great Plains Conference ministries will be coordinated and directed by five Ministry Teams.

A. CHURCH PLANTING TEAM

COMPOSITION: Church Planting Team Leader and Assistant; three at large church planting enthusiasts to be elected to terms, and as many others who have passion and interest in church planting that the Team invites to help facilitate ministry. Current church planters are not eligible for Team membership.

FUNCTION: To oversee the ministry of planting churches under the sponsorship of the Great Plains Conference. Their agenda will include:

- Praying for vision and direction in stimulating and coordinating the conference to reach the unreached by planting churches,
- Seeking sources of funding for church planting, and
- Strategizing, facilitating, and coordinating church planting.

B. WORLD MISSIONS TEAM

COMPOSITION: World Mission Team Leader, Assistant, three at large missions enthusiasts to be elected to terms, and as many others who have passion and interest in missions that the Team invites to help facilitate ministry

FUNCTION: To implement and oversee the ministry opportunities of the Great Plains Conference as it pertains to world/home missions. Their agenda will include:

- Praying for vision and direction for healthy world/home missions ministry opportunities for the local church and for short-term pastoral sabbaticals, and
- Promoting missions, educating, and overseeing short-term missions opportunities,

TEAM LEADER AND ASSISTANT

FUNCTION: 1) Coordinate all activities with and through the GPC World Missions Team, Board of Administration, and Annual Conference; and 2) Work to enlarge the vision and visibility of World Missions within the local church.

- With regard to VISA work teams from GPC
 1. Contact Department of World Missions requesting location of place to serve within certain dates and location limits (mid-January through late February and Latin America);
 2. Arrange for person to be coordinator of the team (oversight by chair of WM Team);
 - a. Determine costs: building material, flight, living expenses, other in-country expenses, and communicate with team;
 - b. Generate publicity to arouse interest: letters to pastor, items in conference newsletter, etc.
 - c. Plan and carry out training and get acquainted meeting with team members four to six weeks before takeoff;
 - d. Delegate ministry tasks to team members: i.e., work supervisor, chaplain, treasurer, interpreter, etc.
 - e. Schedule a debriefing session for closure two to four weeks following return—share pictures, slides, and memories.
 - f. Oversee Pastoral Short Term Initiative (see Policies & Procedures, p. 11)

C. CONGREGATIONAL NURTURE TEAM

COMPOSITION: Team Leader, Assistant and, to be elected to terms, and six (6) other enthusiasts who have passion and interest in congregational health, nurture, and revitalization that the Team invites to help facilitate ministry.

FUNCTION: to assist the local church in nurture and revitalization through:

- Prayer for vision and direction for healthy congregational life and local church revitalization,
- Resourcing healthy congregations (information and scholarship money),
- Organizing, coordinating conference personnel (pastoral or lay) for local church consulting, assisting, resourcing,
- Evangelism/outreach initiatives in local churches: education, coordinating idea exchanges, commending resource materials, strategies, approaches,
- Offering quality camping and retreat opportunities for the people of the Great Plains Conference such as Junior Youth, Teen, Family, Mid-Winter, and SCAMPS.

D. STEWARDSHIP TEAM

COMPOSITION: Team Leader and Assistant; Conference Treasurer; Corporation President, Loan Board Treasurer; and four (4) at-large members.

FUNCTION: To maintain general oversight of conference property and local church property when authorized, to secure, to supervise repair, and report annually on the condition of subject property (paragraph 6400);

- To receive money or property by gift, transfer, bequest or devise, to hold, invest and re-invest the same, to pay interest on deposits, and to sell, give or otherwise dispose of said property on behalf of the conference; to make loans and grants to the conference or local churches for purchase of property, or for construction, renovation or improvement of conference or local church buildings; and, at the direction of Annual Conference, to support or engage in any related activity to advance the work of the conference;
- To approve site selection and purchase of property, to approve architectural plans and construction of all buildings within the bounds of the conference (paragraph 6410);
- To approve financial arrangements and feasibility of payments on loans other than through the conference loan board or a denominational agency ;

- To prepare and administer a conference budget, to assist in stewardship education and UMC Home Ministries promotion throughout the conference (paragraph 5240);
- To study needs, premium options, and administer any ministers' health insurance program approved by Annual Conference and to administer the denominational pension program for the Annual Conference.
- To oversee Pastor Assistance Reserve Fund (see Policies & Procedures, pg. 13)
- To serve as the Great Plains Conference Loan Board and to administer the Board's funds.

E. PERSONNEL TEAM

COMPOSITION: Members of the Ministerial Appointments Committee (MAC) and the Ministerial Education and Guidance (MEG) Board.

FUNCTION: to care for pastoral personnel needs of the Great Plains Conference (see *Discipline* 5220, 5230).

II. BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION (BOA or ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE)

COMPOSITION: The BOA will consist of 10 members plus three ex-officio members (Superintendent, Conference Treasurer, and Conference Secretary). Each team (Church Planting, World Missions, Congregational Nurture, Stewardship, Personnel) will have at least one representative, and five (5) more at-large members. The Superintendent will serve as Chair.

FUNCTION: To join with the Conference Superintendent in providing leadership to Conference Ministries through Conference Ministry Teams; to receive regular reports from Ministry Teams: to be the administrative and executive committee of the conference in the interim between Annual Conferences; and to care for routine business and items specifically delegated to it by the Annual Conference (paragraph 5200).

IV. OTHER CONFERENCE STRUCTURES

A. CONFERENCE HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

COMPOSITION: Chair, plus other interested persons.

FUNCTION: To prepare and maintain a history of the conference, to secure a suitable location for the conference archives, and to solicit ongoing information from existing churches and members

B. MEMORIAL SERVICE COMMITTEE

COMPOSITION: Chair, plus one other person

FUNCTION: To arrange for a memorial service at annual conference for ministers/wives deceased during the past year and to honor lay persons deceased during the past year.

C. MERITORIOUS SERVICE COMMITTEE

COMPOSITION: Chair, plus one other person

FUNCTION: To provide meaningful recognition of ministers' service in the conference at five year intervals, and to honor ministers at retirement

- The years of service shall be determined by the number of years under Great Plains Conference appointment as a pastor, an evangelist, a superintendent, in Free Methodist schools or ministerial service in the general church. The service shall commence with conference appointment as listed above, or as a Conference Ministerial Candidate.
- Service will continue after retirement for the same intervals, if under conference appointment.

- A service of honor for retirees, similar to that by the Committee on memoirs for the deceased, including a biographical sketch (copies given to the retiree and the “Historical Committee”), and a plaque with pertinent information on years of service in the Great Plains Conference to be given to the retiree. The responsibility for a committee to prepare such a service is referred to the Nominating Committee.

D. *MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE*

COMPOSITION: The area bishop or his appointee (chair), the conference superintendent (vice-chair), one additional elder and two lay persons elected by ballot to rotating three year terms.

FUNCTION: To monitor the work in each church, to evaluate pastoral leadership, to appoint ministers, to withhold appointment and to suspend ministers for cause (paragraph 5220).

E. *MINISTERIAL EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE (MEG) BOARD*

COMPOSITION: Superintendent (chair), Ministerial Appointments Committee, chairperson of the Central Christian College of Kansas religion department, plus six other persons.

FUNCTION: To identify, screen and recruit personnel to serve in the conference, to counsel and encourage toward advancement those in conference relationship, to recommend regarding suitability for appointment, and to pass on the character of ordained personnel (par. 5230).

F. *NOMINATING COMMITTEE*

NOMINATION: The BOA will nominate persons to serve as the GPC Nominating Committee. Members will serve on a rotating 2 yr. basis.

COMPOSITION: The Nominating Committee will be comprised of: the Superintendent, four pastors, four lay people. Consideration will be given to geographical distribution.

FUNCTION: To provide a slate of nominees to Annual Conference for all conference offices and structures, except Conference Superintendent, the Nominating Committee, and other positions provided for above, giving due regard to balancing clergy and laity on all boards and committees; also to present to Annual Conference a slate of chairpersons for all designated boards, committees and ministry teams.

- The Nominating Committee shall establish three-year terms for all conference structures and offices. Members of boards, committees and officers may succeed themselves for no more than one term. After a one-year absence, members may again serve.
- The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of chairpersons for all designated structures. Each designated structure may present suggestions for chairpersons to the Nominating Committee not less than one week before the annual spring meeting of the Nominating Committee.
- The Nominating Committee shall provide a brief description of each candidate presented in the Annual Conference Report Book (ACRB) nominations.
- Nominees for tellers should be chosen from those who have neither a voting seat nor an honorary seat at Annual Conference.

G. *SOCIAL ACTION PROMOTER*

FUNCTION: to lead the conference in awareness and action regarding social issues and needs (paragraph 5250), to serve as our liaison between the conference and social action organizations.

V. TEMPORARY COMMITTEES

A. *INTRODUCTIONS COMMITTEE*

COMPOSITION: two persons

FUNCTION: to introduce guests to the Annual Conference

B. *TELLERS*

COMPOSITION: one panel of two persons for counting ballots, two panels of two persons each for distribution of materials

FUNCTION: to distribute materials, to tabulate ballot votes outside the bar of the conference unless otherwise directed

VI. OTHER CONFERENCE PERSONNEL

A. *CONFERENCE SUPERINTENDENT*

SELECTION: refer to *Discipline*, paragraph 5110

FUNCTION: to serve as chief executive officer of the annual conference, refer to *Discipline*, paragraph 5110

- The superintendent is responsible for employing personnel for those positions approved and funded by the Annual Conference.
- The superintendent may teach one course each year at Central Christian College.

B. *CONFERENCE SECRETARY*

SELECTION: The secretary may be elected by ballot if the conference wishes and shall continue to hold office until a successor is elected. The conference secretary shall serve as the secretary of the Board of Administration. (Note: The conference secretary is exempt from the tenure limitation of two successive terms.)

FUNCTION: to keep accurate records of conference proceedings; to submit reports as outlined in paragraph 5120; and to keep, or cause to be kept, all ecclesiastical documents of the conference

C. *CONFERENCE TREASURER*

SELECTION: The treasurer is elected to a 3-year term upon nomination by the nominating committee. (Note: The conference treasurer is exempt from the tenure limitation of two successive terms.)

FUNCTION: to receive, account for, and disburse conference funds as directed by Annual Conference; the treasurer shall be bonded (par 5130)

- The account books of the conference treasurer shall be set up according to recognized bookkeeping principles that lend to the preparing of a balance sheet showing assets, liabilities, and the continuity of the fund balance.
- The conference treasurer shall provide monthly reports to the conference office, annual reports to the Annual Conference, and current reports to each meeting of the BOA.

D. *THE CEDARS BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPRESENTATIVE*

COMPOSITION: one person elected for a three year term

FUNCTION: to represent the interests of current and potential Free Methodists residents at The Cedars, Inc., a Christian retirement community in McPherson, Kansas

E. *LIFE LINE HOMES PROMOTER*

FUNCTION: to serve as a liaison between Life Line Homes and the conference, and to report regarding the work of this organization

F. *MEN'S MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL*

FUNCTION: to promote the interests, program and ministries of MMI within the conference

G. *PRAYER NETWORK DIRECTOR*

FUNCTION: to promote prayer for conference and local needs throughout the conference, to lead appropriate seminars and times of prayer in regional and/or conference events

VII. EXPLANATORY NOTES

- A. The conference superintendent serves as an *ex officio* member of all conference structures. Chairpersons and secretaries are to keep the superintendent advised of meeting dates and send a copy of the minutes for conference office files.
- B. All team members and other conference personnel are elected by the Annual Conference.
- C. All members of the Ministry Teams, other standing boards and committees, and other conference personnel are elected to rotating terms of three years unless otherwise noted; members of temporary committees serve in preparation for and during annual conference; members of ad hoc committees serve until assignment is complete.
- D. When elected to a term longer than one year, tenure is limited to two successive terms. (Exceptions: conference superintendent, conference secretary, conference treasurer and loan board treasurer) A person may be elected again to the same office or committee after an absence of at least one year.
- E. Nominations and elections for all conference structures should give due consideration to maintaining a balance between clergy and laity.
- F. No individual shall be elected to more than one Ministry Team, except for persons on the Personnel Team who may also serve on one other ministry team.
- G. Service in a conference position or on a conference board or committee is both a privilege and a challenge. The work is important. It deserves one's best efforts and priority in scheduling. If a person cannot, or *does* not wish to serve it is appropriate to decline the nomination, or, if already elected, to resign so that another may serve. When persons accept the challenge and serve to the best of their ability, they should be assured their work is deeply appreciated.
- H. *If an appointed minister is elected to serve on a Conference team/committee and is later left without appointment, the elected position will be considered vacant.*
- I. Duties and responsibilities for many committees are outlined in the *Book of Discipline*, with only excerpts cited above under FUNCTION. Please consult the *Book of Discipline* for additional information.

VIII. AMENDMENTS

To reflect action of the last Annual Conference or to clarify and facilitate the work of the conference, these Articles of Organization may be amended by majority vote of the Annual Conference or the Board of Administration, with due debate and consideration, but without advance notice.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

I. PERSONNEL POLICIES

A. *THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND ITS SUPERINTENDENT*

1. The conference superintendent shall oversee the work of the conference.
2. The superintendent shall visit each church at least once annually.
3. The superintendent shall organize and coordinate the conference pastoral learning community.
4. The conference shall pay all of the superintendent's pension and health insurance, and one-half of his social security.
5. Vacation policy for the superintendent shall be the same as that adopted for pastors (see below).
6. The superintendent shall serve as our liaison with the National Association of Evangelicals

B. *THE LOCAL CHURCH AND ITS PASTOR*

1. Pastoral responsibilities and salary begin with the reading of the appointments.
2. Pastors are to assume responsibility for personally informing people from their local church assigned to conference teams and committees.
3. Pastors are to be released by their churches to serve in conference camping programs when asked.
4. Vacation policy is as follows:
 - a. Years of service beginning with eligibility for the Free Methodist Pension Plan.
 - b. Two weeks per year for pastors with less than ten years of appointed ministry in the Free Methodist Church.
 - c. Three weeks per year for pastors with ten years or more of appointed ministry in the Free Methodist Church.
 - d. Four weeks per year for pastors with twenty years or more of appointed ministry in the Free Methodist Church. Further time beyond four weeks should be considered in comparison with individuals of like standing and profession in the community where the church is located.
 - e. Vacation time shall not include time spent by the pastor holding revivals in other churches, or at conference activities where attendance is required.
 - f. Vacation is to be granted any time within the conference year ***and does not accumulate into the next conference year unless an agreement is reached with the local church.***
5. It is also recommended that annually the Local Board of Administration consider, in consultation with the pastor, additional time off for private spiritual retreat apart from vacation schedules.
6. Sabbatical Policy is as follows:

That periodically, a leave of absence be allowed for the purpose of study, research, investigation, work experience or personal spiritual enrichment. The time of service requirement for eligibility and length of sabbatical granted shall be established by each local church, and in accordance with the guidelines established by the Board of Bishops. The guidelines are:

 - a. Sabbatical leave is both a recognition of past service and an opportunity to enrich future ministry.
 - b. Time of service requirements for eligibility shall be established by each conference. (Note: GPC allows each local church to establish its own time of service requirement.)
 - c. After consultation with the superintendent, sabbatical leave shall be agreed upon between the pastor and the local church before applying to the MEG Board. Preparation for sabbatical leave has two parts: The agreement with the church containing arrangements for pulpit supplies, pastoral care and administrative oversight during the absence of the pastor and the sabbatical plan to be submitted to the MEG Board for approval.

- d. Requests for sabbatical leave shall be filed with the superintendent and approved by the MEG Board. Such request shall include a detailed plan for use of sabbatical time and the expected benefits from the experience.
- e. At the conclusion of the sabbatical leave a report shall be filed with the MEG Board describing the activities and benefits of the sabbatical leave and a report made to the church.
- f. Sabbatical leave is not to be used for personal financial advantage.

C PASTORAL SHORT TERM INITIATIVE

The Great Plains Conference has initiated a partnership between local churches and the conference whereby one or more pastoral couples per year will be sent to teach in the area of theological/pastoral training on a Free Methodist Mission Field for four to six weeks. (See 1998 Annual Conference Minutes.)

1. Scope
 - a. The Pastoral short-Term Mission program is only available to appointed pastors and their spouses serving in the Great Plains Conference.
 - b. The pastor must travel to a Free Methodist mission field to teach in the area of theological/pastoral training.
 - c. The missions trip will last from four (4) to six (6) weeks.
2. Application
 - a. The pastor(s) interested in participating will first receive approval from his/her official board.
 - b. After receiving official board approval, the pastor(s) will dialogue with the Conference Missions Coordinator and the respective World Missions Area Director about the duration, venue, and course being taught.
 - c. The pastor will then apply for VISA approval from the Department of World Missions.
 - d. After receiving VISA approval, the pastor shall apply in writing to the **World Missions Team** for conference assistance.
 - e. The **World Missions Team** shall not give assistance to anyone without VISA approval.
 - f. If the **World Missions Team** chooses not to recommend a candidate, it will specify its reasons to the candidate in writing. The candidate may still pursue the mission, but will not receive conference assistance.
3. Pastoral Responsibilities
 - a. The pastor and pastor's cabinet will make arrangements for the pastor's responsibilities during the pastor's absence.
 - b. Because the mission will be within the scope of ministry as an appointed member of the conference, the pastor's salary will continue during the mission.
4. Financial Support
 - a. Financial support for the mission will come first from the local church.
 - b. Conference assistance will be based on the amount budgeted by the annual conference for this ministry and on the amount given specifically by donors to the conference for this ministry.
 - c. Assistance will be divided equally between the approved pastors, based on the calendar year in which their mission will commence.
5. The pastor will be free to solicit assistance outside the local church and the conference in accordance with Par. 6440 of the "Book of Discipline."

II. FINANCIAL POLICIES

A. PASTORAL REMUNERATION

It is recommended that each local church pay its pastor the **maximum** that it can afford, and that the pastor's support be designed according to the Pastoral Support Package guidelines below. Further, that churches not paying at least the recommended minimum annual full-time salary and support package allow the pastor to seek additional employment.

1. When a local church initially determines the pastor's salary, it considers the pastor's education, experience and past performance. Furthermore, each year the church shall review the pastor's gross salary, with a view to giving cost-of-living and merit increases.
2. Gross salary definition and explanation:
 - a. Gross salary: includes cash, housing and utilities, and one-half of Self Employment Tax if paid by the church. It excludes any supplementary income the pastor may receive from other sources and income from spouse's employment.
 - b. Housing: If the pastor lives in the parsonage, determine the gross salary as if he lived in his own home. Deduct a conservative amount for rental value of the parsonage. If parsonage is used by the church on a regular basis, reduce the amount of deduction. If the church or pastor determines that it is better for the pastor not to live in the parsonage, the church may rent the parsonage, and pay the rent to the pastor as part of his gross salary.
 - c. Utilities: If parsonage/house utilities are paid by the church, or if a utility/allowance is paid to the pastor, that amount is to be considered as part of the pastor's gross salary.
3. Pastoral Support Packages shall be as follows:
 - a. Full-time Support Package
 - 1) Salary per schedule (includes cash salary, housing, utilities)
 - 2) Quarterly payment of one-half of pastor's Self Employment Tax.
 - 3) Current with at least ½ health insurance payments
 - 4) Current with Pension Fund payments
 - 5) Travel and hospitality allowance/reimbursement
 - 6) Professional enrichment
 - a) Materials (i.e. books, magazines, tapes, etc.)
 - b) 2 continuing education units per year
 - 7) Conference events (expenses and pulpit supply if necessary)
 - a) Annual Conference
 - b) Pastoral Support Team
 - c) Pastor and Spouse Retreat
 - d) Lecture series at Central Christian College
 - e) Other GPC events
 - 8) No Conference pastoral salary assistance
 - b. Bi-vocational Support Package
 - 1) Salary per schedule (includes cash salary, housing, utilities)
 - 2) 1/2 Social Security (employer's half)
 - 3) Current with at least 1/2 Health Insurance payments
 - 4) Current with Pension Fund payments
 - 5) Travel and hospitality allowance/reimbursement
 - 6) Professional enrichment - Provide as much as possible in consultation with pastor
 - 7) Conference events (expenses and pulpit supply if necessary)
Provide as many of the above (under full-time) as possible in consultation with pastor

- c. Pulpit Supply Support Package (retired, student pastor, or lay person)
 - 1) Paid per day or week
 - 2) Parsonage, if available, utilities as able
 - 3) 1/2 Social Security, if required
 - 4) 1/2 Health Insurance, if pastor's salary over minimum
 - 5) Pension Fund payments, if pastor's salary over minimum
 - 6) Travel and hospitality (may be included in 1.)
 - 7) Professional enrichment, as able
 - 8) Assistance for as many conference events as able

B. THE SUPPLEMENTAL SALARY PLAN

Provides full registration costs at Family Camp, Pastor & Spouse Retreat, and the Christmas Banquet for pastors whose salary reported in the Yearbook, column 64, stands below \$8,500. (AC minutes 1986)

C. THE PASTOR ASSISTANCE RESERVE (PAR)

The PAR was created by the Great Plains Conference Board of Administration to use for assisting pastors in need. The fund, created by a donation from an individual and with a matching grant from the Loan Board earnings, is administered under the direction of the Stewardship Team (Fall 1998 BOA) Guidelines are:

1. Pastors will apply to the Conference Superintendent.
2. The Superintendent will forward the application to the Stewardship Team Chairperson.
3. Assistance will be made in the form of grants and will be structured to meet needs. Recipients are requested to repay if and when able. No interest will be charged.
4. Funds will remain on deposit with the Loan Board with interest retained.
5. Donations will be solicited from others.

D. RESOURCE GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH PLANTS

1. There shall be a 3 to 5 year phase-out for all new projects funded through the conference. A mandatory annual review of each project shall be completed by the Church Planting Team. After evaluation and certification of need, extensions may be granted.
2. The resources of the Team for all new projects shall be used for personnel and program, not for purchasing physical facilities.
3. Each new church planter will comply with GPC requirements for financial accountability, including income and expenditure reports, in the forms and frequencies dictated by the Conference Superintendent, the Church Planting Team, and/or the Stewardship Team.
4. During the period the church plant is being subsidized by the GPC, the church planter will engage in such coaching sessions with the Superintendent or his/her designee as the Superintendent dictates. Initially, these sessions may be monthly, reducing in frequency as determined by the Superintendent.
5. Since church planting is key to the growth of the church, each church plant should have as part of its primary mission of reaching the unsaved, the strategy of doing so through church planting.

E. LOAN BOARD POLICIES

1. All proceeds from the sale of abandoned church property, both real estate and personal, will be deposited with the Great Plains Conference Loan Board until the BOA determines its use. Before the proceeds of such sales are turned over to the Loan Board, the total amount that the said church owed to the GPC shall be paid first to the conference treasurer (AC, June 1986).
2. The net proceeds from the sale of the conference parsonage shall be invested by the Loan Board; and the income from it accrue to the benefit of the conference budget, which will include the superintendent's housing allowance (AC June, 1984).

3. Any undesignated gift or bequest to the Great Plains conference is put on deposit with the GPC Loan Board pending allocation by Annual Conference on recommendation from the Stewardship Team.
4. All GPC churches who wish to borrow money to purchase property, build new buildings or renovate existing buildings should apply first to the GPC Loan Board for funding [AC, June 1988].

F. GPC GREAT COMMISSION ENDOWMENT FUND (GCEF)

1. Purpose
The GCEF provides a perpetual source of funding to support ministry goals of the Great Plains Conference as reflected in the mission statement.
2. Restrictions
 - a. Principal is to be held and invested as a permanent endowment fund.
 - b. Endowment income is not to be used for capital expenditure, i.e., property, improvements, or large equipment items.
 - c. Endowment income is not to be used to support regular conference budget expense.
 - d. Endowment income may only be used for special approved programs.
3. Approved Programs
 - a. Evangelism
 - b. Church Planting
 - c. Ministerial Scholarships
 - d. Camping Ministries (AC minutes 1990)
Note: disbursement of endowment income for each program is to be supervised by the appropriate conference structure.
4. Management
 - a. All endowment funds will be managed and invested by the Loan Board.
 - b. The interest rate for endowment funds will be set by the Loan Board.
 - c. Endowment fund principal will be available for the conference loan program as needed, at the discretion of the Loan Board.
5. Source of Funds
 - a. Any gift or bequest designated for the endowment fund.
Note: any endowment fund gift undesignated as to program shall be divided equally among the approved programs.
 - b. Other funds as designated by the conference.
6. Amendments
 - a. Any change in the use of endowment earnings must be approved by a two-thirds vote of Annual Conference in a regular or special sitting.
 - b. Any new endowment programs must be approved by a two-thirds vote of Annual Conference in a regular or special sitting.

G. FUND FOR STRATEGIC MINISTRIES

(The Fund's resources come from earnings from the Great Plains Loan Fund, specifically 80% of the increase of unrestricted net assets, before planned giving allocations, to be paid over to the Great Plains Conference Treasurer.)

1. Purposes of the Fund
 - a. To fund efforts to expand the Kingdom, primarily through church planting.
 - b. To provide resources for revitalization efforts within the conference.
 - c. These purposes do not include property, equipment, and capital expenditures.

2. Usages of Fund Monies
 - a. To underwrite initiatives of a local church that will better equip them to fulfill the congregation's mission. This could include covering the cost of consultation from the outside, outreach projects, and the like.
 - b. Church Planting Projects
3. Application Process
 - a. Churches may apply in writing for a grant from the Fund, in line with the Fund's purposes and approved usages, to the Superintendent. The application letter should include the following elements:
 - 1) Explanation of the ministry initiative
 - 2) How the initiative serves the mission of the church
 - 3) Documentation of congregational ownership/approval of the initiative
 - 4) Outline of the plan for the initiative, including who will do it, when, and how
 - 5) The budget for the initiative and the amount requested
 - b. The Superintendent will review the application document, consult with the pastor as necessary, and refer to either the Congregational Nurture Team or Church Planting Team (as appropriate) for their approval. The Conference Team to which the request has been submitted will consider and act on the request in a timely manner, within two weeks of reception of the request if possible. The Superintendent will report to the BOA on all requests submitted.

H. PROCEDURES FOR FUNDING DENOMINATIONAL & CONFERENCE OPERATIONS

1. Except for money raised for World Missions, Capital Improvements, and approved "pass-through" funds, each church will contribute 10% of all other money raised to fund Fair Share and United Ministries for Christ - Home Ministries.
2. Funding of United Ministries for Christ-World Missions
 - a. Each church shall establish a plan for annual World Missions giving, either through inclusion in its Budget, the support program for Free Methodist missionaries requested through Great Plains Conference churches, the Country Shares program requested from headquarters, the suggested Extra-mile projects, or all of them to some extent.
 - b. The above plan will be reported to the Conference office.
 - c. Money raised for UMC-World Missions may be deposited with the Conference Treasurer at the end of each month.
3. The cost of conference office expense, superintendent's travel expense, FM pension plan, moving pastors, general conference delegates' expenses, annual conference expenses, honoraria for conference officials, contingencies, shall come from the conference operating fund.

I. ESTATE DISTRIBUTION REQUEST

In recognition of the connectional nature of our church and in response to the principle of tithing, the annual conference recommends that any church which receives an undesignated distribution from an estate or deferred gift of any kind, consider sharing a tithe of such gift with other local churches or ministries of the conference.