

PART 3
DISTRICT CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Chapter 1

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

A. Definition

1000. A district is a grouping of churches created by the authority of the General Conference, within which the churches, ministers and members of The Wesleyan Church are organized according to *The Discipline* and are under its governing authority (317).

B. Developing District

1003. Purpose. New work, or other work which does not meet the requirements for a provisional district (1025), shall be provided for by establishing a developing district.

1006. Authorization. The establishment of a developing district may be authorized by the General Conference (1590:11), upon recommendation of the General Board, or, in the interim of General Conference sessions, by the General Board. The authorizing act shall define the boundaries and assign an official name to the developing district. Any proposed boundaries that will alter the bounds of an established district in the interim of General Conference sessions must have the approval of such a district and shall be effected as required in 1060-1065 (cf. 1655:33).

1009. Jurisdiction. A developing district shall be under the jurisdiction of the General Department of Evangelism and Church Growth and shall be organized and administered by the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth in accord with *The Discipline*, the *Policy of the General Board for Evangelism and Church Growth* and other directives from the General Board or its Executive Board (1655:26). The General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth shall be responsible for developing the work as rapidly as possible, in harmony with the missionary objectives of The Wesleyan Church (2200), to the status of a provisional district (1025).

1012. Organization. The superintendent, other officers and assigned workers shall be appointed by and the granting of ordination and commissioning and issuing of licenses shall be voted by the Board of General Superintendents, for which recommendations shall be submitted by the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth.

1015. General Conference Representation. The developing district shall be represented in the General Conference by the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth, and by the superintendent of the developing district as a nonvoting member (1503:2).

C. Provisional District

1. Authorization

1020. Authorization. A provisional district is created by the General Conference, upon recommendation of the General Board (1590:11), or, in the interim of General Conference sessions, by the General Board. The authorizing act shall define the boundaries of the provisional district and assign to it an official name. Any proposed boundaries that will alter the existing bounds of an established district in the interim of General Conference sessions must have the approval of such district and shall be effected as required in 1060-1065 (cf. 1655:33).

1025. Requirements. The minimum requirements for a provisional district are:

- (1) A minimum of five churches and 200 covenant members.
- (2) A sufficient number of ordained ministers for a district board of administration (1203).
- (3) The holding of all property in trust for The Wesleyan Church as required in 4610, or steps taken to accomplish the same (4590-4630; 4650-4780; 4800-4820).
- (4) A recommendation by the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth for recognition as a provisional district.

2. Organization and Government

1028. Jurisdiction. A provisional district shall be under the jurisdiction of the General Department of Evangelism and Church Growth, and shall be supervised by the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth in accord with *The Discipline*, the *Policy of the General Board for Evangelism and*

Church Growth and any other directives of the General Board or its Executive Board (1655:26; 1785:2). The General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth shall be responsible for the developing of a provisional district to meet the requirements of an established district as soon as possible (1036; 4105).

1030. Organization. A provisional district shall be organized in the same manner as an established district as set forth in *The Discipline*, insofar as possible, but with the following restrictions on its duties and powers:

(1) **District Superintendent.** The district superintendent of a provisional district shall be elected by the district conference (cf. 1180:31; 1303). The Board of General Superintendents may, however, at its discretion, present one or more nominations, from which the district conference shall elect the district superintendent (1935:8, 10). The provisional district superintendent shall confer with the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth concerning the important plans of the district, including the location of property, the erection of buildings and financial matters (cf. 1030:3). No property within a provisional district may be received, transferred, bought or sold without the written permission of the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth.

(2) **District Officers, Boards and Committees.** A provisional district shall first be concerned with the election of its district officials (1255) and district board of administration (1203). Other district departmental officers, boards and committees shall be established as qualified personnel are available. It shall be the goal of the officials of a provisional district, in cooperation with the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth (1028), to meet the requirements for a complete district organization as soon as possible (1038).

(3) **Amenability.** The minutes of the provisional district conference and its district board of administration shall be reviewed by the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth.

3. General Conference Representation

1032. The district superintendent and a lay delegate, elected by ballot and by majority vote, shall be the representatives of a provisional district to the General Conference (1503:1a; 1506).

4. Reclassification

1034. Whenever a provisional district falls below the minimum requirements in 1025, it may be reclassified as a developing district by the General Conference (1590:11), or, in the interim of its sessions, by the

General Board (1655:24), upon recommendation from the Board of General Superintendents.

5. Constitutional Language

1035. Wherever the term “mission district” appears in *The Discipline*, including the constitutional section, it shall be read and interpreted according to the paragraphs relating to provisional districts herein (1020-1034).

D. Established District

1. Authorization

1036. An established district is created by the General Conference (317; 1590:10), upon recommendation by the General Board, or, in the interim of General Conference sessions, may be created by the General Board, subject to the approval of the next General Conference (1655:24, 34; 1920:22). The authorizing act shall define the boundaries of the district and assign to it an official name.

1038. The minimum requirements for an established district are:

- (1) Twenty churches.
- (2) Seven hundred fifty covenant members
- (3) The holding of all property in trust for The Wesleyan Church as required in 4610, or steps taken to accomplish the same (4590-4630; 4650-4880; cf. 4140).
- (4) A reasonable degree of spiritual, organizational and financial stability.
- (5) A recommendation by the Board of General Superintendents in concurrence with the General Director of Evangelism and Church Growth (1920:22).

2. Organizing Conference

1040. When an established district has been authorized (1036), an organizing session of the district conference shall be convened by the General Superintendent over the district or another designated General Superintendent (1920:17). The presiding General Superintendent shall declare it to be an established district of The Wesleyan Church, vested with all the authority and power as properly belong to it according to *The Discipline*. After such has

been declared, the district conference shall proceed to do business and elect its officials.

3. Reclassification

1042. If a district no longer meets one or more of the requirements for an established district (1038), it may be reclassified as a provisional district by the General Conference (1590:11), or the General Board.

1045. An established district, by a vote of its district conference, may petition the General Board for reclassification as a provisional district if it falls below the requirements for an established district (1038). The General Board shall have authority to reclassify it as a provisional district and place it under the jurisdiction of the General Department of Evangelism and Church Growth (1038; 1655:33-34; 1935:8, 14).

4. Amenability

1050. An established district is amenable to the General Conference and to the General Board. It may be placed under discipline for cause as set forth in the Judiciary (5350-5380; cf. 360:3e).

E. Merger or Realignment of Districts

1060. The General Conference shall have the authority to approve the merger or division of districts or the realignment of any district boundaries (317). Negotiations for such a merger, division or realignment of districts shall be under the supervision of the Board of General Superintendents who shall work with representatives appointed for such a purpose by the General Board and the districts concerned (cf. 1655:33).

1065. Whenever each district conference involved in a merger, division or other realignment of districts shall approve the proposed plan, the General Board shall have the authority to grant final approval in the interim of General Conference sessions (cf. 1935:14; 1655:33).