



NETWORK

FMC HISTORY & POLITY
MARCH 23, 2019

WELCOME!

The purpose of this class is to present in brief form the origin, development, beliefs, and practices of the Free Methodist Church. Our hope is that you will be able to know and celebrate where we came from, what we believe, why we believe it, and how we function as a network of churches.

Today's Schedule

8:30 – 9:00	Meet & Greet: Registration and Breakfast
9:00 – 9:50	Session 1 Questions (group time)
9:50 – 10:00	BREAK
10:00 – 10:50	Session 2 Questions (group time)
10:50 – 11:00	BREAK
11:00 – 12:00	Session 3 Questions (group time)
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 1:50	Session 4 Questions (group time)
1:50 – 2:00	BREAK
2:00 – 3:00	Session 5 Questions (group time)
3:00	Closing Prayer

FREE METHODIST

HISTORY & POLITY • SESSION 1

SESSION 1: HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

EARLY HISTORY: PENTECOST to ARMINIUS

1. Acts 2: _____

2. 1382: _____

3. 1517: _____

4. 1530's: ENGLAND / EUROPE

5. 1608: _____

6. A Growing Tension:

JOHN WESLEY (June 17, 1703 – March 2, 1791)

1. Birth and Younger Years

2. 1720's – 1735

3. 1735 – 1738

4. May 24, 1738: _____

"I found my heart _____"

5. Critical Events

1739: _____

1776: _____

6. Two "Founders" of American Methodism

QUESTIONS

What is the #1 thing in Session One that catches your attention? Why?

Studying history can be challenging, especially for us forward-thinking church leaders.
What value does studying our tribe's history have for us today?

FREE METHODIST

HISTORY & POLITY • SESSION 2

SESSION 2: HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS: **Birth & Development of Free Methodism**

1. B. T. ROBERTS: (July 25, 1823 – February 27, 1893)

a. 1823 – mid-1840's: Foundational Context

Personal Context

Historical Context

Spiritual Context

Cultural Context

b. 1840-Early 1850's: Foundational Experiences

Conversion and Call:

College:

Marriage:

c. 1850's Controversies:

The Church and Culture

Slavery: Uncle Tom's Cabin Harriet Beecher Stowe -1852

Methodist Episcopal Church:

d. 1860's: The Birth of the Free Methodist Church

"FREE" is chosen to be added to the denominational name to emphasize

2. THE EARLY YEARS OF THE DENOMINATION

a. 1860's – 1890: Rapid _____ & _____

b. 1890's – 1903: _____ the focus – choice toward inward focus

c. 1900 – 2000: A CENTURY OF _____ - _____

d. 2000 – Present _____

QUESTIONS

What is the #1 thing in Session Two that catches your attention? Why?

Like he did with B.T. Roberts, God has used our life journey to shape our pathway. Briefly share with your group how God directed your life to bring you to this point.

FREE METHODIST

HISTORY & POLITY • SESSION 3

SESSION 3: The Wesleyan Method

1. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: THE WESLEY CLASS MEETING

a. According to Henderson, Wesley's favorite term for the Methodist

movement was "_____ - _____."

b. Fetter Lane Society (May 1738 – July 1740) & Foundry Society (December 1739)

c. Wesley's Target Audience: _____

(_____ & _____)

d. Wesley's "Interlocking System"

i. _____ : (_____) _____

ii. _____ : (_____) _____

iii. _____ : (_____) _____

iv. _____ : (_____) _____

v. _____ : (_____) _____

e. Three Foundational Leadership Concepts

i.

ii.

iii.

2. FREE METHODIST APPLICATION

- a. **DISCIPLINES:** FMs believe spiritual disciplines should develop the _____ person.

Wesley's "Golden Triangle:"

Angle #1: _____

Angle #2: _____

Angle #3: _____

- b. **REVELATION:** FM's have a _____ process for discerning truth.

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral:

- c. **A RELEVANT MESSAGE FOR TODAY'S CULTURE:** Free Methodists have an _____ view of God's grace.

QUESTIONS

What is the #1 thing in Session Three that catches your attention? Why?

Wesley's Quadrilateral might be new to some today. We obviously value the Bible.
So, how much weight do you give tradition, reason, and experience??

FREE METHODIST

HISTORY & POLITY • SESSION 4

SESSION 4: The Free Methodist Church Today

1. An OVERVIEW OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH TODAY

- a. The FMC began with only _____ pastors and _____ laypersons.
- b. The FMCUSA has just under _____ members, with a worship attendance of _____.
- c. There are _____ FM churches in the USA.
- d. The “average” FM church has _____ members and _____ in worship.

2. Global Church

- a. The FM church is in _____ countries with over _____ members.
- b. Our world membership includes the following percentages:

Africa	_____	496,812 members in 25 countries
Asia	_____	490,408 members in 23 countries
Europe	_____	3,495 members in 11 countries
Latin America	_____	100,677 members in 22 countries
Middle East	_____	30,000 members in 7 countries
North America	_____	80,054 members in 2 countries
USA currently is	_____	of World Membership
- c. FMC ministry, International Child Care Ministries, sponsors over _____ children in _____ countries.

3. The Mission of the Free Methodist Church is to:

Love _____ Love _____ Make _____

4. "WHO ARE FREE METHODISTS?"

a. "Free" from or to what?

**

b. What we aspire to be:

Devoted to Christ	Witnessing
Students of the Bible	Generous
Living Holy Lives	Global-Minded
Worshiping	

5. Staying on Mission

a. We have few but very significant non-negotiables

b. We have NINE Strategic Initiatives

Embrace All	Multiply Ministries
Disciple Deeply	Go Global
Cultivate Health	Honor Fruitfulness
Develop Leaders	Partner Strong
Engage Urban	

c. We have EIGHT expected outcomes ¶ 6060

Prayer-Saturated	Reproducing
Worshipping	World-Mission Engaging
Discipling	Culture-Engaging
Evangelizing	Purpose Driven

QUESTIONS

What is the #1 thing in Session Four that catches your attention? Why?

Out of the Nine Strategic Initiatives, which one would your church's strongest?
Out of the Eight Expected Outcomes, which one is your church's greatest challenge?

FREE METHODIST

HISTORY & POLITY • SESSION 5

SESSION 5: POLITY

1. THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

2. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- a. The primary legislative body of the church is the _____
which meets every _____ years.
- b. The FMC currently has _____ Bishops. The role of a Bishop is defined in ¶ _____
 - i. Boards
 - ii. World Ministry Center
- c. The _____ has been the basic
organizational structure of the FMC since it began.
- d. The _____ is the presiding office.

3. ORDINATION - _____!

- a. LMC
- b. CMC
- c. Conference Deacon
- d. Conference Elder & Member of the Conference

4. THE LOCAL CHURCH

a. The Basics

- i. The _____ is the body of Christ in the world. ¶ 6010
- ii. _____ ¶ 6020
- iii. _____ ¶ 6030
- iv. _____ ¶ 6040
- v. Core Values ¶ 6050
 - _____ through _____
 - _____ through _____
 - _____ through _____

b. How Congregations Are Organized/Led

- i. _____!
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. We are not congregationally-led. We are: _____.
- v. The business meeting of the church is called a _____.
It must meet at least _____ (¶ 6200b)

At the end of the day, we are FREE!

QUESTIONS

What is the #1 thing in Session Five that catches your attention? Why?

What is the value of having a common polity for our network of churches?

RESOURCES

BOOKS

- Book of Discipline - <https://fmcusa.org/bookofdiscipline>
- A Future with a History (McKenna)
- A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Wesley)
- [Ordaining Women](#) (Roberts)
- B.T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists (Snyder)
- John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples (Henderson)

FMC INFORMATION

- The **WEBSITE** for the Free Methodist Church is www.fmcusa.org.
- The **World Ministries Center** is the home office for the FMCUSA. It is located in Indianapolis, IN (800-342-5531).
- **LLM (Light & Life Magazine)** is the monthly magazine of the FMCUSA; in English & Spanish. Mailed to churches free of charge, it is also available online (www.fmcusa.org).
- **FMC materials:** www.fmcusa.org/bookstore
- **FMC World Missions:** www.fmwm.org
- **FMC Pastor Resources:** <https://fmcusa.org/pastoral>
- **FMC positions on issues, such as immigration, race, sexuality, etc.:** <http://new.fmcusa.org/conversations>

PCJC INFORMATION

- The PCJC website is www.pcjcfm.org.
- The church planting arm of the PCJC is RIZE – www.rizechurchplanting.com.

ARMINIANISM

Arminianism may be represented by the acronym FACTS:

Freed by Grace (to Believe)

Atonement for All

Conditional Election

Total Depravity

Security in Christ

These points broadly and roughly correspond to the historic Articles of Remonstrance (though they are not specifically a representation of them), which were composed in July 1610 by early Arminians and constitute the first formal summary of Arminian theology. Article numbers have been indicated for each point for convenient comparison. The points are presented here by logical order rather than acronym order to facilitate explanation most helpfully.

Total Depravity (Article 3)

- Humanity was created in the image of God, good and upright, but fell from its original sinless state through willful disobedience, leaving humanity sinful, separated from God, and under the sentence of divine condemnation.
- Total depravity does not mean that human beings are as bad as they could be, but that sin impacts every part of a person's being and that people now have a sinful nature with a natural inclination toward sin, making every human being fundamentally corrupt at heart.
- Therefore, human beings are not able to think, will, nor do anything good in and of themselves, including merit favor from God, save ourselves from the judgment and condemnation of God that we deserve for our sin, or even believe the gospel.
- If anyone is to be saved, God must take the initiative.

CALVINISM

The Calvinist position may be represented by the acronym TULIP:

Total Depravity

Unconditional Election

Limited Atonement

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of the Saints

These are derived from the Synod of Dort, a local synod in Holland, which convened in 1618-1619 to contradict and condemn the Articles of Remonstrance. Here is a brief explanation of each point, with corresponding article numbers from the Articles of Remonstrance indicated for convenient comparison:

Total Depravity (Article 3)

- Same as the Arminian points
- Though we do not differ on how to describe human depravity, Calvinists do also believe that this state requires that God first regenerate a sinner before he can believe in Christ, making him alive and giving him a new, holy nature. But regeneration does not merely enable the sinner to believe; it irresistibly causes the sinner to believe.

Conditional Election (Article 1)

- God has sovereignly decided to choose only those who have faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, for salvation and his eternal blessing.
- God has foreknown from eternity which individuals would believe in Christ.
- Among Arminians, there are two different views of election conditioned on faith:

1. *Individual election*: The classic view in which God individually chose each believer based upon His foreknowledge of each one's faith and so predestined each to eternal life
2. *Corporate election*: Election to salvation is primarily of the Church as a people and embraces individuals only in faith-union with Christ the Chosen One and as members of his people. Since the election of the individual derives from the election of Christ and the corporate people of God, individuals become elect when they believe and remain elect only as long as they believe.

(For more on corporate election, see

<http://evangelicalarminians.org/A-Concise-Summary-of-the-Corporate-View-of-Election-and-Predestination.>)

Atonement for All (Article 2)

- God loves the world and desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- Therefore, God gave his only Son to die for the sins of the whole world so as to provide forgiveness and salvation for all people.
- While God has provided for the salvation of all people by Christ's sacrificial and substitutionary death for all, the benefits of Christ's death are received by grace through faith and are only effective for those who believe.

Unconditional Election (Article 1)

- God chose some individuals unconditionally from eternity for eternal life according to his own good pleasure, completely apart from anything having to do with the person, including merit, good works, or foreseen faith.
- God withheld his mercy from the rest of humanity, ordaining them to dishonor and wrath for their sin.
- Thus, by the decree of God and for his glory, some people are unconditionally predestined to eternal life, and others are left (and so ordained) to eternal death because of their sin, making two specific and static groups of individuals that can never be changed. (Some Calvinists believe that God purposed to glorify his name by unconditionally choosing some individuals for eternal blessing and some individuals for eternal Hell, and that God ordained the Fall and decided to create the world to accomplish this goal.)

Limited Atonement (Article 2)

- Christ died only for those certain individuals whom God chose unconditionally from eternity for salvation, enduring the punishment for their sins in their place.
- Christ's death for those who have been unconditionally elected irresistibly brings about their salvation and everything necessary for it, including repentance and faith in Christ.

Freed by Grace {to Believe} (Article 4)

- Because of Total Depravity and Atonement for All (as described above), God calls all people everywhere to repent and believe the gospel, and graciously enables those who hear the gospel to respond to it positively in faith.
- God regenerates those who believe in Christ (faith logically precedes regeneration).
- God's saving grace is resistible, which is to say that he dispenses his calling, drawing, and convicting grace (which would bring us to salvation if responded to with faith) in such a way that we may reject it. Those who hear the gospel may either accept it by grace or reject it to their own eternal destruction.
- Apart from the realm of pleasing the Lord and doing spiritual good, people often have free will, which means that, with respect to an action, they can at least either do the action or refrain from doing it. People often have genuine choices and are therefore correspondingly able to make choices.
- God has ultimate and absolute free will. His choice to supernaturally free the will of sinners by his grace to believe in Christ is a matter of the exercise of his own free will and sovereignty.

Security in Christ (Article 5)

- Since salvation comes through faith in Christ, the security of our salvation continues by faith in Christ.
- Just as the Holy Spirit empowered us to believe in Christ, so he empowers us to continue believing in Christ.
- God protects our faith relationship with him from any outside force irresistibly snatching us away from Christ or our faith, and he preserves us in salvation as long as we trust in Christ.
- Arminians have differing views of whether Scripture teaches that believers can forsake faith in Christ and so perish, or whether God irresistibly keeps believers from forsaking their faith and therefore entering into eternal condemnation (as unbelievers).

Irresistible Grace (Article 4)

- Those whom God has unconditionally elected, and for whom Jesus died, God will draw irresistibly to faith in Christ by his grace through regeneration (making faith inevitable).
- When God brings elect sinners to Christ, he irresistibly causes them to be willing to come to Christ and to come to him in faith freely. (While we are presenting the Calvinist view objectively and typically without comment, the self-contradiction here is just too obvious to let pass: "*irresistibly causes* them to come *willingly* and *freely*?")
- While God calls all without distinction to faith in Christ (the general call), he only calls those he has chosen unconditionally in a way that cannot be resisted (the effectual call).
- Those God has not chosen will reject the gospel call of their own will and cannot do otherwise.

Perseverance of the Saints (Article 5)

- Those whom God has unconditionally elected and for whom Jesus has died and whom God has irresistibly drawn to faith in Christ will inevitably persevere in their faith and can neither totally nor finally fall away from Christ, because God will irresistibly cause them to persevere. Therefore, their blessed eternal destiny with God is secure.
- This perseverance is not based on the believer, who may waver and actually fall into serious sin for periods of time, but is rather based on the continued grace of God.
- Those who appear to be believers, but fall away from the faith and die without faith in Christ, demonstrate that they had not truly come to saving faith in the first place.