

RESOLUTION TO GENERAL CONFERENCE: OFFICIAL BOARD AS PASTOR'S CABINET

The Argument (the 'Whereas'): ¶320.5.2.2 and ¶373.2.6 Pastor's Cabinet

The Manual of the FMCIC states the following purpose/objectives for a Pastor's Cabinet in ¶373.2.6: *To assist the pastor by meeting with the pastor as a prayer cabinet, receiving recommendations and concerns arising from the congregation and reflecting on them with the pastor, and receiving recommendations and concerns from the pastor and offering support and counsel to the pastor and,*

Whereas, for many years FMCIC leaders have encouraged church boards to focus on local church mission and values in addition to their role in both selecting and caring for the Lead Pastor. As a result, many Canadian Free Methodist Churches now describe the role of the board with descriptors such as:

- The Board works with the Lead Pastor in communicating the mission, values and vision of church to members of the congregation (and other "publics");
- The Board listens to congregational perceptions re: the well-being of the church;
- The Board serves as an encouraging and advisory partner for the Lead Pastor;

In these situations, the churches do not have a separate Pastor's Cabinet. The Board functions in the capacity of Cabinet. The Board has the authority to create a pastoral relations subcommittee, or work team, in order to care for any difficulties involving the pastor which formerly had been referred to the Pastor's Cabinet.

Whereas contextual ministry requires flexible and responsive organizational structures; and many of our churches are already using alternate structures to accommodate growth or leadership styles; and

Whereas, the discussion of the Pastor's Cabinet in *The Manual* comes from an earlier day when Official Boards were larger and were intended to focus extensively on what would now be considered "committee work" or "staff work", often leaving no "space" for attention to the well being of the Pastor and the Pastor's ongoing ministry in the church. As a result;

- The Pastor's Cabinet Job description used language that in today's leadership environment is recognized as the Board's responsibility (e.g, "receiving recommendations and concerns arising from the congregation and reflecting on them with the pastor, and receiving recommendations and concerns from the pastor and offering support and counsel to the pastor");
- This earlier model sometimes resulted in unhealthy relationships between pastors and church members when it referred to taking "recommendations and concerns" to the Pastor's Cabinet instead of the Pastor involved (resulting in what is known in the

psychosocial world as “triangulation”). The implied triangulation violates the clear scriptural command to take things to a brother or sister directly (cf. Matthew 18:15ff);

Whereas, the current direction of *The Manual* puts in place two bodies (Official Board and Pastor’s Cabinet) with significant overlapping roles in processing input from the congregation and pastor about priorities and in their support and counsel of the pastor;

Whereas, the Official Board has the authority to create a pastoral relations subcommittee or work team to care for any difficulties involving the pastor which formerly had been referred to the Pastor’s Cabinet;

The Resolution:

Therefore be it resolved that the Official Board be charged with the responsibilities previously assigned to the Pastor’s Cabinet. We recommend the following changes to *The Manual*:

FROM:

¶5.2.2 Pastor’s Cabinet:

The pastor’s cabinet shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the society. It shall have no fewer than three members and no more than seven, who shall be members of the society. Alternatively, the society may direct to have the official board serve as the pastor’s cabinet. At least one delegate shall be a member. (See ¶373.2.6)

TO:

¶5.2.2 Pastor’s Cabinet:

In many of our local churches, the Board serves the functions of the traditional Pastor’s Cabinet; however, should the board desire to create a Pastor’s Cabinet, the following directions should be followed:

- The Purposes of the Pastor’s Cabinet will be clearly communicated to the whole church so as to avoid any misunderstanding or overlap between Board and Pastor’s Cabinet;
- The Pastor’s Cabinet will assist the pastor by meeting with the pastor as a prayer cabinet, receiving recommendations and concerns arising from the congregation and reflecting on them with the pastor, and receiving recommendations and concerns from the pastor and offering support and counsel to the pastor;
- Candidates for the Pastor’s Cabinet are to be selected by the Pastor but will be approved and appointed by the board;
- The members of the Pastor’s Cabinet are to be mature, trustworthy individuals who have a healthy participation in the life of the local church and can be trusted with sensitive and confidential information. The majority of members Pastor’s Cabinet must be local church members, including at least one board member;
- The Pastor’s Cabinet shall be no more than 6 members;

AND FROM SECTION:

¶373.2.6 Pastor's Cabinet

The Pastor's Cabinet is made up of members of the society, nominated by the Nominating Committee, elected by the society for the purpose of making ministry more effective. It may be elected by the society as a separate committee. The society may also assign the responsibility of choosing the pastor's cabinet to the official board. In the latter case, the official board may designate several of its members to serve the functions of a pastor's cabinet.

The pastor's cabinet will assist the pastor by meeting with the pastor as a prayer cabinet, receiving recommendations and concerns arising from the congregation and reflecting on them with the pastor, and receiving recommendations and concerns from the pastor and offering support and counsel to the pastor.

The members of the pastor's cabinet need to be mature, trustworthy individuals who can be entrusted with sensitive and confidential information.

TO

¶373.2.6 Pastor's Cabinet:

In many of our local churches, the Board serves the functions of the traditional Pastor's Cabinet; however, should a local church choose to create a Pastor's Cabinet, the following directions should be followed:

- The Purposes of the Pastor's Cabinet will be clearly communicated to the whole church so as to avoid any misunderstanding or overlap between Board and Pastor's Cabinet;
- The Pastor's Cabinet will assist the pastor by meeting with the pastor as a prayer cabinet, receiving recommendations and concerns arising from the congregation and reflecting on them with the pastor, and receiving recommendations and concerns from the pastor and offering support and counsel to the pastor.
- The members of the Pastor's Cabinet need to be members of the local church, mature, trustworthy individuals who can be entrusted with sensitive and confidential information.
- The Pastor's Cabinet shall be no more than 6 members;
- at least one member will be a board member;
- the Pastor will select candidates for the Cabinet and bring this slate to the Board for final approval.