



**Linda J. Adams**

## ***Introduction***

“Imagine what we could accomplish together with pure hearts, restored joy and a willing spirit.”

I’m honored to imagine with you what God might have in mind for the Free Methodist Church in Canada at this moment in history. Of course, it’s unusual for an outsider like me to be invited to be a collaborative thought partner with you. As a non-Canadian, I would approach this as a novice to your culture, with you as expert guides for my learning journey. Perhaps God sees the value of a strategic outsider in the process of discerning together his preferred future for the FMCiC. I would join you in a spirit of inquisitive humility. So, since you have invited me to enter the dialogue, I’ll imagine.

I imagine churches coming alive with contagious spiritual vitality. With the eyes of my heart, I see pastors and people filled with passion for the mission of Jesus, resulting in new believers becoming disciples who make disciples. I imagine every member connecting with Jesus daily and reproducing 30-, 60-, or 100-times what God’s Spirit and Word have sown into them. I imagine every FMCiC leader discovering and living into their ultimate contribution in God’s kingdom. I imagine believers loving one another across differences, becoming the beloved community of oneness for which Jesus prayed. I see greater connection among our Canadian churches with one another, and with the global church as immigrants join us here and in partnerships with more of the 100+ countries of the growing worldwide Free Methodist communion. We are alive for such a time as this!

## ***Experience***

### **2019-2023      Bishop in the Free Methodist Church USA**

In 2019, the Free Methodist Church in the United States experienced two historic moments at once. First, all three bishops had announced their retirement, signaling momentous change as three new bishops were elected. In that election, I became the first female bishop in any Free Methodist General Conference in our 160-year history.

This new Board of Bishops co-led a 12-month process to discern, articulate and adopt The Free Methodist Way, an identity statement that has reinvigorated our sense of who we are and what God wants us to become. We also co-created a vision framework and leadership development plan to align twenty-two annual conferences for unified mission and multiplication. We prioritized the convening of pacesetter churches for the redistribution of innovation across 850 churches. We guided the relocation of the World Ministries Center and pivoted toward remote and hybrid work for our employees, streamlining our operations and maximizing financial stewardship.

Personally, I worked with superintendents to guide eight regional annual conferences spanning Eastern Montana to West Virginia in the northern third of the US (319 churches) and with the Latin America area director and national leaders in 17 countries (996 churches, plants, and church planting projects).

**2008-2019 Director, International Child Care Ministries (ICCM)**

I had the privilege of leading the Free Methodist child sponsorship ministry, collaborating with FMC and child development leaders in 33 countries, impacting 20,000+ children. I cast vision, promoted sponsorship, increased financial health, educated and inspired donors, strategized for change and developed a global leadership team.

**1998-2008 Lead Pastor, New Hope Free Methodist Church, Rochester, NY, USA**

I led a vibrant, diverse congregation through growth, capital campaign, relocation, and incorporation of 30+ recent Central African immigrants into the life of the body.

**1993-1997 Lead Pastor, St. Charles Free Methodist Church, St. Charles IL, USA**

I pastored a small suburban congregation through growth and relocation to a larger church building.

**1991-1993 Assistant Pastor, Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church, Spring Arbor Michigan, MI, USA**

As Pastor for Christian Education, I coordinated 400+ volunteers for ministry to children and adults in a large college church. I created multiple volunteer-led discipleship groups and outreach-focused small groups.

**Additional Relevant Experience**

FMCUSA Study Commission on Doctrine (SCOD) 2011-2023 | Trustee: Spring Arbor University, Roberts Wesleyan University/Northeastern Seminary, Asbury Theological Seminary | Board Member: Free Methodist Foundation (FMF), Guidestream Charitable Gift Fund, Haley-McCreedy Relief and Development Fund, The Set Free Movement, SEED, NAE (National Association of Evangelicals) | Homiletics Instructor: Northeastern Seminary, Free Methodist J-Term | Speaker at camps, conferences, churches, retreats, and universities.

Selected Publications: Light + Life Communications: *The Free Methodist Way*, Co-Authored with Bishops Cowart, Whitehead; *Go Global*, Co-Authored with Bishop David Roller and Gerald Coates, 2017 | 12 articles in Light + Life Magazine 2019-2023.

**Education**

Asbury Theological Seminary, Doctor of Ministry, Beeson Residential Program for Preaching and Leadership, 2000.

Asbury Theological Seminary, Master of Divinity, 1991.

Spring Arbor University, Bachelor of Arts, Major in Philosophy/Religion, 1977.

Center for Contemporary Christianity, Honorary Doctor of Divinity, Bangalore, India, 2013.

**Family**

John Carter Adams and I have been married since 1977. We live in Holland, Michigan. John is currently retired after having served in several Christian nonprofits, including the New York Bible Society, Olive Branch Mission, The Salvation Army, and East-West Ministries. John especially enjoys the companionship of our Beagle, Lucy, with whom he often walks along the sandy shores of Lake Michigan.

Our son Nathan is married to Lauren; they are parents to our first grandchild, Isobel, born in 2023. They live in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Our daughter Carrie lives in Washington, D.C. and is engaged to be married to Leo.