

# **Theological Questionnaire for Ordination**

If you use this form, please upload it to the Theological Questionnaire section of the Acts Ordination website.

These questions are important for your Regional MEG Board interview. These are not "right or wrong" answer questions, but meant to help us understand your current theological understanding.

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## **Theology & Doctrine Questions:**

How would you answer the question: "How do I become a Christian?" or "How can I be saved?"?

Explain personal holiness to a new Christian from a Wesleyan point-of-view.

Read Paragraph 108 from the 2019 FMC Book of Discipline. Do you fully affirm this statement? If not, please elaborate on the concerns you have.

The Bible is God's written Word, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit. It bears unerring witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word. As attested by the early church and subsequent councils, it is the trustworthy record of God's revelation, completely truthful in all it affirms. It has been faithfully preserved and proves itself true in human experience.

The Scriptures have come to us through human authors who wrote, as God moved them, in the languages and literary forms of their times. God continues, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, to speak through this Word to each generation and culture.

The Bible has authority over all human life. It teaches the truth about God, His creation, His people, His one and only Son and the destiny of humankind. It also teaches the way of salvation and the life of faith. Whatever is not found in the Bible nor can be proved by it is not to be required as an article of belief or as necessary to salvation.

Read the 5 FM Ways (the 5 values that shape us), do you fully affirm these? If not, please elaborate on the concerns you have.

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

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

**Christ-Compelled Multiplication:** The gospel of Jesus Christ - the message he proclaimed, the life he lived, and the ministry he modeled - set into motion a redemptive movement destined to fill the whole earth.

**Cross-Cultural Collaboration:** From the beginning, God's intent was to have a people from every nation, culture, and ethnicity, united in Christ and commissioned to carry out his work in the world.

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

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Read Paragraph 3311 from the 2019 FMC Book of Discipline. Do you fully affirm this statement? If not, please elaborate on the concerns you have.

## A. Principles Regarding Marriage

Nature of Marriage: At creation God instituted marriage for the well-being of humanity (Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:6-9). Marriage is the joining of one man and one woman into a lifelong relationship of mutual love and service which the Scriptures call "one flesh." Such a marriage should be based on mutuality and partnership, patterned not according to prescribed hierarchies but according to the creation of the male and female both in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and the call to mutual submission as illustrated by Christ in His relationship with the Church (Ephesians 5:21-31).

We look not to the state but to the Scriptures for our understanding of human personhood and well-being, including human sexuality and marriage. We order our life of faith and our ministries according to the Scriptures, not according to the shifting values of society and the state.

Sexual intercourse is God's gift to humanity, for the intimate union of a man and woman within marriage. In this relationship, it is to be celebrative (Hebrews 13:4). Marriage, between one man and one woman, is therefore the only proper setting for sexual intimacy. Scripture requires purity before and faithfulness within and following marriage.

With deep compassion for persons who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, and especially those who have been mistreated and marginalized in various settings, the Free Methodist Church encourages its congregations to practice welcoming hospitality and embracing lovingkindness toward all who desire to worship among us. We will be a people who offer ourselves as agents of Jesus' grace and love to others – all others. We will trust the Holy Spirit to convict people of their sin, to enliven hope of transforming possibilities, and then to lead people to God's best for their lives.

Nevertheless, we hold that marriage can only be the union of one man and one woman who have made a public covenant and vow before God and the state (Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:6-9). Therefore, it would be a breach of the doctrine of our Church for ministers or members of the Free Methodist Church to conduct, officiate, or assist in officiating, the marriage or union between a same-sex or same-gender couple. In light of our beliefs, ministers and members of the Free Methodist Church shall not officiate or assist in officiating marriages or unions of same-sex or same-gender couples.

We hold that our congregations are stewards of the church property. Officiating or assisting in officiating or hosting a marriage between a same-sex or same-gender couple in any Free Methodist Church building or on any Free Methodist property would be a violation of consecrated Free Methodist property. Therefore, such marriages may not be performed or hosted at Free Methodist churches or on Free Methodist properties.

Marriage that the Free Methodist Church deems doctrinally acceptable, legal and appropriate, should be safeguarded and supported by both the Church and society and should be formalized with public vows. It is not enough for a couple to live together in private commitment; we believe that they are to covenant before God and the state.

Further, we hold that all these provisions are applicable to and fully binding on all activities and ministries of or affiliated with the Free Methodist Church.

## B. Nurturing Healthy Marriages

The Free Methodist Church urges its people to enter the covenant of marriage prayerfully. In accordance with the apostle's command (2 Corinthians 6:14), we expect believers to marry only believers. Ministers are required to use diligent care when being requested to solemnize a marriage. It is contrary to the explicit teachings of the Scriptures to unite a believer with an unbeliever.

Couples considering marriage should seek the wisdom of mature Christian leaders for instruction that promotes full equality in communication, finances, family dynamics, sex and spiritual formation. Young couples contemplating marriage should seek parental consent.

## C. Healing Troubled Marriages

Human sin and rebellion against God always threaten marriages. Sin in the Garden brought a change to the way marriage partners related to each other, with profound consequences for a couple's experience of God's plan for marital oneness (Genesis 3:16b). Early in the biblical story the practice of polygamy and spousal abuse became common. Sadly, a constant feature of the story has been the hardening of heart that may lead to broken vows, marriages, and homes.

The prophets describe God's relationship with Israel against the backdrop of common marital brokenness. God pursues his unfaithful people as a husband who refuses to abandon his adulterous wife. Indeed, the steadfast love of Israel's God claims and wins at last a remnant of his rebellious people (Hosea 1-3; Ezekiel 16). In the fullness of time, Jesus the Messiah brings to full expression this steadfast love of the Lord. That love made flesh in Jesus and his followers becomes the prototype of marital love in the teachings of the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Therefore, the church as the Body and Bride of Christ has spiritual resources for marriages in trouble. Through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Scriptures, the Sacraments, and the mutual support of God's people, God brings healing, reconciliation, and oneness to willing marriage partners. We encourage our members to avail themselves of these rich and powerful resources whenever a marriage relationship is strained. In some cases, pastoral and professional Christ-centered counsel should be sought.

As in the biblical story, domestic violence, emotional assault, and physical abuse sometimes occur in the homes of our people. Such sin jeopardizes safety of spouse and children and may threaten their very lives. These family members need the special care of the church family for spiritual and emotional protection and healing.

The Church recognizes all abusive behavior as sin and destructive to the home and its members. Often in these cases separation is necessary to halt abuse and allow space for the healing of persons and their relationships. Even when the marriage and home have experienced the most grievous violation, however, we insist that God's grace can bring healing. Therefore, we counsel our members to seek the fullest measure of healing and reconciliation possible in every situation.

## D. Divorce

Although God intends and wills that marriage vows be honored for life, some marriages fail even within the fellowship of God's people. When marriages fail and partners divorce, they have violated God's intention for marriage and often one or both have violated their vows to love and cherish the other. Such violations, whatever their reason, constitute rebellion against God's plan for their lives and result in personal brokenness. After a divorce each partner needs healing from God, with counsel towards repentance where needed and renewed faith in God for all involved. The church must stand ready to be agents of this healing work in their lives.

A divorce may result from a variety of sinful acts, attitudes, and responses. Sexual infidelity, abandonment, and patterns of abusive behavior that threaten spouse and children are the most commonly identified sins destructive of marriages. Other sins, however, also sometimes lead to divorce, such as selfishness, anger, fear, obsessive preoccupation, and careless neglect. The hardness of heart that drives partners to divorce may trace back to many different manifestations of sin. When questioned about marriage and divorce, Jesus stressed three principles. First, He cites the intent from the beginning that no marriage would fail. Second, He identifies "hardness of heart" as the ultimate marriage killer – because either it causes destructive behavior or refuses the grace that can heal and reconcile. And, third, He refuses to support the common assumption that in some cases one partner has a right (i.e., enjoys freedom) simply to walk away. Whatever the particulars, Jesus offered grace that heals and empowers people to live according to God's plan – to move from their sin to a life that pleases God.

## E. Care after Divorce, Singleness and Remarriage

When a marriage fails, the church seeks to restore people from the trauma of their divorce by inviting its members into a process of restoration (see paragraphs 7110-7130). Godly counsel that promotes full equality will help people understand what happened in their marriage; specifically, where they may have contributed to the failure and how they have been wounded by it. Sinful relational patterns will be exposed, forsaken, and replaced with Spirit-directed and Christ-centered patterns. The damage to children, the larger families, and their witness to Christ will also be acknowledged and where possible restitution will be made.

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Persons who have suffered the trauma of divorce must exercise extreme caution when considering remarriage. Unless they have experienced healing and restoration from their failure in marriage, they will likely fail again. In some cases, wisdom will insist upon remaining single and free to live in devotion only to Christ. One who has been divorced shall not by that fact alone be denied the privileges and responsibilities of a future marriage in the Lord. The grace that brings correction, conviction, repentance, faith, healing, and restoration can make all things new, even for a Christian whose sin may have broken a marriage. When grace restores the brother or sister who has failed, the plan God has for human well-being reopens, even the possibility of remarriage.

### **F. Refusal of Counsel**

When a member divorces a spouse or remarries without seeking the counsel or following the guidance of the pastor or the Membership Care Committee, the committee shall review the case and recommend appropriate action to the local Board of Administration. Corrective action shall include removal from leadership, and may include suspension, or expulsion from membership.

Exceptional cases may arise for which the pastor or the Membership Care Committee can find no explicit direction in this Book of Discipline. In such cases, the pastor, after consultation with the Membership Care Committee, shall confer with a superintendent.

**Do you affirm the authority of the FMC and Acts 12:24 Churches annual conference and the requirements of becoming an elder? If not, please elaborate on the concerns you have.**

Some requirements include: Personal Tithing, Church Conference Tithe, Itinerant Ministry, Attending Annual Conference, Attending District Meetings.

**Do you affirm the Acts 12:224 Churches Enduring Initiatives & Values? If not, please elaborate on the concerns you have.**

Enduring Initiatives: Steward, Expand, & Multiply

Values: Submission, Transformation, Multiplication, Order, Hospitality, & Encouragement

**What is your view of women in the ordained ministry as Lead Pastors.**

**Are there any doctrines of the Bible that you struggle with?**

For example, "do you believe that the gifts of the spirit are still active?" or "do you believe that the miracles in the bible actually happened?"

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# **Theological Questionnaire for Ordination**

## **Questions and Responses:**

Please respond to each of these statements as though you were meeting with a person truly seeking Jesus but that was working through these issues.

Jews, Muslims, & Christians all serve the same God:

If someone is not healed of their sickness, they must lack faith:

Jesus was a good person, and maybe a prophet, but not the Son of God:

God hates gay people:

I don't have to go to church to be a Christian:

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## **Personal Spiritual Questions:**

Describe your personal devotional life. What have you recently done to keep your relationship with God alive and growing?

Ordained Elders are called to go wherever God calls and sends them. What are your thoughts about the possibility of relocating? If married, what are your spouse's thoughts as well?

Describe a person you know that you consider to be an outstanding example of Christian life. How have they influenced your spiritual life and leadership?

Describe a time when you struggled spiritually. What happened?

How would being ordained impact or change your ministry: