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MISSIONS DEPARTMENT, AN EX-PRESIDENT OF
THE CONFERENCE, IS WELL KNOWN AS A
STATESMAN AND COUNSELLOR IN THE CHURCH.

IN THIS BOOK HE HAS USED HIS VALUABLE
EXPERIENCE TO PROVIDE A PRACTICAL INTERPRETATION
OF THE WAY THE METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND
WORKS.

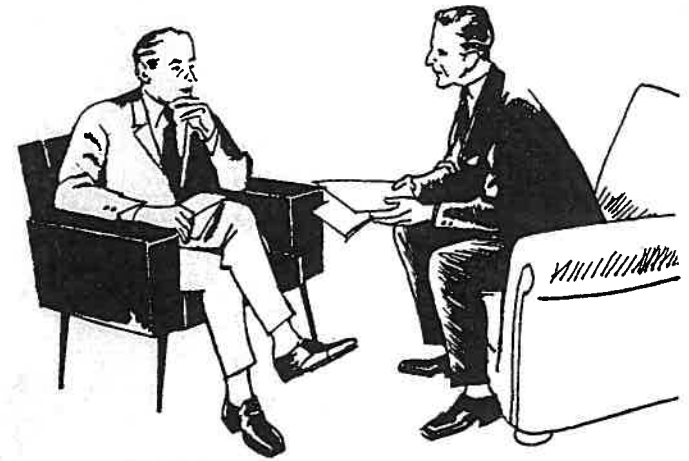
OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS ALIKE WILL BE
HELPED BY THIS GUIDE BOOK.

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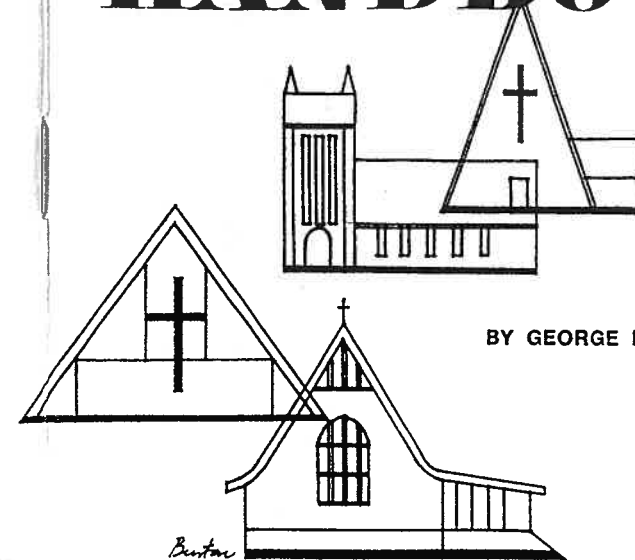
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LAYMAN'S HANDBOOK



BY GEORGE I. LAURENSEN

WE ACKNOWLEDGE our debt to the late Rev. W. A. Burley, M.A. whose booklet "Laymen's Handbook" assisted officers of the church over many years.

The publication of the 1969 Law Book and many changes in Methodist practice necessitated a substantial revision.



LAYMAN'S HANDBOOK

A practical guide for officers
of the Methodist Church of New Zealand

By GEO. I. LAURENSEN, C.B.E.

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INTRODUCTION

From earliest times the Christian Church has been engaged in a mission in the world, to the world. Our Lord chose men and women to be with Him, and as He trained them He faced them with the task of sharing His mission. He sent them out to heal and to teach. Women also shared a ministry in His company.

The early Church, led by the Holy Spirit, selected certain of their number to fulfil specific tasks of service and there gradually emerged recognised forms of ministry — all expressing the wide variety of functions of members of the Body of Christ in a rich unity under the Lordship of Christ as Head of the Body.

There was no hard-and-fast pattern of organisation of the early Church. They did not feel Christ had laid one down. Rather they believed that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they were being led to a simple structure which met the needs as they arose.

It was this same conviction that later led John Wesley to meet the new situations of his day, which existing patterns by their very rigidity were failing to meet. The need determined the organisation. An example of this is the "Society Class". In 1739, after Wesley's experience of the witness of the Spirit in his heart, people began to move to him for warmth and guidance in a cold world. He agreed to meet them once a week, but the increase of the numbers soon called for some simple guide lines of organisation. So the pattern of local "societies" with one or more

“classes” each under the care of a “leader” emerged as the primitive unit in the structure. Inevitably certain financial needs arose, and the organisation at first aimed at meeting these but John Wesley wisely saw the possibilities in such a grouping of members for spiritual oversight and fellowship. Hence the class leaders became lay pastors, who themselves met regularly to report on the work among the members, and thus became what we call today “the Leaders’ Meeting”. This is the local unit of oversight of the congregation in any place under our Methodist system, and it is here that the laity share with the Minister in many of his responsibilities of the pastorate.

These early classes and Leaders’ Meetings were organised by Wesley as “Societies” within the life of the Anglican Church of his day. They grew at a fantastic rate, and drew into their membership great numbers of converts who in many, if not most cases, had had little if any contact with the life of the Church. New needs arose for the guidance and oversight of these classes as they spread far beyond the bounds of the British Isles, and the failure of the Established Church to meet those needs led Wesley to take the steps which after his death, resulted in the later development of the Methodist Connexion as a separate denomination. At each step it was the need which largely dictated the pattern of administration, and it is this heritage within which our New Zealand Methodist Church was nurtured and has matured. We still look to the Holy Spirit to guide our developments.

Today we live in an ecumenical age, with the thoughts and prayers of many of our people responding to this urge as expressed in our Lord’s prayer for His

disciples, — “That they may be one as we are, that the world might believe.” Such a time can contain a danger of forgetting the rock from whence we were hewn, and the achievements under God which have marked the course of our development. We will be worthy successors of our forebears only if we seek by God’s help to carry into a larger unity a virile and dedicated community, bringing with us our treasures for the enrichment of the whole. To do otherwise would be a weak abandonment of our responsibilities.

The aim of this booklet is to explain the structure of our Church, and the ways in which this assists us to make a significant contribution through our Church to our day and age.

Other Churches are making their distinctive contribution and we shall look to them to bring their treasures to a larger unity. Meanwhile we are a Methodist Church. In it we are being nourished, and through its polity we serve. There is a true denominational loyalty which does not mean disloyalty to the larger unity. We cannot play Rugby by Soccer rules. We cannot work a Methodist polity by the rules of another denomination. Let us give some really prayerful study to the privileges and responsibilities that are ours in the family of Churches as long as we continue as a distinct denomination.

THE METHODIST SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Under its polity or system of government, the Methodist Church is called “Connexional” because each section is linked into the whole, the final authority resting in the Annual Conference.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

(Law Book pages 2-6)

A member of the Methodist Church is one who has been received by Holy Baptism, and on profession of Faith has been received into responsible membership by the Leaders' Meeting of a local Church. This reception into full membership normally involves Confirmation by prayer and laying on of hands.

In accepting membership, a candidate makes certain personal promises. Here are the main ones:— To seek fellowship with Christ and His people, to accept the duties and to enter upon the privileges of the Methodist Church, to witness to his Lord, and to contribute of his means to the work of the Church at home and in its wider service.

In each Church a register is kept of Baptisms and Confirmations. This forms the permanent record of these events, and names are not subsequently removed from this register.

In addition an "Electoral Roll" of effective members is established in each Church, and this is revised regularly by the Leaders' Meeting. Only persons whose names appear on the electoral roll are entitled to vote or hold office in the official Church Meetings. These are the Church Meeting, the Leaders' Meeting, the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, District Synod and annual Church Conference.

In Methodist terminology those folk constituting the local Church fellowship were formerly known as the (Place name) Society. This has now been changed to the Church. This includes

members whose names are on the electoral roll of that Church, as well as adherents, — families whose children are attached to the youth work, but who have not accepted full membership, and other people who attend worship or offer a measure of support to the work. However as mentioned above, only members on **the electoral roll** are eligible to vote or to become office bearers.

One or more local Churches in an area may be grouped to form a circuit.

Circuits are grouped into Districts, in which the Synod — comprised of Ministers, Deaconesses, Home Missionaries, and Lay Representatives from each Circuit — reviews the Church life of the whole area, and makes recommendations to the Annual Conference.

Synods are grouped to form the Connexion, in which the Annual Conference comprised of an equal number of Ministerial and Lay Representatives determines the policy of the whole Church. Such representatives are elected or appointed as set out in the Law Book.

Members of Synods and Conference are representatives and not delegates. It is the duty of a representative to ensure that any special concern from his Circuit or Synod is fairly presented, but having done that, he is expected to vote freely on the issue according to his own conviction and in the light of the Conference discussion.

THE LAW BOOK

Our Church is governed by its Law Book, and by the general usages and practice of the Church. It is

the Conference which decides the interpretation and application of all such matters. The Law Book referred to in the text of this handbook is the 1969 edition and its amendments as printed in the Minutes of the most recent Annual Conference.

This handbook is a general guide but we assume that in any technical matters of fact or procedure reference will be made to the fuller material in the Law Book. Every office bearer should possess or have access to a Law Book and the latest Minutes of the Conference.

Our Church is a democratic body, for members have a voice and a vote in the selection of the officials, and from within the local committees of a Church they may initiate proposals for change or development. These, if approved at each subsequent stage, become embodied in the Laws and Regulations of the Church.

In handling the Law Book, members are always reminded that it is the handbook of a religious community, and in all matters of discipline our major objective should be restoration and reconciliation and a seeking of the mind of God in each situation.

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

No member should take up office lightly, for office in the Church carries with it responsibility that to a thoughtful man can be very great indeed. While every member is a witness for Christ and His Gospel this is even more true in the case of an official who is "in the public eye". He is regarded in a very special sense as a representative of the Church. He may bring it into

disrepute, or may enhance it in the eyes of men. Both possibilities are fraught with far-reaching consequences to God's work and His Kingdom.

Officials should set an example to other members in the matter of Church attendance. They should never be lightly absent from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In all Church activities they are the Minister's chief laymen and should give him all the encouragement and co-operation possible.

Because they are lay leaders they will give particular attention to their own devotional life. This will decide the quality of the service they render, and will also constantly remind them that they serve the Lord Christ. Only from this source will there spring the sense of privilege and joy in service.

In passing, a word about resignations. No man can serve in the Church or in public life without being wide open to criticism. He must expect it and take it with good grace. Some criticism may be so wearing and hurtful that he can reach a breaking point and decide to toss it in and resign.

Then is the time he needs the Grace of God to count ten, and consider whether he may not need to learn something from the critics. Besides, he needs to remember that primarily he is not serving the critics but Christ. On the other hand we have to resist the tendency to hold on to office when the best interests of the Church would be better served if we made way for a younger person. After all, the future success of the work depends on a continuing body of men and women who are prepared to assume office if called on. This may be frustrated if the senior members cling to office

when they are really beyond it. Grace and self knowledge are needed for us to discern this state of affairs. How often some person challenged to accept an appointment has revealed, or later developed, unexpected capacities of leadership under the demands of the task.

It is our requirement that accredited Lay Preachers should procure an accredited substitute if for any reason they cannot take the services for which they are planned.

This principle should be applied in all Church work. If an official is prevented from attendance at a service, if he goes on holiday or is absent for any reason, he should regard it as a sacred duty to arrange for a qualified substitute to attend to any duties that would normally be expected of him. This is necessary not only because it is his responsibility but also because the honour of the Church is at stake.

Nothing mars the spirit of true worship more than slipshod and makeshift work. All should be arranged beforehand. It is our Lord's work and it merits the best we can offer.

In spite of the best arrangements, the unexpected can happen in the way of sudden illness or other disconcerting interruption. When these things happen, the thoughtful but as far as possible unobtrusive help of a calm official can do much to ensure that the service is not unduly interrupted.

THE CHURCH MEETING

(Law Book, pages 39-40, paras 266-268)

The Church Meeting of each Church consists of all those whose names are on the **electoral roll** at the time the meeting is held. (See Law-Book page 2, Section 1. Para 1b.)

It must meet at least annually and its business includes —

(a) Matters relating to membership.

(b) Electing annually Church Stewards, Sacramental Stewards, Mission Secretaries, Members' Representatives to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting and local Leaders' Meetings.

(c) Electing conveners of committees of the Leaders' Meetings.

It is helpful if the secretary of the Leaders' Meeting can be convener of the Church Meeting, especially the Annual Meeting which must be held during the quarter ending September 30.

Reports of the work of the various committees can be prepared for presentation to this meeting and an agenda provided setting out the appointments to be made by the meeting. This can be either on an individual copy for each member, or on a blackboard or newsprint chart. This is a great help to chairman and members.

LOCAL OFFICERS

(Law Book, page 32, paras 227-228)

Church Stewards. These are elected annually at the Church Meeting.

Within the local Church they have some special

responsibilities in seeing that the regular pattern of Church worship is maintained. They elect a convener and under his guidance a roster of duties should be prepared. These include:

(a) Appointment of the **Minister's Steward** to welcome the preacher in the Minister's vestry, and to see that any visiting preacher is aware of any special features about the customary order of service, and that hymn numbers are put up and given to the organist. A thoughtful Minister's Steward can do much to ensure that the preacher is conscious of a prayerful and expectant atmosphere as he enters the pulpit. In the event of the appointed preacher failing to attend, the Church Stewards should make the best possible arrangements for the service. The Minister's Steward would find useful a small book of vestry prayers, and this could be part of the equipment in case of need. Further, a book of suitable sermons, to be read in the case of sudden emergency through the non-arrival of a preacher for any cause, could save a momentary attack of jitters in an inexperienced Steward.

(b) Selection of **the Stewards for each service** whose duties are to see that the Church is open in good time, hymn books available, heating or ventilating equipment turned on, arrangements made for the receiving of the offertory, distribution of the bulletins for the service or to make other suitable arrangements for the making of approved announcements.

(c) Checking and recording **the offertory** and the proper disposal of the day's offerings either in a local bank account, or by forwarding them to the Circuit Steward or other proper person. In these days of Stewardship giving it is a special task to see that contents of Steward-

ship envelopes are carefully recorded, and the envelopes with the accurate statement of the individual amounts sent to the Circuit recorder. The local record book should be initialled by two persons, and some Churches find it helpful to have a simple summary "check sheet" showing loose offerings, envelope monies and any amounts for special purposes and when this has been checked with the cash it should go to the Circuit Steward or Treasurer.

(d) Above all, it is the duty of the Church Stewards to see that all **visitors** are cordially welcomed to the services, and that the names and addresses particularly of those indicating an intention to reside in the district are handed to the Minister. A small card expressing this welcome and inviting the visitors to fill in names and addresses is a useful help, and could be left in the book racks in the seats or handed personally to any visitors with their hymn book when they arrive. A sincere but not fussy welcome can make all the difference in the world to the impression on such visitors.

(e) If any local Church has not appointed Sacramental Stewards then the Church Stewards should assume the responsibility and make necessary preparations for **Baptismal or Communion Services**. It is well on Communion Sundays to check with the Minister which order of service is being used and to issue the appropriate service books.

(f) Church Stewards are usually in the special representative position when **Confirmation Services** are being held and a local Church official acts for the Leaders Meeting and congregation in expressing the welcome to the newly confirmed members.

In a large Church an occasional meeting of the

Church Stewards, under the chairmanship of their elected convener could be useful for considering any matters relating to their work and preventing misunderstandings. Such meetings could result in useful suggestions being forwarded to the Leaders' Meeting or the Trustees. Any such suggestions could also be discussed with the Members' Representatives beforehand to ensure that any proposals are understood and are acceptable to them.

The convener of Stewards is one of the natural "inner cabinet" of the local church and his position is one of great trust. From his fellow Stewards he should seek the names of any conspicuous absentees, or reports of any cases of sickness or special distress, to be reported quickly to the Minister. Timing is important in cases of trouble, and undue delay in making a concerned visit can greatly discount its value.

SACRAMENTAL STEWARDS

(Law Book, page 33, paras 229-230)

These are elected at the annual Church Meeting.

They prepare for the Sacramental Services of Holy Communion and Baptism — and their convener is a member of the Worship, Evangelism and Pastoral Committee. Where a Benevolent Fund is maintained in any Church this committee administers it in close consultation with the Minister.

These Stewards should make a special point of watching for any cases of need or sickness to be reported. The quiet unobtrusive fulfilment of their duties can make a telling contribution to the spirit and effectiveness of the Sacramental Services.

MISSION SECRETARIES

(Law Book, page 33, para 231)

Local Mission Secretaries should be appointed annually.

In these days of the Connexional Budget and pledged giving, it is possible for our giving to become so centralised that the dramatic appeal formerly developed by annual visiting deputations can be lost. Local Mission Secretaries should be vigilant for opportunities of bringing details of such work at home or overseas before the youth of the Church, and the congregation as a whole. By contact with the Home or Overseas Mission Departments or the Finance and Stewardship Committee, vital material can be procured for use in the local Church.

The film strip with tape or typescript issued periodically by the Finance and Stewardship Committee should be used throughout the Connexion. Cottage Meetings for this purpose, gathered by personal invitation are useful. Attractive and imaginative posters prepared and made available to Sunday Schools and other groups, or displayed in Church porches or Halls can quicken interest and concern. There is room for a lot of imagination in this field.

MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVES

At the September Church Meeting each Church is entitled in addition to electing Church Stewards, Sacramental Stewards, local Secretaries for Home and Overseas Missions, and conveners of committees of the Leaders' Meeting, to appoint certain of the Church

members to the Leaders' Meeting as direct representatives of the members of the congregation. This is in the proportion of one representative for every 50 members or fraction thereof, provided that no Church may elect more than six.

The purpose of this is to ensure that the voice of the rank and file of the membership may be heard in the councils of the Church, and not just the specifically appointed office bearers who fulfill distinct functions of leadership.

If possible at the next Church Meeting they should be invited to report on matters of interest from the Leaders' Meetings, and its committees, as they specially affect the congregation and its work.

THE LEADERS' MEETING

(Law Book, pages 36-39, paras. 251-265)

The Leaders' Meeting is the "Cabinet" of the local Church and it is empowered to co-ordinate the whole programme, acting through a series of sub-committees and conveners.

These are:—

- (a) The Worship, Evangelism and Pastoral Committee.
- (b) The Local Education Committee.
- (c) The Social Services and Public Questions Committee.
- (d) The local Stewardship Committee.

All these committees may include members who

are not necessarily members of the Leaders' Meeting. This can be a means of drawing a wider section of the Church membership into the reviewing and planning of the Church programme.

(a) THE WORSHIP, EVANGELISM AND PASTORAL COMMITTEE

(Law Book, page 37, para 258)

This committee is chiefly concerned, as the name implies, with all matters affecting the life of the congregation in its worship services, and recruiting and nurturing its membership in a fellowship of active witness.

Its tasks are:

1. Review and make recommendations to other committees on the structure and effectiveness of the worship services, remembering that the Minister has responsibility for the structure and content of the services.
2. Review and make recommendations on all questions of membership, including the regular reading and revision of the Electoral Roll, and approving or declining nominations by the Minister of new members to be confirmed. Names should not be removed from the Electoral Roll unless the person concerned has been interviewed by some representative appointed by the Leaders' Meeting. Such concerned interviews can be the turning point in the spiritual life of a member who has become lax in attendance at worship services of the Church.
3. Take special care of the pastoral pattern in the local Church to ensure that, through a lay pastorate wherever

possible, the families are cared for by the minister and congregation working together.

4. Review and consider all recommendations of the higher courts of the Church with reference to worship and evangelism, and recommend appropriate steps in the life of the local Church.

(b) LOCAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

(Law Book, page 37, para 259 and pages 88-89, paras 12-18).

The responsibility of this committee includes not only the work in Sunday School and Bible Classes but the whole teaching and study programme of the local Church.

The convener and other officials should be selected with this total sweep of responsibilities clearly emphasised.

A very valuable book for members of this committee is "The Local Education Committee. Planning for Education in the Local Church", by David Merritt, and available from the Department of Christian Education, or the Joint Board. It is a complete guide to the work of the L.E.C.

This committee is empowered to review and approve or disapprove of every course of study being conducted or planned in every department of the local Church, subject to the final decision of the Leaders' Meeting. Hence representatives are appointed from the Leaders' Meeting, the various Youth organisations, the Women's Fellowship and other groups. The mem-

bership includes the Superintendent Minister, and the Minister or Probationer of the local Church, the Superintendent of the Sunday School, the leader of each Department of the Church School, the local Christian Youth Movement Methodist chairman and secretary, or representatives of other groups engaged in Christian Education, and not more than six additional representatives appointed by the Leaders' Meeting on the basis of two for the first 50 Church members and one for each additional 50 or part thereof.

The convener is another key executive officer of the local Church and should look on his or her appointment as a special expression of confidence and trust.

(c) THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

(Law Book, page 38, para 260)

This committee may in some smaller Churches be amalgamated say with the Worship Evangelism and Pastoral Committee, but where it can be effectively organised as a separate unit, it calls for the appointment of people with special aptitudes.

Through this committee the local Church seeks to express the concern of its members on social, moral and international questions. It has an immediate responsibility in seeking to give practical material help where possible in cases of personal or family distress and hardship.

It involves co-operation with the New Zealand Methodist Social Services Association in its represent-

ative task of institutional relief and field service, and also with State and voluntary welfare agencies. (The N.Z.M.S.S.A. unites the activities of Central Missions, Children's Homes, Social Service Centres, and the Hostel and field work of the Maori Mission staffs.)

It also involves a responsibility of vigilance on moral, religious and ethical issues affecting the life of the community. The Church has often been accused of making pontifical pronouncements in realms in which the issues are most complicated and in which specialised knowledge is essential. There has been a tendency as a result of this, to soft-pedal on such pronouncements. Even if we have been sometimes a bit unpractical, we have helped to draw attention to values and principles which, but for the Church, would be brushed aside. The task of even a local Church is to try humbly but firmly to be the conscience of the community. Such concerns can be nourished and helpfully studied and pronounced on in such a committee as this, and its leaders should be sensitive and alert to face them. There is a need for fearless and wise declarations, and if these are backed up by careful study and at the same time, positive practical helpful ministrations locally, we can surely make a greatly needed impact on the drifts in our so-called permissive society. We are a sinful lot, needing redemptive forces and associations to be developed among us.

A person chosen to serve on, or to lead this committee needs to have a sensitive spirit of concern and a large measure of courage and gumption.

(d) THE LOCAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

(Law Book, page 38, para 261)

This is the committee which within the local Church watches the trends in the local finances, and on behalf of the Circuit ensures that the obligations to the Circuit and Connexional Budget are being met. It also makes recommendations to the Leaders' Meeting or the Quarterly Meeting on these matters.

Between Stewardship Missions it is commissioned to watch the matter of pledges falling into arrears, or to seek new contributors under the Stewardship system.

It is also requested to see that information on Circuit or Connexional enterprises represented by their budgets is spread among the members of the congregation.

The convener and members of the local Stewardship Committee should receive from the Circuit Recorder notification of any special cases where pledged giving is slipping. They can then arrange judicious visits or inquiries, particularly to see if any embarrassment is being caused by changes in the financial circumstances of any such members or adherents, and if necessary, to suggest a review of the pledge to ease the situation. Goodwill is the key in this situation, and if the initiative is taken from within the fellowship of the Church it can prevent possible embarrassment and hurt.

Moreover in these days of rapid movement of people, note should be taken of the arrival of families to whom at an appropriately early date, an approach could be made inviting a sharing in the local pro-

gramme. Diligence in this matter could do much to prevent the present tendency for a tailing off of contributions between Stewardship campaigns. An annual Stewardship review Sunday is used in some Churches — and arrangements for this should be considered by the Stewardship Conveners and Committees.

There are many people who turn to the Church only in times of special family occasions — baptism, weddings, funerals and so on. How often do they stop to ask how the Church comes to be there when they need it? It is, of course, only because a group of faithful people give the claims of the Church high priority in their Stewardship of time, talents, and substance. Church officials should offer no apology in approaching such folk on the margin of the Church community to share in the responsibilities as well as accepting the privileges. Also, young people on regular allowances or starting work should be challenged to accept a place in this task, and Stewardship Committee members can, by courteous and tactful approach, present the opportunity and privilege of such sharing.

SPECIAL NOTE. All laymen would find a great deal of help from reading the Booklet "Laymen are Ministers", by Clifford J. Wright, published by the Methodist Federal Board of Education, Methodist Church of Australia. It is full of useful suggestions.

TRUSTEES AND THEIR MEETINGS

(See Law Book, pages 46 and 47, and the Methodist Model Deed on pages 147-161.)

The Church properties are vested in and managed by Trustees appointed according to the trusts expressed

in the "Methodist Model Deed." They are responsible to see that Church properties are not used for any purpose forbidden by the Laws of the Church, or for any purposes or activities which conflict with the spiritual purpose for which the Church was called into being or which are likely to bring reproach on the Church.

Trustees have the right to such collections only as are determined by the Circuit Quarterly Meeting to be made for Trust purposes.

They are expected to carry out their duties as to maintenance and repair of buildings by using the revenues derived from rents, collections allowed and other sources.

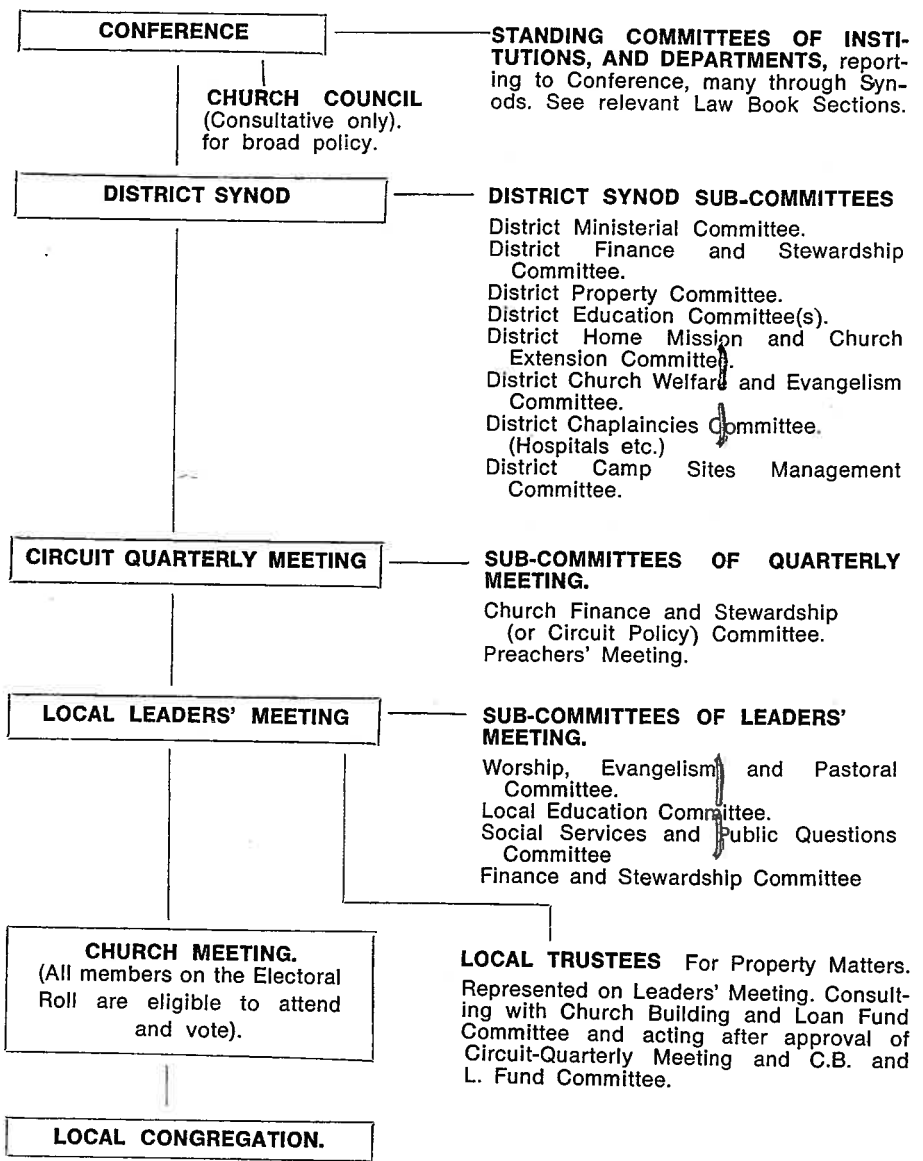
Trustees must be at least adherents of the Methodist Church. Two of their number, if members on the Electoral Roll of the Church, may be appointed by the Trustees to the Leaders' Meeting. It is a great help if Trustees are interested not only in the business side of the property but also in the more specifically spiritual side of the work. Experienced businessmen can make a great contribution to the Church's work as Trustees.

All Trustees must be registered at the Connexional Office before they act or vote in their Trust Meetings.

Trustees must ensure that proper title to the land has been secured before any alterations are made to any building, exterior or interior, or any erection, purchase, lease, mortgage or sale is proceeded with.

All Trust accounts must be audited annually by the Superintendent and the two Circuit Stewards or their deputies appointed in writing.

The Superintendent of the Circuit or one of his colleagues appointed in writing shall ordinarily preside



- THESE ARE**
1. Board of Examiners.
 2. President's Committee of Advice.
 3. Law Revision Committee.
 4. Finance and Stewardship Committee.
 5. Welfare of the Church Committee.
 6. Public Questions Committee.
 7. Chaplaincy Committee.
 8. Board of Evangelism.
 9. Ecumenical Committee.
 10. Faith and Order Committee.
 11. World Peace Committee.
 12. International Affairs.
 13. Radio and Television.
 14. Pastoral Committee.

Departments and Boards

1. Connexional Office.
(Administering the following Funds)
Children's Fund.
Removal Expenses Fund.
Conference Representatives' Equalisation Fund.
Contingent Fund.
Supernumerary Fund.
Ministers' Home Acquirement Fund.
Deaconesses' Retiring Fund.
Home Missionaries' Retiring Fund.
Lay Workers' Retiring Fund.
2. Trinity College Council.
3. Department of Christian Education.
4. Overseas Missions Department.
5. Home Mission, Church Extension and Maori Mission Department.
6. Deaconess Board.
7. General Purposes Trust Board.
8. Connexional Fire Insurance Board.
9. Church Building and Loan Fund Committee.
10. Methodist Board of Publications.
11. Methodist Women's Fellowship.
12. Methodist Social Services Association.
13. Board of N.Z. Methodist.
14. Lay Preachers' Association.

at Trust Meetings. He shall nominate new Trustees, but only the Trustees may vote on this matter unless the vote is evenly distributed in which case the Chairman has the casting vote.

Trustees usually make the appointment of the Organist and/or Choirmaster, and are responsible for paying any honorarium to such persons.

Trustees hold the properties on behalf of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, and their decisions or proposals regarding purchase, alteration or sale, or lease for longer than seven years, are subject to the consent of the Quarterly Meeting, and the Church Building and Loan Fund Committee acting for the Conference. Trustees are bound by the decision of Conference.

PROPERTY STEWARD

Our Regulations provide for the appointment of a Property Steward in each Church. He need not be a member of the Church, but he should be in sympathy with its aims.

His duties would be defined by the Trustees concerned. He would normally periodically check the condition of all properties, and report to the Trust any matters requiring attention. He could be the person to co-ordinate the allocation of the properties or equipment to various Church bodies.

He could also receive any rents or donations for any buildings leased or lent to any reputable organisation which applies for such use, and account to the Trust Treasurer. The foregoing are examples of his duties.

PARSONAGE PROPERTIES

Some parsonage properties are held by a local Trust, others by a Circuit Parsonage Trust. This decision is made to suit local conditions, but in every case these properties are held on behalf of the Circuit.

Most circuits have a Parsonage Committee which is responsible to the Circuit Stewards and Quarterly Meeting. This committee is concerned with furnishing and general maintenance. In some circuits the committee consists of the Officers of the Trust holding the property, plus Officers of the Women's Fellowship, and where felt desirable, a representative or representatives of any congregation in the circuit not otherwise represented.

Some circuits may decide to attend to all the needs of the parsonage through a property committee or property steward. However, the Quarterly Meeting and Circuit Stewards are responsible for seeing that the home provided for the minister and his family meets the standards set out by Conference.

SECRETARY OF THE LEADERS' MEETING

We have deliberately left this to the last of this section.

The Secretary of the Leaders' Meeting is outstandingly the key executive officer of the local Church, and can be the right hand helper of the Minister. He is appointed by the Leaders' Meeting, but appointments to the meeting by the Church Meeting should have a potential secretary in mind.

Regular quarterly meetings of the Leaders' Meeting, should be held, if possible in the month prior to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting. The questions on the Quarterly Meeting agenda presuppose the previous holding of the Leaders' Meetings, and answers to many questions should be based on the recommendations from the Leaders' Meetings.

The Secretary of the Leaders' Meeting should normally be the Secretary for the Church Meeting, and an effective person would normally confer with the conveners of the various committees before their respective meetings to ensure that all essential matters are embodied in the agendas for their meetings. He should also prepare for Leaders' and Church Meetings an agenda based on the standard agenda in the Law Book. Whenever an official agenda is outlined for any meeting in the Law Book, it should always be followed with any amendments made necessary by local circumstances. Only in this way will the full planned programme be covered and essential matters dealt with. In considering the comprehensive responsibilities resting on the Leaders' Meeting and its committees, the position of Secretary is seen to be so highly significant that only a mature and experienced person capable of executive leadership should be considered. An understudy may well be selected in some associated task in which experience can be gained for future leadership.

A WORD ABOUT CHOIRMASTERS

Fortunate is the Church and Minister where there is a devoted and dedicated Christian as choirmaster. This is a place for the closest partnership with the

minister. The experience of such a choirmaster can be a great factor in the real spiritual impact of any service of worship. The choirmaster can advise and suggest in any matters, but in the last analysis the preacher for the day is in charge of the service. It is a frustrating thing for a preacher when he has selected a set of hymns for his service with certain tunes in mind, to be met by some drastic change of tune by the choirmaster or organist which causes the whole hoped-for response to be lost. If tunes are felt to be unfamiliar to the congregation, this should be discussed with the Minister, and this writer has known many instances where the judicious use of the tune as a short voluntary, has prepared the congregation, and the singing has proved to be not the hurdle that had been feared.

A melodious if not numerically strong choir can do a lot to broaden the repertoire of hymn tunes used, and help to remove the deadly limitation of a hackneyed round of a few old favourites. The preacher is in charge of the service and his wishes should be given sympathetic attention. Naturally he will expect the choirmaster to give the lead in matters of anthem and voluntaries, but there are occasions when even there some previous consultation can be helpful in creating real unity in the worship.

CIRCUIT ORGANISATION

THE CIRCUIT QUARTERLY MEETING

(Law Book pages 40-45)

A Circuit is an area in which is situated a Church or number of Churches, a preaching place or number

of preaching places which have been linked together by a decision of the Annual Conference on the recommendation of the District Synod.

All members of each Leaders' Meeting in the Circuit are automatically members of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting — whose constitution is set out in the Law Book. It is designed to receive reports from every section of the work in the Circuit, and to review these reports, making what plans seem best for the advancement of "the work of God".

It is thus the keystone of the organisation of the Circuit, and every person entitled to attend should try to do so regularly.

The Agenda presupposes that Leaders' Meetings have been held, as well as such committees as the Preachers' Meetings, and the Circuit Finance and Stewardship Committee, sometimes called the Finance and Policy Committee. In the event of these not having been held, the Quarterly Meeting should review the questions in their respective agendas.

Lay members of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting shall be fully accredited Church Members in the Circuit of not less than 18 years of age and of not less than 12 months' continuous Membership of the Methodist Church.

(Circuit Stewards of a City Mission may hold their membership in another Circuit.)

Usually a well attended Quarterly Meeting means a live Circuit and a vigorous and successful work.

THE AGENDA OF THE QUARTERLY MEETING

This covers all questions dealing with Member-

ship, pastoral care, evangelism and related matters, the reports from Leaders' Meetings being specially relevant.

Finance and Stewardship is handled under the report and recommendations of the circuit committee.

Christian Education questions are dealt with, based on reports and recommendations of Local Education Committees.

Social Services and Public Questions are covered under reports on these matters from Leaders Meetings.

Property and Trust matters requiring Quarterly Meeting approval are presented by the Secretary of the Finance and Stewardship Committee, also questions bearing on the times and places of services, and the arrangement for opening new preaching places are considered under recommendations from the Preachers' Meeting.

Circuit officials are elected and Representatives to Synod and Conference are appointed by the Quarterly Meeting. Invitations to Ministers are extended by this meeting.

CIRCUIT OFFICIALS

CIRCUIT STEWARDS

(Law Book pages 31-32)

The highest honour in the Circuit which can be conferred on a layman is election as a Circuit Steward.

Two Circuit Stewards are appointed annually, one being nominated by the Superintendent Minister and one by a member of the Quarterly Meeting. The meeting has the right to accept or reject the nominations. If

the Superintendent Minister either refuses to nominate, or ceases to nominate, then the meeting may nominate. Such Stewards are elected at the September Quarterly Meeting by an absolute majority of the votes of those present, and save in exceptional circumstances should not hold office for more than five successive years. They assume office at the close of the September Quarterly Meeting. They are members of the Quarterly Meeting and of the Leaders' Meeting of the Church to which they belong. They are executive officers of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, and are the chief link between the Ministers and the members and officials of the Circuit.

The duties set out in the Law Book reveal a wide and responsible trust. In some circuits it is wise and convenient to appoint a specially chosen person as **Circuit Treasurer**, and this appointment is made by the Quarterly Meeting on the nomination of the Circuit Stewards. The treasurer keeps the Circuit accounts, and performs the duties of Circuit Steward as set out in the Law Book in sections 218 (b) 218 (a) and 218 (g) and he is subject to the instructions of the Circuit Stewards and the direction of the Quarterly Meeting. Some circuits employ an accountant to do this work.

There is no "senior" Circuit Steward. Both are on an equal footing with different duties agreed on between themselves.

They see that the Minister receives punctually each month (not later than the 20th of the month) the stipend agreed on by the Quarterly Meeting. The standard minimum scale of stipends is fixed by the Annual Conference and is generally automatically accepted by the Circuit Quarterly Meetings. If Circuit Stewards find themselves unable to pay the agreed sum

on any monthly date they should immediately inform the Chairman of the District.

Guidance is provided by the General Treasurer of the Conference on all the proper deductions that should be made for taxation purposes when preparing the stipend cheques. From time to time a personal note enclosed by the Circuit Steward with the stipend cheque can mean encouragement to the minister, and it keeps the whole relationship on a basis of more than just a formal transaction.

The following comments on some special aspects of Minister-Circuit Steward relationship warrant special comment.

MINISTERIAL INVITATIONS

In the matter of ministerial invitations, the key man is the Circuit Steward. Everything depends on a relationship of confidence and trust being sustained at each stage. We are all human, and strain can develop in spite of the best efforts on all sides, but in a Christian organisation it should be possible for such a spirit of mutual trust and candour to exist as to obviate any hurtful misunderstandings. As much notice as possible should be given by both Minister and Circuit Steward, if either thinks the good of God's work would be served by a change.

Circuit Stewards should familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations covering this matter of Ministerial invitations and appointments, as embodied in the Law Book and its amendments. There have been a number of changes in emphasis in recent years

and it does not do to act on memories of former regulations. The Circuit Stewards should keep in close touch with the District Chairman and consult with him **before making any approach to any Minister.** One important rule and courtesy is that approaches should be strictly confined to one man at a time, and no other person should be communicated with until the first has been clearly dealt with. Failure in this has been the cause of a great deal of hurtful embarrassment in the past. A small dissident group who do not represent the great majority of the people in the circuit can sometimes create disturbance about the question of the continuance of the ministerial appointment. It is well for the Circuit Stewards to keep their fingers on the pulse of the circuit life. If they find any sign of a move developing to raise the issue, they can under section 219, keep the initiative by watching that a positive resolution comes before the Quarterly Meeting when the matter is raised. It is always much more difficult to overtake a negative motion than to present a positive one.

Circuit Stewards may invite the Chairman of the District to visit their Circuit.

When Quarterly Meetings have reached a decision regarding an invitation, prompt correspondence with the Minister concerned and the District Chairman should follow, and the proper notice should be sent to the Chairman with the Annual Circuit returns.

Immediately Conference has finally appointed a Minister, the Stewards should communicate with him by letter of welcome, and ascertain if possible when he plans to arrive in the Circuit. Though the new Minister does not officially begin his duties until between the first and second Sundays in February, the Circuit is

financially responsible from February 1st. Moreover, if the incoming Minister has school children he is entitled to request occupancy of the parsonage on February 1st. The courteous brotherly concern of the Circuit Stewards at this stage can make a world of difference in the launching of a new ministry in a Circuit.

The Circuit Stewards will either themselves meet the incoming Minister and his family, or arrange for someone else to do so. The first meal in the parsonage is usually provided by the Stewards, or the women of the Circuit, and an informal welcome extended to the new appointee. In this matter the wives of the Circuit Stewards can play a worthy part. Their duties, like those of the Minister's wife are not defined in the Law Book but they can be gracious and valuable. Their work, in consultation with the Women's Fellowship, can mean a lot in giving that home-like touch to the reception, but the final responsibility rests with the Circuit Stewards.

The Church Notice Board. There is usually ample time between Conference and February to have the Church Notice Board altered to include the name of the new minister. Nothing makes a man more clearly aware that he is looked for than the sign that he is the minister, while the long continued appearance of the name of the former minister gives a touch of dilatoriness that is not encouraging.

A Circuit Steward has the privilege of giving a lead in much of the business of the Church. He is usually given the first opportunity to represent the Circuit at Synod and Conference. A wise minister will

enlist the services of his Circuit Stewards on all possible occasions.

Summed up, a Circuit Steward should be a man of affairs, a friendly man who has sympathetic understanding of the work of the minister, one who is a leader, and at the same time a good team-worker. Above all he should be a man of spiritual insight and experience. Who is sufficient for this? Methodism produces such men and women continually. Every minister will witness to the sterling quality of Circuit Stewards in general.

OTHER CIRCUIT OFFICIALS

Other Circuit offices are for the most part an extension of local Church offices and they naturally concern the co-ordinating of the reports on the activities in the local Churches. These officials can include Circuit Home and Overseas Mission Secretaries, Circuit agents or reporters for the connexional paper, Circuit Education Secretaries, and Children's Homes representatives. The duties of each are fairly obvious in the light of earlier comments on the local Church. They are required to keep before the Circuit as a whole the causes they represent. When literature is available from any Connexional or District Board or Committee it should be made available to members in a business-like systematic way. At appropriate times under the respective questions on the agenda they should report to the Quarterly Meeting, remembering that careful preparation can make for brevity without loss of interest. It follows from all this that the first qualification is a deep interest in the cause they represent. Without enthusiasm

founded on knowledge such officials can achieve nothing worth while.

CIRCUIT FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

(Law Book pages 43 and 44, section 284)

This Committee, appointed by the Quarterly Meeting becomes in effect the Circuit Finance and Policy Committee. Its effective working can greatly facilitate the work of the Quarterly Meeting.

It consists of the Ministers, and/or Probationers appointed to the Circuit, the Circuit Stewards, Circuit Treasurer, Trust Treasurers, and one representative appointed by each Leaders' Meeting in the Circuit. One of the Circuit Stewards acts as its Secretary.

The agenda of the Committee covers all

- questions of Circuit Income and Expenditure, including stipends and allowances of the Minister.
- the state of the Circuit obligations to the Connexional Budget.
- the recommended grants to local Church Trusts, Leaders' Meetings, Women's Fellowships, Christian Education Groups, specific objectives authorised by the President of Conference, and community and/or other objectives.

It also covers all questions affecting property transactions, and applications for Loans, or for permission to erect or make major alterations to buildings.

The recommendations on all the above matters

are presented to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting under the relevant questions on its agenda.

PREACHERS AND THEIR MEETINGS

The Ministers and the accredited Lay Preachers of the Circuit form the Preachers' Meeting. They should meet quarterly and consider all the questions connected with the Preaching Plan and the Lay Preachers.

There has been a tendency to describe this meeting as "the Lay Preacher's Meeting", and it has been badly neglected in some quarters. A study of the relevant section of the Law Book shows that it is much more than this. It is the point where the laity share with the ministry in the task of the "Ministry of the Word", and the questions on the agenda should certainly be reviewed periodically by the preachers alone. A live Preachers' Meeting can be a central meeting for the discovering and training of potential preachers. As our Methodist rule has hitherto required that every candidate for the ministry should be a fully accredited Lay Preacher, the significance of this as a recruiting ground for the ministry is self evident. This is a day of high pressure on our time, but we should not lightly dispense completely with this historic piece of Methodist structure. The vital questions meant for this meeting cannot be given the calm, objective attention they deserve in the Quarterly Meeting which is too open and has too comprehensive an agenda for this purpose. The whole question of the missionary task of the Circuit to its growing areas is involved.

With the new structure of Leaders and Quarterly Meetings in which Lay Preachers are represented only by one of their number in any Leaders' Meeting, the Preacher's Meeting can become in some Circuits the only place in which all Lay Preachers do meet at any one time to consider their work.

CONFERENCE LAY OFFICERS

THE VICE-PRESIDENT

(Law Book, pages 29 and 30).

The highest office in the Methodist Church of New Zealand open to a layman is that of Vice-President of the Church. He must have been a Member of Conference on at least three previous occasions, and he is elected at the Conference preceding that at which he takes office.

The Vice-President, if requested to do so by the President, shall preside in the Conference or in any Committee of the Conference, or may represent the President at official functions during his year of office. As the senior layman of the Church he is ex-officio a member of the Synod in the District in which he resides, and of many connexional committees.

THE GENERAL TREASURER

(Law Book, pages 82-83).

A layman, who should, where possible, be a Member of the New Zealand Society of Accountants is appointed by Conference as General Treasurer. He is

responsible to the Board of Management of the Connexional Office of the Methodist Church of New Zealand and to the Conference.

He acts as Treasurer of such Funds, Boards or Committees as determined from time to time by Conference, and he is ex-officio a Member of Conference.

This requires a broad understanding of the Methodist Church, and it involves a great deal of detailed administration of the many Funds under his care.

DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP

(Law Book, pages 76-77, para 475).

There is appointed by Conference a chief executive and administrative officer of the Finance and Stewardship Committee, and known as the Director of Stewardship. In practice he is a layman. His committee reviews and administers all the details of the Connexional Budget, and the work of the Field Directors who are also appointed by the Conference. The Conference General Treasurer is the Budget Treasurer.

THE WOMEN'S WORK

THE METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The amalgamation of the former Methodist Women's Missionary Union, and the Methodist Women's Guild Fellowship into the one organisation has made possible the presenting of a great united challenge to the Women of the Church.

All women of the Church who desire to further

the objects of the Fellowship are eligible for membership. While leadership in Leaders' Meetings, Quarterly Meetings, Synods, and Conference must be from those who are full Members of the Methodist Church, the constitution does allow for the welcoming in local Fellowships of the leadership of other women who are in general sympathy with the objectives of the Fellowship. Officers of the Convention and District Councils of Women's Fellowships must be members of the Church.

The objects of the movement include the following:

- (1) To develop the spiritual and social life of the members so as to make a Christian witness in all of life.
- (2) To support the work of the church at home and abroad.

In any local Church various groups may be formed for special times of meeting and for special interests, but they should all remember the total, comprehensive objectives of the Fellowship Movement, and not become limited little cliques with some hobby interest. This can be obviated by remembering that each group is part of the local Fellowship and should be represented on the local Executive which appoints its representatives to Leaders' Meetings and other higher church courts.

Wherever possible there should be some devotional part to the meetings, and some worthwhile study of the Christian faith. Further there should be a main concern in sharing the outreach and "caring pro-

gramme" of the church, so as to obviate the danger of meetings degenerating into social trivialities. There is room for the social side provided it is seen in the light of the total objective of the Fellowship Movement, and the vision of its founders.

CHAIRMANSHIP OF CHURCH MEETINGS

Under Methodist Law, the Superintendent Minister of a Circuit is the chairman ex-officio of all official meetings. These are Leaders' Meetings, Trust Meetings, Preachers Meetings, L.E.C. Meetings, and Circuit Quarterly Meetings. He is empowered in most cases to appoint a deputy, or to request a group to appoint its own chairman. In the last analysis the Superintendent Minister is answerable to Conference for any act or decision of any group within his Circuit, and members usually recognise that their appointee needs to be a person carrying the confidence of the Superintendent.

In our new structure of Committees in the Local Church and Circuit there are many sub-committees that can well be chaired by a layman, with the minister or ministers sitting in as a member. A Circuit Steward is a logical person to chair the Finance and Stewardship Committee, and he would then lead the presentation of its reports and recommendations to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting.

The Sub-committees of the Leaders' Meetings could also conveniently be led by laymen, and in this way a helpful group of executives would be available to the minister or ministers for consultation and advice in special situations.

AGENDAS FOR MEETINGS

Many of the official meetings of our Church have a set agenda, which is provided in the relevant section of the Law Book. It is a basis for the business of the meeting, but may be amended in special circumstances provided the essential matters are covered. Here is a suggested agenda for any special meeting not otherwise provided for. A suggested opening prayer to be used if desired by the Chairman, is set out on the last page of this handbook.

1. Opening Prayer.
2. Appointment of (a) Chairman.
(b) Secretary.
3. Statement of purpose of meeting.
4. Who are present? Establishment of roll of Meeting.
5. Apologies for absence.
6. Minutes of previous meeting if any.
7. Matters arising from Minutes.
Reports on action requested by last Meeting.
8. Outward Correspondence reported and approved.
9. Inward Correspondence to be received and considered.
10. Report re finances. Treasurer's statement if any.
11. Notices of motion.
12. General.
13. Time and place of next meeting.
14. Benediction.

STANDING ORDERS OF CONFERENCE

(Law Book pages 137-140)

The Law Book states that Standing Orders of Conference apply to all meetings of the subordinate

Courts of the Church. Naturally the means that they are to be a broad guide to the conduct of the business, with special reference to such matters as are covered in paragraphs 5, 8, 9, 11-19, 22, 23 and 27. Of course these will all be read and applied in the light of the nature and size of the meeting in question.

They refer chiefly to the rules of debate and the proper procedure for presenting and voting on the business under review.

THE MINISTER IN RELATION TO CIRCUIT AND LOCAL MEETINGS AND OFFICIALS

Some have criticised the law making the Superintendent responsible for all official meetings in the Circuit, but there are good reasons why the Conference has so decreed.

The minister has been trained so that, all things being equal, he will have a more detailed knowledge of the Laws, regulations and customs, usages and practices of the Church. One of his duties is to see that these are observed on all occasions. As before mentioned, he is also directly responsible to the Conference as no one else can be, and he can be called to account by that body.

He also nominates to the Leaders' Meeting new Church members. It should be noted again, that he can nominate only. No minister can place new names on the roll without the consent of the Leaders' Meeting. (In extreme cases, the minister has the duty of expulsion of a member but this power should be exercised sparingly by him, and only after consulting the Lead-

ers' Meeting and having an interview with the member concerned when he will use all his pastoral gifts to seek to win him back to Christ and His Church.)

It is the duty of the Minister to see that both Church Meetings and Leaders' Meetings are held regularly and that a proper agenda is prepared and used by them.

He must see that the member's roll is revised regularly and that those who have removed from the Circuit are transferred. He must keep a Pastoral Roll Card system as a complete record of those who are in any way connected with the Church, recording as far as possible, particulars of each adult and child, in the various households.

All these people are his special care, and his work should be so organised as to assist him to get to know them in their homes as well as in Services and Meetings.

With the Circuit Stewards the Superintendent must audit personally or by deputy the Trust accounts each year and send on the Circuit Schedules and the Trust Schedules to the appropriate District Secretaries promptly.

The Superintendent Minister with his colleagues shall make the Circuit Preaching Plan, making sure that proper provision is made for the regular celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at each Church and preaching place. If any children are to be baptised, the minister must see that the parents know the meaning of the sacrament and are aware of their obligation in the matter.

The Superintendent minister nominates those who are to be Lay Preachers and candidates for the Ministry.

It is his prerogative to nominate to the Quarterly Meeting one of the Circuit Stewards. It is his duty to see that all properties in the Circuit are settled upon the Trusts of the Model Deed and to attend and preside over the Trust meetings. He must give his consent before any person can preach in any of the pulpits in the Circuit.

He must make proper entries in the Circuit Schedule books, and fill up all other schedules as directed by Conference. He is *ex-officio* president of all youth organisations in the Circuit. (He may delegate this to his colleagues.)

He must keep the Chairman of the District informed of all important developments occurring in the Circuit, especially as concerning any property transactions. On occasion, he will call in the District Chairman to preside at a Quarterly Meeting so that he may be more conversant with the work in the Circuit, or that he may give advice and counsel in some important matter.

He will conduct the Confirmation Service for new members of the Church according to the order of service approved by the Conference. In some places of recent years, the practice has grown up of inviting the Chairman of the District or some other Senior Minister to share in this service as a representative of the wider Church. This is valuable in impressing upon the new members the significance of their step, and prevents any tendency to regard Church Membership as merely a local link.

If an organisation connected with the Church handles more than \$20 annually, it is his duty to see that a banking account is opened and operated upon

by two signatories. He should also ensure that all such accounts are annually audited by a suitable person or persons and that such audited statements are presented to the respective organisations.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the duties of a minister. In addition to all these are the routine work of visiting the sick and afflicted and the members and those who do not attend, the preparation of sermons and addresses at other gatherings, and the work on connexional committees which are an essential part of the Methodist structure.

Every minister is expected to take his share of connexional work if called on. Weddings and funerals may take up a lot of his time, but those provide unique opportunities for intimate contact with families at very sensitive moments and this may have lasting results. In addition to all this, a minister is usually a husband and a father and should take his share in the home, and he has often very difficult choices to make as he weighs the various claims on his time. This is particularly the case when as a recognised leader in the community he has to make decisions about claims upon his time as a representative of his congregation.

Summing up, the Minister's main responsibility is with the spiritual affairs of the Church in its mission to the community. It should be the duty and privilege of the laymen to share the pastoral task and to endeavour to lighten the burden of circuit and local Church administration.

THE SCHOOL FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS

In connection with the work of Trinity Methodist Theological College, there is a School for Christian

Workers. This is provided to give to lay folk a one year course of study and instruction in Christian Faith and Doctrine, and in Lay Leadership.

It has proved useful as a preparatory year of study for prospective candidates for the ministry. It is mainly aimed, however, at assisting lay folk who see a sphere of usefulness as workers in a local Church, and who wish to develop their equipment for the fullest possible usefulness for their Lord and Master. The cost of the course is the responsibility of the person concerned, but it can also be a worthy project for a local congregation or circuit to assist a potential leader to gain the equipment and experience, that could be a wonderful investment in leadership.

We commend this school to our lay folk. The Principal of Trinity College will give all details to interested enquirers.

A diploma is issued to students who successfully complete the course to the satisfaction of the Board of Studies.

CONCLUSION

Well — There it is! We send out again this small book with the hope that it may be of some encouragement and help to those who have been challenged to accept some task in the service of the Church. It is only an outline. There are many experienced folk who can give advice and information. Never be afraid to ask — and do not make decisions on insufficient data.

Keep abreast of developments in the life and work of the Church. Do not discard any pattern until some-

thing better has emerged to take its place. At the same time do not oppose change just for the sake of cussedness. It may happen that other folk and their views may have merit.

Finally always remember — It is required of Stewards that they be found faithful.

Suggested opening prayer for a small meeting:

Let us pray.

O God our Father, before we begin our business, we pause to remember whose we are and whom we serve. We are not our own. We are called together to serve You, the God whom we love and honour.

Give to us a clear understanding of our responsibilities in this meeting. Guard us from sectional prejudices. Give to us we pray, a deep sense of the sacredness of our task as Your servants.

Bless us we pray, with a true spirit of Christian responsibility, and use this meeting to the honour and glory of Your name and the furtherance of Your work among us.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.