



RESOLUTIONS

REPORT

APRIL 2024

IMAGINE

PREPARED FOR THE 2024 FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA
GENERAL CONFERENCE | APRIL 25-28 - TORONTO, ON

Resolutions to the 2024 General Conference of The Free Methodist Church in Canada

1. RESOLUTION FROM THE STUDY COMMISSION ON DOCTRINE

¶130 FINAL DESTINY

MOTION:

Whereas: concerns have been raised by some pastors that the current article ¶130 on Final Destiny does not reflect the convictions of contemporary Free Methodists and the breadth of Scripture, particularly as it relates to two questions: the nature of eternal punishment and creation's inclusion in redemption.

Whereas: Scripture affirms final judgment but describes eternal punishment using various terms, including hell,¹ eternal / unquenchable fire,² destruction,³ darkness,⁴ eternal punishment,⁵ and wrath,⁶

Whereas: this biblical evidence can be interpreted to imply a) endless conscious torment or b) temporary conscious torment or c) a metaphorical description of eternal separation from God,

Whereas: our current article does not reflect the breadth of the scriptural witness on this matter,

¹ Three Greek terms are translated as "hell" in English Bibles: *Gehenna* (Matt. 5:22, 5:29, 5:30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, 23:33; Mark 9:43, 9:45, 9:47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6); *Hades* (Matt. 11:23, 16:18; Luke 10:15, 16:23; Acts 2:27, 2:31; Rev. 1:18, 6:8, 20:13, 20:14; *Tartaros* (2 Peter 2:4). In the Old Testament, the Hebrew *Sheol* was often translated as "hell" in the King James Version, but is rendered as "the pit," "the grave," "the dead," or simply "Sheol" in more recent translations (occurs 66 times, for example, Gen. 37:35, Num. 16:30, Deut. 32:22, 1 Sam. 2:6, 1 Ki. 2:6, Ps. 16:10, 139:8, Is. 28:18, Hos. 13:14).

² Matt. 3:12, Mark 9:43, 9:45, 18:8, 25:41, Luke 3:17, Jude 1:7

³ Matt. 7:14, 9:22, Rom. 9:22, Phil. 3:19, 1 Tim. 6:9, Heb. 10:39, 2 Pet. 2:3, 3:7, Rev. 17:8, 17:11

⁴ Matt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30, 2 Pet. 2:4, 2:17, Jude 1:6, 1:13.

⁵ Matt. 25:46 ("eternal punishment"), 2 Thess. 1:9 ("punishment of eternal destruction"), Jude 1:7 ("punishment of eternal fire").

⁶ Matt. 3:17, Luke 3:7, 21:23, John 3:36, Rom. 2:5, 2:8, 5:9, 9:22, Col. 3:6, 1 Thes. 1:10, 5:9, Rev. 6:17, 11:18, 14:10, 16:19, 19:15 (some references to "wrath" in Scripture refer to this-worldly punishment; included are those that refer most clearly to final judgment).

Whereas: Scripture affirms that the new heaven and new earth includes God’s renewal of all creation in Christ Jesus.⁷

Whereas: recent Wesleyan Scholarship⁸ emphasizes the full renewal of all creation in the eschaton (the new age).

Whereas: the current article refers to Heaven without affirming the final renewal of creation.

Whereas: the current article concludes with punishment and damnation rather than grace and redemption.

Whereas: God’s gracious renewal of all creation is the climax of Scripture.

Therefore, be it resolved that ¶130 be revised as follows:

~~¶130 FINAL DESTINY~~

~~Our eternal destiny is determined by God’s grace and our response, not by arbitrary decrees of God. For those who trust Him and obediently follow Jesus as Saviour and Lord, there is a heaven of eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ’s presence. But for the finally impenitent there is a hell of eternal suffering and of separation from God.~~

¶130 ETERNAL CONDITION

Our eternal condition is dependent on our grace-enabled response to God’s offer of salvation in Christ. All who finally refuse God’s grace will suffer the consequences of total separation from God, namely hell. All who obediently trust Jesus as Lord will receive eternal life, glory, and communion with the Triune God and all God’s people in the unified new heaven and new earth.

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⁷ Revelation 21:1–8, 1 Corinthians 15:12–58, John 20:1–29, Acts 1:9. See also the affirmation of the resurrection of the body in the Apostles’ Creed.

⁸ See for example: Howard Snyder, with Joel Scandret, *Salvation Means Creation Healed: The Ecology of Sin and Grace* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011)

2. DOCTRINAL INTEGRITY RESOLUTION – Rev. M. Wiley, Rev. Dr. M. McEwen, Rev. J. Jobin, Rev. K. Roth, Rev. M. Kluthe, Rev. D. Wightman, Rev. T. Richards

Doctrinal Integrity

MOTION

Whereas: We believe the doctrine of the FMCiC faithfully represents the teaching of the Bible, our supreme authority for faith and life,

Whereas: we seek to minister to our culture in a relevant way while remaining faithful to biblical values and ethics, such as found in passages like Mark 7:21-23 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11,

Whereas: the membership covenant and the ordination vows are a commitment to upholding and promoting our doctrine and practices,

Whereas: people may have sincerely agreed with those vows at one point in time and since had a change of conscience,

Whereas: conversations in the FMCiC that cause doctrinal division and confusion may sever the unity we have amongst us, which is not what God intends for His church, as stated in Philippians 2:1-5,

Whereas: many Christian organizations (e.g., the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Tyndale University) require leaders to regularly affirm their continued alignment with the organization's beliefs and values,

Therefore, be it resolved: that anyone hired by the FMCiC or recommended for membership on any official committee (BOA, SCOD, MEGaP), task force, team or like group of the FMCiC, and all those currently serving in these positions, be required to affirm in writing their continued alignment with the Manual of the Free Methodist Church, including the Articles of Religion, the Membership Covenant, the moral vision articulated in Chapter 6, and Free Methodist principles of church government, that are all biblically based. The Bishop and BOA will stipulate who will administer this affirmation process. This resolution is to be implemented by September 1, 2024.