

Chapter 7

GENERAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A. Objectives

2300. The ultimate objective of Christian education within The Wesleyan Church is to declare the truth of full salvation through Christ as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and to guide sinful, fallen men and women to experience the crises of conversion and entire sanctification, dynamic service to God and humanity, and continuous growth unto the fullness of the stature of Christ. To accomplish this, Wesleyan Christian education will endeavor:

(1) To help each person to recognize the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and to know, believe and obey its teachings.

(2) To help each person to recognize the need of salvation and of God's provision for it through Christ's death and resurrection, and to lead each person to experience the new birth through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

(3) To help each convert to recognize the need for cleansing from the carnal nature and for the sanctifying and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, and to experience the crisis of entire sanctification through consecration and faith.

(4) To help each believer to relate to the Church as the body of Christ, encouraging each believer to become a member of the local church and to find a place of service within it.

(5) To instruct each person in the fundamentals of the faith, in the history of the Christian church, the importance of the Reformation and the Wesleyan movement, the history of The Wesleyan Church, its precedent bodies and its missionary outreach, warning each person against the false doctrines of the age and equipping each as a witness for the Lord.

(6) To help each person to develop a Christian interpretation of life and of the universe, enabling each person to see God's sovereign purpose at work, and training each person to be a good steward of the talents, time, opportunities and material goods with which God has entrusted each person.

(7) To encourage each person to grow toward spiritual maturity in Christ Jesus, demonstrating Christian attitudes and actions in every relationship of life.

B. General Department of Spiritual Formation

1. Function

2305. The General Department of Spiritual Formation is responsible, on the general level, to carry out the objectives of The Wesleyan Church for spiritual formation in such phases as Sunday School, small group ministries, the promotion of Christian family life, the children's ministries of the Church; the youth ministries of the Church, including young adult ministries; and the adult ministries of the Church. The department is responsible for ministries related to the identification and recruitment of leaders in the various age groups of the Church consistent with the function of the department. The department is responsible for serving as the Church's resource agency for all adult related concerns with regards to spiritual formation, discipleship, and membership development.

2. The General Director of Spiritual Formation

2310. The General Director of the Department of Spiritual Formation is elected by the General Conference as a general official (360:2; 1580:1; 1590:17; 1800), and is an *ex officio* member of the General Conference (1503:1c), and the General Administrative Council (1990). The General Director is amenable to the General Board, serves as a nonvoting resource person to the board and is under the supervision of a General Superintendent (1915:3; 1933:3). The General Director of Spiritual Formation shall exercise leadership in this department in keeping with *The Discipline*, the *Policy of the General Board for Spiritual Formation*, and other directives as may be given by the General Conference, the General Board or its Executive Board. The term of service and other regulations for this office are provided in 1810-1870.

C. General Department of Education and the Ministry

1. Function

2338. The General Department of Education and the Ministry is responsible for coordinating the implementation of The Wesleyan Church's objectives for Christian education (2300) as they relate to the training of Christian ministers, missionaries and educators on the study course, college and seminary levels, the development of youth in higher education for various

fields of service, and continuing education and career development for the ministers of The Wesleyan Church.

2. The General Director of Education and the Ministry

2341. The General Director of Education and the Ministry is elected by the General Conference as a general official (360:2; 1580:1; 1590:17; 1800), is an *ex officio* member of the General Conference (1503:1c) and the General Administrative Council (1990), and is a member and the executive secretary of both the Committee on Chaplains (2395) and the Wesleyan Educational Council (2355). The General Director of Education and the Ministry is amenable to the General Board, serves as a nonvoting resource person to the board, and is under the supervision of a General Superintendent (1915:3; 1935:3). The General Director of Education and the Ministry shall exercise leadership in this department in keeping with *The Discipline*, the *Policy of the General Board for Education and the Ministry*, and other directives as may be given by the General Conference, the General Board or its Executive Board. The term of service and other regulations for this office are provided in 1810-1870.

3. Wesleyan Educational Council

2355. The Wesleyan Educational Council shall consist of the General Director of Education and the Ministry, who shall serve as its executive secretary (2341), and the president and chair of the board of trustees for each general educational institution (2365). The Council shall serve as an advisory body to the General Director of Education and the Ministry.

D. Educational Institutions

1. Ownership and Control

a. Basic Principles

2358. The educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church shall be governed in harmony with these principles:

(1) All schools, in fulfilling the mission of The Wesleyan Church, shall seek to produce Christian workers and committed lay members for the church of Jesus Christ. The Church recognizes that more than one type of educational institution will be needed. Some institutions will devote

themselves primarily to the preparation of full-time Christian workers for the Church. Some colleges, recognizing the God-given mandate to explore and bring under dominion the whole range of knowledge for the glory of God and the good of mankind (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:1-7; Matt. 6:10; 1 Cor. 3:21b-23; 2 Cor. 10:5; 1 Tim. 4:4-5), will offer a Christian liberal arts program. Some students will use such a curriculum as training for full-time, church-related vocations or as a foundation for graduate training for such vocations; some to prepare for other vocations in which they have been called to serve Christ, His Church and His world.

(2) The Church and all its schools shall work in the closest harmony. In its legislative assemblies, the Church defines its faith. In its classrooms, the Church studies, expounds and defends its faith. In the congregation, the Church worships its Lord and proclaims its faith. To safeguard the doctrinal purity of the Church, it shall be required that all schools maintain and promote the doctrinal position of the Church as set forth in its Articles of Religion, Covenant Membership Commitments and Elementary Principles. Any person employed on the administrative staff or faculty of an educational institution of The Wesleyan Church must affirm adherence to the doctrine of entire sanctification and other doctrines of The Wesleyan Church as set forth in the Articles of Religion.

(3) In establishing its educational institutions, and in guiding their life and work, The Wesleyan Church seeks to provide the highest possible quality of Christian education for its own constituents and for other persons who wish to study under its auspices without regard to race, national origin or sex (265:11; 360:3d).

b. Lines of Authority

2362. Ultimate authority over the educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church rests with the General Conference (cf. 1590:13). In practice this authority is delegated to the General Board and consists of the following:

(1) Authority, by two-thirds vote, to establish, merge or dissolve an educational institution, or to enter into a cooperative agreement with other persons/groups of like theological and behavioral commitment in the ownership and operation of an educational institution.

(2) Authority to provide for and deal with all matters pertaining to charters and bylaws.

(3) Provision for boards of control in keeping with 340:2.

(4) The adoption and revision of such *Standards of the General Board for Educational Institutions* as the General Board shall deem to be wise.

(5) The General Board is not empowered or authorized to contravene, override or set aside a decision of a college board of trustees except as is provided and specifically stated in 2362:1-4.

2. General Educational Institutions and Curricula Offerings

2365. The general educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church and their curricula offerings are:

(1) Bethany Bible College, Sussex, New Brunswick, Canada: two-year terminal and transfer degree curricula; four-year Bible and Christian Ministries curricula (cf. 2368).

(2) Houghton College, Houghton, New York: two-year terminal and transfer degree curricula; four-year liberal arts and professional curricula; professional curricula leading to master's degrees (cf. 2368).

(3) Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana: two-year terminal and transfer degree curricula; four-year liberal arts and professional curricula; professional curricula leading to master's degrees and doctoral degrees (cf. 2368).

(4) Oklahoma Wesleyan University, Bartlesville, Oklahoma: two-year terminal and transfer degree curricula; four-year liberal arts and professional curricula leading to master's degrees (cf. 2368).

(5) Southern Wesleyan University, Central, South Carolina: two-year terminal and transfer degree curricula; four-year liberal arts and professional curricula; professional curricula leading to master's degrees (cf. 2368).

2368. Each of the four-year colleges shall maintain a curriculum which satisfies the educational requirements for ordination as an ordained minister by The Wesleyan Church.

3. Educational Areas

2371. The established districts, provisional districts and developing districts of The Wesleyan Church in the United States and Canada shall be divided into four educational areas (1590:14), corresponding in general with the four representative areas of the Church, and in general with the regional accreditation associations serving the area in which the schools are located. The boundaries of the educational areas are given in 2455-2470.

2374. Each general educational institution shall be considered as serving all the districts of the area or areas to which it is assigned.

4. Financial Support

2377. The financial support of the general educational institutions of The Wesleyan Church shall be provided for as follows:

(1) **The United Stewardship Fund-General Fund (2035).** The USF-General Fund shall include provision for the General Department of Education and the Ministry (2338), and the Wesleyan Educational Council (2355).

(2) **The United Stewardship Fund-Educational Institutions Fund (2040).** The USF-Educational Institutions Fund shall provide for the support of the approved general educational institutions (cf. 2365; 2450-2470), the Ministerial Study Course Agency (2385-2388), the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation (2382) and the subsidizing of ministerial training (cf. 2035:1).

(3) **Special Offerings.** Each general educational institution shall supplement its income through deputational work, solicitations and special offerings (cf. 2050:3).

E. Educational Agencies

1. Wesleyan Seminary Foundation

2382. The Wesleyan Seminary Foundation is the Church agency providing for the advanced training of Wesleyan ministers. Its connection with a particular institution, the official agreement between The Wesleyan Church and the institution, and consequent policies and programs shall be determined as provided by the General Board. The Foundation shall be under the direction of the General Director of Education and the Ministry.

2. Ministerial Study Course Agency

2385. Ministerial training within The Wesleyan Church will ordinarily take place in one of the approved educational institutions. However, for those persons whose circumstances make such institutional education impossible in whole or in part, the General Department of Education and the Ministry shall provide correspondence courses of study. The correspondence courses shall also be open to others who wish to prepare for Christian service. (Cf. 3200-3210.)

2388. The Ministerial Study Course Agency shall be maintained at the denominational headquarters to centralize and standardize the keeping of records on all students for the various ministries recognized by The Wesleyan Church and the administering of the correspondence study courses for those ministries (3200-3210). It shall be directed by the General Director of Education and the Ministry. The duties of the General Director of Education and the Ministry in this connection shall be:

(1) To maintain records on all students for the various ministries recognized by The Wesleyan Church, whether enrolled in educational institutions or in correspondence courses (3170:1-3), and including students of the lay minister's course of study (3210:4; 3420), commissioned minister's course of study (3059:1b; 3210:3); the pre-ordination course of study (3040:2; 3051:1; 3070:3; 3210:1), the courses of study for specialized ministries (3210:2), and the special worker's courses of study (3210:5; 3460-3470). The records shall include transcripts, grades, courses finished, and current standing. The Agency shall exchange needed information with the educational institutions and the local and district boards directing the students, issuing an annual report concerning progress for the year and current standing to each student, a similar report on each student of the lay minister's course of study to the local board of administration of the local church where membership is held, and a similar report on each student recognized by the district to the home district board of ministerial development prior to the session of the district conference (cf. 1387:2; 1390:2; 3040:2; 3460).

(2) To provide a correspondence course for each course required in each course of study, securing the services of a qualified instructor and approving the choice of textbooks and study plans, providing for the registration of students properly authorized to use the correspondence courses (cf. 3170:3), and providing study guides and instructions as well as examinations which shall be administered through an ordained minister whenever possible (cf. 3200).

(3) To provide suitable transcripts and to issue certificates upon the satisfactory completion of the work assigned (cf. 6410).

(4) To evaluate any training taken outside the institutions and agencies of The Wesleyan Church by a student for one of the ministries recognized by The Wesleyan Church, to judge the equivalence of such outside training to the appropriate course of study, and to report any conclusions and recommendations to the appropriate local board of administration or district board of ministerial development (3070:3; 3104:4; 3170:4; 3470).

F. Committee on Chaplains

2395. The Committee on Chaplains shall include the General Director of Education and the Ministry as its executive secretary, with other members to be selected as provided by the General Board.