



**BOARD OF
ADMINISTRATION
(BOA) REPORT**
APRIL 2024

IMAGINE

PREPARED FOR THE 2024 FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA
GENERAL CONFERENCE | APRIL 25-28 - TORONTO, ON

BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

Report to General Conference 2024

BOA Report: Period Covering (virtual) General Conference 2021 to General Conference 2024

Board Members

BOA members who served all or part of this term include David Kreutzweiser (chair), Paul Millar (vice chair), Jon Grant (secretary), Steven Braun (treasurer), Abena Serwaa Armah, Cherith Alexander, Daniel Graham, Darryl Dozlaw, and Jennifer Wagar. Part way through this period, we grieved the passing of one of our members, Pam Lougheed, a truly remarkable person in every sense of the term.

Regular Responsibilities

Much of the term was spent on the regular responsibilities of reviewing, evaluating, approving and amending the denominational ministry plan, departmental and team plans, reports and budgets, standing committee recommendations (e.g., MEGaP, SCOD), task force and working group reports and recommendations, and serving on Management Committee providing financial oversight.

Specific Highlights

In addition to those responsibilities, here are some highlights of other significant activities over the past term:

Bishop Election. When Bishop Fletcher announced in mid-2023 that he would not seek re-election by General Conference (GC) 2024, the BOA initiated a process to elect a new bishop. This included the appointment and commissioning of a Bishop Leadership Task Force, and working with Ministry Centre staff to coordinate the online election. As of this writing, the BLTF has completed their work and has submitted the names of two candidates for bishop to the BOA. The names and biographic information are being circulated to voting members of General Conference in preparation for an online vote. We express sincere gratitude for the commitment and work of the BLTF in bringing forward the most suitable candidates for bishop. Special thanks to Ministry Centre staff for arranging the technical details of the online election.

Revised Bishop Transition Process. The BOA worked with the Personnel Team and MEGaP to clarify and improve the bishop transition, onboarding, and exit processes. This resulted in changes to the Manual paragraph 860. We recognize this is a work in progress and we expect further discussion on best practices for bishop transition and possible further changes to P860.

BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

Report to General Conference 2024

National Leadership Team Restructuring. The BOA worked with the bishop on his restructuring of the National Leadership Team. Senior Directors Jared Siebert, Mark Molczanski, and Marc McAlister, for varying reasons left the NLT over this past term. All three of those gentlemen served our denomination exceptionally well and we are grateful for the years they gave to our FMCiC. We now have the Senior Director of Finance and Operations, Deva Ratnam, and Senior Director of Church Health and Planting, Jervis Djokoto in place. Deva and Jervis are currently in the process of revamping their respective departments. The Senior Director of Leadership Development position remains vacant.

Task Forces. Over this term, we assisted in moving the two current Task Forces, the Racial Justice and Ethnic Equity Task Force and the LGBTQ2S+ Task Force to final report stages in preparation for GC2024. We spent time on reviewing and discussing the report recommendations and implemented response actions (more on these later in separate reports to GC).

Relationship with New Leaf Network. The BOA accepted a recommendation from the NLT that we end our formal working relationship with the New Leaf Network and we worked with the bishop and NLT on transitioning out of New Leaf. An email to members of conference on 18 January 2024 issued a joint statement from the NLT, New Leaf Network, and BOA outlining the rationale for, and implications of, this decision.

Women in Leadership. In this term the BOA oversaw the transition of the Women in Leadership Task Force to the Women in Leadership Team. This team is now fully functional, chaired by Rev. Kim Henderson, and nested within the Leadership Development department.

Denominational Planning and Assessment. Toward the end of the term, we explored some options for a new denominational planning and assessment process. Our intent was to find an effective process that was perhaps more systematic and less onerous than the denominational Life Plan that was put into effect in the previous term. The work on this initiative was put on hold until the NLT restructuring is complete and the new bishop is in place.

Denominational Org Chart. We continued the ongoing work of revising and updating the denominational org chart (see appended pdf). This continues to be a work in progress as the departments under the new Senior Directors evolve and as teams are created or disbanded. However, the overall structure in the attached chart reflects the organizational and reporting structure as it was at the November 2023 BOA meeting. Note that it retains a strong central role of our bishop, which we think is important. It will be added to the Manual as an appendix owing to the fluidity of the chart.

Working Groups. We began a systematic process to clarify the creation, structure, reporting relationships, and roles of teams, task forces, and other working groups within the FMCiC. The

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Page | 2



BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

Report to General Conference 2024

overall concept of teams and task forces has been working well for us, but we need some clarity on how they are commissioned, how they are structured and how they function.

Defined Benefit Pension Deficit. On a celebratory note, our long-standing pension deficit is gone. The FMCiC maintained a defined benefit pension plan until about 20 years ago. The challenge of this type of pension plan is predicting future interest rates and investment returns. The risk this presented was on the forefront of our Management Committee for most of the last 15 years since regular valuations were required which could have (and occasionally did) required large cash injections. In late 2021, we considered (not for the first time) selling the plan to an investment company. Owing largely to the astuteness of Mark Molczanski, the valuation was unexpectedly high and the sale of the plan was completed at a profit. This was an unexpected blessing. The additional funds had to be used for pensions (i.e. could not be used for general FMCiC revenue) and so this enabled us to provide a twofold benefit for our local churches: 1) the pension levy was cancelled, and 2) a holiday for the employer portion of pension contributions was put in place for 24-30 months.

World Conference Business. Bishop Fletcher and our treasurer, Steven Braun, attended the 2023 World Conference in Rwanda. The BOA had previously approved three resolutions that were reported to our virtual General Conference 2021, and they were subsequently passed at World Conference 2023. An abbreviated summary is as follows: 1) Commissions "...to be included in the Common Constitution for a meaningful and productive participation by the World Conference: The commissions of the World Conference shall be: Global Impact: Mission to every tongue and tribe, nation and people (Rev 7:9); Special Ministries: Development, Medical and Relief; Leadership Development: Theological education, scholarships, and leadership training; Constitutional Matters: Area fellowship constitutions, referendums, World Conference constitutions, and constitutional compliance."

2) Edit paragraph 159 of the Common Constitution: "As regards the Institutions of God, as a people, we honour and support the God-ordained institutions of family, state, and church. We commit ourselves to honour the sanctity of marriage, as the union of one male and one female in holy love, and the family they form. We commit ourselves to value and nurture children, guiding them to faith in Christ. We commit ourselves to seek to be responsible citizens, and we pray for all who lead. This we do by God's grace and power."

3) Edit paragraph 220.4.4, "The board of administration of a general conference may appeal to the World Conference Executive Committee (see P230.7) for counsel to assist with the resolution of conflicts within its general conference, or, if the World Conference Executive Committee is convinced of a general conference's non-compliance with the Common Constitution, the World Conference Executive Committee may initiate assistance, counsel, and mediation. If no solution

BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

Report to General Conference 2024

satisfactory to the conflict is reached, the matter shall be referred to the next sitting of the World Conference and its ruling shall prevail.”

We were very pleased to review Ghana’s submission and grant their request for Annual Provisional Conference status.

Looking Ahead

We expect that heading into the next term the BOA will focus on the new bishop onboarding by working closely with the NLT and Personnel Team. High priority files in the term will include further optimization of our bishop selection process, designing and entering a new phase of denominational assessment and planning, clarifying and specifying the structure and function of task forces and teams, and implementing response strategies from our current task forces.

Conclusion

This has been a busy, in many ways challenging, and at times tumultuous, term for the BOA and I am grateful for the steadfastness, dedication, thoughtfulness, comradery, and Spirit-sensitivity of the board members as we worked through many issues to reach consensus, if not unanimity. We believe that we, working with the bishop and the NLT, have advanced many significant files, and have set the stage for further work in the new term. Please join with us in praying for wisdom, clarity, unity, and effectiveness as we continue to serve our denomination, equip pastors and churches for meaningful ministry, and work toward accomplishing our mission.

FMCiC—Organization Chart
 BoA Updated on November
 17, 2023

