



Mike Chong Perkinson

Nominee for Bishop

Hi, my name is Mike Chong Perkinson, and it's an honor to be included in this mix of wonderful candidates and people. I'm honored to be in the Free Methodist Church, in the family and the denomination. I came from another denomination. I came to be Free Methodist in 2014, via the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. I began pastoring a church in Boise, Idaho. I have since then pastored Lamb's Fellowship in Lake Elsinore, California. And in 2024, I had the privilege to become the superintendent of the Pacific Coast Japanese Conference, which is what I'm doing now.

I felt the call of God as a young man. I came to faith at 13 years of age and I came from a radically dysfunctional home — a Buddhist mother and a very devout and committed, alcoholic, womanizing father. He was the American side of me. And so I had no concept of who Jesus was. And so when Jesus Christ was stated in my home, it was usually in the midst of a bunch of expletives. So it was a scary name to me. So I usually ran for cover. I didn't know Jesus was a real person. I didn't know anything about that until I came to the United States and met Jesus at 13. Again, I was radically saved. I had no idea who Jesus was and just ran right into this incredible love. And I was a lost kid, fatherless, hurting and found Abba, found my daddy, found God and actually found me.

And so it was amazing for me, and man it spun me around right away as quickly. Just wrapped up in the love of God, and about 14 years of age, I felt the call of God. And so I responded, I had no idea what that meant. I just thought I would be sharing the love of God with people. And I can say that I remember middle school; I was like Moses. I'd walk down the halls between classes, and the halls would literally part because they knew I was coming to share Jesus. I couldn't help it.

And my family life, as I mentioned, was a mess. And God was so kind to bring me out of that, and in my early years, I also struggled with just some identity issues and at 16, 22 and 30, I actually tried to take my life. In the act three times, God has saved me from that. And I'm so grateful for His kindness. So I love the fact that God uses broken people like me and allows me the privilege to bring hope to people.

I was privileged then to get some training. I went to Bible college, went to seminary, was trained up in Eugene, Oregon, went down to Southern California to Fuller Theological Seminary. And my path was PhD, that's where I was going. And I got interrupted, like a lot of you, by the will of God. And next thing I knew, I was planting a church, finished my master's that was in historical theology (patristics). And since then, I've had the privilege just as an honor to serve God. I've had the privilege to plant four different churches. I've had the privilege to come alongside five different churches. Lots of churches. And I've been doing ministry for 46 years now.

So I've been around the block a little bit. And I always like to joke with people and tell them I started when I was 7, so it keeps me young. But, yeah, I've been honored to do this and still love Jesus. And so five different churches to revitalize, and I've been a part of starting multiple Bible institutes, training centers. It's fun that God would allow someone like me the honor to do this.

We have another ministry called the Praxis Center for Church Development that we started back in 2003, and we went to Africa – East Africa, Uganda. And we trained a couple hundred leaders about 16-17 years ago. And for the leaders that I knew and walked them through discipleship processes, the requirement was to plant a church or revitalize a church. And we asked one of our leaders who went over there, "I mean, how many churches have now been planted and revitalized?" And this was back in 2017. And I said, "What maybe two or three hundred?" He said, "Oh no, Mike, the last count we had was 4,500 churches in East Africa had been planted and restarted." I'm like, "You're kidding." We've lost track since 4,500. They probably won't know my name. I don't care. They will know the name of Jesus. And they're continuing to do that today.

I've had the privilege to come alongside and catalyze Embrace and Reach International in the Philippines. We've been going for 26 years. We have seen through medical clinics, you know, digging wells, feeding the homeless, bringing clothing, training thousands of pastors. We have seen over 100,000 people serving in our medical clinics over these 25-26 years. And it's amazing, you know, full-on doctors. We take 45 to 50 people from the U.S. with about the same in the Philippines with the nationals and work with them. We've seen nearly 80,000-90,000 professions of faith, 300-plus churches planted out of all that. So, I mean, it's amazing to be included in this.

And you know, I believe the season we're in as the Free Methodist Church; I'm excited. I think we're in this amazing season, and God has sovereignly positioned us. I think it's for such a time as this moment. I think we're being called out. We're a small denomination. But you don't need to be large to be mighty. God works through broken and small things. And He's done that all throughout our Scriptures; you know that. And so I think we're positioned

and our Free Methodist Way, oh my goodness. It is so incredibly relevant to our current culture. Our mission is right out of Jesus. And we've called it the irreducible core. Love God, love others, and make disciples. It's the mission of every church; we're called to do that.

So I think we're positioned to bring God's healing, reconciling love to the world as Free Methodists, and we have this beautiful egalitarian mutuality, and we're diverse, and we have a heart for loving justice. My goodness. We're set up to speak to some of the societal ills and struggles that we're facing today.

And, I think for me, probably one of the many scriptures that would be scriptures that would be important to me, but Mark 10:45 has been a hallmark scripture for me, "Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many."

So, I consider it an honor to serve God and His people. And this is a sacred trust. God said to me years ago, "Mike, this is a sacred trust. Never treat it as common." And so I'm serving God's people, and people that yet don't realize they could be a son of God, a daughter of God.

And so I'm excited for the season that we're in as Free Methodists. I believe that we are called to help people grow in their God-given identities and destinies, to help them grow in their heart capacity. As Psalm 119:32 says, "When you enlarge my heart, I will run the way of your commandments." I believe that even though we might be a small denomination, God's given us a big heart. We're a genuine community of people that understand how to live in community. We have a rich heritage that goes back to B.T. Roberts and John Wesley and Jesus. It goes all the way back.

And so we are set up to help our world come back to a loving God and to live this life of just loving Him with all that we are loving others, with all that He is. And as we live life to make disciples to be fruitful, to reproduce and to bring His healing delight to our world.

I'm honored to be included in the mix, and I'm praying for our family as we move forward, that God continues to walk us into His fullness in the name of Jesus.