

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BY THE
TWENTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Adopted at Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
June 2017

The _____ District shall consider concurrence or non-concurrence (by **majority vote** of district assembly delegates) with action of the Twenty-ninth General Assembly held in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, 25-29 June 2017, amending the constitution of the Church of the Nazarene.

NOTE: New text is underlined; brackets [] indicate text to be deleted.

RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 7, Article of Faith VII, be amended as follows:

7. We believe that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight. We also believe that the human race's creation in Godlikeness included the ability to choose between right and wrong, and that thus human beings were made morally responsible; that through the fall of Adam they became depraved so that they cannot now turn and prepare themselves by their own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God. [But we also believe that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight.]

[We believe that all persons, though in the possession of the experience of regeneration and entire sanctification, may fall from grace and apostatize and, unless they repent of their sins, be hopelessly and eternally lost.]

REASONS:

1. This moves a definition of prevenient grace into the beginning of the Article of Faith entitled Prevenient Grace.
2. Adding the word "the" to the new second sentence adds clarity to the sentence structure.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 8, Article of Faith VIII, be amended as follows:

8. We believe [that repentance, which is a sincere and thorough change of the mind in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and a voluntary turning away from sin, is demanded of all who have by act or purpose become sinners against God.] [T]the Spirit of God gives to all who will repent the gracious help of penitence of heart and hope of mercy, that they may believe unto pardon and spiritual life. Repentance, which is a sincere and thorough change of the mind in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and a voluntary turning away from sin, is demanded of all who have by act or purpose become sinners against God.

We believe that all persons may fall from grace and apostatize and, unless they repent of their sins, be hopelessly and eternally lost. We believe that regenerate persons need not return to sin but may live in unbroken fellowship with God through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit who bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God.

REASONS:

1. The first paragraph makes more logical sense if the work of the Spirit of God precedes human repentance.
2. The second paragraph added above was taken from Article of Faith VII, and was slightly revised.
3. The subordinate clause in the second paragraph is not necessary for the subject under consideration.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 9.2, Article of Faith IX, be amended as follows:

9.2. We believe that adoption is that gracious act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer is constituted a [son] child of God.

FURTHER RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 9.3 (Article of Faith IX) be amended as follows:

9.3. We believe that justification, regeneration, and adoption are simultaneous in the experience of seekers after God and are [obtained upon the condition of] received by faith, preceded by repentance; and that to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

REASONS:

1. The rationale for such a change is not so much predicated on the sensitivities of perceived sexist language that excludes female believers who have been adopted by God into His family (although that perception may very well exist) so much as several modern English translations refer to “child [or children] of God” when specifically referring to the doctrine of adoption.
2. To cite two biblical examples:
 - a) “So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God’s very own children, adopted into his family—calling him ‘Father, dear Father.’” (Romans 8:15, New Living Translation)
 - b) “He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will.” (Ephesians 1:5, New Revised Standard Version)
3. The other reason for the change is for the sake of continuity as the phrase, “a son of God,” to refer to believers appears nowhere else in the Articles of Faith.
4. Clarify and simplify the language.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 12, Article of Faith XII, be amended as follows:

XII. Baptism

12. We believe that Christian baptism, commanded by our Lord, is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement [of Jesus Christ, to be administered to believers and declarative of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness.

Baptism being a symbol of the new covenant, young children may be baptized, upon request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training.

Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the choice of the applicant.] and incorporation into the Body of Christ. Baptism is a means of grace proclaiming faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. It is to be administered to believers indicating their full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness. As participants in the new covenant, young children and the morally innocent may be baptized upon request of parents or guardians. The church shall give assurance of Christian training. Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

REASONS:

1. This change clarifies the Wesleyan understanding of the sacraments as outward signs for an inward grace.
2. This change is consistent with other *Manual* paragraphs that identify sacraments as means of grace, namely, *Manual* paragraphs 10.1, 21.1, 514.9, 801, and 805.
3. This change places emphasis on the proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior for believers' baptism.
4. This change is consistent with the language of *Manual* paragraph 800.2 The Baptism of Infants or Young Children.
5. This change includes the morally innocent among participants in the new covenant and welcomes their baptism into the community of faith.
6. This change is consistent with our Methodist heritage, John Wesley's understanding, and Wesleyan denominational partners.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 13, Article of Faith XIII, be amended as follows:

XIII. The Lord's Supper.

13. We believe that the [Memorial and Communion Supper instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is essentially a New Testament sacrament, declarative of His sacrificial death, through the merits of which believers have life and salvation and promise of all spiritual blessings in Christ. It is distinctively for those who are prepared for reverent appreciation of its significance, and by it they show forth the Lord's death till He come again. It being the Communion feast, only those who have faith in Christ and love for the saints should be called to participate therein.] Communion Supper instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a sacrament, proclaiming His life, sufferings, sacrificial death, resurrection, and the hope of His coming again. The Lord's Supper is a means of grace in which Christ is present by the Spirit. All are invited to participate by faith in Christ and be renewed in life, salvation, and in unity as the Church. All are to come in reverent appreciation of its significance, and by it show forth the Lord's death until He comes. Those who have faith in Christ and love for the saints are invited by Christ to participate as often as possible.

REASONS:

1. The Article of Faith in its present form understates the scope of Christ's incarnation. This change draws attention to Christ's life, sufferings, resurrection, and the hope of His coming again.
2. The addition of the word "sufferings" brings this Article of Faith more in line with Article of Faith VI ("Atonement").
3. The addition of the words "resurrection" and "hope of his coming again" points to Christ's victory over death and sin as evidenced in His resurrection and our hope of His return.
4. This change clarifies the Wesleyan understanding of the sacraments as outward signs for an inward grace.

5. This change is consistent with other Manual paragraphs that identify sacraments as means of grace, namely, Manual paragraphs 10.1, 21.1, 514.9, 801, and 805.
6. The addition of the phrase “Christ is present by the Spirit” states clearly our Wesleyan understanding of the presence of Christ in this sacrament.
7. Attention is given to some of the benefits of this means of grace with the addition of the phrase “renewed in life, salvation, and in unity as the Church.”
8. Reference to the frequency of participating in this ritual with the words “as often as possible” speaks to the significance of this means of grace. The reference to a quarterly frequency in Manual paragraph 514.9 is not present for theological reasons. Rather, in the early days of Methodism, a shortage of ordained ministers qualified to administer the sacraments necessitated traveling in circuits to lead this ritual. These traveling ministers sought to visit each local congregation at least once per quarter.
9. The word “memorial” is removed due to its Zwinglian implication which regards the ritual as primarily a commemoration of Christ’s death and a proclamation of the benefits of Christ, much like a sermon.
10. These changes are consistent with our Methodist heritage, John Wesley’s understanding, and Wesleyan denominational partners.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 14, Article of Faith XIV, be amended as follows:

14. We believe in the [Bible] biblical doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. We also believe God heals through the means of medical science.

REASON:

1. This clarifies the language.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 24, be amended as follows:

Article III. District Assemblies

24. The General Assembly shall organize the membership of the church into district assemblies, giving such lay and ministerial representation therein as the General Assembly may deem fair and just, and shall determine qualifications of such representatives, provided, however, that all assigned ordained ministers shall be members thereof. [The General Boundaries Committee shall fix the boundaries of assembly districts.] The General Assembly shall also define the powers and duties of district assemblies. (200–205.6)

REASONS:

1. This would harmonize the language with revisions that were made to *Manual* paragraph 200 by the 2013 General Assembly.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 25, be amended as follows:

25. How Composed. The General Assembly shall be composed of ministerial and lay delegates in equal numbers, elected thereto by district assemblies of the Church of the Nazarene; such ex-officio members as the General Assembly shall from time to time direct; and such delegates [of districts under the administration of the Global Mission Committee of the Church of the Nazarene] as may be provided for by the General Assembly.

REASON:

1. Districts “under the administration of the Global Mission Committee of the Church of the Nazarene” now applies to all districts since USA/Canada is now part of Global Mission, so this phrase is not needed.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 25.3, be amended as follows:

25.3. Quorum. [When the General Assembly is in session, a majority of the whole number of delegates elected thereto shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.] The quorum at any meeting of the General Assembly shall be a majority of the voting delegates who have been registered on site with the General Assembly Credentials Committee. If a quorum has once been obtained, a smaller number may approve the unapproved minutes and adjourn.

REASONS:

1. It has frequently been a challenge to establish and maintain a quorum at previous general assemblies, which delays the business until a quorum is satisfied.
2. If a quorum is not maintained, the only business that may be conducted is the approval of minutes and the matter of adjournment.
3. This adds language to allow that the quorum would be determined by the total number of registered delegates, who are actually present at the General Assembly.
4. The usual quorum for meetings of conventions or assemblies of delegates is a majority of the delegates registered in attendance, and quorum should not be based on the number elected by constituencies.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 25.4, be amended as follows:

25.4. General Superintendents. The General Assembly shall elect by ballot from among the elders of the Church of the Nazarene [as many general superintendents as it may deem necessary,] six general superintendents, who shall constitute the Board of General Superintendents. Any vacancy in the office of general superintendent in the interim of General Assemblies shall be filled by a two-thirds vote of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene. (305.2, 316)

REASONS:

1. This will facilitate the election process of general superintendents by clarifying ahead of time prior to each GA the number of GSs to be elected.
2. In light of the study on the Future of the General Superintendency, it was determined that six GSs (as opposed to one, three, or more than six) is a more advantageous number for mission fulfillment and jurisdictional effectiveness.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 26, be amended as follows:

Amendments

26. The provisions of this Constitution may be repealed or amended when concurred in by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly members present and voting, and when ratified by not less than two-thirds of all the Phase 3 and Phase 2 district assemblies of the Church of the Nazarene. A [majority] two-thirds vote is required on each constitutional amendment item by any Phase 3 or Phase 2 district assembly. Either the General Assembly or any Phase 3 or Phase 2 district assembly may take the initiative in the matter of proposing such amendments. As soon as such amendments shall have been adopted as herein provided, the result of the vote shall be announced by the Board of General Superintendents, whereupon such amendments shall have full force and effect.

REASON:

1. Amendments to paragraphs in the Constitution of the *Manual* are serious and must require a larger number of delegates to support any changes that are approved for those paragraphs.

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RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraph 27, be amended as follows:

27. Resolutions amending the Articles of Faith (paragraphs 1–16.2) shall be referred by the General Assembly to the Board of General Superintendents for review by a study committee, including theologians and ordained ministers, appointed by the Board of General Superintendents that reflects the global nature of our Church. The committee shall report, with any recommendations or resolutions, to the Board of General Superintendents, who shall report to the subsequent General Assembly.

REASON:

1. This study committee is accountable to the Board of General Superintendents.