CONSTITUTION

Membership of the Evangelical Connexion of the Free Church of England shall be for all Christians who agree with and abide by its Declaration of Principles.

ARTICLE I

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The Free Church of England, otherwise called The Reformed Episcopal Church, which is a branch of the Holy Catholic Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, united by Faith to Him, who is the Head over all things to the Church which is His Body, and recognising the essential unity of all who, by a like Faith, are united to the one Divine and Common Head, doth make declaration of its Principles as follows:-

1. The Free Church of England, otherwise call The Reformed Episcopal Church, holding "the faith once delivered to the saints," declares its belief in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, and the sole Rule of Faith and Practice; in the creed commonly called "The Apostles' Creed"; in the Divine Institution of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and in the Doctrines of grace substantially as they are set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

2. This church recognises and adheres to Episcopacy, not as of Divine right, but as a very ancient and desirable form of Church polity.

3. This Church, retaining a Liturgy which shall not be repressive of freedom in prayer, accepts the Book of Common Prayer, as it was received, prepared, and recommended for use by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, A.D. 1785, reserving full liberty to alter, abridge, enlarge, and amend the same, as may seem most conducive to the edification of the people, "provided that the substance of the faith be kept entire".

4. This Church CONDEMNS and REJECTS the following erroneous and strange doctrines as contrary to God's word:-

First that the Church of Christ exists only in one order or form of ecclesiastical polity:

Second, that Christian ministers are 'priests' in another sense than that in which all believers are a 'royal priesthood':

Third, that the Lord's Table is an altar on which the oblation of the Body and Blood of Christ is offered anew to the Father:

Fourth, that the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is a presence in the elements of Bread and Wine:

Fifth, that regeneration is inseparably connected with Baptism.

In accordance with the liberty given in Article 3 of the above Declaration of Principles, this Church accepts the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, with such revisions as shall exclude sacerdotal doctrines and practices.

This Church, as a Reformed and Protestant Church, doth hereby reaffirm its constant witness against all those innovations in doctrines and worship, whereby the primitive faith hath been from time to time defaced or overlaid, and which at the Reformation were disowned and rejected.

This Church will maintain communion with all Christian Churches and will set forward, so far as in it lieth, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people.

"Wherever the Evangelical Connexion is read it refers to the Evangelical Connexion of the Free Church of England otherwise called the Reformed Episcopal Church in the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland". Thereafter only the Evangelical Connexion will be used.

ARTICLE II

POWERS OF LOCAL CHURCH IN THE EVENT OF THE REDUCTION OF CONVOCATION

"Whenever the said Evangelical Connexion shall be reduced under the number of ten and continue so reduced for three yearly Convocations successively or whenever the members shall decline or neglect to meet together annually during the space of three years then the said Convocation shall be extinguished and all the aforesaid powers privileges and advantages shall cease and all such powers and authorities in any such Chapel or Place of the Evangelical Connexion shall thenceforth vest in the Management Trustees for the time being of the said Chapels and Places respectively and their successors for ever upon trust that they and the survivors of them and the trustees for the time being shall and do permit such person or persons as they shall think fit to be the Minister or Ministers of God's Holy Word and Ordinances in the said Chapels and Places of the Evangelical Connexion and have the use and enjoyment thereof for such time and in such manner as to the said trustees for the time being shall seem proper. Provided that no person whoever shall minister in any of the said Chapels or Places as last aforesaid or shall be permitted to continue in such who shall not subscribe and assent and continue his Subscription and assent to the said thirty-nine articles and declaration of principles or who shall preach teach or promulgate therein any Creed Doctrine or Matter contrary to the plain common intent and meaning of the said articles or any of them..

POWERS OF CONVOCATION

The Evangelical Connexion of the Free Church of England, otherwise called the Reformed Episcopal Church, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, deriving its authority from Christ, Who is the Head over all things to the Church, declares that the Convocation of the said Church, consisting of the Presiding Bishop, Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, together with the representatives of the Laity, shall in all matters therein, have chief legislative power and jurisdiction.

As to any matter or thing concerning the conduct and discipline of the Congregations, Ministers of this Church, in respect of which other canonical oversight or direction shall not at the time have been provided, the Council as hereinafter defined, shall have an *ad interim* power and jurisdiction until the next Annual meeting of Convocation.

Convocation shall appoint at its Annual Meeting a Council of its members not less than five (together with of the Bishops and Convocation Secretary, who shall be ex-officio members of such Council) and delegate to Council administrative powers and functions as Convocation shall from time to time resolve. The Council thus appointed shall hold office until the next succeeding Annual Meeting of Convocation.

The Convocation shall appoint annually such standing Committees as it may deem necessary

ARTICLE III

MEETINGS OF CONVOCATION

The Annual Convocation shall meet in such place as shall be determined by Convocation itself, and in case there should be any good and sufficient cause to alter the place or time fixed, the Council shall have power to appoint another convenient place and time for the holding of such Convocation.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

A special Meeting of Convocation may be convened at any convenient time by the Presiding Bishop, or by the General Secretary with the consent of the Presiding Bishop. A special

Meeting thereof shall be convened by the General Secretary, on the written request of at least six members of Convocation, specifying the object or objects of such special Meeting, and if such special Meeting be not convened by the said General Secretary within fourteen days from the date of requisition, then the requisitionists, or any other Members amounting to the required number, may themselves convene such special Meeting.

QUORUM AND NOTICE

Before Convocation shall proceed to business, ten members must be present (of whom three at least shall be Presbyters) except that five members shall be sufficient to adjourn. In all business of Convocation freedom of debate shall be allowed.

Not less than fourteen days previous notice in writing shall be given of any Ordinary or Special Meeting, and notice through the Minister of the Church shall be deemed to be valid.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP OF CONVOCATION

The Convocation shall consist of all the Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons of this Church, in good standing, together with the Churchwardens and two lay delegates from each duly organized Congregation of the Evangelical Connexion.

Before taking his seat, every person so elected, shall sign a declaration in the following form in a book to be kept for that purpose by the proper officer of Convocation.

Attendees - "I M _____ M _____ , do solemnly make the following declaration:-

NB I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to Salvation, and regretting the historic division which has occurred in the Free Church of England and praying for her return to biblical faith and practice, - I do solemnly make the following declaration:

"I believe the Doctrine of the said Church, as set forth in the Declaration of Principles thereof, to be agreeable to the Word of God, and in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments.
And further, I will pay true and canonical obedience to the lawful authorities of the said Church as far as Scripture permits."

VOTES

The votes of all attending Convocation shall be equal in value, and a majority of those present shall be sufficient to pass a Resolution thereof, unless there is a request for the vote of ministers, wardens and delegates only.

ARTICLE V

CLERGY

Guided by the New Testament and the Evangelical Connexion declares the Episcopate to be an office proceeding from the Presbyterate:- *primus inter pares* and not an order in succession to the Apostolate, and maintains the ecclesiastical parity of Presbyters.

For the due and solemn consecration of Bishops, the ordination of Presbyters and the ordering of Deacons, this Church will use the Forms approved by Convocation or sanctioned by the Bishop or his representative.

ARTICLE VI

BISHOPS

The Bishops of this Church shall be chosen or received agreeably to such rules as shall be fixed by Convocation, and their jurisdiction, powers, and duties shall be such as Convocation itself shall define from time to time.

No Bishop of this Church may perform any act of the Episcopal office in any Church, or for any

Congregation, outside the jurisdiction of Convocation, without the consent of the Presiding Bishop and Council, if necessary obtained by phone or letter/email.

ARTICLE VII

DIOCESES

This Church shall have such Dioceses as Convocation shall decide, and each Diocese, with the approval of Convocation or the Presiding Bishop, may form a Synod under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of such Diocese. Each Synod shall be composed of the Clergy and Ministers of this Church within its geographical limits together with the Churchwardens, and two lay delegates from each organised Congregation, and each Synod shall have absolute independence in all matters whatsoever within the limits of its jurisdiction, except where otherwise ordered in this Constitution, and each Synod shall have power to frame bye-laws for its own Government - provided always, that no such bye-laws made or operating in opposition to the Declaration of Principles, or to this Constitution, shall be good or valid to any intent or purpose whatsoever; and provided also, that any Resolution or Injunction of a Synod may be appealed against to Convocation, whose decision shall be final.

ARTICLE VIII

CONGREGATIONS

Any Congregation not now represented, may be admitted to union with this Church, under such Conditions as Convocation may determine from time to time.

ARTICLE IX

TRUSTS

All funds, other than those for purely Congregational purposes, shall be held in Trust by Trustees who shall be Enrolled Members of the Evangelical Connexion, and no other person shall be appointed a Trustee of any Freehold, Leasehold, or other property settled upon, or in Trust for, the said Church.

All monies, and other property held in trust for the use of the said Church, shall be disposed of, and applied (except the Declaration of any Trust shall express to the contrary) in such manner and way as Convocation by vote at its meeting shall direct.

Properties already held, in Trust shall be administered according to the provisions of the said Trusts, by the Free Church of England Central Trust.

New Properties, which it is proposed to Vest in Trustees for the uses and purposes of the Free Church of England, otherwise called the Reformed Episcopal Church, shall be placed in Trust under such Model Trust Deed as shall be approved and adopted by Convocation.

TRUSTEES

If any person appointed a Trustee shall cease to be a Member and Communicant of the said Free Church of England, otherwise called the Reformed Episcopal Church, such person shall cease to be a Trustee, and any Trustee refusing to obey a Resolution or Injunction of Convocation (of which a Certificate signed by the Bishop Presiding, and the Secretary of the Convocation concerned, shall be sufficient evidence) shall thereby be considered as resigning his or her Trusteeship, and shall cease to be a Trustee, and such Trustee shall convey, assign, and transfer the Trust estate and premises so vested in him or her, unto other Trustees or Trustee thereof, duly nominated or appointed by Convocation.

ARTICLE X

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The Book of Common Prayer of the Evangelical Connexion, with its Rubrics, Administration of the Sacraments, and other Services of this Church, Articles of Religion, and Forms for ordaining and consecrating Bishops and other ministers, as revised in 1956, shall be used in this Church as a guide to liturgy.

No alteration or addition shall be made in this Book of Common Prayer, or other Offices of this

Church, or the Articles of Religion, unless the same shall be approved by a Vote of three-fourths of those present and voting in one Convocation, and ratified by a similar majority in the ensuing Annual Convocation, provided that there shall be not less than three calendar months between the two meetings, and that such alterations do not contravene the Declaration of Principles.

ARTICLE XI

ORNAMENTS

No decorations, ornaments, vestments, postures, or ceremonies calculated to teach either directly or symbolically that the Christian Ministry possesses a sacerdotal character, or that the Lord's Supper is a Sacrifice, shall be allowed in the worship of this Church: nor shall any altar or Communion table constructed in the form of an altar, nor any Cross, Crucifix, candles, molten, painted or graven images or images be introduced or used; nor shall flowers, or vases, be placed on, or apparently upon the Lord's Table.

ARTICLE XII

DISCIPLINE

Ministers of this Church shall be liable to trial and discipline for any of the following offences, viz:-

1. Any offence for which a lay Communicant would be amenable to discipline.
2. Holding or teaching any doctrine condemned by this Church, or contrary to its doctrinal standards.
3. Refusing to comply with the terms of the declarations respectively made by them in accordance with the provisions hereinbefore contained in this Constitution, and refusing to obey the Regulations, Laws and Ordinances of this Church.

Any Enrolled Member of this Church shall be liable to trial and discipline for any of the following offences:

1. Denial of the Faith.
2. A walk or conversation unworthy of a Christian Profession.
3. If a Church Officer, refusing to comply with the Canons and Regulations of this Church, or to submit himself to the lawful authorities of this Church.

ARTICLE XIII

COURT OF DISCIPLINE

The Court for the trial of a Bishop, or other Minister, shall consist of an equal number of Presbyters and Laymen to be chosen from the Members of Convocation, excluding all relatives or connections of the accused or accusers.

The Presiding Bishop shall be the President of the Court, unless the party accused be the Presiding Bishop, in which case Convocation, or Council, shall appoint some other Bishop or Presbyter to preside.

The Court, for the trial of any Officer, shall be the Presiding Bishop, and the Clerical members of the Council, together with one or more laymen, excluding all relatives and connections of the accused or accusers.

The Court for the trial of a lay Communicant shall consist of the Incumbent and three Communicants of the Congregation to which such Communicant shall belong. The Incumbent shall preside, unless he be related to the accused or accusers; in which case, the Presiding Bishop shall appoint some other Minister of this Church to preside, excluding all relatives and connections of the accused or accusers.

Rules or procedure shall be decided by Convocation and shall be set forth in the Canons of the Church. Nothing may be done contrary to Article 2 which states that Convocation shall in all matters therein have chief legislative power and jurisdiction.

ARTICLE XIV

CONSTITUTION

The Name of this Church, and this Constitution shall be unalterable, unless the proposed alteration shall be approved by a Vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting in one Convocation, and ratified by a similar vote in the ensuing Annual Convocation, provided that there shall be not less than three calendar months between the two meetings.

ARTICLE XV

CANONS

Convocation shall adopt and publish Canons for the government and administration of this Church. No Canon shall be valid or binding, save, or in so far only, as it is consistent with this Constitution, and no Canon shall be altered or rescinded nor shall any new Canon be enacted, save by a majority of three-fourths of the Members present and voting in one Convocation, and ratified by a similar vote at the ensuing Annual Convocation, provided that there shall be not less than three calendar months between the two meetings.

ARTICLE XVI

PRINCIPLES

The Principles of this Church, as set out in the Declaration of Principles recited in Article I of this Constitution, are, and shall be, unalterable.

CANONS OF CONVOCATION:
ORGANISATION AND DUTIES

CANON 1

THE PRESIDENT OF CONVOCATION

The Presiding Bishop (of this Church, or in his absence, his representative specially authorized) shall preside at all meetings of Convocation. Without modifying the Presiding Bishop's Presidency of any meeting, he may arrange who is to chair each meeting. In case of death, resignation, or incapacity of the said Presiding Bishop, or in his absence without having appointed a representative for the purpose, Convocation shall appoint some Bishop or Presbyter present to preside. The President shall have an ordinary and a casting vote.

CANON 2

POWERS OF CONVOCATION TO AMEND CANONS

The Constitution and Canons Ecclesiastical, as herein set forth, shall be unalterable, unless any proposed alteration, addition, or rescission of the same, shall be approved by a majority of three-fourths of the Members present and voting, at one Meeting of Convocation, and ratified by a similar majority at the ensuing Annual Convocation, provided that there shall be not less than three calendar months between the two meetings.

The Declaration of Principles contained in Article I of the hereinbefore recited Constitution shall be unalterable.

CANON 3

POWERS OF CONVOCATIONS TO MAKE BYE-LAWS, etc.

The Convocation may make from time to time, such Bye-Laws, Orders, Regulations, and Injunctions as it may deem necessary; and may amend, annul, and make void, any Bye-laws, Orders, Regulations or Injunctions, provided always, that no Bye-law, Order, Regulation or Injunction, made or operating in opposition to the Declaration of Principles as set forth in Article I of the Constitution, or to the Constitution and Canons themselves, shall be good or valid to any intent or purpose whatsoever; and provided further, that no Bye-Law, Order, Regulation or Injunction shall be made, amended, annulled or made void, as aforesaid, except by a majority of at least three- fourths of the Members of Convocation present and voting.

CANON 4

ORDERS OF CONVOCATION TO BE BINDING ON ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

Every Bye-law, Order, Regulation and Injunction made by Convocation on any subject whatsoever connected with the Church, shall be binding on all the Members of the Church, and on all the Congregations connected therewith, unless specially expressed to the contrary.

CANON 5

RECORD TO BE KEPT OF ALL PROCEEDINGS

All Canons, Bye-laws, Regulations, Resolutions, Injunctions, and Acts whatsoever of Convocation shall be entered in the Minute Book kept for that purpose, and when entered, shall be confirmed as correct at the next meeting of Convocation.

The Minutes shall then be signed by the President, and the Secretary and when so entered and signed shall be taken and received to be, and shall be, the Acts of Convocation, and such Entry and Signature as aforesaid, shall be taken and received to be, and shall be, evidence of all and every such acts of Convocation.

CANON 6

POWER TO EXPEL MEMBERS

The Convocation may expel any Member thereof who shall be proved to maintain doctrines contrary to the Declaration of Principles and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of this Church, or who shall be proved to be guilty of immoral conduct, or who shall refuse to obey the orders of Convocation, or to conform to the usages of this Church:

Provided, that such expulsion as aforesaid shall be by Resolution, upon the Report of the Court of Discipline, and after due notice of the intention to move such expulsion has been given to the party accused:

Provided also, that Convocation at any sitting may suspend any Member thereof for the remainder of such sitting, or for any further period not exceeding twelve months.

During such period, the Member so suspended shall not be allowed to exercise his rights and privileges as a Member of Convocation.

CANON 7

THE SECRETARY AND HIS DUTIES

The Secretary of Convocation shall be elected annually, and shall have power to appoint, with the approval of Convocation, such Assistants as may be necessary.

He shall perform the duties which usually appertain to his office, and such other duties as Convocation may assign to him, from time to time.

CANON 8

THE REGISTRAR AND HIS DUTIES

The Registrar of Convocation shall be elected annually thereby. He shall take charge of, preserve and file, all Papers, Documents, Reports, etc., relating to the business of Convocation, and which have been handed to him for safe keeping on behalf of Convocation.

He shall keep a Record of the Consecration of Bishops in this Church, designating therein the time and place of the same, with the names of the Bishops and Presbyters of this, and of other Churches, who officiate at such Consecration.

He shall keep also, a Register of all the Ministers of this Church, whose names shall be delivered to him in the following manner, that is to say:

Every Bishop of this Church, or where there is no Bishop, the Council shall deliver, or cause to be delivered to the said Registrar, at least fourteen days before the Meeting of each Annual Convocation, a List of the names of all the Ministers of this Church, within the respective jurisdictions, including the names of their respective charges, or of their stations in any Colleges or other Seminaries of Learning, or, in regard to those who have not any charges or other stations, their places of residence only; and also particulars of time and place of all such Ministers who have been ordained or received from other Churches, or who have resigned or died, or may have been subjected to discipline since the preceding Convocation.

CANON 9

THE TREASURER AND HIS DUTIES

The Treasurer, who shall be a Layman, shall be elected annually by Convocation.

He shall *receive* all monies raised or contributed under the authority of Convocation, and of which the collection and disbursement shall not be regulated otherwise, and shall disburse the same under the directions of Convocation, or of the Council acting on behalf of Convocation.

His accounts, duly audited by an Accountant who is qualified to be an auditor under Section 161 of the Companies Act 1948 or a firm of Accountants which is so qualified, appointed by the Secretary of Convocation, with the approval of the Bishop Presiding Bishop, shall be rendered annually to Convocation, and shall be subject to its authority.

CANON 10

POWER TO FILL UP VACANCIES

In the case of any vacancy occurring in the Office, or Offices of Secretary, Registrar, or Treasurer, the Council shall appoint some suitable person, or persons, to serve in such Office, or Offices, until the ensuing Annual Convocation.

CANON 11

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL

At its Annual Meeting, Convocation shall appoint a Council which shall act until the ensuing Annual Convocation:-

(1) Council which shall consist of:

(a) The Bishops, the Secretary, who shall be ex-officio and

(b) Not less than five elected members of whom there shall be an equal number of Presbyters and Laymen.

The Secretary of Convocation shall be the Secretary of Council. Meetings of Council shall be held twice in every year in such places as Council itself shall direct or as Convocation shall appoint provided always that the Bishop Presiding Bishop may convene additional meetings at his discretion.

Council shall exercise *ad interim* administrative authority until the next ensuing Annual Convocation and one third shall form a quorum.

(2) The Council may appoint Standing Committees at its discretion.

CANON 12

QUORUM OF COMMITTEES

In the meetings of any of the above Committees, except Council, not less than one-third of the Members shall constitute a Quorum for the transaction of business.

CANON 13

POWER TO FULL UP VACANCIES ON COMMITTEES

In the case of death, incapacity, or refusal to act, of any person or persons appointed to serve on any Committee, the Council shall appoint some other person, or persons, to act on such Committee.

CANON 14

BISHOPS AND SECRETARY TO BE MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES

The Bishops of this Church, and the Secretary of Convocation, shall be ex- officio Members of all Committees.

CANON 15

EXPENSES OF CONVOCATION

The expenses of Convocation, and of the Officers thereof, shall be defrayed by payments out of a Fund, which shall be raised by such means, as Convocation may authorise and direct from time to time.

OF DIOCESAN SYNODS

CANON 16

ORGANISATION

This Church shall have such Dioceses as Convocation shall decide, and each Diocese shall form a Diocesan Synod.

The Diocesan Synod shall be composed of the Bishop of the Diocese, together with all the

Ministers of this Church, ecclesiastically resident within the limits of the Diocese, and duly licensed to officiate therein, and of the Churchwardens and two Lay Delegates, from each Congregation within the Diocese.

CANON 17

POWERS OF DIOCESAN SYNODS

Each Diocesan Synod shall have absolute independence in all matters whatsoever within the limits of its jurisdiction, except where otherwise ordered in these Canons; provided also that any Resolution or Injunction of a Diocesan Synod, may be appealed against to Convocation, whose decision shall be final.

Six Members (exclusive of Ex-officio Members) shall form a Quorum for the transaction of business.

The Bishop and the Secretary shall be ex-officio Members of the Synod, and of all Committees of such Diocese.

OF THE MINISTRY, DOCTRINE, AND WORSHIP

A OF BISHOPS

CANON 18

THE PRESIDING BISHOP

The Presiding Bishop shall be chosen annually from among the Bishops, by Convocation, and he shall continue in office until the close of the meeting at which his successor is elected, provided that such Annual election shall not preclude the re-election of the same Bishop.

The Presiding Bishop shall be, ex-officio, the President of Convocation, and Chairman of all its Committees, without prejudice to his liberty to appoint a Chairman as he deems fit and shall have jurisdiction over all congregations and Ministers for which other Canonical oversight has not been provided.

CANON 19

ELECTION OF BISHOPS BY CONVOCATION

Any duly ordained Presbyter of this Church in good standing and who normally shall not be in extra parochial employment may be elected as a Bishop, by Convocation, at any Meeting thereof; provided that one month's notice of the intention to propose the election of a Bishop shall have been given by the Secretary of Convocation, to every Member thereof at his last recorded address.

In the event of decease of the Bishop, or upon his retirement, or if for any reasons listed in Canon 36 he shall cease to act as a Bishop of this Church, the steps necessary to implement the above paragraph may be referred to any meeting of Council preceding the next Convocation, which Council meeting shall decide whether to proceed to an election or not at the following Convocation.

The Jurisdiction powers and duties of a Bishop-elect shall be such as Convocation may assign or define.

CANON 20

ELECTION OF BISHOPS BY DIOCESAN SYNODS

Any Diocese duly organised according to Canon 18 may elect as the said Bishop of the said Diocese, any Bishop, or any duly ordained Presbyter of this Church; but such Bishop-elect shall not be consecrated, or be qualified to exercise jurisdiction until his election by the Diocese has been confirmed by Convocation. In the event of such election not being confirmed, the Diocesan Synod shall proceed to another election.

CANON 21

MODE OF ELECTING BISHOPS

Prior to an election, it is required that Convocation be reminded of the biblical position regarding episcopacy. In the Scriptures all ordained Ministers are Presbyter-Bishops and there are not three orders, Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons. Our episcopacy represents a supervisory function and 'a pastor to the pastors' rather than an order.
At any Meeting of Convocation, or Diocesan Synod, at which it is proposed to elect a Bishop, there shall first be prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Presbyters in good standing who are not prepared in any circumstances to function as Bishop even if elected, should indicate as much to the Presiding Bishop or General Council prior to the meeting of Convocation for the election of a Bishop or Bishops.

NOMINATION VOTE

The Clerical and Lay Members present shall vote by voting papers, each for one or more persons, (not exceeding three) being Presbyters of good standing in this Church, and not less than thirty years of age and not more than seventy five, without special leave of Convocation.
No person shall be entitled to vote for himself.

The Bishops shall vote with the Presbyters, and in this instance, the Deacons shall vote with the Laymen.

The voting papers shall then be examined, and the names of the two persons who shall have obtained the largest number of votes of the Members of each Order, present and voting, shall be placed on a Select List, and it shall be in the power of Convocation or the Diocesan Synod, by a majority of both Order, to add names to this Select List.

Any Presbyter whose name shall be placed on the Select List and who shall at the time be absent from the Meeting for any reason shall be deemed to have made disclosure of ineligibility by virtue of Canon 21 unless he shall have given notice in writing to the presiding Bishop in the fourteen days immediately preceding the election that he is not in secular avocation or occupation and such written notice shall thereupon be placed before the Convocation or Diocesan Synod by the presiding Bishop.

THE VOTE

The Members of each Order, shall then proceed to vote on the names so selected, each Member voting for one Member only; and such voting shall be repeated, if necessary, until one person shall have obtained a clear majority of the votes of the Members of each Order, present and voting.

CONFIRMATORY VOTE

The name of that one person shall then be proposed to Convocation or the Diocesan Synod; and if two-thirds of the Members present signify their consent to the election of that person, such consent to be given by ballot, he shall be declared elected.

If the required proportion of Members consenting be not obtained, it shall be held that no election is made, and no further action shall be taken at that Convocation or Diocesan Synod in relation to the election of a Bishop.

Convocation votes for one Bishop at a time; if another Presbyter is to be elected, there will need to be a further Vote and Confirmatory Vote.

CANON 22

CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION

Before his consecration or admission to Office, every Bishop-elect shall produce to the Presiding Bishop, a Certificate of his election, signed by the Secretary of Convocation, or of the Diocesan Synod at which he was elected; and in the case of a Diocesan Election he shall also produce a Certificate of the confirmation of such election, by Convocation.

CANON 23

CERTIFICATE OF GOOD LIFE AND LEARNING

Before his consecration, the elected Bishop shall present to the Presiding Bishop, a Certificate signed by a clear majority of Convocation or Synod electing, in the following form: We, whose names are hereunder written, are fully aware how important it is that the office of a Bishop should not be conferred unworthily, and fully persuaded that it is our duty to bear testimony on this solemn occasion, without partiality or fear, do, testify in the presence of Almighty God, that the Reverend A.B., Bishop-elect, is not, as far as we are informed, justly liable to evil report, either for error in the faith or for inconsistency of life, and that we do not know or believe that there is any impediment on account of which he ought not to be consecrated to that office.

We do, moreover, jointly and individually declare that we do in our conscience believe him to be of such soundness in the faith and of such virtuous and pure manners and godly conversation, that he is apt and meet to exercise the office of a Bishop, to the honour of God and the edifying of His Church and to be a wholesome example to the flock of Christ.

This certificate, together with the certificate of election, shall be publicly read at the beginning of the service of Consecration.

CANON 24

CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS

After the Election or Confirmation of the Election of a Bishop by Convocation, the Presiding Bishop, or some other Bishop designated by him, together with such other Bishops as he may invite, shall proceed to the Consecration of the Bishop-elect, according to the Form established by the Connexion, and in such place, and at such time as the Presiding Bishop shall direct.

CANON 25

BISHOPS OF OTHER CHURCHES ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION IN THE CONNEXION

Any duly consecrated Bishop of another Church, and of good standing in such Church, may be elected a Bishop of the Connexion by the Vote of Convocation, or as the Bishop of a Diocese, by the Vote of the Synod thereof, subject to the provisions of Canon 21, but no such Bishop shall be permitted to assume the duties of the office for which he may be thus elected, until he shall have been duly received into this Church by the proper authorities thereof, and shall have signed the Declaration contained in Article IV, of the hereinbefore recited Constitution.

CANON 26

THE BISHOP TO RESIDE IN HIS DIOCESE

Every Bishop of the Connexion shall reside within his own Diocese or Jurisdiction, unless excused from so doing by a Vote of Convocation.

CANON 27

THE BISHOP'S RIGHT OF ENTRY INTO ANY CHURCH

A Bishop of the Connexion shall not have the right of entry into any church within his Jurisdiction without the local church's permission. In the event of difficulties in the local church, the Bishop may, with the approval of Council, visit the church for the purposes of Preaching, Enquiry, the rectifying of any abuse, Counsel in any difficulty, or performing such other duties as pertain to his Office, and shall take any action that may be necessary in the interests of the Minister or Congregation; such action to be reported to the ensuing Meeting of the Diocesan Synod or of Convocation. Local churches should be encouraged to invite the Bishop to preach and to help resolve issues.

CANON 28

TRIENNIAL VISITATION

The Presiding Bishop of the Connexion may visit every church within his Jurisdiction at least once in three years, and shall address Pastoral Letters to the people of the Connexion at his discretion.

CANON 29

THE BISHOP TO REPORT HIS PROCEEDINGS

At each Annual Meeting of Convocation, as well as to his own Diocesan Synod, every Bishop shall report his proceedings, and the state and condition of the Congregations under his Episcopal care.

CANON 30

FEES FOR EPISCOPAL DUTIES

The Fees as referred in Canon 91 in addition to the travelling and out-of- pocket expenses of the Bishop, and of any person or persons assisting him, or acting under him in the performance of any Episcopal function, or for the issue of Letter of Orders, Licences, etc., or for Visitations or Confirmations, etc., shall be defrayed by the Person or Congregation on whose behalf, and at whose request, any Episcopal act or acts shall be performed; provided also, that Convocation shall provide for the maintenance of the Episcopate.

CANON 31

A BISHOP NOT TO ACT FOR OTHER CHURCHES WITHOUT SANCTION OF CONVOCATION

No Bishop shall ordain, confirm, or perform any other act of the Episcopal Office, at the request of any Bishop, Minister, or Congregation not connected with this Church, except he shall first obtain the sanction of Convocation, or of the Council, to his performance of such Episcopal act. Convocation may authorise a Bishop to give regular assistance to a named group or denomination.

CANON 32

A BISHOP MAY RESIGN HIS JURISDICTION

Any Bishop in good standing may resign his Jurisdiction. However, his resignation needs to be received and approved by Convocation, which has the freedom to encourage him to continue in office. Having resigned, he shall perform no Episcopal functions,

thereafter, except at the special request of some other Bishop, or of the Council.

Any Bishop who may thus resign his See, shall retain his Seat, and be entitled to vote in Convocation or Diocesan Synod, and be amenable to the authority thereof.

The provision of this Canon shall not apply in the case of a Bishop who may be translated from one Diocese to another.

CANON 33

A BISHOP MAY LEAVE THIS CHURCH

Any Bishop of this Church, in good standing, who may desire to withdraw from the Communion thereof, shall be permitted to do so upon the recommendation of the Council, and shall be furnished with a Letter Dismissory duly signed by the Presiding Bishop or Council, to any Christian Church. Failure to obtain the approval of Council, will result in the loss of recognition of his office as Bishop.

CANON 34

OFFENCES, MISDEMEANOURS, BANKRUPTCY, OR INCAPACITY

Any Bishop of this Church, who, by any British Court of Justice, shall be found guilty of any criminal offence or misdemeanour, or shall be adjudicated bankrupt, shall cease to act as a Bishop of this Church, and the Jurisdiction of such Bishop shall be declared vacant.

If, by legal process, any Bishop of this Church is found or certified to be of unsound mind, or through age or disease, is found incapable of managing himself or his affairs, and a Receiver of his Estate has been appointed under Sec. 101 of the Mental Health Act 1959; whilst so incapacitated he shall cease to perform any Episcopal function in this Church, until the legal proceedings have been discharged, or, on the Certificate of two qualified medical Practitioners conversant with mental disease, he has been pronounced of sound mind and understanding.

During the incapacity of such Bishop, the duties of his Office shall be discharged by the Presiding Bishop or some other Bishop appointed by him.

CANON 35

OVERSIGHT OF NEGLECTED OR VACANT DIOCESE

If, from any cause, any Bishop shall neglect to perform the duties of his Office, the Presiding Bishop shall arrange for the proper performance of the same with the approval of Council until a decision is made by Convocation.

In case of death or resignation of a Bishop, or vacancy by other cause, the oversight of any vacant Diocese or Jurisdiction, until the same be provided for again, by the appointment of a new Bishop, shall devolve upon the Presiding Bishop, who shall have power to appoint some other Bishop to act on his behalf in the said oversight.

In the event of the Office of the Presiding Bishop becoming vacant, the Council shall apppoint some other Bishop or Presbyter to perform the duties of the said Office until the next Convocation.

CANON 36

OFFENCES, MISDEMEANOURS, BANKRUPTCY, OR INCAPACITY

Any Bishop of this Church, who, by any British Court of Justice, shall be found guilty of any criminal offence or misdemeanour, or shall be adjudicated bankrupt, shall cease to act as a Bishop of this Church, and the Jurisdiction of such Bishop shall be declared vacant, unless such conviction shall be regarded by Convocation or Council as being the result of the Bishop's faithfulness to the task of preaching the Gospel and opposing erroneous doctrine and practice.

During the incapacity of such Bishop, the duties of his Office shall be discharged by a Bishop or Minister appointed by Convocation or Council ad interim.

If there is no other Bishop, Council shall appoint an individual from among its own number to perform such duties as are necessarily performed until a Bishop is elected.

CANON 37

NEGLECTED OVERSIGHT

If, from any cause, any Bishop shall neglect to perform the duties of his Office, the Presiding Bishop, with the approval of the Council shall arrange for the proper performance of the same, until a decision is made by Convocation.

In case of death or resignation of a Bishop, or vacancy by other cause, the oversight of any vacant Diocese or Jurisdiction, until the same be provided for again, by the appointment of a new Bishop, shall devolve upon the Council, which shall have power to appoint some other Bishop to act on his behalf in the said oversight.

In the event of the Office of the Presiding Bishop becoming vacant, the Council shall apppoint some other Bishop to perform the duties of the said Office until the next Convocation.

OF BISHOPS; OF LAY READERS, OF MINISTERS

A OF BISHOPS

CANON 38

THE QUALITY OF SUCH AS ARE TO BE MADE MINISTERS

Age Requirement:

No man should be ordained Deacon unless he is 23 years old. No man should be ordained Presbyter unless he is 24 years old, and has been a Deacon usually for a year.

Discipleship Requirement:

No person should be ordained Deacon or Presbyter unless it is possible to testify to his conversion; his fear of God and love of Christ; his commitment to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture; his grasp of Reformed Doctrine; his progress in character and works as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ; and his involvement in the local church.

Gift Requirement:

In addition to character qualities and faithful discipleship, a candidate for the ministry needs to be personable in relationships with a love for people, a pastor's heart; to have a knowledge of Scripture and an ability to expound the Scriptures effectively and relevantly to the issues of the day; to express himself clearly and caringly to differing people with differing needs; to be able to encourage and lead people gently yet effectively in the way of truth and wisdom, with vision and calmness, yet without harshness or contentiousness, even in the event of animosity.

Training Requirement:

A minister of the Gospel needs to have had a good general education to a reasonable standard; he should have or be encouraged to acquire the equivalent of a Bible College training and he should be committed to continue his theological and ministerial education throughout the course of his ministry.

Evidential Requirement:

The Bishop shall follow-up confidential character references for each candidate. Where possible, Certificates or other evidence of Baptism shall be required.

CANON 39

TITLES OF SUCH AS ARE TO BE MADE MINISTERS

All Clergy of this Church shall be ordained, or if already ordained, received as Ordained Ministers with the approval of the General Council to be confirmed by Convocation.

No ordination shall take place until such Candidate satisfies the Examiners in all the Subjects set for the Examination for Deacons or Presbyters. The Bishop may ordain men for Missionary purposes overseas, pursuant to any Rules made by Convocation.

The Bishops shall report to the Council all pending Ordinations.

CANON 40

THE INTERVIEW OF SUCH AS ARE TO BE MADE MINISTERS

Before any person is admitted to the Diaconate or Presbyterate, he shall be interviewed by the Bishop, and one or more Clergymen appointed by him for that purpose, to ascertain that the Candidate is well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and with the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of this Church and that he has a sufficiency of good learning.

CANON 41

THE RECEPTION AND DISMISSAL OF MINISTERS FROM OR TO OTHER CHURCHES

Any duly ordained Minister of another Church may be received into the Ministry of this Church, under such Regulations as Convocation may approve.

Any Minister of this Church, in good standing, at his own request, may leave the Evangelical Connexion to unite with any Christian Church, and shall be entitled to a Letter of Commendation, signed by the Bishop having jurisdiction.

C. OF LICENSED PREACHERS

CANON 42

THE LICENSING OF MEN TO PREACH AND CONDUCT SERVICES

Men of suitable character, conviction and gifts may be authorised to conduct services and to preach the Word of God by the Presbyter-in-Charge with the Bishop’s approval and licence.

Such Licence should be given for one year. It may be renewed by the Bishop's endorsement, but it may be revoked at any time.

CANON 43

LICENSED PREACHERS TO CONFORM TO REGULATIONS

In all matters relating to the conduct of the service, he shall conform to the directions of the Minister in charge of the Congregation in which he is serving; or to the directions of the Bishop, when there is no Minister in Charge.

D. OF MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS AND DUTIES

CANON 44

THE LICENSING OF MINISTERS

All ministers appointed to churches should be licensed by the Bishop on behalf of the Evangelical Connexion, in confirmation of his subscription to the Declaration.

CANON 45

THE LICENCES OF MINISTERS REFUSING CONFORMITY TO BE WITHDRAWN

If any Minister shall refuse to conform himself to the Laws or Regulations established in the Evangelical Connexion, he shall be admonished by the Bishop having jurisdiction.

If within the space of one month after such admonition he does not conform himself, the Licence of such Minister shall be withdrawn.

CANON 46

PRECAUTION AGAINST IMPOSTERS

No Minister in charge of any congregation, and no Wardens, Church Councillors, or Trustees of any Congregation shall permit any person professing to be an ordained Minister to officiate or preach therein, without sufficient evidence of his being a duly recognised or ordained Minister of the Gospel.

CANON 47

PULPIT EXCHANGES WITH OTHER MINISTERS TO BE ALLOWED

Pulpit exchanges by Ministers of this Church with Ministers in good standing of other Evangelical Churches, and the occasional occupancy of the pulpits of this Church by such Ministers of other Churches, shall be allowed; and it shall be a fundamental principle of this Church that its Clergy may partake of or administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in any Evangelical Church, at the request of its Minister.

CANON 48

MINISTERS TO BE INSTITUTED BY THE BISHOP

On the appointment of a Presbyter as the Incumbent or Minister of any Church or Congregation, the Churchwardens shall inform the Bishop having Jurisdiction, and if the said Bishop shall approve, he or some Presbyter appointed by him, shall proceed to install the said Minister.

CANON 49

PASTORAL RELATIONS MAY BE TERMINATED

An Incumbency or Pastoral involvement may be terminated at any time with the agreement of both the minister and the Congregation, the latter being represented by the Churchwardens and Church Councillors. In the event that a congregation desires to dismiss a minister, the minister may appeal to the Bishop who, in consultation with the General Council, may advise the Wardens.

CANON 50

BISHOP TO TAKE CHARGE OF VACANT LIVING

In the event of a vacancy occurring in any Living the oversight thereof shall devolve upon the Bishop having Jurisdiction, who may himself take charge, or with the consent of the local church may appoint some other Minister of this Church to take charge of the said Living on his behalf, until such time as an Incumbent shall be duly appointed.

CANON 51

MINISTERS TO KEEP REGISTERS OF BAPTISMS, ETC.

Every Minister is encouraged to keep a record of services including baptisms; confirmations; weddings; funerals; and attendance at the Lord’s Table.”

CANON 52

MINISTERS TO RENDER 'ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BISHOP

Every Presbyter-in-Charge or the Wardens of a congregation shall submit to the General Secretary an annual report on the previous year as requested by the required date.”

Ministers without charge may also report on their ministry.

A summary of reports may be presented to Convocation annually

Any Minister who for the period of three years fails to report, shall be considered to have resigned his ministry, and, by a vote of Convocation his name shall be removed from the list of Clergy of this Church.

CANON 53
MINISTERS TO HAVE CONTROL OF MUSIC AND SERVICES IN THEIR CHURCHES

Every minister shall have control over, and be responsible for, the services conducted in his Church, provided that in the conduct of the services the Minister shall pay respect to the advice of the Bishop and the reasonable wishes of the Congregation expressed by a majority of the congregation provided these are not contrary to the Evangelical and Protestant principles and usages of this Church.

No decorations, ornaments, vestments, postures, or ceremonies calculated to teach either directly or symbolically, that the Christian Ministry possesses a sacerdotal character or that the Lord's Supper is a Sacrifice, shall be allowed in the worship of this Church; nor shall any Communion Table constructed in the form of an altar, nor any Cross, Crucifix, candles, molten, painted or graven image or images, be introduced or used; nor shall flowers, or vases, be placed on or apparently upon the Lord's Table.

In the event of any dispute arising between the Minister and the Congregation upon any matter connected with the conduct of Divine Service.

CANON 54
PROVISIONS FOR MINISTERIAL NEGLECT

If any Minister of the Evangelical Connexion shall neglect to perform his duties in the local congregation, the Churchwardens, in consultation with the Bishop, may assume responsibility for that which has been neglected.

E. OF CONGREGATIONS

CANON 55
COMPOSITION OF A CONGREGATION

A Congregation consists of all professing Christians enrolled as Communicants and duly contributing to the support of the congregation: such persons, aged over 18, shall be entitled to vote at all Special or Annual Congregational Meetings of such congregation.

CANON 56
CHURCH PLANTING

Persons belonging to this Church may organise as a congregation with the advice of the Bishop having jurisdiction; but such congregation, before being entitled to representation in Convocation, shall be required to recognise and accede to the current Constitution and Canons, Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of this Church.

CANON 57
CONGREGATIONS FROM OTHER CHURCHES MAY BE RECEIVED INTO THIS CHURCH

Any Congregation of another Church that may desire to be received into union with this Church, shall declare its desire to the Bishop and shall recognise and adopt the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of this Church. On the recommendation of the Bishop and General Council, the Congregation shall be received by Convocation.

CANON 58
REMOVING A CONGREGATION FROM THE LIST OF MEMBER CHURCHES

Any congregation which for three years fails to conform to the Rules and Regulations of this Church, shall be considered to have ceased to belong to this Church. Convocation may remove the congregation from the list of member churches.

CANON 59

ENROLLED COMMUNICANTS

Enrolled Communicants are those who partake regularly of the Lord's Supper, including those home-bound who receive the Lord's Supper.
The Roll of Communicants shall be kept by the Minister, and Churchwardens, and shall include the contact details of the regular Communicants of the Congregation. This roll is the list of members of the congregation.

CANON 60

COMMUNICANTS TRANSFERRED FROM ONE CONGREGATION TO ANOTHER

A Communicant, removing from one Congregation to another, shall be furnished with a Letter of Commendation, signed by the Minister and the Parish Council (if any).

CANON 61

COMMUNICANTS OF THIS CHURCH MAY BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CHURCHES

A Communicant, in good standing, at his or her request shall be furnished with a Letter of Commendation.

CANON 62

COMMUNICANTS OF ANOTHER CHURCH MAY BE RECEIVED INTO THIS CHURCH

A Communicant of another Christian Church may be received as a member of this Church, on satisfactory evidence of Membership in the Church of Christ.

CANON 63

SCATTERED MEMBERS

Any persons residing at a distance from an organised congregation of this Church may be acknowledged as Scattered Members either of the local church where they were members or of the Evangelical Connexion by the Presiding Bishop and General Secretary, upon subscribing to the Declaration and the Framework of Reference (see Article 1),and accepting the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of this Church.

All such persons shall be enrolled as Scattered Members of this Church.

F. OF CHURCH MEETINGS AND OFFICERS

CANON 64

CHURCH OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED ANNUALLY AT AN OPEN CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

In each Congregation during February each year or an open Congregational Meeting shall be held for the election of Churchwardens, Church Councillors and Delegates to Convocation and for congregational business. The persons entitled to attend and vote at this and all other Meetings of the Congregation are particularly designated in Canon 55.

The Wardens and Delegates and Church Councillors shall be chosen from among the members and shall hold office until the First day of March in the following year. (It is recommended that Church Councillors be re-elected each year).

One Warden shall be nominated by the Minister and the other by the people and the Minister shall be *ex officio* Chairman of the Congregational Meeting and of all meetings of the Church Council.

It is recommended that voting be by secret ballot.

CANON 65

SPECIAL MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION

Special Congregational Meetings may be convened at any time by the Minister or Churchwardens. Due notice of such Meeting should be given on the previous Sunday.

CANON 66

CHURCHWARDENS TO SEE THAT THEIR CHURCH IS SUITABLY FURNISHED

It shall be the duty of Churchwardens to see that their Church is provided with appropriate furnishings; a substantial safe for the preservation of Church Records and Registers. But nothing shall be enjoined as requisite, or be provided, which is contrary to the Protestant and Evangelical principles of this Church.

CANON 67

CHURCHWARDENS TO BE CUSTODIANS OF THE PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH

It shall be the duty of Churchwardens to keep in repair the fabric of the Church, to guard the property belonging to the Church, and to act as or appoint Treasurers of the Funds of the Church, disbursing the same under the directions of the Minister and Church Councillors, or in case of their disagreement, on the advice of the Bishop having jurisdiction.

The signatories of church accounts shall include the Minister and Churchwardens.

Accounts should be audited annual and shall be made up to the 31st December in each year, or the date of the closing of the Fund, whichever is the earlier, and submitted to the Churchwardens and Church Council in time for the Annual Congregational Meeting.

CANON 68

CHURCHWARDENS NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THE MINISTER, BUT TO REPORT ANY UNLAWFUL PROCEEDINGS TO THE BISHOP

The Minister and Churchwardens shall be entitled to the keys of the Church and shall have free access. No Churchwarden or other Church Officer shall have the right to interfere with the Minister in his conduct of the services and administration of the Sacraments of the Church, or with his free and proper use of the Church buildings and property for any lawful Ecclesiastical purposes which he may deem necessary; provided, that if any services be held, or any use be made of the Church buildings in opposition to the Constitution and Canons of this Church, or contrary to the Evangelical and Protestant principles of this Church, the Churchwardens shall immediately report the same to the Bishop having jurisdiction, who shall enquire into the matters alleged, and take such steps as he may deem expedient.

CANON 69

CHURCH COUNCILLORS AND THEIR DUTIES

It shall be the duty of the Church Councillors, as the representatives of the Congregation, to act with the Churchwardens in the nomination of a Minister; to assist the Churchwardens in the discharge of their duties when desired to do so; and to take such measures as may be necessary to provide sufficient funds for the maintenance of the Church and the Services and Ministry thereof.

CANON 70

MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Meetings of the Church Council may be convened by the Minister or Churchwardens at any time, or, by not less than one third of the Church Councillors for the time being. At

least three clear days notice of such meetings shall be given to every member of the Church Council.

CANON 71

CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council shall consist of the Minister, the Churchwardens, and Delegates, *ex-officio,* together with the Church Councillors elected and appointed at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

CANON 72

CHAIRMAN OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The Minister shall be Chairman of all Church Council Meetings, and Congregational Meetings, either Annual or Special, but, in the event of his absence, or there being no Minister, the members present at any meeting shall elect, from among themselves, a Chairman of such Meeting. The Chairman shall have a casting, as well as an ordinary vote.

CANON 73

A RECORD TO BE KEPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF MEETINGS

A faithful record of the proceedings and resolutions of all Church Council Meetings and Congregational Meetings, either Annual or Special, shall be kept by the Church Council Secretary, who shall be elected by the Church Councillors from their own number at the first Church Council Meeting held after the Annual Congregational Meeting and such record shall be open to inspection at reasonable times.

CANON 74

DELEGATES

Every organised Congregation shall be entitled to elect not more than two Delegates as its representatives to Convocation.

In addition to the two Delegates, an alternate Delegate may be elected to take the place of either of the two Delegates who may be unable to attend the Meeting of Convocation.

CANON 75

NOTICE OF ELECTION TO BE SENT TO THE BISHOP AND SECRETARY

Upon the election of Delegates, the Churchwardens shall notify the Bishop and the General Secretary with the contact details of those elected.

CANON 76

VACANCIES TO BE FILLED UP

When the Seat of a Delegate shall become vacant from any cause, the Congregation may elect another Representative to serve until the Annual Congregational Meeting following.

CANON 77

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

In each Congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting, the Minister may nominate two or more Communicants as a Parish Council, who shall be his special advisers in the Spiritual oversight of the congregation.

CANON 78

CHURCH OFFICERS AFFIRMED BY THE BISHOP

All Churchwardens, Delegates, Church Councillors and Members of the Minister's Advisory Council shall be required upon election, and before acting in their respective offices, to subscribe the following declaration:

"I the undersigned, having been duly elected (or nominated) to the office of in the Church of

and I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to Salvation, and I do engage to conform to the Biblical Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Evangelical Connexion, so long as I shall continue a member thereof.

Dated this day of

Signature

The Minister or Wardens shall submit these declarations to the bishop who shall affirm them by returning a signed certificate."

G. OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

CANON 79

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Historically the Free Church of England recognized and authorised the 1785 Book of Common Prayer and subsequently revised it in the light of evangelical and biblical principles. The Evangelical Connexion has adapted it to reflect current use of language.

CANON 80

THE USE OF THE PRAYER BOOK

In Public Worship the 1785 Book of Common Prayer may be used at the discretion of the Minister for worship on the Lord's Day, and at other times.

Nothing in this Canon is to be understood as precluding extempore prayer.

CANON 81

ALTERATIONS TO THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

No alteration, or addition, shall be made to the currently published edition of the 1785 Book of Common Prayer as authorised by Convocation, unless the amendment(s) be approved by a vote of three-fourths of those present and voting at one meeting of Convocation and ratified by a similar majority at the ensuing Convocation.

New Editions of the Book of Common Prayer may be published by Convocation. Authorisation of each Edition by the Presiding Bishop shall be included in the publication.

CANON 82

SPECIAL FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE ALLOWED

The Bishop having jurisdiction may authorise alternative liturgy, not contravening biblical principles or Canons of this Church.

H. OF DISCIPLINE

83 CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The one mark of the church, necessary for the being of the church is the true preaching of the Word as the standard of doctrine and life. That determines the right administration of the sacraments and the faithful exercise of church discipline both of which are necessary for the well-being of the church.

If church members would admonish and pray for one another when sinful conduct becomes evident, there would be little need for formal church discipline to be carried out.

84 THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Sin hinders fellowship with God and with one another. The primary purpose of church discipline is not punishment but is the restoration of the offender to right behaviour and reconciliation with God and with one another.
(Heb.12[6]; Prov.13[24]; Matthew 18[15] Galatians 6[1] ; James 5[20] ;1 Corinthians 5[5])

85 REASONS FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline is necessary

that the teaching of Scripture and the name of Christ be not dishonoured (Romans 2[24] 1 Corinthians 5[1-2]) ;
that sin be kept from spreading. (1 Corinthians 5[2] ; Heb.12[15])
that people may know that open sin will not be tolerated; (1 Tim.5[20]; Gal.2[11]) and that the purity and harmony of the church be promoted and that people be spared the wrath of God (1 Cor 11:27-32, Jude 23).

86 SITUATION WHICH CALL FOR DISCIPLINE

1 False teaching and faulty application of truth (Gal 1:8-9, 1 Tim 1: 20, 6: 3-5, 2 John 9-11, 2 Thess 3:6-10, 14-15, Rev 2: 14-16)
2 Divisiveness (Rom 16: 17-18, Tit 3:10)
3 Unresolved personal conflicts (Mat 18:15-17)
4 Open sexual immorality (1 Cor 5: 1-13)
5 Criminal offences (except where the Law itself is at fault according to Scripture). Wisdom is required as to whether it is necessary to refer the matter to the relevant authority.

87 THE SPIRIT IN WHICH CHURCH DISCIPLINE SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT

It should be done with gentleness and humility and with a genuine appreciation of our own weakness and the fear that we might fall into similar sins (Gal 6:1). It is essential that there be a spirit of forgiveness from those who exercise discipline. (Matt 18: 21-35 in context, Matt 6:14-15) Those who bring charges should be subject to censure if the charges are unfounded. (Ex 23:1, Dt 19:15-21, Prov 19:5, 1 Tim 5:19-21)

88 LOCAL CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1 The first context of discipline is the preaching of the Word of God, the Teaching and Admonitions of Scripture, both in public and in private. (1 Thes 5:12, Acts 20:20)
2 Individuals should proceed according to our Lord's instructions in Matthew 18:15-18.

3 Ministers aware of situations that require discipline, having given the relevant instruction publicly and privately, should not operate alone but in conjunction with men of wisdom and experience (or if necessary exceptionally with a woman of wisdom and experience).

4 Mindful that God is slow to wrath and quick to show mercy, those who exercise discipline should be quick to respond mercifully. However, in the event of a lack of repentance and where the offence threatens the well-being of the church, further action should be taken as follows:

I Personal rebuke and exhortation
II Rebuke and exhortation in the presence of another member of the church
III Rebuke and exhortation before the leaders of the church

At any of these stages it may be wise to apply other sanctions which may include the following:

I Withholding the elements at the Lord's Supper [v BCP]
II Suspension from Church Council (if a Councillor)
III Forbidding to attend at open Church Meetings
III Exclusion from membership of the Church

5 In the event that the local church needs assistance in the matter of discipline it should approach a senior member of the Evangelical Connexion for help and advice.

89 DISCIPLINE OF MINISTERS AND OFFICERS OF THE CONNEXION

Standards should be higher for ministers and officers of the Connexion. However, charges cannot be brought by one person alone (1 Tim 5:19-21) and should not be accepted without good reason, there being no other way of dealing with the issue. Charges against a minister or officer should be presented to a bishop or if it concerns the Presiding Bishop through the General Secretary or other senior officer. The Bishop or officer receiving the charge should consult with a senior experienced minister of the Connexion. The Bishop or officer receiving the charge may need to keep the churchwardens informed of developments. The actions to be taken should parallel those above. If the matter is unresolved the final steps should be suspension from office and then exclusion from the Evangelical Connexion.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

CANON 90

MATTERS NOT PROVIDED FOR IN THESE CANONS TO BE REFERRED TO CON VOCATION

Any matter of Ecclesiastical Administration or Order not provided for in the hereinbefore recited Constitution and Canons, shall be referred to Convocation.

CANON 91

FINANCE

In order that the necessary funds may be raised for Denominational and Diocesan purposes each Congregation shall make an annual contribution to the General Fund, the Diocesan Fund and the Publication Fund. The amount of each such contribution shall be decided in advance by the Annual Convocation.

Provided Always that any Congregation may apply to Council within three months of the relevant Annual Convocation for an abatement of its annual contribution to the General Fund, the Diocesan Fund and the Publication Fund. Council shall determine such application and its Secretary shall notify such Congregation and the Treasurer of the amount of any such abatement in writing within fourteen days of the meeting of Council. Before making such determination Council shall take into consideration the income expenditure assets and liabilities of such Congregation and such other relevant information as shall have been made

available to Council at the date of its meeting.

In addition Council shall publish annually a scale of fees to be payable

(a) to the Diocesan Fund for Consecration or Dedication of Churches, extensions, additions and furnishings; for Ordination (to include "Letters of Orders") of a Deacon or a Presbyter; and for the issue of a license of a Layreader or a Mission Room.

(b) to the Examination Board for each examination to be paid by each candidate for the Ministry of this Church.