

REPORT AND RESOLUTION FROM  
**World Conference**

The Free Methodist World Conference exists to facilitate communication and harmonious relationships among the leaders of the general conferences and the area fellowships and the resolution of constitutional issues.



Delegates to | Bishop Keith Elford  
World Conference | Patrick Duncan





# WORLD CONFERENCE REPORT AND RESOLUTION

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**FREE METHODIST WORLD CONFERENCE**  
**Sao Paulo, Brazil November 8-10, 2007**  
**Delegate's Report – Pat Duncan**

- Thank you very much for the opportunity to represent our Canadian General Conference at the Free Methodist World Conference as the lay delegate.
- While waiting in the Toronto airport, we happened upon Fred Lester from the Prince Edward County FMC (Picton, Ont) and a work team that was also headed to Brazil to work on the construction of a church in one of the outlying areas of Sao Paulo. When we first arrived in Sao Paulo, we traveled to see the project site; then we shared a wonderful Brazilian lunch with the pastor of the church and his family.

**Now on to the World Conference 2007**

- The World Conference, which meets every four years, was held November 8 – 10, 2007, in a hotel in the centre of the huge metropolitan city of Sao Paulo – over 22 million people – two thirds of the population of all of Canada in one city!
- Theme for this, the second World Conference, was “We must go to the other towns and villages” (Luke 4:43) Jesus told them, “Don’t you realize that there are yet other villages where I have to tell the Message of God’s kingdom, that this is the work God sent me to do?” (The Message)
- The four purposes of the World Conference are:
  1. To worship God
  2. To share together and be encouraged as we hear what God is doing in other parts of the world
  3. To build relationships as a foundation for working together
  4. To report to the World Conference on the work of the World Conference Executive Committee since the last meeting of the World Conference
- There are 14 FM General Conferences in the World --12 full General Conferences and, at the time of this World Conference, two Provisional General Conferences (Brazil and India). Egypt was unable to attend this year. Some 77 countries were represented, with Bishops, ministerial and lay leaders from all over the world. There were Area Fellowship representatives, honorary delegates, and the very valuable translators as well. Each phrase spoken needed to be translated into English, Spanish, Portuguese, Punjabi, French, and Japanese – so that after each phrase, there would be this melodious muttering of the translators. I remember the revelation that came to me that, “God speaks Spanish, He speaks Japanese – His message is the same in any language of the world; and He hears and is glorified in every language from every corner of the globe – and beyond!”
- Our Bishop Keith Elford, as President of the World Conference Executive, presided at the meetings, with morning, afternoon, and evening sessions.
- Our Brazilian host was Bishop Ildo (José Ildo Swartele Mello), who of course was the guest speaker for our 2005 Canadian General Conference.
- Each World Conference session began with worship

- Lively, inspiring, led by a worship band much like we do
- Songs were in English or Portuguese or Spanish – familiar like “Here I am to Worship”, as well as some new, such as “Te alabare, Te glorificare, e buen Jesus”
- A devotional message was shared by one of the Bishops

Then the business session would begin

- Each General Conference gave a 20 minute report that focused on three questions:
  1. Blessings - What are signs of God’s blessing in your General Conference’s ministry these days?
  2. Challenges - What challenges are frustrating you?
  3. Dreams - What God-inspired dreams are you dreaming?
    - I was appointed the dubious honour of Timekeeper (the “bell ringer”) at 17 minutes (which meant the speaker had 3 minutes to wrap-up)
      - Try this with your Pastor some Sunday morning!!
      - Of course, the speaker had to allow time for translation after each phrase
    - Following each General Conference report, a bishop from another part of the world was invited to lead in prayer for the leadership of that General Conference.
    - Bishop Keith and I presented the report for our Canadian General Conference, along with Donna Elford working the PowerPoint presentation. Bishop Elie Buconyori, Bishop Keith’s “African cousin” from Burundi, led in prayer for our Free Methodist Church in Canada.
- As many of you are aware, Bishop Philemon Munyagisaka, who is one of the bishops in Rwanda, has been held in prison in Kigali since 2006. In this photo, you can see Bishop Kayinamura and his wife Rachel, as well as Zerda Munyagisaka, Bishop Philemon’s wife (who attended the World Conference), and on the screen at the far left is a photo of Bishop Philemon. Bishop Elford is leading the World Conference delegates in prayer for the General Conference in Rwanda, and for God’s care of Bishop Philemon.
  - One of the more significant actions of the World Conference was to receive a request from the East/Central Africa Area Fellowship that an international delegation be sent by the World Conference and Council of Bishops to Rwanda to meet with Rwandan government authorities to request the release of Bishop Munyagisaka from prison. This delegation included our Bishop.
- Break-out small group sessions on Friday and Saturday focused on --
  - The Role of Area Fellowships
  - World Conference Budget options and plans
  - Crisis Needs Assessment and Action policy
  - Global Missions Network
- A Global Missions Network report was presented by Dr. Art Brown
  - There are multiple centres for missions sending
  - In 1950 – Free Methodist missions existed in 16 countries

- Today – Free Methodist missions is alive in 78 countries – most of these new missions points have developed in the last twenty years.
- One of the final presentations at World Conference was the Nominating Committee Report
  - The Council of Bishops had elected its Executive Committee
  - Nominations for the Free Methodist World Conference Executive were presented and elected, with Bishop Jim Tuan of the Philippines elected president, and Bishop Elford becoming a Member at Large (ex officio as Past President)
- Expressions of appreciation were presented to:
  - Retiring members of the World Conference Executive
  - Marcia Goldstein, Administrative Assistant to Bishop Keith for all the work she did in preparing a mountain of materials, and so many other arrangements leading up to the World Conference
  - Bishop Ildo and his wife, along with all the team who hosted us so well
  - The worship leaders and bands
  - Donna Elford – including projection details, and keeping her husband on track
  - Finally, but by far not the least important, to Bishop Keith for his wise and diligent leadership as President of the World Conference over its first eight years, and his skillful administration during this present World Conference November 2007. Here you see Bishop Keith presenting the “tools” of the office to his successor, Bishop Jim Tuan of the Philippines, the new President of the Free Methodist World Conference Executive.
- A true highlight of our trip to Brazil came after the concluding prayer of World Conference. On Saturday evening, we traveled by bus to a large indoor stadium and joined with 7,000 Brazilian Free Methodists at a service celebrating the inauguration of Brazil as a General Conference. The worship service included participation of children (notice the CYC scarves and t-shirts), young people, choirs, bands, dancers, and soloists.

Suffragan Bishop Jose Ildo Swartele Mello was consecrated as Bishop. The Brazilian Provisional Conference became a full General Conference, and the service also included the ordination of several Brazilian pastors.

Elected officers of the World Conference Executive Committee and Executive of the Council of Bishops were inducted as well during this amazing worship service. This is Bishop Tuan praying a benediction at the close of this great celebration service.

To read more about the World Conference, and to see more photos and even some video of the World Conference and the inauguration service, search on the internet for 2007 Free Methodist World Conference.

There is so much more I would and probably should tell about the proceedings and actions of the World Conference. Suffice to say that it was a great honour and a life-changing experience to represent our Canadian Free Methodist Church at Sao Paulo.

- **Referenda Passed** – the following referenda were circulated to the General Conferences after the 2003 World Conference meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe. A two-thirds aggregate vote of all voting general conferences was received for each of these 3 referenda, and therefore each was declared passed.
  - Proposal to Amend the Constitution of the Free Methodist Church (Chapter Two in the *Book of Discipline*) [Resolution 1] as proposed by the World Conference Executive Committee and amended and approved by the World Conference. 93% Yes
  - Amendment to Requirements for Membership [Resolution 6] as proposed by the General Conference of North America and approved by the World Conference. 98% Yes
  - Amendment to the Termination of Church Membership section [Resolution 7] as proposed by the General Conference of North America and approved by the World Conference. 97% Yes

We have a referendum to deal with this weekend that was referred to the Council of Bishops by the Free Methodist World Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe in November, 2003, and refined and proposed by the Council of Bishops in March 31, 2006.

**WORLD CONFERENCE RESOLUTION:**

**AMENDMENT TO PAR 115 AND 119 IN THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION**

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Paragraph A/115 (The New Life in Christ) and Paragraph A/119 (Article 12 on Sanctification) in the Articles of Religion of the Free Methodist Church be amended to read as follows:

***Par A/115 THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST***

*A new life and a right relationship with God are made possible through the redemptive acts of God in Jesus Christ. God, by His Spirit, acts to impart new life and put people into a relationship with Himself as they repent and their faith responds to His grace. Justification, regeneration, adoption, sanctification and restoration speak significantly to entrance into and continuance in the new life.*

***Par A/119 SANCTIFICATION***

*Sanctification is that saving work of God beginning with new life in Christ whereby the Holy Spirit renews His people after the likeness of God, changing them through crisis and process, from one degree of glory to another, and conforming them to the image of Christ.*

*As believers surrender to God in faith and die to self through full consecration, the Holy Spirit fills them with love and purifies them from sin. This sanctifying relationship with God remedies the divided mind, redirects the heart to God, and empowers believers to please and serve God in their daily lives.*

*Thus, God sets His people free to love Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love their neighbor as themselves.*

YES       NO