

General Board Policy
on
Church Discipline

The Wesleyan Church

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Task Force on Revision of The Judiciary

GENERAL BOARD POLICY ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Contents

Chapter 1 – GENERAL PRINCIPLES	5000-5068
A. Meaning and Purpose of Church Discipline	5000
B. The Administration of Church Discipline	5002
C. Conflict Resolution	5004
D. Offenses	5010-5012
E. Resolution without a Hearing	5014-5018
F. Discipline Involving a Hearing	5020-5068
Chapter 2 – DISCIPLINE AND REINSTATEMENT OF A MEMBER	5105-5130
A. Discipline Involving a Hearing	5105
B. Disciplinary Measures	5115-5120
C. Reinstatement of a Member	5130
Chapter 3 – DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION OF MINISTERS, OFFICERS AND SPECIAL CASES	5200-5288
A. Those Subject to Districts	5200-5248
B. Those Subject to the General Church	5270
-5288	
Chapter 4 – DISCIPLINE OF A LOCAL CHURCH, DISTRICT OR OTHER UNIT	5300-5385
A. Those Subject to Districts	5300-5325
B. Those Subject to the General Church	5350-5385
Chapter 5 – GENERAL BOARD OF REVIEW	5400-5450
A. Membership	5400-5405
B. Sessions	5420
C. Organization and Procedure	5425-5435
D. Duties and Powers	5445
E. Appeals	5450

General Board Policy on Church Discipline

Chapter 1

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Meaning and Purpose of Church Discipline

5000. The Church has the responsibility to provide a holy and harmonious environment that fosters Christlike conduct and relationships. The purpose of church discipline is the vindication of the truth, the preservation of the integrity of the body, the restoration and salvation of the guilty and the warning of the careless.

B. The Administration of Church Discipline

5002. In order that the purposes of the church may be realized, discipline in The Wesleyan Church shall be administered in accord with the following principles:

- (1) A prayerful and Christlike spirit shall be maintained at all times by all parties.ⁱ
- (2) Every effort shall be made to bring back to the Lord any who have wandered from Him (cf. 268).ⁱⁱ
- (3) A sincere and reasonable effort shall be made to resolve an accusation or to deal with an offending person, in keeping with scriptural admonitions.ⁱⁱⁱ
- (4) Each accusation and all proceedings shall receive prompt and careful attention by the proper authorities.
- (5) Any offending person shall be dealt with kindly, yet faithfully, according to the seriousness of the offense and as provided for in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* and *The General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

C. Conflict Resolution

5004. Conflict Resolution. The person having the grievance shall be first required to follow the Lord's directions in Matthew 18:15–17:

- 1) Go to the person and point out the issue, just between the two of you.
- 2) If unresolved, the person having the grievance shall seek counsel from the official having jurisdiction (pastor, district superintendent, general officer) relative to the redemptive steps to be taken.^{iv}
- 3) If the personal grievance remains unresolved, or affects the body of believers, the official having jurisdiction or a designated representative shall privately inquire, and, if necessary, instruct and admonish an offending person. If there is an acknowledgment of the fault and correction is made, the matter shall be dropped.
- 4) If the grievance continues, the official in charge shall provide intervention. If the conflict remains unresolved, and if the matter rises to the level of a fair and impartial hearing of charges pending, procedures shall be followed according to *The General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

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D. Offenses

1. Individual or Corporate

5010. Any member, minister, local church, district, official body or other agency of The Wesleyan Church shall be liable to disciplinary proceedings for any of the following offenses:

- (1) Holding, teaching, disseminating or tolerating the teaching of any doctrine contrary to the Articles of Religion of The Wesleyan Church as stated in *The Discipline*.^v
- (2) Disobedience to the provisions of *The Discipline* or tolerating such disobedience.
- (3) Willful refusal to recognize Church authority.^{vi}
- (4) Conduct unbecoming a member or minister of The Wesleyan Church.
- (5) Sexual immorality.^{vii}
- (6) Serious or persistent neglect of duty.

2. Accusation

5011. Accusations must be in writing, dated, signed by the accuser(s) and handed to the official having jurisdiction over the accused. The official having jurisdiction shall decide whether to handle the matter directly or refer to a higher Church authority. In either case, an investigation of the accusation shall be conducted. Whenever, in the opinion of the accuser(s), proper action has not been taken, appeal may be made to the next higher Church authority.

3. Investigation

5012. Investigation. At any point in these proceedings, the official having jurisdiction or the accused may ask the official body having jurisdiction to conduct an investigation. Such an investigation may include a committee of two or more covenant members or ministers of The Wesleyan Church who can be relied on for impartial judgment, who are not involved in the matter, and who are not closely related to any party involved. The investigation shall involve a careful and thorough inquiry into the matter, meeting with each appropriate person and meeting with any antagonists together if at all possible. One member of the committee shall serve as secretary and a written report shall be presented to the official having jurisdiction. If the committee finds no grounds for discipline, it shall so report and the official having jurisdiction shall relay this report to the official body having jurisdiction and the matter shall be dropped. If the committee does find grounds for discipline, it shall so report and the official and official body having jurisdiction shall decide on subsequent steps. Should a hearing be ordered, the investigative report shall be made available to the judicatory.

E. Resolution without a Hearing

5014. Settlement by Agreement. At any point in these proceedings, in matters that would not involve removal from credentialed standing or dismissal from membership, if the official having jurisdiction discovers that an agreement can be reached with the parties involved that will settle the matter satisfactorily without a hearing, the official shall establish a written agreement and secure signatures to it from the involved parties and submit it for approval to the official body having jurisdiction and subsequently to the next higher Church authority. If all approve, it shall close the matter.

5016. Citation to Show Cause. If no agreement has yet been reached, and the official having jurisdiction believes the evidence is strong that an offense has occurred, in a final effort to avoid a hearing, the official may cite the person accused of the offense to appear before the official having jurisdiction to show cause why the accused should not go to a hearing. If the matter persists to resist counsel, the matter shall go to a hearing.

5018. Confession of Guilt. At any point in the proceedings outlined above, if the accused shall confess guilt, the official body having jurisdiction shall conclude the proceedings and decide on the discipline to be imposed. (Cf. 5058:4.)

F. Discipline Involving a Hearing

1. Right to Hearing and Appeal

5020. The right to a fair and impartial hearing and the right to appeal shall not be denied to any member, minister, local church, district or official body of The Wesleyan Church. No one shall be arbitrarily set aside without due consideration for both spiritual welfare and rights as a member of The Wesleyan Church and shall always have the right to request a hearing or to appeal, even when placed under discipline (*Disc.* 302:4; 305:3; 313:7; 315:8; 323:10; 360:3f; 375:4, 6; 380).

2. Jurisdiction

5020.1. Original jurisdiction over a member ordinarily belongs to the local church of which the person is a member.

5020.2. Exceptions in Jurisdiction. There are situations as provided for in *The Discipline* 365 in which jurisdiction over a member may be assumed by the district or by the General Church.

(1) If a member is a person credentialed by the district, or is elected as an officer of the district, full jurisdiction over all offenses passes to the district, with full authority to set the discipline.

(2) If a covenant member is also a general officer, a member of the General Board or otherwise employed by the General Church, or is a district superintendent, full jurisdiction over all offenses passes to the General Church, with full authority to fix the discipline, including removal from office or dismissal from membership.

(3) If a lay member's conduct is such as to affect the health of the local church where membership is held, and the district superintendent and the district board of administration become convinced that the local church is unable or unwilling to deal appropriately with such member, or if a lay member is alleged to have committed offenses which affect The Wesleyan Church beyond the local church where membership is held, the district superintendent may recommend and the district board of administration may authorize the assumption by the district of jurisdiction in the matter. Investigation and hearing would be conducted in accord with district procedures. Any appeals shall be heard by the district board of review. The district would have full authority to fix the discipline, including removal from office or dismissal from membership.

3. Accusation

5022. Accusations must be in writing, dated, signed by the accuser(s) and handed to the official having jurisdiction over the accused before a hearing can be ordered. Whenever, in the opinion of the accuser(s), proper action has not been taken, appeal may be made to the next higher Church authority.

4. Disciplinary Measures

5023. Definition of Disciplines. There shall be five degrees of discipline for the administration of discipline which are:

(1) **Admonition.** Admonition is the mildest discipline and consists of a general reproof, a warning and an exhortation to greater watchfulness by the offender. (See 1 Thess. 5:14.)

(2) **Rebuke.** Rebuke is a stronger discipline for a more serious offense and consists in setting forth the offense, an official rebuke and correction, and a warning to the offender. (See 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2.)

(3) **Suspension.** Suspension is that discipline by which the accused is placed “under discipline” and is deprived of certain rights and privileges for a period of probation.

(4) **Removal.** Removal is that discipline by which a person is deposed from an official position, credentialed status or appointments. (See 1 Tim. 1:19–20.)

(5) **Dismissal.** Dismissal is the strongest discipline and is the expulsion of the offender from membership in the Church (*Disc.* 305:3; 315:1; 585:3), which automatically includes all lesser disciplines. Dismissal should be imposed only for the most serious offenses, or for obstinate persistence in a serious offense. (See 2 Cor. 6:14–15; 1 Tim. 1:19–20.)

5. Charges and Specifications

5024. A hearing may not be ordered until a proper inquiry is made. When the investigation has found evident need for discipline, it shall prepare appropriate charges and specifications.

(1) A *charge* sets forth an offense, a kind of act or conduct that makes a person liable to discipline.

(2) A *specification* states what the accused is alleged to have done, an instance of the offense indicated in the charge.

(3) It is not required that the accusations be written in any particular legal form. Every accusation must be in writing, dated, signed by the accuser(s), and must clearly define the alleged offense by its proper term as stated in 5010, and each charge must be accompanied by at least one specification.

(4) A charge shall not allege more than one offense. However, more than one charge against the same person or unit, with the specifications for each charge, may be presented to the judicatory at the same time and heard at the same time, provided that the vote on each charge shall be taken separately. The specifications shall declare as far as possible, the time, place and circumstances of the alleged offense, and shall be accompanied with the names of the witnesses and the title of each record or document to be cited for its support.

6. Judicatory

5025. When the official body having jurisdiction orders a hearing, it shall at the same time appoint the judicatory (judicial committee) in keeping with the appropriate provisions of *The General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial*. Each judicatory is appointed as needed for a specific matter. The judicatory shall conduct the hearing in keeping with the provisions of this *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

5026. One member of the judicatory shall be designated as the chair, either by the official body having jurisdiction, or as otherwise provided in *The General Board Policy for*

Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration. The chair is a voting member of the judicatory. The duties and responsibilities of the chair shall include:

(1) To preside over all phases of the hearing, making certain that all provisions of this *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration* are observed.

(2) To appoint a secretary (5056).

(3) To exercise, if such is deemed wise, the option of appointing counsel when the accused has not exercised the right to do so (5040:1). The counsel shall be a member or minister of The Wesleyan Church.

(4) To give direction to preparation of notices and citations to appear, and to sign the same (5042).

(5) To notify the accused of their rights (5040).

(6) To instruct the judicatory concerning its duties as assigned in this *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*, both before the hearing begins and again before the judicatory deliberates on the verdict (5058:14).

(7) To decide on the validity of any challenge for cause of the qualifications of a member of the judicatory (5040:3; 5054).

(8) To grant, if such is deemed wise, a postponement of the hearing (5044).

(9) To schedule the hearing date providing time for the members of the judicatory to arrange their schedules so that they can be available to complete the hearing in a timely manner.

(10) When possible to schedule the hearing to be conducted on consecutive days.

(11) To receive the list of witnesses that will be called by the hearing manager and the accused, and to inform both parties at the same time of said witnesses.

(12) To state, at the beginning of the hearing, the purpose of the hearing, to read the official action ordering the hearing, and to announce the members of the judicatory (5058:2).

(13) To decide on the admissibility of evidence (5027).

(14) To announce the verdict only as "guilty" or "not guilty."

(15) To communicate the verdict and any recommendations being made to the official body having jurisdiction (5058:17).

(16) To inform the accused in writing of the verdict.

(17) To attest the records of the hearing (5056).

(18) To have custody of the records throughout the hearing until the matter is finished, and then to deliver such records to the official having jurisdiction (5056). The records of a hearing will be retained in a confidential file either at the district or the General Church level for a minimum of ten years.

7. Evidence

5027. Rules of Evidence. An investigation, judicatory or other official body shall not be bound by any technical rules of evidence but shall adopt such rules as shall, in its opinion, be best adapted to ascertain the truth and determine accurately the substantial rights of the parties involved. The chair of the judicatory shall decide on the admissibility of evidence.

5028. Testimony. No one may be barred as a witness on the grounds of not being a member of The Wesleyan Church (but their time in the room where the hearing is held

shall be limited to their time on the stand unless waived by the chair of the judicatory (cf. 5046). Whenever circumstances make it impossible for a witness to appear, a proper certificate of affidavit from such a person may be presented, provided that the party against whom it is sought to be introduced has had a proper opportunity to see the certificate or affidavit and personally or through counsel to question before witnesses the person signing the affidavit regarding the contents thereof.

5030. Proof of Charges. The accused shall be presumed innocent until the contrary is proved. However, the moral conviction of the truth of the charge is all that is necessary to find the accused guilty of the charges. In all matters the accused may be questioned relative to the charges made.

8. Manager

5032. The official body ordering a hearing shall, at the same time, appoint a member or minister of The Wesleyan Church in good standing as *manager* of the hearing. In addition an assistant manager shall be appointed. The manager's duty is to prepare in final form the accusation and specifications, present them at the proper time and place to the judicatory and represent the official body having jurisdiction during the hearing. The manager's responsibility is to help the judicatory get at the truth and to secure a just outcome.

9. Rights of the Judicatory

5036. Right of Investigation. The Church has a right to investigate the character of its members and ministers in order to maintain the purity of its doctrines and practices, and can, therefore, through its own officers, official bodies and judicatories, require members or ministers under investigation to testify, under discipline of dismissal, if they refuse.

5038. Duty of Cooperation. It shall be the duty of every member, minister and church body to cooperate and to give testimony when properly requested to do so for an official investigation or hearing (cf. 5010:3; 5050).

10. Rights of the Accused

5040. Any member or minister who is accused shall have the following rights:

(1) **Counsel.** The accused shall have the right to choose counsel, or to present a personal defense; but where this right is not exercised, counsel may be appointed by the chair of the judicatory. The counsel shall be a member or minister of The Wesleyan Church.

(2) **Examination.** The accused, or counsel, shall have the right to meet any accuser(s) face-to-face and to cross-examine any witnesses presented by the manager (cf. 5028).

(3) **Objection.** The accused shall have the right to challenge for cause the qualifications of any member of the judicatory, the validity of which shall be determined by the chair of the judicatory (cf. 5054).

(4) **Limitation.** A minister or member shall not be required to answer for any accusation which occurred more than five years before the filing of such accusation, except in matters involving immorality.

11. Notices and Postponements

5042. All notices and citations to appear shall be given as directed by the chair of the judicatory and shall be in writing, in the name of the official body having jurisdiction ordering the hearing, and signed by the chair. An official notice of the date, time and place of the hearing (the names of the persons appointed to the judicatory), together with an official copy of the accusation and specifications, and a citation to appear shall be delivered to the accused; this shall be done at least thirty days before the hearing unless both the manager and the accused agree to a shorter period. No subsequent changes in such charges and specifications shall be permitted. Notices to appear shall be given to such witnesses as either party may name, and shall be served at least thirty days before the hearing. Members or ministers of The Wesleyan Church shall be cited to appear, but others may only be requested to appear (cf. 5038). An official notice of the names of the persons appointed to the judicatory shall be delivered to the accused at least thirty days before the hearing.

5044. The manager or the accused shall have the right to petition the chair of the judicatory for a postponement of the hearing date, and the chair may grant such a petition if deemed essential for proper preparation or other necessary reasons, provided that the other party shall be notified before the postponement is granted. A postponement shall not be granted for more than fifteen days, except for extenuating circumstances.

12. Participants

5046. Only those who are members or ministers of The Wesleyan Church shall be allowed to participate in a hearing, except as witnesses and only those participating in the hearing shall be permitted to attend the hearing. Nonmembers who consent to testify may be brought in as witnesses at the hearing, but any witness, even a member, should not be allowed in the room except while testifying, unless this prohibition is waived by the chair of the judicatory. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party producing them, then cross-examined by the opposite party, after which any member of the judicatory or either party may put additional questions. All deliberations of a judicatory shall be considered confidential during and after the hearing, and members of a judicatory shall not discuss the matter with anyone outside the judicatory during the hearing.

13. Request for Withdrawal

5048. Whenever in the course of an investigation or hearing, the accused person shall request a letter of withdrawal from the Church, the same shall be granted and the matter shall end. It shall be noted on the membership records of the local church, and, when the

accused is a minister, on the membership record of the district, as “withdrawn under accusation” whenever such request is during the investigation, and “withdrawn under charges” when such request is during the hearing (cf. *Disc.* 592).

14. Failure or Refusal to Appear

5050. Whenever an accused member or minister refuses to obey a properly issued citation to appear for hearing, or fails to appear except for unavoidable circumstances, the accused shall be considered guilty as charged and the judicatory may proceed to set the discipline. A member or minister of The Wesleyan Church who refuses a properly issued citation to appear as a witness shall likewise be deemed subject to church discipline (cf. 5010:3, 5038).

15. Status of the Accused

5052. After the official notice of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with a copy of the accusation and specifications, is delivered to the accused and until after judgment is rendered by the judicatory, the accused may be temporarily suspended from the exercise of any office by the official body having jurisdiction.

16. Grounds for Challenge

5054. A person is disqualified to serve as a member of any judicatory who is personally interested in the matter, closely related to either the accused or the accuser, has been active for or against either party in the matter referred to in the charges, is at personal variance with either party, or who has prejudged the matter (cf. 5012; 5040:3). Any member of a judicatory may, on such grounds, be challenged in writing by either party, provided that such challenge shall be made not later than one week prior to the opening of any hearing, and the allowance of such challenge shall be decided by the chair of the judicatory.

17. Records

5056. The chair of the judicatory shall appoint a secretary, who need not be a member of the judicatory (but must be a member of The Wesleyan Church), and shall see that complete and accurate records are kept by the secretary of all proceedings, testimonies, evidence, documents admitted, together with copies of the charges, specifications, notices, citations and findings of the judicatory. The records shall be attested to by both the chair and the secretary. The chair shall be the custodian of such records until the matter is finished and shall then deliver such records to the officer designated by the official body having jurisdiction for permanent filing. Whenever the decision of the judicatory is appealed, the person having custody of the official records shall forward such records promptly to the chair of the appellate body, or a transcript of the same, when requested to do so by the chair of the appellate body.

18. Order of a Hearing

5058. The following order should be observed in conducting a hearing:

- (1) Devotions.
- (2) Statement of purpose, the reading of the official action ordering the hearing, and the announcement of the members of the judicatory, by the chair of the judicatory.
- (3) Reading of the accusation and specifications by the secretary, unless waived.
- (4) Answer by the accused or the counsel for the accused with a plea of “guilty” or “not guilty.” If guilt is confessed, the judicatory may thereupon consider the discipline to be imposed, if any, and terminate the hearing, or it may request to hear the evidence in order to make a more proper determination of the matter and the disciplines to be imposed.
- (5) Statement of the matter and outline of the procedure by the manager.
- (6) Evidence submitted by the accused and cross-examination by the accused.
- (7) Statement of the matter and line of defense by the accused.
- (8) Evidence for the accused and cross-examination by the manager.
- (9) Rebuttal by the manager.
- (10) Rebuttal by the accused.
- (11) Summary of the matter by the manager.
- (12) Summary of the matter by the accused.
- (13) Should it be deemed proper to allow the manager to reply, the accused shall also be permitted to reply.
- (14) Instructions by the chair to the judicatory concerning the duties assigned to it as set forth in this *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration* and especially to render a verdict in not more than three days, if possible, and to vote separately on each charge, with a two-thirds vote of all the members required to render a verdict of guilty. Members of the judicatory who have been absent from more than one sitting shall not be permitted to vote on the verdict.
- (15) The verdict, stated only as guilty or not guilty.
- (16) Communication of the verdict to the accused.
- (17) Communication by the chair of the verdict, and the recommendations, if any, being made to the official body having jurisdiction over the accused.

19. Appeals

5062. Right of Appeal. The accused, if found guilty, shall have the right to appeal the verdict and/or the discipline unless such right has been forfeited for misconduct. Misconduct shall consist of withdrawing from the Church, publicly discrediting, slandering or libeling the members of the judicatory, refusing to abide by the decision of the judicatory, or by refusing to appear in person or by counsel if cited to appear by the appellate body, or by resorting to a suit in a civil court concerning the matter involved in the charges. Misconduct shall be decided upon by the appellate body. If, on the other hand, the accused was found innocent, the official body which ordered the hearing has the right to appeal the verdict.

5064. Procedure of Appeal. The appellant or the counsel of appellant, within thirty days after being notified of the verdict and/or discipline, may submit a request in writing and shall set forth the grounds of the appeal. The chair of the appellate body shall ask for a transfer of all the official records of the matter, or a transcript of the same, which shall

be forwarded promptly by the person having custody of such records. The appellant shall be responsible to pay the cost of the appeal, including the cost of preparing a transcript of the records. Upon modification or reversal of the verdict and/or discipline, such cost of the appeal shall be paid by the person or body losing the appeal.

5066. Status of the Accused during Appeal. While the appeal is pending, the discipline shall be deferred, though if under discipline prior to hearing such discipline shall remain. Whenever the accused is a church or a district, it may continue to function but shall have the status of being under discipline and shall not be entitled to any representatives in a conference body and, in the case of a district, shall not have authority to buy, sell or transfer any real property, except with the approval of the General Superintendent.

5068. Judgment of the Appellate Body. The appellate body shall promptly consider the matter and the grounds for appeal and shall render judgment within sixty days, with the exception of the General Board of Review. The appellate body, by a majority vote, may affirm, modify or reverse the verdict and recommendations of the lower judicatory in whole or in part, or may remand the matter for a new hearing, provided that if the accused has been previously found innocent, it shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the appellate body to find the accused guilty (does not apply to the General Board of Review, cf. 5425:3). In all matters the right to present evidence shall be exhausted when the matter has been heard once on its merits in the proper judicatory. Whenever a matter is remanded for a new hearing, a new judicatory shall be constituted, to provide for a fair and proper hearing. When any appellate body shall modify or reverse, in whole or in part, the verdict and recommendations of a judicatory, or change the discipline imposed by the official body having jurisdiction, it shall return to the official body having jurisdiction, or to the judicatory, a statement of the grounds of its action.

Chapter 2

DISCIPLINE AND REINSTATEMENT OF A MEMBER

A. Discipline Involving a Hearing

5105. Jurisdiction. Original jurisdiction over a member ordinarily belongs to the local church of which the person is a member. (For exceptions, see 5020.2.)

(1) Accusations against a member shall be submitted to the pastor (*Disc.* 725:15; GBP-5022). If there is no pastor, or if the pastor does not attend to the matter, the accusation shall be submitted to a member of the local board of administration. In either case, the accusation shall be presented to the local board of administration. Inquiry shall be made, and the local board of administration shall have charge of ordering an investigation (5012; 5024) and hearing if necessary. Any charge against a member must be sustained by two or more members of The Wesleyan Church. Whenever a hearing is ordered, the district superintendent shall be notified. If the accused member is a person licensed, commissioned or ordained by a district, or holding a district office, or serving or being employed by the General Church, the appropriate official shall be notified of the accusation(s) and proceedings.

(2) The authority of a local board of administration for a developing church shall be exercised by the district superintendent (*Disc.* 1310:15).

(3) The district superintendent, when requested to do so by the local board of administration, shall have authority to provide for any unusual circumstances not provided for in *The General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*, and to appoint, when necessary, any members from another Wesleyan church in the district or ministers from the district to a local judicial committee (GBP-5110:1–2; cf. *Disc.* 1310:18).

(4) When a member, who resides away from the church in which membership is held and attends another Wesleyan church, is accused of improper or immoral conduct, the pastor and the local board of administration where the member attends shall have authority to make an official investigation of such accusation (5012). If, pursuant to such investigation, an accusation is drawn up against such a member, it shall be presented to the pastor of the local church where the accused holds membership.

5110. Local Judicial Committee. Charges against a member shall ordinarily be heard and determined by a local judicial committee (cf. 5125).

(1) A local judicial committee shall consist of not fewer than three covenant members (cf. 5054), which shall be selected by the local board of administration (cf. 5105:3), as the occasion may arise, from its own membership or the membership of the local church (*Disc.* 782:12; 970). The committee shall serve from the time of its appointment until it shall hear and determine the matter.

(2) The local board of administration shall designate the chair or may request the district superintendent to do so (cf. 5105:3). The chair of the local judicial committee shall be the presiding officer and shall conduct the proceedings in accord with this *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

(3) It shall be the duty of the local judicial committee to hear and determine the charges, to render a verdict concerning the guilt or no guilt of the accused, and to

recommend to the local board of administration the discipline, if any, to be imposed (5115–5120). A two-thirds majority vote of all members of the committee shall be required to render a verdict. Discipline, if required, shall be administered by the local board of administration, and may take the form of admonition, rebuke, suspension, removal or dismissal, and said board may also require apology or restitution.

(4) An appeal may be taken concerning the verdict and/or discipline to the district board of review, within thirty days (5221:1; 5062–5068).

B. Disciplinary Measures

5115. Definition of Penalties. There shall be five degrees of discipline for the administration of discipline, as outlined in paragraph 5023.

5120. Assignment of Disciplinary Measures. The local board of administration shall be governed by the seriousness of the offense and by the following regulations in the assignment of disciplinary measures:

(1) Anyone declared guilty of holding or teaching any doctrine contrary to the Articles of Religion of The Wesleyan Church as stated in *The Discipline* (5010:1) shall be dismissed (5023:5), unless the local board of administration is of the opinion that the offense has ceased, in which case the discipline shall be either that of admonition, rebuke, or suspension.

(2) Disobedience to *The Discipline*, or tolerating such disobedience (5010:2), shall result in such discipline as deemed advisable.

(3) Willful refusal to recognize properly constituted authority (5010:3) shall result in such discipline as deemed advisable.

(4) Conduct unbecoming a member (5010:4), including but not limited to dishonesty, or sowing dissension, shall result in removal and/or dismissal (5023:4-5), unless the local board of administration believes the offender is truly penitent, in which case the offender shall be rebuked or indefinitely suspended (5023:2-3) until such time as the proper authorities are satisfied that the accused has reasonably demonstrated genuine Christian character in accord with the standards of The Wesleyan Church.

(5) Sexual immorality, including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual practice or other acts involving moral turpitude shall result in immediate dismissal from the Church (*Disc.* 265:5; GBP-5023:5).

(6) Serious or persistent neglect of duties (5010:6) shall result in suspension or removal, unless corrected, in which case a lesser discipline may be imposed.

C. Reinstatement of a Member

5130. After being dismissed from church membership, a former member may be reinstated by the local church which dismissed the member when such a person evidences a genuine repentance and meets the requirements for membership. If the former member is joining another local church, the receiving church should first consult with the dismissing church to make sure that all necessary corrections and restitutions have been cared for properly. If the former member was dismissed by a district or by the

General Church, the receiving local church must first secure the approval of the dismissing unit. (See 2 Cor. 2:5–11.)

Chapter 3

DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION OF MINISTERS, OFFICERS AND SPECIAL CASES

A. Those Subject to Districts

1. Identification

5200. Those ordinarily subject to district jurisdiction include the following persons:

- (1) An ordained, commissioned or licensed minister.
- (2) A ministerial student.
- (3) A commissioned or licensed special worker.
- (4) A supply pastor.
- (5) An interim pastor.
- (6) A district officer.
- (7) A lay member whose matter has been assumed by the district (5020.2:3).

2. Discipline Without a Hearing

5203. District officials and official bodies dealing with one of the above persons accused of an offense as set forth in 5010 are bound to follow as much as is appropriate the provisions of *The General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration* (5004) before conducting a hearing.

3. Discipline Involving a Hearing

5206. Jurisdiction. Original jurisdiction over the persons listed in 5200 ordinarily belongs to the district in which their ministerial membership, or for laypersons, their membership, is held. The exceptions are for those who serve as general officers or members of the General Board or who are otherwise employed by the General Board, and district superintendents. These are subject to the jurisdiction of the General Church (*Disc.* 323:1; 1180:12; GBP-5270).

(1) Jurisdiction shall be exercised on behalf of the district by the district board of administration for any and all charges brought against such persons.

(2) Accusations alleging an offense (5010) against one of the persons in 5200 shall be submitted to the district superintendent (*Disc.* 1310:31; GBP-5022). The accusation shall then be presented to the district board of administration. The district board of administration shall have authority to order the investigation (5012; 5024) and hearing if necessary. Any charge must be sustained by two or more members or ministers of The Wesleyan Church.

(3) If an accusation alleges an offense committed by a person under the jurisdiction of the district in a district other than that in which the accused holds membership, the district superintendent and the district board of administration of the district in which the offense was allegedly committed shall have jurisdiction over the official investigation

(5012). If an accusation is to be drawn up, it shall be submitted through the General Superintendent to the district in which the accused holds membership.

5209. District Judicial Committee. Charges against a person under district jurisdiction shall be heard and determined by a district judicial committee, appointed by the district board of administration for that particular matter. District judicial committees also are appointed for matters involving a local church or other unit (see 5310).

(1) A district judicial committee shall consist of four ordained ministers and three lay covenant members, appointed by the district board of administration (*Disc.* 1233:40), as the occasion may arise, from among its own members or the members of the district, and the district board of administration may request the General Superintendent to appoint a general official as one member. In any case, the General Superintendent shall be notified of the hearing. Members of the district board of review may not serve as members of the district judicial committee. The committee shall serve from the time of its appointment until it shall hear and resolve the accusation.

(2) The district board of administration shall appoint the chair or may request the General Superintendent to do so. The chair of the district judicial committee shall preside over the hearing and shall conduct it according to this *General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration* (5020–5068) and *The Discipline*.

(3) It shall be the duty of the district judicial committee to hear and determine the charges, to render a verdict declaring the accused, either guilty or not guilty and to recommend the discipline (cf. 5023; 5212; 5215), if any, to be imposed by the district board of administration. A two-thirds majority vote of all members of the district judicial committee shall be required for a verdict of guilty. The discipline may take the form of admonition, rebuke, suspension, removal or dismissal, and said board may also require apology or restitution.

(4) The accused may appeal the verdict and/or discipline to the district board of review within thirty days (5062–5068; 5221).

4. Special Regulations

5212. The administration of discipline to credentialed persons under the jurisdiction of the district (5200:1–3) shall be in accord with the following regulations:

(1) **Indiscreet Conduct.** Whenever a minister, ministerial student, or special worker has been charged with an offense alleging sexual immorality and is not found guilty of such actions but rather of imprudence or indiscreet conduct, the offender shall be subject to admonition, rebuke, suspension or removal, according to the seriousness of the offense. (See 1 Tim. 5:19–20.)

(2) **Suspension.** Whenever a minister shall be suspended from the ministry, or a ministerial student or special worker shall be suspended from such office, all credentials shall be surrendered to the custody of the district superintendent (cf. *Disc.* 1310:32). Whenever such a person shall furnish the district superintendent a written apology acknowledging guilt and pledging to correct the matter, and gives evidence that the offense has ceased and that the person is repentant, the district board of administration may end the suspension, reinstate the person, and authorize the return of all credentials. If the written apology and assurance are not forthcoming, and the accused does not exercise the right of appeal, the district board of administration shall declare that the said

person has withdrawn from the district, and said person's credentials shall be forwarded to the Executive Director of Communication and Administration (cf. *Disc.* 1233:40; 1310:32; GBP-5230).

(3) **Sexual immorality.** Whenever a minister, ministerial student or special worker shall have been convicted by a judicatory of such immoral acts as fornication, adultery or homosexual behavior, or has confessed to such acts to the official body having jurisdiction, the individual shall be removed from the ministry or from the office of a ministerial student or special worker, as the case may be (see 1 Cor. 5:1–13; 6:9–11). This shall not prohibit membership in a Wesleyan church when the guilty person repents and demonstrates a Christian life according to the standards of The Wesleyan Church. Anyone who has been removed for such an offense may be considered for restoration as provided for in 5230–5245.

(4) **Removal** (5023:4). A minister who has been removed from the ministry, or a ministerial student or special worker who has been removed from such office, shall immediately surrender all credentials to the district superintendent (cf. *Disc.* 1310:31; 3085:4; GBP-5230), shall cease to exercise any of the functions of the ministry, or of a commission or license, as the case may be, and shall not occupy any pulpit in The Wesleyan Church. Such a person's compensation and benefits, or a comparable family living allowance, shall be determined by a plan mutually agreed upon by the local board of administration and the district superintendent. Whenever anyone who has been expelled from the ministry or a commission or license shall appeal, the discipline may be deferred with the exception that such a person shall be suspended from the exercise of any office or of any particular service while the appeal is pending (cf. 5066).

(5) **Dismissal** (5023:5). In matters where the actions or the attitude of the removed person is especially grievous, the district board of administration has full power to dismiss the person from membership in The Wesleyan Church, and the involved local church, when officially informed of this action, shall so indicate in its membership records. If the district board of administration removes the person but does not choose to dismiss from membership, the district secretary shall notify the local board of administration of the accusations, findings, and discipline and leave the matter of membership to the local church.

5215. The administration of discipline to other persons under the jurisdiction of the district (5200:4–6) shall be in accord with the following regulations:

(1) A supply pastor or interim pastor who is a minister or a member of another denomination or who is a minister in process of transfer from another denomination is not subject to a hearing or appeal by The Wesleyan Church. Such a person may simply be removed from appointment by the district board of administration (*Disc.* 3104:4; 3260:5).

(2) A lay district officer or a lay member whose matter has been assumed by the district shall be subject to the judicial jurisdiction of the district.

5. District Board of Review

5218. The district board of review shall organize itself, elect its own officers, and keep complete records of all proceedings (cf. 5056). The board shall also be authorized to cite any member(s), minister(s) or local church(es) to appear and to testify (5036–5038). The

records of the district board of review shall be placed in the custody of the district superintendent.

5219. Members must recuse themselves in the case of conflict of interest,

5221. The duties and powers of the district board of review are to hear and determine the appeal of a lay member, of a local board of administration, of a minister, of any other person under the jurisdiction of the district (5200), or of the district board of administration concerning the results of a local church hearing or concerning the results of a hearing before a district judicial committee; to sustain, modify or revoke, in whole or in part, the verdict and/or the discipline as set forth in 5062–5068, by a majority of all members of the district board of review (*Disc.* 302:4), provided that if the accused has been previously found innocent, it shall require a two-thirds majority of all members of the district board of review to find the accused guilty.

6. Surrender of Ministerial Credentials

5230. If an ordained minister or commissioned minister, because of guilt in an offense which disqualifies the minister from being an ordained minister or commissioned minister, has either voluntarily surrendered ministerial credentials (*Disc.* 3059:3d; 3085:4) or been required to surrender them, the credentials shall be forwarded to the Executive Director of Communication and Administration, to be filed and preserved.

5233. The district in which the disqualified person is a member shall take initiative to express its desire for and commitment to the restoration of that person, with God's help, to a holy life and relationship. If the disqualified person expresses a repentant spirit and a desire to reestablish ministerial calling, practice and credentials with The Wesleyan Church, the district may initiate a process in accord with *The General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration* that potentially could lead to ministerial restoration.

5236. An ordained, commissioned or licensed minister, or ministerial student, who has been removed from the ministry of The Wesleyan Church, either through voluntary surrender of credentials because of guilt (*Disc.* 3059d; 3085:4) or through judicial process and disciplinary action, other than that considered in *The Discipline* 3124, may be restored to the previous level of credentialing in The Wesleyan Church, provided that the disqualified person shall have shown evidence of repentance and amendment of life, and provided that such is approved by the district board of administration of the district from which withdrawn or removed. In the matter of sexual immorality, to which the minister has confessed guilt or for which guilt was declared by judicial process, such restoration may be accomplished only with the additional approval of the General Board (5245).

5239. The district and the disqualified person, subject to the approval of the General Superintendent, shall develop a specific plan and process of restoration, in harmony with *The General Board Policy for Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

5242. If adequate progress is observed and restoration criteria are met, and if a mutual desire of ministerial restoration is expressed by the person, the district superintendent and the General Superintendent, then steps may be taken for restoration of credentials and, subsequently, opportunity for ministerial assignment. Based on such an approved program of spiritual restoration, the restoration of ministerial credentials could be effected

after a minimum of three years from the time the plan of restoration was agreed upon, signed and implemented. The General Superintendent has authority to shorten the minimum time period when deemed appropriate.

5245. When a request for restoration of a minister in a matter such as that described in 5236 has received the approval of the appropriate local and district bodies, it shall be processed as follows:

(1) The request shall be directed to the General Superintendent who shall ascertain if indeed all required district actions have been taken.

(2) The General Superintendent shall review the entire matter with the Executive Board.

(3) The General Superintendent shall then either recommend for or against restoration in presenting the matter to the General Board.

5248. In no case shall a minister who has been restored and then falls again be considered for restoration.

B. Those Subject to the General Church

1. Identification

5270. Those subject to General Church jurisdiction include the following persons:

(1) A general official (*Disc.* 1800; cf. 360:2; 1655:37).

(2) An area representative of the General Board (cf. *Disc.* 1655:37).

(3) A district superintendent (cf. *Disc.* 323:1; 360:2; 1655:37).

(4) A member or minister of The Wesleyan Church who is serving under the jurisdiction of the General Board, including any who are elected or employed by the General Board for full-time service for the General Church (cf. *Disc.* 323:1; 1655:27), missionaries or workers under the Global Partners Division or the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division (cf. *Disc.* 323:1; 1655:27), members of boards elected by the General Board (cf. *Disc.* 1655:19), and any others amenable to the General Board.

(5) A district officer or a minister or other credentialed person, the assumption of whose matter by the General Board has been authorized by the Executive Board (5020.2).

2. Discipline Without a Hearing

5273. General officials and official bodies dealing with one of the above persons accused of an offense are to follow the provisions of 5004–5018 before taking the matter to a hearing.

3. Discipline Involving a Hearing

5276. Jurisdiction over the persons listed in 5270 belongs to the General Board and its Executive Board. Ordinarily members of boards elected by the General Board would first be subject to the jurisdiction of the board to which they are elected. But if such matters are not dealt with appropriately, the General Superintendent may recommend and the

Executive Board by a two-thirds vote may authorize assumption of immediate jurisdiction in the matter by the General Board.

5279. If the accused is a general official, an area representative of the General Board, or a district superintendent, any accusation alleging an offense set forth in 5010 shall be submitted in writing (5022) to the General Superintendent and must be sustained by at least three lay covenant members or ministers of The Wesleyan Church. The General Superintendent shall make inquiry as required in 5012. If a hearing is necessary, the General Board may appoint or authorize its Executive Board to appoint a general judicial committee, with the chair appointed by the General Superintendent. A two-thirds majority vote of all members of the general judicial committee shall be required for a verdict of guilty. The General Board shall determine the discipline (5023; 5212), which may take the form of admonition, rebuke, suspension, removal or dismissal, and said board may also require apology or restitution. Whenever it is deemed necessary, the General Board may remove a general official elected by the General Conference, an area representative of the General Board or a district superintendent from office by a two-thirds majority vote of all its members (*Disc.* 1655:40a), and by a similar two-thirds majority vote of all its members may remove such a person from the ministry and/or dismiss such a person from covenant membership. In the matter of a general official elected by the General Board, a majority of all the members of the General Board is required to remove such a person from office (*Disc.* 1830), but a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the General Board would be required to remove such a person from the ministry and/or dismiss such a person from covenant membership. An appeal on the removal from the ministry or dismissal from covenant membership can be taken to the General Board of Review (5445:5).

5282. If the accused is a member or minister under the jurisdiction of the General Board (5270:4), an accusation or complaint shall be submitted to the general official to which the accused is amenable or to the General Superintendent. The General Board or its Executive Board shall decide on the disposition of such accusations or charges (5004) in a manner parallel to that of 5279. If it is deemed necessary, the General Board may remove such a person from office by a majority of all members of the General Board (1655:40b), and by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting may remove such a person from the ministry and/or dismiss such a person from covenant membership. An appeal (5062–5068) on the removal from the ministry and/or dismissal from covenant membership can be taken to the General Board of Review (5445:5).

5285. If the accused is one described in 5270:5, removal from office would be by majority vote of General Board members, present and voting, removal from the ministry or dismissal from covenant membership would require a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting. An appeal (5062–5068) on the removal from the ministry and/or dismissal from covenant membership would be taken to the General Board of Review (5445:5).

4. Power of Removal

5288. The General Board, the Board of Pensions, the Board of Directors of the Wesleyan Investment Foundation, the board of trustees of an educational or benevolent institution, and other such governing boards shall have full power and authority to

discharge at their discretion any officer or employee thereof (with the exception of those in 5270:1-4 which shall be limited to the General Board) who shall be guilty of any immoral conduct or breach of trust, or who for any reason is unable, or who fails to perform the duties of their office, or for other misconduct which any of said boards may deem sufficient to warrant discharge. The action of such board in removing such officer or employee in the circumstances above set forth shall be final. Any governing board of a subsidiary corporation, or of any educational or benevolent institution, shall have the right to recommend the removal of any of its members to the General Board, which shall have power to sustain or reject such a recommendation (cf. *Disc.* 1655:18, 40b). There is no appeal for removal from office.

Chapter 4

DISCIPLINE OF A LOCAL CHURCH, DISTRICT OR OTHER UNIT

A. Those Subject to Districts

1. Identification

5300. Districts ordinarily exercise jurisdiction in matters of church discipline over those pastoral charges which consist of established churches or circuits (for exceptions, see 5315). Districts have full authority in all matters over developing churches (510) and missions (*Disc.* 537).

2. Discipline Without a Hearing

5305. The procedure for the discipline of an established church shall begin as follows:

(1) An alleged offense against a local church by a lay member, minister, another local church or the district board of administration shall be submitted in writing to the district superintendent (*Disc.* 1310:31), who together with the district board of administration (*Disc.* 1233:36) shall endeavor to make an amicable resolution.

(2) If the allegations lead to charges against a local church for an offense as set forth in 5010, the district superintendent and the district board of administration shall continue to make every effort to bring about an amicable settlement. The district board of administration shall have the authority to cite the offending church, in the person of its pastor and local officials or local board of administration, to appear before it to settle the matter or to show cause why it shall not be placed under discipline. Such a citation shall contain a clear and definite statement of the charges and any supporting evidence so that the accused church may be properly informed of the grounds of the accusation. The order shall be served upon the pastor and the local church secretary.

3. Discipline Involving a Hearing

5310. Whenever a settlement cannot be effected, a district judicial committee shall be appointed in keeping with 5209. An accusation and specifications against the local church shall be submitted to the district judicial committee which shall hear and determine the matter. Whenever the district judicial committee finds the local church guilty as charged, the district board of administration (*Disc.* 1233:36) shall suspend the local church from all its rights and privileges as set forth in the Constitution (*Disc.* 315) and *The Discipline*. The suspension shall end when the local church, through its officials, shall make a written apology acknowledging its guilt and pledging loyalty to the district and the denomination, and when, in the opinion of the district board of administration, the offense has ceased. Whenever a local church does not offer such a written apology and assurance, and if it continues to offend, it shall be reorganized (5320). An appeal (5062–5068) may be taken by the local church concerning the verdict and/or discipline to the district board of review (5221).

4. Exceptions in Jurisdiction

5315. If a local church is alleged to have committed offense(s) which affect The Wesleyan Church beyond the district of which it is a part, and/or the district is unable or unwilling to deal appropriately with the matter, the General Superintendent may authorize assumption of jurisdiction in the matter by the General Church (cf. *Disc.* 4770, last sentence).

5. Reorganization

5320. Whenever a local church, through its pastor and/or local officials or board of administration, shall refuse to answer the citations of the district board of administration to appear for a settlement (5305:2), or the citation of the district judicial committee to appear for the hearing of the matter, or whenever a local church that has been placed under discipline refuses to offer a written apology and assurance as set forth in 5310 and does not exercise the right of appeal, the district board of administration shall authorize the district superintendent and any two of its other board members to reorganize the local church. The district superintendent and the appointed representatives shall ask the covenant members of the local church for an affirmation of loyalty to The Wesleyan Church, consistent with paragraph 553:2 of *The Discipline*. Those covenant members who affirm such loyalty shall be the members of that local church, and those covenant members who refuse to affirm such loyalty shall be declared as having withdrawn from The Wesleyan Church and from that local church and all offices held by such persons shall thereby be vacated. The loyal covenant members shall be entitled to hold and use the property as provided for by *The Discipline* and to carry on the functions of the local church.

5325. Any former member who has been declared as withdrawn from The Wesleyan Church during the reorganization of a local church may be reinstated when the person gives evidence of a change of attitude and is deemed to meet the requirements for membership.

B. Those Subject to the General Church

1. Identification

5350. The General Church exercises jurisdiction in matters of church discipline over established districts. The General Church has full authority in all matters over developing and provisional districts (*Disc.* 1003–1034). The General Church may also assume jurisdiction over a local church under some circumstances (5315).

2. Discipline Without a Hearing

5355. Any charge or complaint against an established district (or against a local church over which the General Church has assumed jurisdiction) alleging an offense set forth in 5006 shall be submitted in writing to the General Superintendent. The General

Superintendent, together with the General Board or its Executive Board, shall make every effort to clear up such accusations or charges so as to effect an amicable resolution (5004–5018) before any unit, through its officials or board of administration, shall be brought to a hearing, unless a hearing is requested by the accused.

5360. The General Board, or, in the interim of its sessions, the Executive Board, shall have the authority to cite a district (or local church over which jurisdiction has been assumed), through its officials or its board of administration, to appear before it to show cause, why it should not be brought to a hearing or declared to be in a state of disobedience or insubordination for an offense as set forth in 5010. Such a citation shall set forth a clear and definite statement of the charges and any supporting facts or evidence and shall be signed by the General Superintendent and secretary of the General Board, so that the accused may be properly informed of the grounds of the accusation. The order shall be served upon both the chief officer and the secretary of the accused. Should the hearing before the General Board or its Executive Board result in a satisfactory resolution of the matter, with the accused pledging its loyalty to the denomination, no further steps shall be taken.

3. Discipline Involving a Hearing

5365. When the above procedure does not bring about an amicable settlement in the opinion of the General Board, or should the cited officials fail or refuse to appear, an accusation and specifications for offenses as listed in 5010 shall be prepared and submitted in writing (5022) to the General Superintendent and must be sustained by at least three members of The Wesleyan Church. The General Board may appoint or authorize its Executive Board to appoint a general judicial committee, with the chair appointed by the General Superintendent. The findings of the general judicial committee shall be reported to the General Board. A two-thirds majority vote of all members of the general judicial committee shall be required for a verdict of guilty. If the accused district is found guilty of an offense(s), the General Board, by a two-thirds vote of all its members, may place a district found guilty under discipline and suspend all its rights and privileges as a district under the Constitution, or other provisions of *The Discipline*, and may thereupon appoint the General Superintendent or other person to have charge of the district (*Disc.* 360:3c, e; cf. 1655:42). If it is a local church which is found guilty, the General Board by a majority vote may place the church under suspension and appoint a designated authority to have charge. Such suspension shall continue until the unit under discipline shall, through its officials, offer a written apology acknowledging its guilt and giving assurance of its loyalty to the denomination and shall also give evidence that the offense has ceased, whereupon the General Board shall end the suspension and reinstate the unit (cf. *Disc.* 1655:44). A district under discipline shall also be suspended from all rights to acquire, purchase, mortgage, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of any real property, unless approved by the designated authority appointed to have charge of the district.

5370. An appeal (5062–5068) may be taken by the accused district or local church concerning the verdict and/or the discipline to the General Board of Review. All appeals must be filed with the Executive Director of Communication and Administration within sixty days after the date of the official decision on the matter.

4. Reorganization

5375. Whenever a district under discipline refuses to offer a written apology and assurance of loyalty as set forth in 5365, or whenever the district officials refuse to answer a citation to appear (5360), the General Board or its Executive Board may authorize the General Superintendent to reorganize the district (*Disc.* 1655:44). The General Superintendent shall ask for an affirmation of loyalty. Those members and ministers of the district who affirm their loyalty to The Wesleyan Church shall be and constitute the district. Those covenant members and ministers of the district who refuse to affirm such loyalty to The Wesleyan Church shall be declared by the General Superintendent as having withdrawn from The Wesleyan Church, and all offices held by such persons shall thereupon be vacated. Those who are thus declared to be the covenant members and ministers of the district shall be entitled to hold and to use all the district property in the manner as set forth in *The Discipline* and shall be organized to carry on the work of the district. Should the number of loyal ministers and covenant members be fewer than that required for an established district, the district shall be reclassified by the General Board as a provisional district or developing district as the case may be (cf. *Disc.* 1034; 1042–1045).

5380. If a minister who has been declared withdrawn from the district because of refusal to affirm loyalty to The Wesleyan Church shall desire to be restored, this person may be restored as provided for in 5230–5245.

5385. If a local church whose matter has been assumed by the General Church and has been placed under discipline does not respond appropriately in a reasonable time, the General Superintendent may authorize the district superintendent responsible to reorganize the local church in keeping with 5320.

Chapter 5

GENERAL BOARD OF REVIEW

A. Membership

5400. Members. The General Board of Review shall consist of nine members, five of whom shall be ordained ministers and four of whom shall be lay covenant members of The Wesleyan Church.

(1) Their term of office shall be for four years. They shall serve from the close of the session of the General Conference at which they are elected until the close of the next session of the General Conference or until their successors are elected and qualified.

(2) A member of the General Board of Review may not at the same time be a member of the General Board.

(3) The General Conference shall elect by majority vote the members of the General Board of Review, from nominations presented by the Committee on Special Nominations. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the General Conference (*Disc.* 1580:2; 1590:19).

(4) Members of the General Board of Review shall recuse themselves in the case of conflict of interest. Whenever a member is disqualified, the chair shall appoint an alternate for the hearing of that particular matter (5405), provided that such appointment shall maintain the membership of the Board as five ordained ministers and four lay covenant members.

5405. Alternates. The General Conference shall elect, in the same manner described in 5400:3, four ordained ministers and three lay covenant members to serve as alternate members of the General Board of Review, with the same qualifications (5400:2) and term of office (5400:1) as the members (*cf.* *Disc.* 1590:19).

B. Sessions

5420. The General Board of Review shall meet at times and places of its own choosing as deemed necessary, or as requested by the General Board or its Executive Board.

C. Organization and Procedure

5425. Organization and procedure for the General Board of Review shall be:

(1) **Organization.** The General Board of Review shall organize itself and shall elect, from among its own members, a chair, vice-chair, secretary and such other officers as deemed necessary.

(2) **Procedure.** The General Board of Review shall decide on its own methods and rules of procedure and shall adopt such bylaws as deemed necessary, provided such do not contravene any provisions of *The Discipline*. All parties shall file their written position statements and arguments and shall present evidence under such rules as the General Board of Review shall adopt from time to time (*cf.* 5068).

(3) **Quorum.** Seven members shall constitute a quorum. A decision of the General Board of Review against the constitutionality of an act by the General Conference shall

require a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the Board, and on all other matters a majority vote of all members of the Board shall be sufficient.

5430. Records. The General Board of Review shall keep complete and accurate records of all proceedings, testimonies, evidence, documents and findings, certified copies of which shall be forwarded promptly upon the conclusion of the matter to the Executive Director of Communication and Administration.

5435. Notification. After each session of the General Board of Review, an official summary of the Board's decisions on points of Church law or interpretations of *The Discipline*, as prepared by the secretary and attested to by the chair, shall be reported to the General Board.

D. Duties and Powers

5445. The jurisdiction and duties of the General Board of Review are set forth in the Constitution (*Disc.* 370–380) and as provided for herewith:

(1) To determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference, upon the appeal of the General Superintendent or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference (*Disc.* 375:1; 2061:3). A two-thirds majority vote of all the members of the General Board of Review is required to find an act of the General Conference unconstitutional (5425:3). An act of the General Conference that is declared as unconstitutional by the General Board of Review shall be null and void (cf. *Disc.* 1590:3).

(2) To hear and determine any appeal from a ruling of the General Superintendent on a point of church law, an interpretation of *The Discipline* or the validity of an action by a district as set forth in *Disc.* 2064 (375:2).

(3) To hear and determine any appeal concerning the legality of any action by any General Church board upon appeal of one-third of the members thereof or by request of the General Superintendent (*Disc.* 375:3; 2066).

(4) To hear and determine any appeal from the judgment of a general judicial committee over issues arising between a district and the General Church or between districts or between a local church and the General Church (*Disc.* 375:4, 6; GBP-5370).

(5) To hear and determine such other matters as shall be referred to it by the General Conference or the General Board.

E. Appeals

5450. A decision of the General Board of Review on matters assigned to it by the Constitution shall be final until overruled by the General Conference by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting (*Disc.* 380). A decision of the General Board of Review on matters assigned to it by statutory law shall be final and not subject to appeal (cf. 5288).

ⁱ 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:2.

ⁱⁱ See 1 Thess. 5:14; Jude 22-23.

ⁱⁱⁱ Matt. 18:15-18; Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:16, 19-20.

^{iv} See 1 Cor. 6:1-8.

^v See 2 Thess. 3:6,14–15; 1 Tim. 6:3–5; 2 John 9–11

^{vi} See Rom. 16:17–18; Titus 3:10–11; 3 John 9–10.

^{vii} See 1 Cor. 5:1–13; 6:9–11.