



Charter and Constitution

Faith and Light international



Faith and Light
international

**3, rue du Laos 75015 Paris, France - T + 33 1 53 69 44 30
international@foietlumiere.org - foietlumiere.org/en**

Edition 2023

Summary

Charter of Faith and Light

I. The vocation of Faith and Light	6
1. A community that meets	8
2. A community of fiesta and celebration	8
3. A community of prayer	8
4. A community of friendship and faithfulness	9
5. A community for taking root and integrating	9
II. The inspiration of Faith and Light	10
1. Each person is loved by God	10
2. The need for a community	11
3. Accompaniment toward a deeper human maturity	12
III. Faith and Light activities	12
1. A community movement	12
2. Meetings, holidays camps and pilgrimages	12
3. Cooperation with others	13
4. One world-wide family Faith and Light	13

Constitution of Faith and Light

I. Foreword	14
II. The objectives of the international association of Faith and Light	14
III. Exercising responsibility	15
A) Responsibility of the members	15
B) Responsibilities of Faith and Light	15
IV. The community	16
A. The coordinating team	16
B. The community coordinator	17
C. The community chaplain	17
D. Creation of a new community	17
E. A community leaving Faith and Light or being asked to leave	18
V. The province	18
A. The provincial assembly	19
B. The provincial team	19
C. The provincial coordinator	20
D. The vice provincial coordinators	21
E. The provincial chaplain	22
F. The provincial treasurer	22
G. The provincial meeting	23
H. Creation of new provinces	23
I. Dismissal or resignation of a coordinator	23
VI. The international organisation	23
A. The general assembly	23
B. The board of directors	24
C. Role of the members of the board of directors	27

a) The president	27
b) The vice-president	27
c) The international coordinator	27
d) The deputy international coordinator	28
e) The international chaplain	28
f) The international treasurer	28
g) The general secretary	29
D. The international coordinating team	29
E. The coordinators' council	31
F. The international meeting	31
VII. Adopting the Constitution	32
VIII. Appendices	33
1. Creation of a new community	33
2. A community leaving Faith and Light or being asked to leave	33
3. Nomination committees	34
4. Creation of new provinces	36
5. Project teams	36
6. Role of general secretary	37
7. Removal from office and resignation of a coordinator	38
8. History of the Constitution	38
Index	39

The Charter

F *ait*h and *L*ight was born of a desire to help people with an intellectual disability and their families find their place within the Church and society. This was the main purpose of the organized pilgrimage to Lourdes at Easter of 1971. Twenty or thirty people from the Protestant tradition were among those who participated in this Catholic event.

In order that the gifts of this pilgrimage would not be lost, it was necessary for the participants to be members of a community that brought together people with an intellectual disability¹, their parents and friends, especially young people. Following this event, which was a time of great blessings, a great number of communities maintained and deepened the links that had been created between their members. In the course of the years other communities were created throughout the world, developing in different Christian denominations.

Thus, since its inception, the movement founded by Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu, has been increasingly aware of its specific vocation within the Churches and in society, and of its ecumenical mission.

I. The vocation of Faith and Light

Faith and Light is a community movement. At the heart of these communities are people with a more or less serious intellectual disability: children, adolescents or adults. They are surrounded by

¹ Each time the expression person with a disability is mentioned, it always means the person with an intellectual disability. This term is used throughout this document. There may be changes in a language according to different periods and cultures. Each country should adopt a term that is generally acceptable as long as it means to show respect for the person with an intellectual disability.

members of their family and friends, particularly young people. Each community is asked to be accompanied by a chaplain.

Faith and Light gives to persons with an intellectual disability the possibility of being recognized as unique persons, and using their gifts and discovering the joy of friendship.

To the parents, Faith and Light gives support in their trials and helps them to better appreciate the inner beauty of their children. A number of them, in turn, become a source of strength and an assistance to other parents who are crushed by their suffering and their daily difficulties.

The brothers and sisters of the people with an intellectual disability are called to appreciate that a person with a disability can be a source of life and unity; if this person disrupts their life, he/she can also transform and transfigure it.

Thanks to the person with an intellectual disability, the friends also come to understand that there is another world, a world other than that of competition, money and success; those who are weak and poor invite them into a world of tenderness and fidelity, of listening and of faith.

To the chaplains, Faith and Light offers the opportunity to rediscover in a new way the core of the Gospel message, the good news of Jesus Christ, announced to the poor and little ones, and to find there a source of renewal for their ministry.

The communities are not residential, but rather communities whose members meet at least once per month and create between themselves links which become deeper and deeper through the sharing of their difficulties and their hope: sharing times of festivity, prayer and the Eucharist and/or other worship celebrations. These communities are usually made up of about thirty people.

1. A community that meets

Each meeting includes a time of getting together to talk and to listen to one another. The essential thing is to form personal relationships within which we discover the suffering and the gifts of one another, where we learn to know someone else by name. Sharing in small groups enables each person to express him/herself through words or other forms of communication, e.g. drawings, modelling, mimes or gestures. In this way we seek to “be with”, carrying one another’s burdens, to encourage and support each other and to respond to the needs of each one. Through friendship, made up of tenderness and fidelity, we become signs of the love of God for one another.

2. A community of fiesta and celebration

From faithful friendship springs the joy characteristic of the Faith and Light community. It is God who calls us together and enables us to discover the covenant that unites us: we are no longer alone. Meetings are characterized by moments of joy when we sing or dance or share a meal. From time to time a day of celebration enables us to invite guests who are moved by the discovery of the capacity of someone with an intellectual disability to create this joyful atmosphere. When it comes to celebration the person with an intellectual disability is often less disabled than others, because he/she is not imprisoned by convention, worry about efficiency or fear of what others may think. People with disabilities live more simply in the present moment; their humility and transparency make them naturally disposed towards community festivity.

But in the community we must not forget those who are not able to enter into the celebration and shut in with their sadness and their fears. They also have their place at the heart of Faith and Light. They need to receive special attention so that gradually they may know the joy and peace that Jesus came to bring us, even when the difficulties and pains remain.

3. A community of prayer

Jesus came to announce the Good News to the poor. They are loved by the Father. Jesus gave His life for his flock. He feeds them

with his Body. Jesus is present in our gathering and in our celebration. He helps us to live community life with love and fidelity. We meet him in a special way in prayer, in the celebration of the Eucharist and/or in other forms of worship.

4. A community of friendship and faithfulness

Friendship deepens through time and presence. Between the monthly gatherings the members of the community choose to spend time together in smaller groups or just meeting one-to-one. They share stories, fears, dreams, hope, prayer, fun, service with others, a meal, and other activities which nurture friendship: it is “the time of fidelity”, also called the “fourth time”.

5. A community for taking root and integrating

Persons with an intellectual disability play an essential role in the human community, society and Churches. In order to exercise their gifts and to grow as persons, they need to fully belong to and to participate in these, giving and receiving. *“The members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think are less honourable we clothe with great honour...”* (1 Cor 12: 22-23)

Faith and Light takes great care in integrating its communities and their members in the activities of the wider Faith and Light family, society, their respective Churches, Christian communities, parishes, etc.

This vocation for taking root, which lies with every person and every community, leads us to discover also our ecumenical vocation and mission.

Today, Faith and Light communities have their roots in different Christian traditions: Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant. Most often the members of a community belong to the same Church. Some communities are interdenominational. All Christians are called to find a deep expression of their faith and their love of Jesus within their own Church. At community meeting, they seek

how they may worship together, united as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

All of them are called to discover and appreciate with joy the truly Christian values that have their source in their common patrimony.

Faith and Light believes that the person who is weak and disabled can become a source of unity in society and in each Church and also between Churches and nations.

In families where there is long-standing disagreement, which has never been resolved, reconciliation is often brought about through a serious crisis. Grievances are forgotten and hard feelings break down. Communion in the Cross prepares a resurrection in rediscovered brotherly love. Thus it may be between Christians of different denominations who meet around the weakest and most rejected person whose very life may be threatened.

Lack of humility and of simplicity of heart is a serious obstacle to communion between Christians. Persons with an intellectual disability, by the very radiance of their poverty, lead Christians of different denominations into the beatitude of poverty of heart and thus allow them to rediscover the spirit of God.

II. The inspiration of Faith and Light

1. Each person is loved by God

Faith and Light is founded on the belief that each person with an intellectual disability is fully a person with all the rights of a human being: above all the right to be loved, recognized and respected for himself or herself and in the choices he/she makes; the right also to receive whatever help is necessary in order to grow at every level, spiritual and human. Faith and Light also believes that every person, able-bodied or disabled, is equally loved by God and that Jesus lives in them, even if the person concerned can barely express this. Faith and Light believes that every person, even the most disabled, is called to deepen his or her life in Jesus, to receive all the spiritual richness from his/her Church, sacraments, liturgical

tradition, etc. He/she is called to be a source of grace and peace for the whole community, and also for the Churches and for all humanity.

Faith and Light believes in the words of Saint Paul: *"God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong"*. (1 Cor 1, 27)

2. The need for a community

In order to live his/her faith, everyone, even the person with the most severe disability, needs to meet real friends in order to create together a warm environment in which each one may grow in faith and love. Those who come to Faith and Light to meet people with intellectual disabilities must come in a spirit of receiving from them their specific gifts while sharing their own gifts with them.

In front of a severely disfigured person whose words and gestures are often difficult to understand or even non-existent, the spontaneous reaction is often to look the other way and flee. This reaction emerges often out of misunderstanding and fear but it can also reveal egoism and hardness of the heart. To create a real and liberating relationship with people with intellectual disabilities, *"our hearts of stone must be changed into hearts of flesh."*

Jesus and his Holy Spirit can transform our hearts to enable us to welcome the poor and rejected person and to recognize them in all their human reality and spiritual depth. This transformation of love will lead us to recognize the face of Jesus in ourselves and in the other.

We are led along this path of conversion and of the faithfulness in love by the witness of Mary. Mary and the disciple whom Jesus loved, present with the suffering Jesus, show us a way of living this same loving and faithful presence with our friends in the community. Mary teaches us, like a caring mother, how to carry human suffering together and to live out of the resurrection. In spite of and through suffering, the community becomes a place of peace and joy, mediator or reveller of the gifts that God has given to

those with an intellectual disability: that is their capacity for welcome and for love, their simplicity and their rejection of conventions. In a society based on usefulness and power, people with disabilities may not be efficient but they are nonetheless prophetic in the area of the heart and of tenderness, and in what is essential in the human person. And so those who are poor evangelize the rest of us.

3. Accompaniment toward a deeper human maturity

In order to help people with intellectual disabilities to find peace of heart, hope and the desire to grow, it is certainly necessary to see them in the light of the Gospel, but also to understand their human needs in their suffering, and to know how to respond. For this, we must gradually acquire human experience and the necessary knowledge. Those who are involved in Faith and Light must become competent in the way they accompany people who suffer or are in difficulties.

III. Faith and Light activities

1. A community movement

Faith and Light is a community movement. The essential lies in the links of trust and in friendship created between its members, links having their source in Jesus and reaching fulfilment in Him.

2. Meetings, holiday camps and pilgrimages

The communities may have many activities other than the regular meetings. They arise according to the needs and creativity of individuals and the inspiration from God. Among these initiatives are holiday camps, retreats and pilgrimages, etc.

On the other hand, certain communities organize means of welcoming and animating activities for people with intellectual disabilities to enable their parents to have a rest.

There are some activities that are not the province of Faith and Light: for example, the creation or management of institutions, res-

idential homes, schools, workshops or holiday homes. These we leave to appropriately qualified associations, which could be inspired by Faith and Light.

3. Cooperation with others

While keeping the spirit and mission of Faith and Light, it is important that Faith and Light communities cooperate as much as possible with other associations and movements¹³ that are at the service of people with an intellectual disability and their families.

4. One world-wide family Faith and Light

Communities across the world form the branches of one big international family. Within each province, each country, we carry one another's burdens, sufferings and joys. Solidarity is expressed by sharing financial support for the life of Faith and Light but also by sharing the benefits of their particular gifts, their friendship, the wisdom of their experience, and their faithfulness in prayer. As members of a single family, communities seek to live in love and unity.

A Charter was proposed at the General Assembly on 26 October 1980 (Lourdes). It was adopted provisionally for one-year period of study and modification by National Coordinators. The Charter was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in 1982 (Wetherby, England). Further modifications were adopted by the General Assemblies in 1984 (Rome), 1986 (Santo Domingo), 1990 (Edinburgh), 1994 (Warsaw), 1998 (Québec), 2002 (Rome), 2006 (Madrid), 2013 (Leeds).

Any new amendment shall be proposed by the Board of Directors. A 90% majority vote of the General Assembly is required to amend the Charter.

Note: The St Paul quotations used above are drawn from the NRSV of the New Testament.

The Constitution

I. Foreword

1. The purpose of this Constitution is to present how the movement is organised and to define its different levels of responsibility.
2. This Constitution cannot be dissociated from the Charter of Faith and Light, which is its preamble and defines its spirit.
3. The Constitution is consistent with the statutes of the International association of Faith and Light, which define the objectives of the association and the statutory legal requirements for the operation of the movement.
4. The Constitution cannot anticipate all aspects of the life in Faith and Light. It is important to give priority to the spirit rather than the letter and to show flexibility by taking into account specific situations and local realities while pursuing a collegial rather than an individual approach.

II. The objectives of the International association of Faith and Light

5. The objectives of the International association of Faith and Light are:
 - to bring into being “Faith and Light” communities across the world with a view to creating deep bonds between those with an intellectual disability¹, their families and friends. These communities gather regularly in the spirit of the Charter for meetings of friendship, celebration, sharing, reflection and prayer, as well as for any other initiatives supported by the international coordinating team,

¹ Each country should keep the expression commonly used, so long as it shows respect for the person.

- to create amicable bonds of support between these different communities, particularly through international meetings and pilgrimages,
- to ensure, at all levels, formation sessions adapted to the different members: those with an intellectual disability, their families and their friends and those who have a responsibility or engage in a service in Faith and Light,
- to organise solidarity between economically advantaged provinces and provinces in economic difficulty,
- to promote the integration of these communities and the people that they bring together into all human and Christian communities while ensuring respect for each particular culture and each religious tradition,
- to collaborate with associations that help the person with an intellectual disability to develop his/her human and spiritual capacities and seek to give him/her their rightful place in society and in his/her Church,
- to give testimony to the attitude of Jesus with regard to persons with an intellectual disability, fully recognising them as children of God who are capable of a spiritual life and of true holiness.

III. Exercising responsibility

A. Responsibility of the members

6. Every member of Faith and Light has the responsibility to renew and deepen his/her commitment to live better the spirit of the Charter. It is also their responsibility to involve themselves in the organisation of activities that nourish the life of the community and contribute to the support of the provincial and international family.

B. Responsibilities of Faith and Light

7. It is the responsibility of Faith and Light to establish and maintain a structure that enables proper organisation and decisions. This structure supports the members and their communities in their continuous growth and their fidelity towards the most vulnerable members.

8. Any responsibility in Faith and Light is seen as a service. Service is the essential dimension required to safeguard and promote the fundamental values of Faith and Light and, at the same time, to foster the development of our mission in the world.
9. In Faith and Light, there are three circles of responsibility: the community, the province and the international. In each circle, care must be taken to maintain the balance between a good representation of the members and an effective and respectful governance of the people, as well as giving the necessary support to the leaders through accompaniment and formation.

IV. The community

10. A Faith and Light community is made up of people with an intellectual disability, surrounded by their family members and friends (in more or less equal numbers) who meet regularly, at least once a month. A chaplain is part of the community.
11. A community may be created from a group of about ten people who adhere to the Charter and the Constitution. Once there are more than fifty members, it becomes necessary to bring a second community to life.
12. Once a year, all members of the community meet to reaffirm their commitment to the community for the coming year. Also, they evaluate the activities of the past year, establish priorities and decide which activities will be organised in the coming year. The community delegates to a coordinating team the task of planning and organising these activities.

A. The coordinating team

13. Role

The coordinating team is responsible for the life of the community. It meets between the monthly community gatherings in order to set priorities, to prepare and evaluate the community meetings, and other community activities decided by the members. It

maintains the spirit and shares the responsibilities. Its strength lies in its unity.

14. Composition

The coordinating team is made up of four to eight people, including at least one parent, one friend, a chaplain² and, as much as possible, a person with an intellectual disability. The members of this team are chosen by the members of the community. The coordinating team is renewed regularly.

B. The community coordinator³

15. The community coordinator is elected by the community members, in the presence of the vice provincial coordinator. The community coordinator leads and animates the coordinating team.

16. The community coordinator's role is to:

- foster unity,
- guide and encourage the coordinating team and the community,
- distribute to the members of the community information about Faith and Light International, which usually comes through the accompanying vice provincial coordinator,
- lead the community's delegation to the provincial assembly.

17. Mandate

Three years, renewable once.

C. The community chaplain

18. The community chaplain is chosen by the coordinating team or the community itself for a three-year term, which is renewable.

D. Creation of a new community

19. The conditions for creating a new Faith and Light community are set out in appendix I.

² Other expressions may be used, according to the tradition of each denomination.

³ In each circle of responsibility in Faith and Light, the coordinator is always a layperson, either male or female.

E. A community leaving Faith and Light or being asked to leave

20. The conditions for a community to leave Faith and Light or to be asked to leave are set out in appendix II.

V. The province

21. The provinces are defined as community groupings. They are the branches of the international family and bring together between 15 and 40 recognised communities. The number of communities by province is flexible and depends on cultural, linguistic and geographic circumstances. There may be several provinces in a country where there are more than 40 communities, and, conversely, communities from various countries can constitute a province made up of countries where there are only a few communities. The size and composition of provinces are periodically revised with the international vice coordinators who accompany the provinces and submitted to the board of directors by the international coordinator for approval.
22. To facilitate the accompaniment and the implementation of activities, a province with a large number of countries or communities can organise them at a national or regional level.
23. The principle adopted by Faith and Light International is the creation of one legal entity per country⁴.
24. This organisation can be adapted in the provinces for which it can be difficult to put into practice. Such arrangements are prepared together with the international vice coordinator who accompanies the province and are presented for approval to the board of directors by the international coordinator.

⁴A Faith and Light country is a national territory (or a geographically remote local entity) in which there are at least two communities in probation or one recognised community.

A. The provincial assembly

25. Authority for the province lies with the provincial assembly, which reflects the experience of the communities and their members as well as their concerns, and establishes large common orientations. It approves the list of the provincial nomination committee members proposed by the old and new provincial teams. It elects the provincial coordinator. It validates the choice of the vice coordinators decided by the new provincial team⁵.

26. Composition

The provincial assembly is made up of the provincial team and delegations sent by the communities. Particular attention is given to members with an intellectual disability. Each delegation from a recognised community has one vote at this assembly.

The members of the provincial team take part in the provincial assembly with voting rights.

The vice international coordinator accompanying the province is also invited to animate the election without the right to vote.

Due to local circumstances another, more appropriate solution may need to be chosen; this will be decided with the help of the vice international coordinator who accompanies the province.

27. Meeting frequency

Every four years.

B. The provincial team

28. Led by the provincial coordinator, the provincial team coordinates the implementation of the orientations decided by the provincial assembly and governs the movement in the province. With the support of the accompanying vice international coordinator, it ensures that community coordinators are elected in accordance with the spirit of the movement, that they receive appropriate

⁵ In the event a vice coordinator is replaced in the course of his/her mandate, the provincial team, on a proposal by the nomination committee, will appoint a new vice coordinator and his/her appointment will be approved by the next provincial assembly.

formation to accomplish their role and that they are supported and accompanied in their mission. It determines the formation activities in the province. It ensures that communities can flourish and radiate in a climate of friendship with the neighbouring communities.

This team, after discernment, also appoints the vice provincial coordinators from a list submitted by the provincial nomination committee or by the communities in question.

The provincial team decides the programme of the provincial assembly, the number of delegates from each community and the guests to invite.

29. The provincial team designates the province representatives to the general assembly and to the international meeting.

30. Composition

The provincial team is made up of the provincial coordinator, the provincial vice coordinators, the provincial chaplain and the provincial treasurer. It may include two members-at-large to reflect as much as possible the make-up of the province.

31. Frequency of meeting

If possible, twice a year.

32. Project Teams

The provincial team may appoint one or several project teams to organise and carry out activities for the benefit of communities. Where appropriate, the provincial project team managers take part in certain meetings without the right to vote.

C. The provincial coordinator

33. The provincial coordinator leads the provincial team. The provincial coordinator's role is to:

- accompany the vice provincial coordinators and share any information in its possession,
- lead the provincial delegation to the general assembly and participate in the coordinators' council,

- ensure that those in the provincial coordinator’s province who are likely to take on responsibilities in Faith and Light International are actually identified,
- forge links with other provincial coordinators.

34. Method of election

The provincial nomination committee in Appendix III, with the assistance of the vice international coordinator accompanying the province, consults the communities and submits names to the provincial assembly which elects the coordinator. The Vice international coordinator or the vice international coordinator’s delegate animates the election. In the exceptional situation where a coordinator has to be replaced during a mandate, the vice international coordinator, after consultation with the communities, appoints an interim provincial coordinator.

35. Mandate

Four years, renewable once.

D. The vice provincial coordinators

36. They accompany the community coordinators as well as the correspondents from new communities. They assist them in their service by:

- creating links between communities, proposing and supporting intercommunity formation, gatherings and activities,
- providing community coordinators with all the information about the life of the province and of Faith and Light International,
- visiting each community that they accompany at least once a year and by establishing additional contact by telephone or by video-conference,
- animating the election of the community coordinators.

37. Number of vice provincial coordinators

At least one for every four to eight communities, this figure is to be adjusted according to the provincial realities.

When a province covers several national entities, at least one vice coordinator is appointed for each country.

38. Method of appointment

The provincial nomination committee or, if it is unable, the vice international coordinator accompanying the province consults the communities and prepares a list of names of possible leaders. After discernment and with the help of the vice international coordinator, the new provincial team chooses the vice coordinators from the list provided by the nomination committee in order to form the new provincial team.

39. Mandate

Four years, renewable once.

E. The provincial chaplain

40. The provincial chaplain is chosen by the provincial team. This choice is, wherever possible, approved by the competent church authority.

Local conditions may make it difficult to appoint a provincial chaplain. The provincial team is then to seek an appropriate solution with the help of the vice international coordinator accompanying the province.

41. Mandate

Four years, renewable once.

F. The provincial treasurer

42. The provincial treasurer is appointed by the provincial team and has the responsibility, under the authority of the provincial team to:

- administer the finances and to help find the funds necessary for the functioning of the different levels of Faith and Light,
- take part in provincial team meetings with voting rights,

To better suit circumstances in the province, one treasurer may be appointed per country, without voting rights, under the responsibility of the Provincial Treasurer.

43. Mandate

Four years, renewable once.

G. The provincial meeting

44. The provincial team prepares and facilitates the provincial meeting. This is where and when community coordinators have an opportunity for sharing, reflection and formation, in order to better understand the objectives of Faith and Light and how the movement operates. This provincial meeting is also a time of deepening, renewal and celebration during which a true provincial community is created. If possible, members of the communities are invited to the provincial meeting.
45. Meetings can be organised at regional or national level to ensure they are best adapted to circumstances in the province. The vice international coordinator accompanying the province is invited to attend the provincial meeting. If unable to do so, the vice international coordinator may send a delegate.
46. Meeting frequency
Every two years or, if possible, every year.

H. Creation of new provinces

47. The conditions for creating new provinces are set out in appendix IV.

I. Dismissal or resignation of a coordinator

48. The conditions concerning the dismissal or resignation of a coordinator are set out in appendix VII.

VI. The international organisation

A. The general assembly

49. The general assembly represents the members of the Faith and Light movement from all over the world. As the first and ultimate authority of the movement, it is responsible for establishing its priorities and overall direction, after consultation of the communities and the provinces.
 - It discerns and elects the following members of the board of directors: the president, vice-president, international treasurer,

international coordinator, deputy international coordinator and two members.

- It approves the possible amendments to the Charter and the Constitution proposed by the board of directors.

50. Composition and voting rights

The participants in the general assembly are:

- the members of the board of directors,
- the vice international coordinators,
- the delegations from the provinces, which should reflect their reality as much as possible: participation of people with a disability is recommended, each country in the province will be represented,
- the international secretariat,
- guests .

It shall be ensured:

- that countries which are not attached to a province and have at least two recognised communities can participate,
- that all of the Christian traditions are represented.

Participants with voting rights are:

- the members of the board of directors,
- the vice international coordinators,
- the provincial coordinators or their delegates.

51. The board of directors decides the programme of the general assembly, the number of delegates from each province and the guests to invite.

52. Frequency of meeting

Every five years. The general assembly usually takes place during the international meeting.

B. The board of directors

53. The board of directors acts in accordance with the orientations given by the general assembly.

- It governs the movement and is entrusted with the mission and vision of Faith and Light, the implementation of which is shared with the international coordinating team.
- It delegates the coordination of the movement to the international coordinating team.
- It appoints project teams (cf. appendix V) to carry out projects in the international context
- It approves the list of characteristics and skills for the identification of provincial coordinators and vice international coordinators.
- It regularly revises the size and composition of the provinces on a proposal from the International Coordinating Team.
- It approves the creation of new provinces according to the needs and development of Faith and Light in the world.
- It approves the appointment of the provincial correspondent of a new province.
- It approves all official documents and booklets of Faith and Light International.
- It calls and organises the general assembly.
- Whenever necessary for decision-making, the board of directors will consult the international coordinating team.
- The board of directors of Faith and Light International complies with the rules and practices required by the French Law for Associations.
- It ensures that the values of Faith and Light, as written in its Charter, effectively address the reality of today's world.

54. Composition

The board of directors is made up of a president, a vice-president, the international chaplain, the international coordinator, the deputy international coordinator, the international treasurer and two members-at-large. These two people may be from outside Faith and Light and are chosen for the openness which they can bring to the work of the board of directors.

The general secretary participates without the right to vote. Leaders of project teams at the international level and vice international coordinators may be invited to certain meetings without the right to vote.

As Faith and Light international has its registered office in France and is subject to French laws and regulations, the international treasurer must be French and reside in France.

55. Method of election of the board of directors

One year before the general assembly, the international nomination committee invites provinces to submit names of people who are likely to be appropriate for the posts of the board of directors to be filled. The committee then shares this list of all the people who meet the criteria with the board of directors and the international coordinating team. The board and the international coordinating team may then provide more information regarding the people selected. The international nomination committee may also consult any person able to provide other relevant information regarding them.

Based on these consultations and all the information collected, a restricted list of names is drawn up by the international nomination committee. This list is sent to all levels of responsibility in Faith and Light International, which will elect the president, vice-president, international coordinator, deputy international coordinator, international treasurer and two members, four months prior to the general assembly.

During the general assembly, before the elections, the international nomination committee will explain the process that has been followed up until the presentation of the list of the people selected.

56. Age limit and number of mandates in board of directors

There is an age limit for members of the board of directors: they must be younger than 70 at the time they begin their role or at the time of any potential re-election. There may be exceptions to this principle, but only if approved by the general assembly.

The number of mandates – consecutive or otherwise – held in the board of directors is limited to two.

57. Frequency of meeting

- Once a year for the plenary meeting with the international coordinating team.

- Two other times a year, either in the form of a meeting or by video- conference.

C. Role of the members of the board of directors

a. The president

58. The president leads the board of directors and has legal responsibility for the association:
- oversees the common work between the board of directors and the international coordinating team by organising a joint meeting of these two bodies once a year. The venue for the annual meeting of the international coordinating team will therefore be the same as for one meeting of the board of directors,
 - accompanies the International coordinator,
 - has an authority of appeal with a right of a deciding vote in the event of an unresolved conflict or the impossibility of reaching a consensus,
 - the vice-president replaces the president if the president is not available.

59. Mandate

Five years, renewable once.

b. The vice-president

60. The vice-president assists the president in all of the president's missions and replaces the president in the event of absence.

61. Mandate

Five years, renewable once.

c. The international coordinator

62. The international coordinator is responsible for the implementation of the broad orientations delegated by the board of directors; leads and animates the international coordinating team, accompanies each international vice coordinator, helped by the deputy international coordinator.

The international coordinator's action also focuses on:

- the general organisation of the international operation,

- formation,
- the identification of those showing leadership potential at various levels of Faith and Light International, in cooperation with the provinces. Therefore the international coordinator relies on the members of the international coordinating team.

63. Mandate

Five years, renewable once.

d. Deputy international coordinator

64. In order to ensure balance in background and culture, a deputy international coordinator assists the international coordinator in all the international coordinator's missions, and particularly in the accompaniment of the vice-international coordinators. The deputy international coordinator replaces the international coordinator in the event of absence.

65. Mandate

Five years, renewable once.

e. The international chaplain

66. The international chaplain:

- is chosen by the board of directors from a list of names submitted by the international nomination committee. This choice is approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority,
- is responsible for the spiritual orientation of the movement, while respecting the charisma of Faith and Light,
- reviews the various publication or material of Faith and Light international relating to spiritual or religious subjects,
- has a leading role in organising retreats in accordance with the spirituality of the movement.

67. Mandate

Five years, renewable once.

f. The international treasurer

68. The international treasurer is responsible, under the authority of the president, for managing the finances and helping to find nec-

essary funds for the life of the international association. The international treasurer has to comply with the spirit of the Charter in all particulars.

69. Mandate

Five years, renewable once.

g. The general secretary

70. The general secretary, reporting to the president, has a working relationship with the international coordinator for all matters concerning the life of the movement. The general secretary is appointed by the board of directors after it has selected one candidate in accordance with the strict terms and criteria of professionalism. It is desirable that the general secretary is a member of a community and the general secretary must fully share the spirit the Charter.

71. The role of the General Secretary is specified in Appendix VI. It may evolve over time and in accordance with the needs defined by the board of directors.

D. The international coordinating team

72. Led by the international coordinator, the international coordinating team is responsible for the coordination of the movement, delegated by the board of directors. Its role is:

- to listen to the needs of the different provinces so as to respond to their hopes.
- To encourage and facilitate the sharing of experience among the provinces.
- To ensure that leaders in the movement are identified and chosen in accordance with the spirit of the movement, that they receive appropriate formation to exercise their role, and that they are supported and accompanied to accomplish their mission.
- This team remains in contact with the official channels of the various Churches in order to keep them informed of the activities of Faith and Light and to receive guidance from them.

- It is responsible for the programme of the international meeting.
- It draws up requests which will be presented to the board of directors by the international coordinator.

73. Composition

The international coordinating team is made up of the international coordinator, the deputy international coordinator, the international chaplain and the vice international coordinators. The general secretary is invited to participate without a right to vote.

74. The vice international coordinators

- Their main role is to accompany, encourage and assist the provincial coordinators to carry out their responsibilities.
- They visit each province under their responsibility at least once a year and establish additional contacts, be it by telephone or by video-conference.
- They are responsible for the implementation of formation in their provinces
- They ensure that those showing leadership potential are identified at the different levels of Faith and Light International, through consultation with the provinces.
- They encourage solidarity and create links between provinces by proposing and supporting inter-provincial gatherings and activities.

75. Frequency of meeting

- Once per year on the occasion of the plenary meeting with the board of directors.
- And other meetings during the year, by video-conference or otherwise, as decided by the international coordinating team.

76. Relationship with the board of directors

At the end of each international coordinating team's meeting, the international coordinator reports on the work of the international coordinating team to the board of directors.

77. Method of appointment

The international nomination committee consults the provinces,

the international coordinating team and the board of directors and then presents a list of names to the international coordinator, who submits a choice of vice international coordinators to the board of directors for appointment.

78. Mandate

Five years, renewable once.

E. The coordinators' council

79. The coordinators' council is animated by the international coordinator and the international coordinating team. It is a place of consultation, of mutual support and formation for the various provincial coordinators, in the spirit of the Charter. It is a time of listening and sharing, during which coordinators have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the objectives of Faith and Light and the ways in which the movement operates. This time of reflection is the opportunity to evaluate how the priorities decided by the general assembly have been implemented. It is also a time when a true international community is created.

80. Composition

The coordinators' council brings together the international coordinating team and the provincial coordinators.

The president is invited to these meetings, as is the general secretary and anyone else deemed useful.

81. Frequency of meeting

At least once between each general assembly.

F. The international meeting

82. An international meeting is organised at least once every five years simultaneously with the general assembly. It is organised by the international coordinating team, who determines the content and animates its activities.

83. The international meeting is a time of reflection and sharing during which the participants have the opportunity to deepen their commitment in accordance with the spirit of the Charter. This time of deepening and renewal is also an opportunity for

formation and celebration where a true international community is created.

84. Composition

The participants at the international meeting are the same as those at the general assembly which is held at the same time.

VII. Adopting the Constitution

85. The general assembly adopts the Constitution by a majority of 75%. Amendments are proposed by the board of directors and agreed to by the same percentage.

A history of the Constitution is in appendix VIII.

VIII. Appendices

1. Creation of a new community

A group wishing to become a Faith and Light community or several people who would like to start a new community contact the provincial coordinator of the nearest province. A vice international coordinator may accompany the new group when the distances from the nearest province are too great.

When the necessary conditions are met¹, the community begins a probationary period² and a community correspondent is appointed for a one-year mandate, renewable once. The correspondent is accompanied in this mission by the vice provincial coordinator. The role of this correspondent is the same as that of the community coordinator. During the probationary period, he participates to the provincial assembly in an advisory capacity.

When the community is recognised, the vice provincial coordinator or vice international coordinator accompanying the community prepares and animates the process of discerning and electing the community coordinator.

2. A community leaving Faith and Light or being asked to leave

A recognised community, which feels that it is no longer its vocation to adhere to the Charter and Constitution of Faith and Light, will leave the movement after having reflected with the provincial team³ on the reasons for its decision and the means of its departure. The provincial team will ask a community to leave when it explicitly

¹ The details and conditions for beginning a probationary period and officially recognising a community are detailed in the Leader's Handbook.

² The duration of which may not exceed two years.

³ If the community operates in a province, or with the designated vice International coordinator if the community is too far from an existing Province.

or implicitly refuses to comply with the Charter and Constitution, or when it is no longer willing to participate in the life of the wider Faith and Light family or to financially support the operation of the international movement.

It cannot leave without the provincial team referring the matter to the vice international coordinator. The provincial team will help the community, if it wishes, to discover and define its new orientation. The community will no longer be called Faith and Light.

3. Nomination Committees

The mission of the international and provincial nomination committees is to consult the communities/provinces and to lead the discernment process of competent people who could be chosen for a role of responsibility. The profile of the international and provincial nomination committee members is drawn up by the board of directors.

The board of directors draws up a profile of the coordinators and vice coordinators at provincial and international levels. It sends this to the international nomination committee.

The role of international and provincial nomination committees is not to elect or to appoint a person, but to search for the most suitable people and to receive names from communities or provinces. Their role is also to review these proposed nominations according to the list of characteristics and skills drawn up by the board of directors, and to submit the list of candidates for decision either to the assembly, in the case of an election of a coordinator, or to the coordinator in the case of the choice of a vice coordinator.

The nomination committees must ensure that:

- accurate schedules for the organisation of elections are distributed and known to everyone within a specified timeframe preceding the election in question,
 - 18 months for the international,
 - 12 months for the provincial,

- the nominees have given their prior consent to the post in question,
- the voters know in advance – within a sufficient timeframe – the name(s) of the candidate(s) for the post. the nominees for the board of directors can be presented only for one position. Two exceptions can be considered :
 - the same person may be nominated for the roles of president and/or vice president,
 - similarly the same person may be nominated for the roles of international coordinator and/or deputy international coordinator.

The board of directors and the provincial team submit the names of the members of the nomination committee to their respective assemblies. The assembly then approves their appointment.

Method of election of the international nomination committee

- The general assembly delegates its power to the board of directors and to the international coordinating team to carry out this election at their first annual joint meeting following the general assembly.
- Prior to this meeting, the members of the board of directors and the vice-international coordinators will have proposed names to the president of the board of directors. The list, which is then drawn up, will be subject to discernment on the day of the meeting.
- After the election, the president of the board of directors will send out the names of the people elected to all Faith and Light coordinators around the world.

Mandates

Duration:

- At the international level: five years, renewable once.
- At the provincial level: four years, renewable once.

Principle:

It is desirable that at least half of the members of the nomination committees be replaced by new persons at the end of each mandate.

4. Creation of new provinces

When the number of communities in a province grows to more than fifty, when the distances are too great, or for any other important reasons, the provincial team can request that the province be divided into two provinces and make a proposal. The request is forwarded by the international coordinator to the board of directors, which makes the decision. One or both new provinces may receive the status of recognised province if they meet the required criteria¹.

Admission of a province to a probationary period and recognition

In a remote area where the movement is beginning, and where there are at least seven to ten recognised communities, the accompanying vice international coordinator may request that a new province be admitted in a probationary period.

The request is forwarded by the international coordinator to the board of directors. If accepted, the board of directors appoints a provincial correspondent for a one-year mandate, renewable. This provincial correspondent sets up and coordinates a provincial team composed of the community coordinators. The provincial correspondent has the same role as the provincial coordinator. The provinces in probation have no voting rights at the general assembly.

A province is recognised if it meets specific conditions prescribed by the board of directors. When a province is recognised, the accompanying vice international coordinator prepares and conducts the process of discerning and electing the provincial coordinator.

5. Project Teams

Project teams may be organized for a wide variety of aims: the 'guidelines' project, 'pilgrimage' project, 'financial management' pro-

¹ The conditions for probation and recognition of a province are described in the Leader's handbook.

ject, 'general assembly' project, 'communications and external relations' project or 'fundraising' project, etc.

They are set up by the board of directors at international level or by the provincial team at provincial level. The project teams are under their authority and are accountable to them.

A project team generally has a limited duration (the time to bring its project to fruition). The mandate entrusted to it at the beginning of the mission specifies the objectives, the agreed means and the deadlines within which the mission must be completed.

6. Role of general secretary

The general secretary:

- Is responsible for all Faith and Light International organisational issues and must speak several languages.
- Runs the international secretariat, which reports to the general secretary.
- The scope of general secretary's activities touches on all the work carried out by Faith and Light International (compliance with budgets, investment, personnel management, insurance and premises, IT equipment, database, website, internal and external communication, etc.).
- Participates, without a right to vote, in meetings of the board of directors, international coordinating team, the general assembly and the coordinators' council, for which the general secretary provides the minutes and agendas.
- Is responsible for the conservation of and access to the archives of Faith and Light international.
- Will be subject to an annual appraisal by the president of the board of directors, assisted by the international coordinator and the international treasurer.

7. Removal from office or resignation of a coordinator

The removal from office (or resignation) of a coordinator or vice coordinator can be requested if they have ceased regular communication or participation in the life of the movement for a prolonged period. It may also be requested due to a lack of availability, competence or any other serious problem. After consultation with the community/province coordinating team members, the vice coordinator accompanying the community/province makes a request to the provincial team (in the case of a community) or to the board of directors (in the case of a province). The provincial team or the board of directors consults the coordinators and the leaders from the involved entities prior to making the final decision.

8. History of the Constitution

A Constitution was proposed at the general assembly on 26 October 1980 (Lourdes). It was provisionally adopted for a one year period. Studied and amended by the country coordinators, it was then unanimously adopted at the general assembly in 1982 (Wetherby, England).

Further modifications were adopted at the general assemblies in 1984 (Rome), 1986 (Santo Domingo), 1990 (Edinburgh), 1994 (Warsaw), 1998 (Quebec), 2002 (Rome), 2008 (Lourdes), 2013 (Leeds), 2018 (Lebanon) and 2023 (Strasbourg).

Index

Board of directors	24
Community chaplain	17
Community coordinating team	16
Community coordinator	17
Community	16
Constitution	14
Coordinators' council	31
Country	18
Creation of provinces	36
Deputy international coordinator	28
General assembly	23
General secretary	29
International chaplain	28
International coordinating team	29
International coordinator	27
International meeting	31
International treasurer	28
New community	33
Nomination committees	34
Objectives of the international association of Faith and Light	14
President	27
Probationary province	36
Project teams	36
Provincial assembly	19
Provincial chaplain	22
Provincial coordinator	20
Provincial meeting	23
Provincial team	19
Provincial treasurer	22
Removal from office or resignation of a coordinator	38
Radiation of a Community	18
Statutes of Faith and Light International	14
Vice international coordinators	30
Vice-president	27
Vice provincial coordinators	21

From faithful friendship springs the joy

Charter 1, 2