Minutes of the First Sitting of the 2021 General Conference

September 12, 2020

The Eleventh General Conference of the Free Methodist Church in Canada had the first sitting on Saturday, September 12, 2020 via Zoom teleconferencing software at 12:00 pm EDT.

Jessica Isaak, Zoom Moderator gave instructions as to how to navigate Zoom, how to change the name in the screen so that their names and the church they are from are visible on their screen.

The participants were informed that the nine motions up for vote would be done using the Simply Voting software and would be done throughout the course of the meeting.

The following individuals helped to facilitate the meeting:  
Alison McKinnon – Chat Moderator

Vinola Pakkianathen – Voting Teller

Lisa Howden – Technical Support

Elle Pyke - Technical Support

Jasmine Rock – Technical Support

Susan DePlanché – Support

Lindsay Noel – Translator

Eliana Wolfe – Voting Translator

Kalesha Peters – Recording Secretary

Rev. Ian Isaak was appointed by the Board of Administration as the Parliamentarian.

Bishop Cliff Fletcher was given the floor to open the meeting. He recognized the strangeness of meeting like this in the midst of the pandemic. He encouraged those attending to have a spirit of prayer and readiness in order to participate in the discussion and the vote.

After a time of prayer Harold Gonyou, Chair of the Board of Administration took over the meeting. He encouraged everyone to have patience while participating in the meeting using Zoom. The purpose of having the early sitting of the Conference is to take care of as much business as possible before the GC 2021 meeting.

**Vote to Establish Quorum**

In order to continue the meeting, a poll for Quorum was taken via Simply Voting. It was expressed again that it will be an anonymous vote and that the identity of the voter would be unknown. Harold instructed the participants to check their email to view the nine votes that have been sent previously in order to vote.

As the vote was being taken to establish quorum a video regarding the upcoming prayer summit was shown.

**The election of a General Conference Secretary**

Rev. Daniel Graham was put forward as the secretary nominee. Harold asked that all nominations be sent to be sent to Alison McKinnon, Chat Moderator and she would communicate the nominations to Harold. This would ensure that everyone was heard and had the opportunity to register a nomination.

* A nomination for Anne Kenny was presented and Anne declined to let her name stand.

Rev. Mike Hogeboom, Chair of the Nominating Committee seconded the nomination for Daniel Graham to act as Secretary.

When the vote for quorum was closed 199 Ordained Ministers and Lay Delegates were present for the vote. 219 participants were needed for quorum.

Since quorum was not reached, Bishop Cliff Fletcher, Harold Gonyou the Chair of the Board of Administration, Rev. Ian Isaak the Parliamentarian and Rev. Greg Pulham had an off-camera discussion regarding how to proceed. It was decided that the best way forward was to take another attendance vote in case anyone had logged in since the first vote happened.

Another vote was opened in order to establish quorum and continue the meeting. The participants were instructed that all eligible voting members were to vote.

As the votes were being tallied Bishop Cliff led the participants into a time of prayer.

Adam Kline, Intercultural Engagement Team leader was given the floor to give an update on the IET and the challenge to have our life and ministry rooted in the Trinity; an important reminder of the fact that we are part of Trinitarian community in order to participate in the mission of God.

At the close of the attendance vote 219 Ordained Ministers and Lay Delegates were present, which meets quorum.

Rev. Daniel Graham was also successfully elected as Conference Secretary

**Standing Rules** See Appendix …

The next vote to be taken was that of adopting the GC 2021 Standing Rules.

On motion, the Standing Rules were adopted as presented

**Sub Report on Organization Structure** see Appendix…

Sub Report on Organization Structure was presented by Harold Gonyou giving some background information on moving the BOA toward a Governance Board model. Harold also presented the implications of how that affects the performance of the Board in fulfilling its duties.

The floor was opened to questions regarding what was presented- questions were sent to the chat Moderator.

A Simply Voting Vote for Motion 5 to accept the Sub Report on Organization Structure.

On motion, the Sub Report on Organization Structure were adopted as presented (See Appendix…)

Simply Voting for Motion 4 to accept the Agenda.

On Motion, the Agenda was adopted as presented (See Appendix )

Ian Isaak, advised the participants that if they wish to amend a motion, they will need to send it to the chat moderator and she will bring it forward to Harold.

**Update from Rev. Marc McAlister, Director of Leadership Development and Church Health**

Marc McAlister gave an update on Church Health and Leadership Development. He advised that the Regional Coaches are there for support for churches and pastors. To find out more about regional coaches, and which coaches are assigned to which churches, people can look on the FMCIC Web Page. Marc also presented on the responsibilities of Leadership Development, telling us that MEGaP continues to work and audit the system in order to ensure a system that creates and sustain healthy leaders.

Harold Gonyou went over the Agenda, to inform the participants as to the progress of agenda items.

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**Vote on Motion Five** *see Appendix…*

**Motion to Change the Size of the FMCIC Board of Administration**

WHEREAS the National Leadership Team (NLT) is moving to a team structure which allows for the inclusion of unelected resource people; this change broadens the base of support for the ministries of NLT and allows for a single BOA member as a liaison on each team;

WHEREAS it is recognized that a visionary board with an intention to guide and serve our Canadian churches requires healthy diversity in situation, experience, and understanding as well as the practical diversity of region, gender, lay/clergy, and ethnicity;

WHEREAS diversity is a key part of holistic representation while simultaneously creating an environment for growth and understanding, a smaller board size allows space for intimate connections among its members as they work for the whole;

Therefore, the Board of Administration recommends that 10 members serve on the Board of Administration. The following Manual edits are required:

***Manual edits***

▪ ***¶420.2.1 Board of Administration***

The general conference shall elect a board of administration of 10 members.

Membership should include equal ministerial and lay representation, recognizing the importance of diversity in the areas of age, gender, geography, race and ethnicity. The functions and authority of the board of administration are defined in 425.2

*Revised*: The general conference shall elect a board of administration of 10 members.

Membership should include equal ministerial and lay representation; *Recognizing the importance of diversity, we will pursue a balanced board that reflects the age, gender, geography, race and ethnicity of the FMCIC.* The functions and authority of the board of administration are defined in 425.2 (amendment indicated in italics)

***▪ ¶425 Board of Administration***

***1. Membership***

The membership of the board of administration shall consist of 10 members as defined in ¶420.2.1. The bishop shall receive notification of all board of administration meetings and minutes, and shall be entitled to be present and participate fully without vote in all meetings except those held in executive session of the board.

The floor was opened for clarifying questions regarding the motion. Keitha Ogbogu, West Springs FMC brought forth the following amendment to the motion *“Recognizing the importance of diversity, we will pursue a balanced board that reflects the age, gender, geography, race and ethnicity of the FMCIC.”*

The amendment was seconded and it was opened to the members of the Board of Administration Tamera Goller and Steven Braun who drafted the motion, to see if this would be received as a friendly amendment. Steven and Tamera accepted it as a friendly amendment- and Keitha is prepared to move ahead.

Dale Harris, Corner Church voiced that there were two things happening: diversity and reducing the size. The diversity discussion is a good one, but the reduction of the board is being clouded by the issue. By cutting the board by 2/3 raises the issue of whether the work and representation of opinion of the denomination would be heard.

A short break was taken and the meeting resumed at 2:24pm

The vote on Motion Five was taken and Keitha Ogbogu was given the floor to introduce the new Anti-Racism Task Force.

***On motion, the recommendation to reduce the board size was approved. (182 in favor)***

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**Vote on Motion Six** *see appendix…*

Dave Kreutzweiser, member of the Board of Administration, presented background information on the Personnel motion

**Motion to Change the Name, Membership and Function of the FMCIC Personnel Committee**

It is our belief that an efficient system of personnel evaluation and management should apply to all employees of the conference. This would require expanding the role of the Personnel Committee to include review or oversight of performance appraisals of not only the bishop and other national leadership team members, but also staff reporting to these supervisors. With the expanded role a larger committee would be required, and this offers the opportunity to involve greater expertise on the committee. In keeping with the governance models shifting from BOA-dominated committees to expertise-oriented teams, the Personnel Committee will now be known as the Personnel Team. As a significant part of the work would involve reviews of employees directly or not directly reporting to the bishop, the bishop will serve on the Team, but must recuse him/her self from the process of performance appraisal for him/her self. Performance appraisals for all other NLT members and conference employees will be conducted by the appropriate supervisors, but the Personnel Team will provide oversight and final sign off on all appraisals to ensure due process. Although Personnel Team membership would include a member of the BOA, we see no compelling reason that this person need be the chair of the Personnel Team. However, this BOA representative would lead the bishop’s performance appraisal and serve as the contact person for all staff concerns about the bishop. To avoid conflict of interest between a minister and the bishop, the BOA representative should be a lay person. Because several of the employees will be ordained ministers, it is appropriate that a member of MEGaP be included on the Personnel Team.

**MOTION**: That the Personnel Team be charged with conducting the bishop’s performance appraisal, as well as providing oversight on performance appraisals, job descriptions, and compensation packages of all national team members, supervisory staff, and conference employees, to ensure due process. That the Personnel Team be expanded to 4 or 5 members and that it includes the bishop, a lay member of the BOA and member of MEGaP, as well as additional members of the FMCIC or the conference. At least half of the committee shall be lay members, and at least one member, other than the Bishop, shall be ordained. The chair shall be chosen from the lay members. The bishop shall recuse him/her self during all deliberations of his/her performance appraisals. The BOA representative shall lead the performance appraisal process for the bishop, and receive all staff concerns related to the bishop.

**Manual edits:**

FROM

***¶ 425.4.3* Personnel Committee**

A personnel committee shall be elected by the board of administration at its first meeting following general conference to assist the bishop with the annual review of national leadership team’s performance appraisals and compensation packages for the term between general conferences. It shall be comprised of the following three persons: the chair of the management committee (chair), a clergy member of the MEGaP committee and a lay member of The Free Methodist Church in Canada, who is not on the board of administration. The latter two are to be nominated by the bishop.

**TO**

***¶ 425.4.3* Personnel Team**

A Personnel Team shall be appointed by the board of administration at its first meeting following general conference to assist the bishop, national leadership team and supervisory staff with the annual review of all employees’ performance appraisals and compensation packages for the term between general conferences. It shall comprise four or five persons including the following: the bishop, a lay member of the board of administration (BOA), a member of the MEGaP committee, and one or two members of the Free Methodist Church in Canada or of the conference, who are not on the BOA. The latter may be nominated by the bishop, but appointed by the BOA. At least half of the team shall be lay members, and at least one member, other than the bishop, shall be ordained.

Participants were invited to speak for or against the motion after which the vote on Motion Six was opened.

***On motion, the recommendation was approved. (202 in favor, 4 abstained)***

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**Update from Jared Siebert, Director of Church Planting**

Jared Siebert gave an update from the Church Planting department and the ways in which church planters are supported.

There was discussion as to whether or not the meeting should continue or to have the two remaining motions tabled until the next sitting.

The floor was opened to those who would like to speak for or against tabling the two remaining motions.

A vote was then taken by the participants as to whether or not to continue the meeting and discuss the remaining two motions on the agenda.

The results of the vote: That the remaining items tabled until the next meeting on October 17, 2020 at 12:00pm EDT (90 in favour/60 against).

Bishop Cliff reinforced the fact that it is necessary for everyone to show up on time for the meeting in October and thanked everything for their patience and participation.

Bishop Cliff prayed and closed the meeting at 3:01 pm EDT.

These minutes submitted respectfully by Kalesha Peters, Recording Secretary, and Daniel Graham, General Conference Secretary. Approved by the Board of Administration on October 24, 2020.