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CHAPTER 3: LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION

¶300 INTRODUCTION

The local church is the growing edge of the denomination. It exists for the nurture of saints and the conversion of sinners. It also exists to be a servant people, showing the compassion of Christ in practical ways. The greatest single resource for the faithful carrying out of the church's mission is the evidence of the love of Christ in its communal life. This gives credibility to its formal and informal witness in the community.

¶301 NAME

1. The Free Methodist Church in Canada is the creator and owner of the following trademark: *The Free Methodist Church in Canada*TM.

Any local church, new congregation (church plant) project, affiliated church shall obtain a Trade-Mark License Agreement and an Association Agreement from The Free Methodist Church in Canada, specifying the terms and conditions under which it may use "Free Methodist Church" or "The Free Methodist Church in Canada".

2. In legal or contractual matters, local churches, new congregation (church plant) projects, or affiliated churches shall use a legal name of the form "(Name) Church, a congregation of The Free Methodist Church in CanadaTM."

¶305 FORMATION OF NEW CHURCHES

1. Kingdom growth not only requires the development of larger local churches, but also more and varied local churches. Church growth research tells us that new churches are often the most effective at reaching the lost for Christ.
2. During their various stages of development, new Free Methodist churches are known as *new congregation (church plant) projects, or affiliated churches* in preparation for society status. The term, Free Methodist Church may be used in public reference by groups in any of these categories. The following guidelines provide a consistent policy framework, while allowing for flexibility in the strategy for multiplying local churches. For more information on the formation stages of new churches, please see ¶370 Introduction (The Local Church Handbook).
3. New churches are most effectively formed when they are mothered or sponsored by one or more churches. Occasionally, new churches will be established through other arrangements. In any case, new churches will normally be sponsored by an existing church or organization (such as the conference) during its initial development.

4. **New Congregation (Church Plant) Projects**

A New Congregation (Church Plant) Project is the first phase in the formation of new congregations.

- 4.1 Each new congregation (church plant) project must have a sponsoring organization. This may be a local church, a group of local churches, or the conference.
- 4.2 The pastor or lay leader of the new congregation (church plant) project shall be accountable to the sponsoring organization. The sponsoring organization shall provide support in the form of consultation, personnel, materials and/or finances.
- 4.3 The pastor or lay leader of a new congregation (church plant) project is responsible for preparing persons to become members. Free Methodists participating in the project may retain membership in their home church until the new project becomes established.
- 4.4 Full self-support should be reached as early as possible. The project may hold and disburse its own funds. Until a new congregation has been approved by Canada Revenue Agency as a Registered Charity, the sponsoring organization must supervise all financial transactions, and be responsible for preparing a financial review of the accounts and issuing charitable donation receipts. New congregation (church plant) projects may not hold real property.
- 4.5 The pastor or lay leader of the project may appoint a ministry committee to provide counsel and direction, under guidance from the sponsoring organization.
- 4.6 New congregation (church plant) projects are encouraged to move to society status as soon as possible. Only under exceptional circumstances, approved by the sponsoring organization and/or the board of administration, should a new congregation continue for more than three years without moving to society status.
- 4.7 A leader of a new congregation (church plant) project shall have an honorary seat in the conference, with a voice but without a vote.
- 4.8 The new congregation (church plant) project shall obtain Trade-Mark License/Association Agreements from The Free Methodist Church in Canada. (See ¶301.1)

5. SOCIETY STATUS

A society is the term for a fully organized local Free Methodist church.

- 5.1 The director of church planting, in consultation with the board of administration, may authorize a-church plant to become a Free Methodist society when:
 - A job description performance appraisal (JDPAS) process resulting in the development of a mission statement and ministry plan has been completed.
 - The congregation is able to demonstrate that it is self-propagating (growing), self-governing (an active official board), self-supporting (financially viable, see ¶375.3.3).
- 5.2 The board of administration may provide a phased plan to bring the new society into full participation in all conference and denominational financial responsibilities as soon as possible. (See ¶375.3.3).

¶306 AFFILIATION STATUS

Congregations that have formed outside of Free Methodist Church sponsorship and wish to become part of the denomination may enter as affiliated churches. The board of administration or a nearby Free Methodist Church will serve as their sponsoring agency.

1. The director of church planting, with the concurrence of the board of administration, may recognize a congregation as an affiliated church when:
 - The congregation applying for affiliation has completed a diagnostic viability study.
 - At least 12 members of the congregation have been adequately prepared through membership instruction to become members of the Free Methodist Church.
 - These members of the congregation give joint public assent to the adoption of *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada* and answer the questions for membership individually. (See questions in ¶384A.)
 - A certificate of agreement prepared by The Free Methodist Church in Canada has been signed by the pastor, the members of the congregation, the bishop (or a designee) as a representative of the board of administration. This document shall indicate that the pastor(s) and members of the affiliating congregation have given joint public assent to the adoption of *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*. The board of administration may enter into any legal agreements that are deemed necessary to facilitate the affiliation. (See certificate sample in ¶384B.)
 - The affiliating church has been approved by Canada Revenue Agency as a charitable organization under the terms of the Income Tax Act.
 - The affiliating church shall obtain Trade-Mark License/Association Agreements from The Free Methodist Church in Canada. (See ¶301.1)
2. The pastor or lay leader of the affiliated church shall be accountable to the director of church planting and the conference. Together they shall guide the congregation toward becoming a Free Methodist society. The pastor or lay leader shall provide periodic written reports of progress and needs for further guidance to the director of church planting.
3. The affiliated church may receive adult and youth members
4. The members of the affiliated congregation shall elect an official board of no fewer than three members with officers as outlined in ¶320.2.3 and provide for such additional organizational structures as are needed to administer its ministry programs. (See ¶325 for guidance.)
5. An affiliated congregation shall hold and disburse its own funds. It shall provide the conference with a copy of its annual financial review.
6. An affiliated congregation is encouraged to financially support conference and denominational ministries as a first step toward full participation in these financial responsibilities. (See ¶375.3.2).
7. An affiliated congregation that owns property need not incorporate the denomination's trust clause outlined in ¶385 into its deed until the time of recognition as a society. Any financial assistance provided by the denomination to affiliated congregations for the acquisition or improvement of real property shall be in the form of mortgages or loans repayable immediately if the church does not choose to become a Free Methodist society.

8. Non-Free Methodist pastors of affiliated congregations may not join the denominational pension plan until they are approved by the ministerial education guidance and placement committee to transfer their credentials to the conference. They may then join the benefit program at their discretion, and with the approval of their official board.
9. An affiliated congregation shall be granted an honorary membership in the general conference. Its delegate(s) is entitled to an honorary seat, with a voice, but without a vote.
10. An affiliated congregation shall remain in this relationship for no longer than three years without the consent of the board of administration.
11. If the congregation wishes to withdraw from its relationship with The Free Methodist Church in Canada, it may do so after providing appropriately for:
 - Transfer of its members into a newly organized congregation or provision of letters of membership transfer to any members wishing to withdraw.
 - Documentation cancelling any affiliation or other legal agreements with The Free Methodist Church in Canada, and termination of any Trademark License Agreement granted to it.

12. SOCIETY STATUS

- 12.1. The director of church planting, in consultation with the board of administration, may recognize an affiliated congregation as a Free Methodist society when:
 - It has developed a mission statement and plan that is in harmony with the denomination.
 - It has sufficient members, maturity and financial stability to function in this relationship.
 - Its members have given approval to join with The Free Methodist Church as a society.
- 12.2. At the time of becoming a society, the affiliated congregation must revise its deeds to real property to include the denomination's trust clause provided in ¶385.
- 12.3. The board of administration may provide a phased plan to bring new societies into full participation in conference and denominational financial responsibilities as soon as possible. (See 375.3.3)

¶307 MERGERS

Occasionally a denomination or group of related established churches may wish to merge with The Free Methodist Church in Canada. Mergers require extensive negotiations, and the development of related legal agreements.

1. When another denomination or group of churches with a polity and doctrine compatible with the Free Methodist Church has an interest in merging with The Free Methodist Church in Canada, the board of administration may establish a committee to enter into exploratory merger discussions.
2. If these discussions provide a favourable indication that a merger is feasible, the board of administration may authorise further detailed discussion to define the draft terms of merger, and the development of draft legal merger agreements.

3. The board of administration is empowered to conclude and approve a final merger agreement with another denomination or group of churches if:
 - The denomination or group is willing to adopt *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*.
 - Appropriate legal merger agreements are developed and approved by appropriate bodies within both denominations. These agreements must indemnify The Free Methodist Church in Canada from any financial or legal liabilities, present or past, of the merging denomination or its congregations.
 - The merger will have no impact on the Free Methodist Church outside of Canada.
 - The ordained ministers of the merging denomination are willing to meet the qualifications for acceptance into ordination in the Free Methodist Church.
4. If any of the above conditions cannot be met, the merger must be approved by a full session of the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church. If the merger will have impact outside of Canada, the merger shall be negotiated as needed with other General Conferences and the World Conference.

¶308 THE CLOSURE OF CHURCHES

The closing of a church (church plant or society) requires that due process be followed. The following are steps to guide this process.

1. The initiative to begin the process may come from either the official board of the church or the conference. This shall come in the form of a formal, written recommendation to the congregation.
2. A letter is to be sent to the members and adherents of the congregation to inform them of the recommendation and to invite them to a duly called (See ¶315.3) special meeting of the church to discuss the recommendation to close.
3. If it is the will of the church to discontinue ministry and close, the following motions will need to be passed by majority vote of the members at the duly called meeting of the church:
 - 3.1 It is recommended to the Board of Administration of The Free Methodist Church in Canada that ministry at _____ Church cease and that it be closed effective _____.
(Date)
 - 3.2 It is recommended that the Trustees of the _____ Church be empowered to distribute or dispose of any equipment or building contents under the direction of the Director of Administrative Services of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.
 - 3.3 It is recommended that any real estate owned by the church be disposed of according to the provisions of ¶350.3 of *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*.
4. The pastor is to provide letters of transfer to all members and is to ensure that the records of the church are sent to the ministry centre.

¶310 SOCIETY

1. The society (a Methodist term for the members of a local church) is the fundamental unit of organization of a fully organized local Free Methodist church. For further detail on local church organization, see ¶¶370-376.
2. **Membership:** A Free Methodist society shall be composed of all members of the local church. Members under the age of majority, as defined by provincial legislation, are youth members without vote. The requirements for membership are defined in ¶150ff.
3. **Authority:** The ongoing business of the local church is generally carried out by the official board that is elected by the society. The official board and all committees, groups or organizations functioning within the church are ultimately amenable to the society. The society has authority in the following areas:
 - 3.1 Final approval of the organization plan for the official board committees and service positions of the church.
 - 3.2 Officials to be elected at the annual meeting
 - 3.2.1 Officers which must be elected:
 - official board (¶320.2.1)
 - nominating committee (¶320.5.2.3)
 - 3.2.2 Unless otherwise approved according to the applicable provisions of ¶320.2 (i.e., by the official board), the following must be elected:
 - secretary and treasurer (¶320.2.3)
 - delegates and reserve delegates (¶320.3)
 - auditor and other financial officers (¶320.4)
 - the trustees (¶320.5.2.1)
 - the pastor's cabinet (See ¶320.5.2.2)
 - 3.3 Final approval of all major decisions, such as:
 - a recommendation to plant another church
 - a recommendation to purchase, mortgage or otherwise encumber, or sell real property, erect a building or undertake major renovations, lease property, or to relocate (subject to conference approval).
 - 3.4 Recommendations regarding the addition of full-time, paid ministerial positions.

¶315 SOCIETY MEETINGS

1. The society shall meet at least annually at a time and place to be determined by the society or official board. The annual meeting shall be announced at least 30 days in advance. Absentee voting is not permitted.
2. The pastor (or, in his/her absence or refusal to do so, the majority of the official board) may call a special meeting of the society when in their judgment the interests of the church require it.
3. Special meetings shall be announced at least 30 days in advance, except in emergency situations. A special meeting may only consider the limited list of agenda items specified in the announcement.

4. Either the pastor (without vote) or the chairperson of the official board may chair the society meeting. In the absence of the pastor, or the board chairperson, members present may elect a chairperson pro-tem by ballot.
5. Minutes of society meetings shall be kept in the minute book of the official board.
6. Robert's Rules of Order in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure. Unless otherwise specified, "elect" or "election" in this chapter means a simple majority vote (50% plus one) by show of hands, voice, ballot or other manner determined by the local church. Tellers may be appointed to distribute materials and count ballots.
7. When The Manual gives the society the option to elect personnel or to empower the official board to do so, the society may so empower the official board by action taken annually or by standing policy.

¶320 THE ANNUAL MEETING

1. During the annual meeting, the society will elect members to the official board and, based on the organization plan and policies approved by the society, other committees and personnel to staff the various service positions of the church (See ¶325.1). Leaders in the church should meet the leadership qualifications of ¶630.3.3.

2. OFFICIAL BOARD

- 2.1 The society shall elect an official board of no less than three and no more than 15 members. (See ¶325.1)
- 2.2 No office shall be filled by the same person for more than six consecutive years. (In the case of delegates, see ¶320.3.5.) Where the nominating committee recommends that a longer term is necessary, the election shall be by at least a two-thirds majority. It is recommended that the members of committees and the board serve on rotating terms to provide some continuity along with change.
- 2.3 **Officers of the Society and Official Board:** The society will elect persons to serve as secretary and treasurer of the society and official board, or grant authority to the official board to appoint such officers.

3. DELEGATES

- 3.1 The delegates serve a number of functions. They serve as the ongoing liaison between the local church and the conference and its national leadership team. They will also serve on the Pastoral Leadership Task Force if the local church enters into a pastoral transition (change of pastors) during their term of office. They also serve as the voting representatives of the local church during conference sittings. A delegate's job description is found in ¶375.5.
- 3.2 Reserve delegates will serve in the place of delegates at the conference sitting if delegates are not able to serve.

- 3.3 The number of lay delegates elected by a local church is as follows:
- a. A local church without a pastor elects one lay delegate.
 - b. A local church with at least one appointed pastor (ordained, commissioned, ministerial candidate) will elect one lay delegate, and may elect additional delegates according to the greater of:
 - i. one additional lay delegate for each appointed ordained minister (beyond the lead pastor) serving at least half-time.
- OR
- ii. one lay delegate for every 75 members (that is, 1-75 members entitles the society to one lay delegate; 76-150 members entitles to two delegates; 151-225 members entitles to three delegates, etc.)

3.3 The number of delegates to be elected shall be according to the number of appointed pastors/and members at the time of the deadline set by the conference for submitting the names of delegate(s).

3.5 The delegate(s) and reserve delegate(s) may be elected by the society or the society may choose to empower the official board to elect delegates from among its members. In order for delegates to have one year of service prior to attending general conference, and then to have two years to work with the pastor to implement the actions of the general conference, they may be elected at a society/official board meeting a year prior to the sitting of the general conference, and will serve until the next such election. (See ¶315.6-7)

The delegates should normally serve for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

Delegates to be elected for additional consecutive terms must be elected by at least a two-thirds majority.

3.6 The delegate, or where more than one is elected, the first delegate elected, shall serve on the official board. The role of delegate and board chair should not normally be filled by the same person. It may be advisable for all delegates to serve on the official board if this does not unduly increase the size of the board.

4. OTHER OFFICERS

4.1 **Signing Officers (financial):** The society, or in its place, the official board, shall elect financial signing officers who will have the authority to sign cheques, and other financial documents.

4.2 **Auditors:** The society, or in its place, the official board, shall elect an auditor who will have the responsibility of conducting a financial review of the accounts of all organizations or groups within the local church. The auditor shall report in writing to the annual meeting of the society. External auditors may be used.

4.3 **Financial Tellers:** The society, or in its place, the official board, shall elect financial tellers who shall assist the treasurer to count offerings and complete signed offering reports stating the date and the amount of the offering.

4.4 **Financial Secretary:** A financial secretary may be elected by the society, or in its place, the official board, to assist the treasurer in the keeping of financial accounts.

5. COMMITTEES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

5.1 The society shall elect the members of local church committees, unless otherwise provided for by local policy adopted by the society.

5.2 The following committees shall be elected: **Trustees:** The trustees shall be elected by the society by ballot vote. There shall be no fewer than three trustees, two thirds of which shall be members of the local church. The society may optionally elect to have the official board serve as the trustees of the society for legal and financial matters and make provision for another committee to care for maintenance and other property matters.

5.2.1 **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 of the Pastor's Cabinet must be local church members, and should include at least one board member;
- The Pastor's Cabinet shall be no more than 6 members.

5.2.2 **Nominating Committee:** The nominating committee shall be elected from among the members of the church by the society by ballot. The senior pastor is an ex officio member.

5.3 Local churches are encouraged to ensure that at least a majority, preferably two-thirds of the members of church committees, are members of the local church.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Where a member of the Official Board has an interest in a material contract or transaction or a proposed material contract or transaction with the local church, such member shall disclose such interest in writing or request that such disclosure be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Official Board. Where a church is federally incorporated, the member shall comply, in all respects, with section 141 of the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act and may be required by the Official Board to withdraw from any discussion with respect to same. Such member shall not vote on the matter being considered. If the material contract or transaction is retained or awarded where a member has an interest, the member shall resign from the Official Board. The member shall comply with all provincial laws which protect charitable property within the province of the local church.

¶325 OFFICIAL BOARD

1. MEMBERSHIP:

The official board (see ¶320.2) shall include the officers of the society, and one or more of the delegates. If so provided in the organization plan, the society may also include additional members-at-large or representatives of various ministry areas of the local church. All members of the official board shall be members of the local church, and be of the age of majority and meet the leadership qualifications of ¶630.3.3. At the discretion of the senior pastor, other pastoral staff may attend official board meetings.

To ensure that the local church does not become classified by Canada Revenue Agency as a private foundation, more than 50% of the members of the official board must be “at arm’s length.”

2. OFFICERS OF THE OFFICIAL BOARD:

2.1 **Chair and Vice-Chair:** The official board shall elect its chair and vice-chair from among its lay members. The chair is a facilitator of the group process of the board when it meets and should consult in advance of meetings with the senior pastor to facilitate the creation of effective, prioritized agendas. The senior pastor shall receive notification of all board meetings and minutes, and shall be entitled to be present and to participate fully without vote in all board discussions except for those held in an executive session of the board.

2.2 **Secretary:** The secretary serves as the recording officer, and is responsible for keeping the minutes and other records of the society and official board.

2.3 **Treasurer:** The treasurer is the “chief financial officer” of the society. The treasurer is entrusted with administration of the financial resources of the church according to the directions of the official board. The treasurer also provides periodic reporting of the financial status to the official board and society.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY:

The official board is responsible for the general supervision of the ongoing operation of the local church and all of its ministries. The official board is at all times amenable to the directions of the society. This includes the responsibility to:

3.1 Plan for the organization and development of the church and its ministries. The official board shall meet at least once each year for the purpose of developing/refining the church's ministry plan. This plan should include measurable goals for each of the ministry areas of the local church.

3.2 The official board also has responsibility to:

- approve admission to lay membership in the local church;
- approve a recommendation from the membership care committee that a lay member be allowed to withdraw, or that membership be terminated (see ¶915);
- approve licenses for lay ministers and recommend lay ministers deemed suitable for ministerial candidacy to the conference ministerial education guidance and placement committee;
- elect members of local church ministry committees if so provided in local by-laws;
- after receiving nominations from the nominating committee, elect replacement official board or committee members if a position becomes vacant in the interim between annual society meetings;
- approve recommendations for any expenditures not covered in the approved budget. (Recommendations for major changes in expenditures should be approved by the society);
- develop and approve changes to the ministry plan and organization plan of the church that are within the general direction of the previously approved plans.

And authority to recommend to the society:

- proposals for major changes to the ministry plan and organization plan of the church;
- proposed annual budgets or major changes to the budget;
- proposals to purchase, mortgage or otherwise encumber, or sell real property, erect a building or undertake major renovations, lease property and to relocate (subject to conference approval);
- the parenting of a new congregation.

4. MEETINGS

4.1 The official board shall meet regularly. The interval between meetings should not exceed two months.

4.2 Members who are unable to attend should notify the chair in advance. Members who attend less than 50% of the meetings within any 12 month period may be replaced.

4.3 Robert's Rules of Order in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure. The official board may adopt standing rules provided that they are not in conflict with Robert's Rules of Order.

¶330 COMMITTEES

Various committees serve within the local church to administer the ministries of the church. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all church committees. Where there is more than one appointed pastor, the senior pastor may designate who will serve as the pastoral representative on each committee. All committees are ultimately accountable to the official board.

¶335 PASTORAL EVALUATION

The official board will ensure that an annual performance evaluation of the lead pastor (and other appointed staff) is done according to guidelines provided by the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health office (see par 374.5) The evaluation is to be based on the pastor's current official board-approved job description (built locally and reflecting the congregation's current vision and stated mission).

If the 360 performance appraisal is used and results in an overall average score below 5.5, the results will be referred to the bishop and the ministerial education, guidance and placement committee (MEGaP) who will consult with the pastor and church.

¶340 PASTORAL TRANSITIONS

1. From time-to-time the conference ministerial education guidance and placement (MEGaP) committee will approve changes in pastoral appointments. The related process is called a "pastoral transition". The bias of the committee is toward long tenures.
2. An overview of the process for a pastoral transition is described briefly in ¶875 and in detail in the "*Transitions Handbook*" which is available from the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health office or may be downloaded from the FMCIC website.
3. A pastoral transition is announced by a letter sent by the bishop. It may be initiated in a number of ways:
 - by a signed letter of request jointly from the board and pastor to the bishop
 - by a signed letter of request from the pastor to the bishop
 - as a result of a performance appraisal which indicates to the MEGaP committee a need for a pastoral transition
 - by a signed letter of request to the bishop from the chair of the official board and delegate indicating that a strong majority (75%) of the official board has expressed in a recorded vote at a duly called meeting (see ¶325.4) that they have lost confidence in the pastor's capacity to lead the congregation. Prior to the board's request being sent, if necessary, a pastoral vote can be taken as provided for below.
 - by a decision of the MEGaP committee that a transition is necessary for the health of either the local church or the pastor
 - by a decision of the MEGaP committee to appoint the pastor to another charge
 - due to disciplinary action which necessitates a change in pastoral leadership
4. Situations where a pastoral vote may be requested are:
 - a pastor needs a formal indication of the congregation's level of support.
 - a division in the congregation is challenging the leadership of the pastor

- the pastor's relationship with the official board and/or congregation has seriously deteriorated.
5. In these instances, the official board and/or pastor may request the bishop's permission to conduct a vote of confidence with respect to the pastor's leadership at a duly called special meeting of the society (see ¶315.3). The bishop may also request that a vote be taken. Only those who have attained the age of majority may participate. If non-members and inactive members vote, their ballots shall be of a different colour. (For the purposes of this vote, inactive members means those who have intentionally withdrawn from fellowship with the church and have not complied with the requirements of their membership commitment including: failing to attend the church for at least 3 months and not supporting the church with their resources.)

The chair of the meeting (appointed by the bishop) and the secretary of the official board shall count the ballots privately, but the results of the vote shall be kept confidential. The tally and the ballots will be sent to the bishop who shall verify the count and then confer with the pastor and official board.

The vote of the active members will be regarded as the direction of the congregation. The votes of adherents and inactive members will be regarded as opinion to be considered by leaders when the results of the vote are known.

A ballot shall typically say: "I agree that Pastor ___ continue as pastor of this church."
Yes ___ No ___

If the affirmative vote of the membership is less than seventy-five percent, the bishop and/or Director of Leadership Development and Church Health may begin to work with the official board and pastor to arrange for the church to go into transition.

If there is a discrepancy between the results of the vote and the pastor's preference, normally the vote of the members will take precedence.

6. The *Handbook on Local Church Organization* provides additional guidance to the pastor and official board on this process. (See ¶374)
7. The pastor or local church shall normally receive a minimum of 60 days notice of an approved pastoral transition, except for transitions resulting from disciplinary action. This period of notice may be waived if a written agreement is approved and signed by the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health, the pastor and the delegate (acting on behalf of and with the knowledge of the official board). The 60-day period begins on the date that the request for a transition is approved by the bishop or by MEGaP decision. It ends with the termination of the pastoral appointment and related pastoral duties.

¶350 PROPERTY

1. INCORPORATION AND DEEDS

Before an annual conference, district conference, a pastoral charge, or a society purchases real estate, a lawyer should be consulted and given a copy of *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada* for reference, and wherever the civil laws will permit, proceed to incorporate. The articles of incorporation, wherever the law will permit, should provide that the corporation

shall be subject to the rules, regulations, doctrines, and *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church* incorporated as “The Free Methodist Church in Canada,” as from time to time adopted by the general conference of that church insofar as they do not contravene the civil laws, and that the secular affairs of the corporation shall be managed by trustees elected according to the provisions of this chapter. When incorporation is complete, the deed shall be made out directly to the owning body in its corporate name and shall without exception contain the trust clause given in the following paragraph.

1.1 Trust Clause

The Free Methodist Church in Canada was incorporated by an Act of Incorporation assented to on July 8, 1959, by the Parliament of Canada.

In provinces where the law requires church property to be held by trustees, and where incorporation is not secured as provided for in the above paragraph, all deeds shall be made to the trustees, naming them and their successors.

The deed should be drawn up by a lawyer, and contain a trust clause drawn in harmony with the Second Schedule of the Act of Incorporation of The Free Methodist Church in Canada. A copy of this schedule may be obtained from the Ministry Centre.

The deed shall also include a clause indicating that in the event of dissolution of the local society or other organization, for whatever reason, the trustees shall convey the net proceeds of sale of local properties to The Free Methodist Church in Canada, or if no trustees remain, that titles of all properties shall be transferred to The Free Methodist Church in Canada, in accordance with ¶350 of *The Manual*.

All property, whether real or mixed, acquired by any local society, pastoral charge, conference or other body, whether incorporated or unincorporated, shall be held subject to the foregoing trust as set forth in section 2 whether appearing in the evidence of title, or whether left out of such evidence of title, by mistake, inadvertence, willfully, or otherwise; and can only be released pursuant to the provisions outlined below....

2. Real Property and Trustees

- 2.1 The trustees (See ¶320.5.2.1) of the local society shall hold in trust all real property (buildings and lands) for the use and benefit of the society. They shall ensure that titles are in order; that deeds are drawn-up in accordance with the civil law; and that the trust clause given in ¶385 is included in all deeds.
- 2.2 The Free Methodist Church in Canada was incorporated by an Act of Incorporation assented to on July 8, 1959 by the Parliament of Canada. The Second Schedule of this Act defines in detail the permitted uses of real property and the scope of authority of the trustees. Trustees shall acquaint themselves with the Act (which can be ordered from the Ministry Centre of The Free Methodist Church in Canada), and ensure that their actions are in keeping with it.
 - A. In keeping with the Act of Incorporation:
 - The trustees shall obey all lawful directions of the official board, society and conference. They shall be subject to direction by the society through the official board.
 - The trustees shall have the power to mortgage, lease or sell property, with the consent of the society and the management committee of the conference.

- The church or parsonage property shall not be sold, mortgaged or encumbered for current expenses.

3. OTHER PROPERTY

- 3.1 All other property (equipment, supplies, money, and investments; i.e. property other than real property) shall be held in trust by the official board and its treasurer for the use and benefit of the society. The treasurer shall have charge of all monies and investments, subject to local by-laws regarding signing authority.
- 3.2 The Act of Incorporation requires investments made by The Free Methodist Church in Canada to be made in securities authorized under the federal *Insurance Companies Act, Dec. 1991*). All investments made by local churches shall also be in securities authorized under this act. Any investment of funds or change in investments must be approved by the official board. Funds shall be invested prudently and with due diligence for the security of the principal funds. (See the accompanying *Handbook on Local Church Administration* (§370) for more details).
- 3.3 Funds (donations, bequests or endowments) designated for specific projects (e.g. building fund, missions, etc.) may not be used to pay operating expenses. If real property is sold, the principal received may not be used for operating expenses. With the permission of the management committee of the conference board of administration, the interest received from money received from the sale of property may be used to pay operating expenses.

4. DISSOLUTION

Whenever a local society ceases to exist due to local action, or it is so declared by duly authorized action of the conference, the local trustees and official board, if they remain, shall sell all real and personal property of the society, and transfer the net proceeds, after clearing all local debts, to the conference, or convey the title to all real and personal property to the conference. If no trustees or official board remain, the titles to all real and personal properties of the former society shall transfer to the conference, for the benefit of The Free Methodist Church in Canada. The conference board of administration may authorise the management committee to sell the real and personal properties. The proceeds may be used as directed by the conference board of administration, provided that they are first applied to clearing any remaining debts of the former society.

¶360 FUNDRAISING

It is a long held conviction of The Free Methodist Church that the Lord's work should be supported by the tithes, offerings and gifts of his people. Other methods of fundraising may only be used provided that:

- they are not a substitute for the giving of tithes and offerings;
- they are consistent with the ethics and practices of our faith;
- the church does not become a marketing agency for commercial products.

CHAPTER 3:

HANDBOOK ON LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND MULTIPLICATION

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HANDBOOK ON LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND MULTIPLICATION

¶370 INTRODUCTION: ORGANIZING FOR THE MULTIPLICATION OF MINISTRIES

In Mark 4: 26-29, Jesus gives a key principle of how God's Kingdom grows. In this little story (see also I Corinthians 3:5-8) Jesus shows how the Kingdom of God grows organically, all by itself. However, "...growth is not unlimited in God's creation. A healthy organism doesn't keep growing indefinitely, but brings forth other organisms, which in their turn also multiply."¹ Kingdom growth not only requires the development of larger local churches, but also more and varied local churches.

Kingdom growth is based on a fundamental concept of MULTIPLICATION as also found in nature. Just as cells, organisms, animals and people reproduce and multiply, so too must individual Christians multiply themselves by witnessing and sharing Christ with those around them (I Peter 3:15 & 16). Good leaders reproduce themselves by developing apprentices (e.g. Paul & Timothy), and healthy small groups multiply themselves. This principle also applies to congregations, ministries and churches. Therefore, it is a natural part of the life cycle of every church to reproduce itself. This is a crucial strategy towards accomplishing our vision as a denomination.

This chapter is a handbook supplementing Chapter 3. Chapter 3 provides the bylaws approved by the general conference, which define the minimum set of denominational requirements for the organization and administration of local churches. This handbook, on the other hand, provides general philosophical guidelines to assist the local church in developing its organizational structure, managing and multiplying its ministries.

Each local church is unique, with its own particular ministry vision, objectives and needs, and members who have their individual Spirit-given gifts and graces. As a result, each church will have its own specific organizational structure. The number of and size of committees, their names and roles may differ from one church to another. At the same time, there are many organizational principles and characteristics that are common to all churches.

The objective of this chapter is to provide guidance on the principles of local church organization and multiplication as they are commonly applied throughout The Free Methodist Church in Canada, while still empowering each church to adapt them to their own local ministry goals, needs and context.

During their life cycles Free Methodist congregations/ministries pass through several stages: the idea stage, core formation stage, new congregation/ministry stage or affiliated (if coming from outside the denomination) stage in preparation for becoming a society. The term, Free Methodist Church, may be used in public reference by groups past the core formation stage. The following guidelines provide a consistent policy framework, while freeing the Holy Spirit to grow His Kingdom in whatever way He chooses. They seek to maintain our responsibility for integrity of faith, functionality of structure, and the health of each individual ministry.

¹ Schwartz, Christian. Natural Church Development. P124.

New churches/ministries are most effectively formed when they are reproduced (sponsored) by one or more churches. Occasionally, new churches will be established through other arrangements. In any case, new ministries will normally be sponsored by an existing church or organization (such as the conference) during its initial development.

370.1 THE IDEA STAGE

Ultimately, the origin of any ministry begins with an idea, a picture, a vision from God given to a person or people. When a person is sufficiently moved by God to approach his/her church about the possibility of bringing this vision to reality, it will be considered an idea. This idea can take an infinite variety of forms. (e.g. a youth ministry that starts a weekly service, a recovery ministry, a drop in centre, any age-specific ministry, a small group that multiplies, etc.)

370. 2 THE CORE FORMATION STAGE

Core formation is the first visible phase in the multiplication of congregations. To move into this stage, several criteria must be met:

When a group of individuals are ready to form a core group, they must have a sponsor. This may be a local church, a network, a group of local churches, or the conference.

The point person(s) (pastor or lay leader) of the core group shall be accountable to the sponsor, a peer network led by a network leader, and a coach. The sponsor shall provide support in the form of consultation, personnel, materials and/or finances.

Once a core group has been formed, it is recommended that it aim to move to the next stage within three years. Only under exceptional circumstances, approved by the sponsor and/or coach and peer network, should a core group continue for more than three years without moving to the new congregation stage.

The point person(s) of the core group is responsible for preparing persons to become members. The memberships of individuals participating in a church multiplication project will be listed in the sponsoring church membership rolls.

The point person(s) of the core group may appoint a leadership team from within the core group to provide counsel and direction, under guidance from the sponsor.

A vision/mission statement, core values and basic ministry plan must be established. Research must begin along various lines (e.g. demographics, structure, methodology, etc.).

The ministry plan must be approved by the sponsor, peer network participants, coach and the director of church planting.

Before applying for Charitable Organization Status with the Canada Revenue Agency, the core group shall obtain Trade-Mark License and Association Agreements from The Free Methodist Church in Canada. (See ¶301.1)

Full self-support should be reached as early as possible. The core group may hold and disburse its own funds. Until a new congregation/ministry has been approved by the Canada Revenue Agency as a Registered Charity, the sponsor must supervise all financial transactions and be responsible for auditing the accounts and issuing charitable donation receipts. Only

societies and affiliated churches may hold real property. If a group at any other stage acquires real property, it will either be held in trust by the sponsor or the conference. (See ¶305.5.7 for further details).

¶370.3 NEW CONGREGATION (CHURCH PLANT) STAGE

The form a new congregation takes, and its relationship to its sponsor, can have infinite variety. However, some key criteria must be met for a core group to be recognized as a new congregation. A congregation, loosely defined, is a group of people with a unique vision for their area, an identified leader(s), worshipping together weekly, with a ministry plan describing their preferred future.

The point person for the new congregation shall continue to be accountable to the sponsor, a peer network led by a network leader, and the director of church planting. The point person of a new congregation shall have an honorary seat in the conference, with a voice but not a vote.

¶370.4 QUESTIONS TO BECOME AN AFFILIATED CONGREGATION

Before a Free Methodist Affiliation Certificate is signed, the bishop (or a designee) shall ask those who are to become charter members, the following questions:

1. Do you today reaffirm your commitment to Jesus Christ to work under His leadership to build His church?
2. Do you today reaffirm your loyalty to the ministry of _____ *(name of local church)* ?
3. Are you now willing to be a Free Methodist Affiliated Congregation of The Free Methodist Church in Canada by agreeing together to adopt *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*, and are you willing to be guided by it and live in harmony with it as a congregation?

¶371 THE SOCIETY

The primary unit of organization of a local church is the society.

The society consists of all the adult members of the local church. Under the by-laws outlined in Chapter 3, the society must meet at least once a year. This meeting is typically known as the “annual meeting.” Other special “society meetings” may be held as needed.

The society has the authority for the direction of the church. All of the officers, the official board and all committees and organizations functioning within the church are ultimately responsible to the society. The society has the authority for approving all major decisions affecting the church. (See ¶310.3.)

¶372 THE OFFICIAL BOARD

The official board is responsible for the general supervision of the ongoing operation of the local church and, as such, establishes the policies that govern the day-to-day operation of the church and its ministries. It may serve as trustees of the society. (See ¶320.5.2.1)

¶372.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICIAL BOARD

- Plan the development of the vision and mission statements, goals or objectives of the local church, and the steps to reach those goals. This also includes development of an organizational plan, outlining the various committees and positions needed to implement the ministry plan.
- Co-ordinate and facilitate the activities of the various committees and organizations within the local church.
- Monitor progress towards goals at regular intervals with committee and organization chairs.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to reach the stated goals, and recommend changes to the methods used, as appropriate.
- Communicate by keeping the congregation fully informed of the church's ministries, goals and needs.
- Ensure that appropriate records are kept of legal and financial matters, memberships, baptisms/dedications, weddings, and funerals.

¶372.2 OFFICERS OF THE OFFICIAL BOARD

The minimum essential officers in any deliberative assembly are the presiding officer or chair, and the secretary. In addition, the board of a local church needs to have a treasurer, due to its role as the "Board of Directors" of a charitable organization.

It is important that all of the officers of the board be spiritually mature individuals with the ability to see their roles as those of servant-leaders. See ¶630.3.3

¶372.2.1 Chair

As indicated in ¶325.2.1, the official board shall elect a chair and vice-chair from among its lay members. The relationship between the senior pastor and board, and the rationale for having a layperson chair the board, are outlined in more detail below. It must be remembered that in Free Methodism, the senior pastor, appointed by the conference, is to function as the over-all team leader for the leaders of the church.

The primary duties of the chair are to serve the board by preparing the draft agenda for meetings, to preside over the meetings, and to ensure due process, by following and enforcing the appropriate parliamentary procedure. The vice-chair assumes the chair when the chairperson is not able to be present or the chairperson vacates the chair.

When a person is elected by the board to serve as its chair, it is important that he/she has the full confidence and support of the board. A wise chair will recognize that the board may change its chairperson if at any time this confidence is lost. It is very important that the lay chairperson recognizes that his/her role is to be a servant of the board, assisting the whole board in carrying out its task. To preserve the unity of the board, the position carries no authority outside of the role of presiding over board meetings. The chair does not speak for the board, except at the request and direction of the board. The chair is not responsible for supervising or directing the senior pastor or any other staff. The pastor/staff does not report to the chair; they are responsible to the board as a whole.

In developing the board agenda, the lay chair will need to work closely with the senior pastor and committee chairpersons to determine the items that need to be reported or included on the agenda.

¶372.2.2 **Secretary**

The secretary is the officer of the board responsible for the care and keeping of the official records of the society and board. This includes:

- Keeping accurate, clear minutes of the proceedings of meetings of the society and official board. The minutes should provide a clear record of the date and time of the meeting, the type of meeting, and the members present. They should provide a clear record of all reports presented, and all main motions and their disposition. Recording the names of the movers and seconders and the number of votes pro and con is optional. It is not necessary to record all secondary motions (such as motions to amend, table, postpone) except where necessary for completeness or clarity (e.g. motions to refer). The secretary should ensure that draft minutes are distributed to Board members before the next meeting and that the record, or file copy of the minutes are signed immediately after approval. It is important that all signed record copies be kept in a complete master file.
- Maintaining records of all of the by-laws adopted by the society and policies adopted by the board.
- Keeping a file of official committee reports presented to the board in writing.
- Keeping a file of all official correspondence received by or originated from the board or society.
- Ensuring that the membership records of the society are accurate and current.
- Ensuring that baptismal, marriage and death records are accurate and in a safe place for historical and legal reference.
- Ensuring that all members receive proper notice of annual and special society meetings.

More detailed information on the role of the secretary, and the recording of minutes can be found in Robert's Rules of Order.

¶372.2.3 **Treasurer**

The treasurer is the officer of the board responsible for the overall administration of the financial assets of the church, as directed by the official board and finance committee. This position should not be confused with that of the bookkeeper or accountant. The treasurer is an officer of the organization, and has the authority to sign legal and business documents relating to financial matters on behalf of the church. For example, the treasurer will be recognized as representing the church in financial matters by Canada Revenue Agency (filing of Income Tax forms, Registered Charity Information Returns, approval of Charitable Tax Receipts) or by financial institutions (signing for various financial transactions).

In many churches, the treasurer will keep the financial records (act as the bookkeeper). In some cases, a church may hire a part-time bookkeeper, or a volunteer may serve as the bookkeeper. In these cases, the treasurer will supervise the bookkeeper, ensuring that board policies are followed, and ensure that overall financial assets are appropriately managed. The treasurer may chair or alternately be an ex-officio member of, the finance committee.

It is important that the treasurer be spiritually mature, with a vision for the ministries of the church. He/she must have the wisdom to understand that the financial assets of the church are only important as tools to further those ministries, and not important in their

Own right. In addition he/she should have good financial management and organizational skills.

Because of the complexities of operating as a charitable organization, it would be wise for the board to ensure that there is only one bookkeeper within the church, and that only one set financial records are kept. The practice of having separate books for various organizations (e.g. youth, women's ministries) should be discouraged. The church has a single registration as a charitable organization with Canada Revenue Agency. Operation with more than one set of books, and more than one bookkeeper, presents risks that may ultimately lead to revocation of the church's charitable registration number.

¶372.2.4 Other Officers

¶372.2.4.1 **Signing Officers:** The society or board should name the signing officers who may sign cheques and other financial instruments on behalf of the church. The treasurer should normally be one of the signing officers. The society or board may wish to name more than one signing officer, and define signing limits where cheques larger than a pre-defined amount require more than one signature. If the treasurer does not keep the books, the board may wish to authorize the bookkeeper to sign cheques up to this limit and require cheques for larger amounts be co-signed by the treasurer.

¶372.2.4.2 **Auditor:** ¶320.4.2 requires the society, or in its place, the official board, to appoint an auditor. The society may choose to employ an external licensed public accountant or audit firm, or may use the services of a volunteer auditor (unless federal regulations or incorporation legislation requires the use of an external public accountant or audit firm). This volunteer may be a member of the society, who has accounting or auditing qualifications, or a volunteer with such qualifications from outside the society. If the volunteer is not a licensed public accountant it is important to ensure there is an understanding of the role of the volunteer in regards to an independent and diligent scrutiny of the records and ensure that receipts received and disbursements made are accurately recorded and documented.

It is recommended that when a society or official board asks volunteers to perform a review, that the following steps be considered as part of the review process to be performed by the volunteer:

1. Review year end bank reconciliations and other months on a sample basis.
2. Determine if there is a separation of duties among two or more people who are at arm's length to each other (ie. the person who receives and approves the invoice does not issue the cheques)
3. Review supporting receipts for expense reports to ensure completeness to support the amounts expensed
4. Review cash receipts, cash disbursements, payroll and general ledger transactions for supporting documentation
5. Ensure proper authorization of transactions (eg. Verifying two signatures on cheques. In some societies where only one person signs cheques, consideration of additional testing of disbursements should be made)
6. Ensure all payroll transactions have been recorded properly as per central payroll debit advice

7. Review cash receipts against charitable tax receipts issued and ensure this ties to the financial statements and to what is reported on the annual information return filed with Canada Revenue Agency (T3010)
8. Ensure that the annual information return was completed and forwarded to the Canada Revenue Agency no later than 6 months after the year end (most societies have a calendar year end, so June 30th is the key date)
9. Ensure that insurance coverage is up to date
10. Ensure that Harmonized Sales Tax or Goods and Services Tax recoveries are filed
11. Review bequests received in the year for appropriate designations
12. Review equipment leases (if applicable)
13. Compare expenses (and revenues) with budget and prior year and get explanation for unexpected variances
14. Consider whether an expenditure is a repair and maintenance item or a capital asset to ensure proper accounting treatment
15. Review investments (if applicable), verifying value, treating of income
16. Review designated gifts to ensure they comply with the donor's wishes
17. Search for unrecorded liabilities (ie. this covers services performed or materials received prior to the fiscal year end for which the church has not been invoiced or has been invoiced in the next fiscal year that relates to the prior fiscal year)
18. Review postmark on envelopes for December 31 cut off of donations (Note: for churches that do not receive donations by mail, this step is not applicable)

Findings by the volunteer reviewer should be presented to the annual society meeting.

A full audit is not normally required. A financial review statement is sufficient.

¶372.2.5 Access to Donor Information

To allow them to provide official donation receipts for income tax purposes, local churches must keep accurate, ongoing records of the amounts given by individual donors. These records are normally kept by the treasurer, or a financial secretary/recording secretary (if one is appointed).

The information on the specific amounts contributed by individual donors is confidential, private, personal information. Only the treasurer and/or the financial secretary/recording secretary should have access to this data. Information on the amounts contributed by an individual donor should not be divulged to anyone other than the donor.

Because the giving pattern may reflect an individual's attitudes toward the church, the official board may approve a policy allowing the treasurer or financial secretary/recording secretary to inform the pastor of any dramatic change in an individual's giving pattern (without providing specific information on the amounts donated), to assist the pastor in fulfilling his/her role as spiritual shepherd.

¶373 LOCAL CHURCH COMMITTEES

This section provides a description of the various committees that will be found in a typical local church. It also describes a number of alternative organizational models. The specific organizational structure in your church may be different. For example, the committees and positions in your church may have different names and job descriptions. You will probably find that many of the same functions are needed in your organizational structure.

One of the important roles of the church board is to develop the ministry plan of the church. One of the components of this plan should be an organizational plan, defining, at least in broad terms, the committees and service positions, their roles, and the organizational structure (the reporting structure). This plan should then be approved by the society. The organization plan should directly reflect the ministry goals and programs of the church. As the ministry plan and programs change, the organizational plan may also need to be updated.

¶373.1 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

There are a number of alternative models available for organizing the committees and positions within the local church.

In the representative model, the official board may consist of the chair (who is elected from within the board), the secretary and treasurer, one or more delegates and the chairpersons of the various standing committees of the church. A number of members-at-large may be added to provide the full board roster. The chairpersons of the standing committees represent their committees on the board, provide periodic reports or recommendations from their committee and, along with the pastor, communicate board decisions and directions to their committee.

In larger churches, or churches with a larger number of standing committees, the church may wish to organize on a commission model. Each commission would include a number of committees that have related responsibilities or roles. One representative from each commission would represent that commission on the board. This model may help to provide more co-ordination among related committees. It does however add more hierarchy and possibly bureaucracy to the process.

In another model, a number of the major committees may be formed from the membership of the board. The board members are elected by the society. The newly elected board then divides itself into a set of standing sub-committees of the board. These standing sub-committees will usually be responsible for advising the board on policy and administrative issues that are the direct responsibility of the board (e.g. finances, membership, personnel policies, planning and goal setting). In this model, other committees, with members from outside the board, may be responsible for the implementation of the ministry programs of the church, under board guidance and direction.

In the governance board model, the official board and committees have totally separate memberships, with the senior pastor, in his/her role as the chief administrator of the local church, providing the communications or liaison role between the board and committees.

¶373.2 COMMITTEES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Every local church must elect a Nominating Committee and Pastor's Cabinet (¶320.5.2). Their duties, and the duties of other potential committees are outlined below. As indicated above, the number of other committees, their names and specific duties may vary from church to church. This list provides an indication of the typical committee names and duties. The members of the committees (other than the Nominating Committee and Pastor's Cabinet) may be appointed by the official board, unless the society provides other directions.

¶373.2.1 Christian Education Committee

The Christian Education Committee is responsible for planning and implementing the children's, youth and adult Christian education programs, providing biblically based education and training, and group activities. The committee may include Directors of Children's Ministries, Youth Ministries and Adult Ministries. With the approval of the society or board, the committee will appoint all staff personnel needed to implement these programs. It will also provide for the required training and supervision of these personnel. The committee should encourage Christian education personnel to adhere to denominational doctrines and standards in the information they present.

In some churches, the Christian education committee may also take responsibility for the planning, implementation and supervision of the small group outreach and discipleship programs of the church.

¶373.2.2 Facilities and Property Committee

The Facilities and Property Committee (formerly trustees, see ¶320.5.2.1) is responsible to routinely inspect the church's building, property and equipment to ensure that all are being maintained adequately, to prioritize maintenance and replacement projects as to urgency within the constraints of the committee's budget. The committee is also to respond appropriately to maintenance requests, organize work days as needed, and ensure that the church facilities are kept clean and tidy.

¶373.2.3 Membership Care Committee

The Membership Care Committee is composed of the pastor and a number of members of the local church elected by the official board. In smaller churches the official board may serve this function. The responsibilities of the committee are to:

- Assist the pastor to identify and recruit individuals as members, assist with the development and provision of membership training and with the pastor recommend new members for approval by the official board.
- Counsel members whose conduct may give cause for concern and assist in bringing reconciliation between persons or groups to avoid chronic unresolved conflict.
- Make recommendations to the official board regarding the membership status of those who have been counselled.
- Recommend to the official board termination of membership for members no longer intending to fulfill their membership commitments.
- Periodically review the membership status of members living at a distance and non-participating members.
- Review the membership roll at least annually to ensure it is accurate and current.

¶373.2.4 Missions Committee

The Missions Committee is responsible for keeping the congregation informed of and promoting interest in Free Methodist missions through an ongoing program with emphasis on personal awareness of missions needs, support of individual missionaries and the mission programs of the denomination through prayer, giving and personal participation in short-term missions teams or VISA assignments. Missions awareness may be enhanced through visits and presentations by career and short-term missionaries.

¶373.2.5 Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for providing a slate of nominations for positions elected at the annual society meeting, and to the official board for other committee and service position appointments made by the board. The committee may also provide nominations to the board to fill any vacancies that occur between society meetings.

In making its recommendations, the nominating committee should carefully evaluate the spiritual gifts and graces of all members of the congregation. It should help members to recognize and use their particular gifts and skills. The committee should carefully develop a plan for rotation of committee memberships which takes into account the tenure requirement of a maximum of six years in any one position, while at the same time ensuring sufficient continuity of experienced personnel on committees.

It is important that the nominating committee be independent of the official board. The nominating committee is elected by the society from among the members of the church and is accountable to only the society, serving the church membership as a whole. Its recommendations should be presented to the annual society meeting, without prior review by the board. Any board involvement in the nomination process may bring the democratic process involved in society meeting elections into question. In times when there may be differences of opinion on one or more issues within the membership, any board involvement in the nomination process may lead to suspicions about board attempts to ensure the election of those holding a particular opinion or view. In addition, it may lead to suspicions, warranted or not, about attempts by a specific group to centralize power.

During the nomination process the committee should ensure that more than 50% of the board members deal with each other “at arms length,” i.e. unrelated by blood, adoption, marriage or employment. This can be accomplished by limiting or eliminating nominations of members of the same family (spouses, siblings, parents and children) to board positions.

It is also good practice for the nomination process to allow for input by the congregation. Suggestions may be collected from the congregation at the beginning of the process. Once a short list has been developed from these suggestions, these individuals should be interviewed by the nominating committee. When a slate of nominees has been proposed, it is wise to distribute or post the proposed nominations in advance of the society meeting, and provide some process for input from the congregation. This can help to limit the potential problems with “nominations from the floor,” where the proposed nominations may not be well considered or it may not be clear that the nominees have agreed to let their names stand.

¶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 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 of the Pastor's Cabinet must be local church members, and should include at least one board member;
- The Pastor's Cabinet shall be no more than 6 members.

¶374 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PASTOR AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

The relationship between a pastor and a Free Methodist local church is intricate. The local church exists within two worlds; the world of our denomination and the world defined by the "law of the land."

¶374.1 CHURCH POLITY IMPACT

One of our pastors has written, "Methodists are connectional. They do not believe that any one local church has the range of gifts and training to establish doctrine, ordination standards, and other constitutional matters. Instead Methodists do these things collectively, freeing local churches for the work of ministry. Pastors are accountable to their conference for character and conduct and work side-by-side with local church leaders. Independent churches and pastors are not truly Methodist."

In our denominational world, the relationship between the local church and pastor is governed by the polity of The Free Methodist Church as outlined in this *Manual*. The pastor is appointed to a local church by the bishop, with the approval and guidance of the MEGaP committee. They are given responsibility for both the spiritual and temporal leadership of the local church. In those matters that are denominational in scope, including doctrine, standards of personal conduct, and areas of denominational policy, the pastor is guided by our denominational constitution, *The Manual*, the policies defined by the general conference and board of administration and the guidance and direction of the bishop and national leadership team.

Although a senior pastor is employed by the local church, the conference endorses and credentials the pastor, and all ministerial appointments are made through the bishop. Consequently, if there are to be any local church initiated pastoral changes, the local

church may not “fire” a pastor but must request that the bishop or Director of Leadership Development and Church Health assist with the pastoral change to ensure that proper personnel procedures are followed. Similarly, appointed pastors do not resign from the local church, but must make requests of the bishop to be released from their appointments. (The related procedures are outlined in ¶340.)

Within the local church, the pastor provides both spiritual and temporal leadership. In their role as spiritual leaders they are responsible for the preaching and teaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, and the providing of guidance and direction in the evangelistic outreach ministries of the church. As temporal leaders, pastors serve as the primary administrator of the local church. In both these roles the pastor serves side-by-side with his/her local church leadership. Pastors provide leadership to their official boards, but are also accountable to them and subject to their policy direction.

¶374.2 IMPACTS OF THE LAW

In addition to being governed by denominational polity, local churches are also governed by the laws of the country, and of the province in which they are located. Most local Free Methodist churches in Canada are unincorporated associations. They are subjected to many of the laws that apply to corporations, as well as the laws that are applicable to all charitable organizations. Under the law, pastors are considered to be employees of the local church. Local churches are therefore responsible for ensuring that all of the requirements of labour and human rights laws applicable to employer/employee relationships are followed.

¶374.3 OFFICIAL BOARD CHAIR

Under civil law, employees of an organization may not serve as members of its board of directors. This is considered to be a conflict of interest. For example, Ontario case law has confirmed that pastors should not serve as voting members, nor as the chair of church boards. In addition, a pastor who serves as a member or chair of the board is also exposed to the same legal liabilities shared by all board members. In light of these considerations, *The Manual* requires that a layperson be elected to chair the board. (See ¶325.2.1.)

A number of considerations regarding the role of a lay chair are outlined in earlier parts of this chapter. It is important that the senior pastor, as the leader and chief administrator of the local church, be invited to and have a voice in all board and committee meetings. Having a layperson chair the board may give pastors more freedom to participate and express their views as nonvoting leaders in board meetings.

¶374.4 MULTIPLE STAFF CHURCHES

When a local church has determined that it needs additional pastoral staff, both the senior pastor and official board need to have a clear understanding of the relationships between the board, senior pastor and additional pastoral staff. Carefully chosen titles help to define relationships. The titles, assistant pastor and associate pastor communicate different relationships.

An associate pastor is one who, while clearly accountable to the senior pastor, is expected to be the senior pastor, as it were, *in the areas of his/her responsibility*. He/she is not expected to assist the senior pastor with things that will be shaped and directed by the senior pastor. (That is what an assistant does). The associate gives formation to his/her area of church life, while the assistant does tasks in ministries shaped by someone else.

The associate pastor possesses the same kinds of training, experience and high competence for his/her area of responsibility that the senior pastor does for his/her area. In this, they are viewed as equal (in terms of gifts and training and level of responsibility in their own areas) and different (in terms of assigned responsibilities).

Because someone must ultimately be in charge in an organization, that responsibility belongs to the senior pastor. Employing an associate who is clearly an equal in gifts, training and responsibility (except final oversight) does nothing to negate the fact that every organization needs one person who is ultimately responsible.

Whether a pastor is an assistant or an associate is not a simple matter of choice. To a greater or lesser extent, formational and temperamental factors incline most people to be better suited for one role or the other. Some pastors find it difficult to function as assistants; some find it hard to perform as associates; some senior pastors find it hard to manage assistants; some find it hard to work with associates. There are reasons for this.

Some people's temperament and formation make it difficult for them to allow others to have real responsibility in areas they are ultimately responsible for. They tend to strongly prefer what Hersey and Blanchard (*Management of Organizational Behaviour: Utilizing Human Resources*, Prentice-Hall, 1982) call "telling" (high task, low relationship) or "selling" (high task, high relationship) forms of leadership behaviour with followers. They find it hard to "participate" (high relationship, low task) or "delegate" (low relationship, low task). They have too much of a need to stay "hands-on" and to give shape and formation to what they are ultimately responsible for. These persons should probably not hire an associate or ask that their secretary to function as an administrative assistant. They don't work that way.

Other people tend by personality and formation to prefer leadership behaviours that are termed participating or delegating. They have to work hard to give directions (telling or selling) to people working for them. These people should not hire an assistant who needs the high levels of direction and support they find hard to give.

Likewise, some people have such a level of what Hersey and Blanchard call "Job Maturity" (willingness + ability) that they would only be frustrated to be in an assistant role. They are leaders who need to shape their world and create things.

In the same way there are people who need a narrowly defined task to do, and who will do it with distinction under good supervision. Such persons should not be asked to function as pastoral "associates."

From the perspective of our denominational polity, the process for the selection and appointment of an assistant/associate pastor will be the same or very similar to the appointment of a senior pastor. The qualifications and doctrinal position of all appointed pastors must be approved by the conference MEGaP committee. From a legal

perspective, both the senior pastor and assistant/associate pastor are employees of the local church.

Both the senior pastor and the official board (or a locally appointed subcommittee) need to be involved in the process of defining the proposed job descriptions for additional pastoral positions, and in interviewing and recommending a candidate for the position. It is important to recognize that this needs to be a “side-by-side” process. Senior pastors must be involved since they will need to work very closely with the new assistant/associate. The board must be equally involved since they must represent the interests of their congregations as well as approving the position description and related employment conditions.

Local churches with multiple staff may wish to appoint a personnel committee. This committee may be a subcommittee of the board, or the board may serve as the personnel committee. This committee will be responsible for recommending the job descriptions and roles for all pastoral positions and terms of employment, such as salaries and benefits, housing allowances and vacation allowances. It will also be responsible for developing and implementing procedures for periodic performance assessments for all pastoral staff

Official boards need to recognize that assistant/associate pastors are supervised by the senior pastor. This also needs to be recognized clearly by the senior and assistant/associate pastors. The senior pastor is the chief administrative officer, or temporal leader of the local church. The senior and assistant/associate pastors need to work in close co-operation. There will be occasions when, as is the case in any working relationship, someone needs to take the leadership and decision making role. The board’s role is to provide the policy framework within which these decisions can be made. It is not in a position to make the day-to-day administrative decisions. Any attempt to do so will ultimately undermine the leadership and supervisory role of the senior pastor.

In practical terms this means that:

- It must be clear to all involved that the assistant/associate is supervised by the senior pastor.
- The assistant/associate pastor may attend official board meetings at the discretion of the senior pastor.
- Directions from the board to staff are in principle made through the senior pastor. The senior pastor is solely responsible to the board for the administration of the local church.

If problems arise between a senior and assistant/associate pastor, and they have not been able to resolve them between themselves, they should refer the matter to the pastor’s cabinet or board for review and advice. The senior pastor may recommend a change of assistant/associate pastor, or termination of employment to the official board, for its consideration, if such problems cannot be resolved, or if the performance of the assistant/associate is unsatisfactory, and reasonable attempts to resolve the performance deficiencies are unsuccessful. Disciplinary action by the bishop and ministerial education guidance and placement committee may also be grounds for dismissal. Except in the case of disciplining action, the assistant/associate pastor should be provided with a minimum of 60 days notice, or appropriate compensation in lieu of notice in accordance with provincial labour laws.

Assistants/associates who want a change in appointment should formally inform their senior pastor and board by requesting of the bishop that they be released from their appointment. The 60 day notice applies.

¶374.5 PASTORAL AND STAFF EVALUATION

Every organization should have a formal process for regular evaluation of the performance of its staff. The official board will ensure that an annual performance evaluation of the lead pastor (and other appointed staff) is done according to guidelines provided by the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health office (See ¶335).

The guidelines outline the process for two forms of evaluation that will occur: the 360 performance appraisal (preferred) or any other comprehensive appraisal approved by the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health either of which must be done at least once every three years. An informal review must be done in the year(s) when the 360 performance appraisal or the approved comprehensive appraisal is not done.

The best results from a performance evaluation will be obtained if everyone involved recognizes that the process has a positive objective: the objective of obtaining the best possible performance. Performance areas that have been satisfactory or superior should be acknowledged with positive feedback and documented. Where performance is less than satisfactory, the underlying reasons should be identified, and action plans to improve performance should be clearly identified. The committee should attempt to clarify and document whether the reasons for the unsatisfactory performance lie with the pastor/staff member, the board, or with the overall actions of the local church and its congregation. It is important to remember that in a local church setting, most resources needed to achieve the church's objectives are provided through the efforts of volunteers. The pastor or staff cannot be held totally responsible where the congregation does not have the volunteer participation and co-operation to accomplish its goals

¶374.6 Guidelines for Leaves of Absence Administered by the Local Church

There are times when an appointed pastor requires a short leave of absence that affects the employment arrangement with the local church but does not change the appointment arrangement with the conference. The reasons for the leave may vary from personal health (physical and/or mental) to educational pursuits. If requested by either the pastor or official board, the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health (or a designate) will assist with the planning for the leave.

Generally speaking, a leave of absence granted and managed by the local church should not exceed six months. It is important that the leave serves the original needs that prompted the leave. If there is need for a leave to be extended beyond the original plan, new terms should be negotiated.

Compensation to the pastor may vary from full compensation to no compensation. This is a time for a congregation to express compassion to its pastor. The understanding relating to compensation needs to be clearly outlined in a signed "Letter of Agreement" at the beginning of the leave. The need for accountability and progress reports is important whether or not the church compensates the pastor.

While a pastor is on leave, the church must ensure that his/her ministry responsibilities are cared for. If there are persons on staff, their job descriptions may be revised to cover ministry needs during the time of the pastor's absence. The pastor going on leave needs to know that it will be impossible to step back into leadership in the church at the same point

where he/she stepped out. Longer leaves will result in greater changes in the relationships with the congregation and staff.

If a leave longer than 6 months is required, the MEGaP Committee should be involved as the pastor's appointment may need to be changed. (See ¶853.) The departments of personnel and of administrative services are available to the pastor and local church as a resource in these situations.

If the need for the leave is medical in nature, the best professional resources should be engaged. It is not unreasonable for a board to request permission to receive progress reports from counsellors and medical professionals. The pastor may also qualify for the Long-Term Disability program administered as part of the benefits package for pastors. For more information on this program, go to the FMCIC website.

When a return to work is approved by a qualified medical practitioner/ counsellor, a re-entry consultation will be conducted with the minister (and spouse if applicable) under the following conditions:

- after any length of time, when initiated by the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health or the minister on medical leave
- after a medical leave of 12 months or more, it is mandatory

The re-entry consultation will be conducted by two MEGaP members (one clergy and one lay) and the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health or designate.

If the employment relationship must end, a termination of employment form (see ¶880) must be completed. Guidance for applying for Employment Insurance coverage is available through Service Canada at: 1.800.206-7218 or www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/common/contactus/index.shtml. If further help is needed, contact the office of the Director of Administrative Services of the FMCIC.

In summary the following issues relating to a leave of absence need to be clearly understood and stated in the "Letter of Agreement" signed by the pastor and a representative of the official board:

- the beginning date, duration, and ending of the agreement;
- the compensation package during the leave;
- the system of accountability expected;
- the need to revise job descriptions and staffing needs (so that the need for a leave does not happen again);
- a plan (if the leave is for medical reasons) that provides for a gradual and progressive return to full-time responsibility, in consultation with the pastor's physician and the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health;
- provision for the conference to advise and assist the church in the interim.

¶375 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE LOCAL CHURCH AND CONFERENCE

¶375.1 PASTORAL TRANSITIONS

The process for a pastoral transition (change of pastor) is outlined in ¶340 and in the “*Transitions Handbook*” available from the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health office. (See ¶875). Pastoral transitions mean change, and change is stressful for both the pastor and board members. The stresses can be reduced if the process is handled well. The process, if not handled well, may potentially lead to a great deal of dissension within the board and ultimately the congregation. The “*Transitions Handbook*” (par 875) is designed to help create a healthy process. It is extremely important that the process be undertaken in a spirit of loving Christian support. The board decision, and the rationale and background for it should not be discussed with anyone outside of the board (except the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health or bishop).

¶375.2 STAFF ISSUES RELATED TO SENIOR PASTOR TRANSITIONS

A local church will need to consider the tenure of its assistant/associate pastor(s) when there is a change of senior pastor. There is no single policy that will fit all situations. A number of considerations need to be taken into account during this transition. In some cases, the assistant/associate pastor may have been chosen because their ministry skills complement the skills of the senior pastor. This may not be true after a new senior pastor with different skills is appointed. On the other hand, the assistant/associate pastor may have been hired for a particular ministry role, requiring specific skills, which will continue without change after the transition.

There is also the reality that some members of the congregation may develop a strong loyalty to the assistant/associate pastor, particularly if the assistant/associate assumes the full ministry role during the transition period. This loyalty may make it difficult for the incoming senior pastor to gain the respect and loyalty of the entire congregation. This may also make it difficult for the new senior pastor to recommend a change of assistants/associates if necessary.

There are a number of possible solutions.

1. Ask the assistant/associate pastor(s) to submit their requests to the bishop to enter into pastoral transition at the same time that the senior pastor leaves. The major drawback here is the church immediately loses all pastoral leadership and experience at one time.
2. Ask the assistant/associate pastor(s) to submit their requests to the bishop to enter into pastoral transition immediately after the incoming senior pastor is appointed. This allows the incoming senior pastor and board the freedom to arrange for the appointment of new assistants/associates. It also provides for continuity of pastoral staff during the transition.
3. Ask the assistant/associate pastor(s) to be prepared to submit their requests to the bishop to enter into pastoral transition at any point up to a year after the incoming senior pastor is appointed, and enter into pastoral transition if the board approves a recommendation from the senior pastor requesting a change in assistants/associates.

At a minimum, the incoming senior pastor must have the opportunity to evaluate the ministry needs of the church, the ministry skills, graces and performance of the assistant/associate pastor(s), and if necessary, recommend a pastoral transition for the assistant(s) during the first year of their tenure.

The official board may wish to adopt one of these policies when an assistant/associate is appointed. Or it may wish to wait until the bishop has approved a transition for the senior pastor to select one of these options based on the considerations above, and the current circumstances of the church. In either case, the board *must*:

- a) Ensure that assistant/associate pastor(s) are clearly aware that they may be required to submit their requests to the bishop to enter into pastoral transition at any time after a transition for the senior pastor is announced until a year after a new senior pastor is appointed.
- b) Ensure that this understanding is clearly documented in a written agreement between the local church and assistant/associate pastor, signed by the assistant and a board officer, before the assistant is appointed.

¶375.3 POLICIES GUIDING CORE AND GIVING STREAMS GIVING

Tithing as a fundamental principle should be understood by the leadership of a core group of a new congregation (church plant) and affiliated church at its formation or in the case of an affiliated church, at the negotiation stage for affiliation. If the infant/child analogy to tithing is applied, parents assume the full responsibility of the child's support. Where tithing is taught as a household principle, children are encouraged to tithe on their allowance, and as they get older, on their part-time and summer jobs. Only when children assume full responsibility for their living expenses do they begin to tithe on their full income. In the case of local churches, this applies to the operations budget (see ¶440.2.2).

¶375.3.1 New Congregation (Church Plant) Projects

Church plants are at the infancy stage of their life, being provided for by a "parent" church, whether a local church, a network of churches, or the conference. Fiscal accountabilities are overseen by the sponsoring church(es) who birthed the project. Provided the principle is understood as a value of the organization and expected with maturity, new congregations are not expected to tithe to the Core or give to Giving Streams programs. At this stage they are in fact a recipient of the system rather than a contributor to it.

¶375.3.2 Churches in Affiliate Status

In both cases, these churches have been approved by Canada Revenue Agency as a charitable organization under the terms of the Income Tax Act and have demonstrated the appropriate signs of viability. In harmony with the expectations of paragraphs 305.5.6 and 306.6 of *The Manual*, the church will demonstrate "an attitude of intention" by moving toward 5% of its general budget receipts (only those receipts coming from parishioners) to The Free Methodist Church in Canada Core ministries program, beginning the first month after it becomes a fellowship or an affiliated organization. This remains consistent with the parent/child analogy above, where young children are only expected to tithe on the income that they earn themselves, not on the other perks or benefits they receive for being part of that family. Therefore churches are not be

expected to tithe on grants, subsidy or gifts that come from Giving Streams, parent churches or otherwise. Prior to applying for society status, a church with affiliate status should be moving toward the 10% participation level and be moving toward full independence from denominational subsidy.

¶375.3.3 Churches Applying for Society Status

When a church applies for society status, there is an expectation that it be within the 5-10% payment of Core from its full operational budget as described in Par 440.2 of *The Manual*. Unless an affiliate has demonstrated faithful support of Core within this range for six months or more, it will not be considered for society status. Churches that are accepted as societies will need to project full participation to tithe at the full 10% of their operations budget. The church will also need to pledge some interest in supporting denominational Giving Streams and be demonstrating some gesture of Giving Stream support in their budgeting process. Both of these intentions will be based on a covenant of good faith with the denomination.

¶375.3.4 Churches Experiencing Financial Challenges Asking for a Period of Grace

Paying pastors and keeping the lights on should always remain the first priority. However, rather than fully omitting the payment of the tithe from a church budget, a board should first strive to send a reduced percentage (e.g. 8, 6 or 4%) and communicate this adjustment to the Management Committee of the BOA, through the Director of Administrative Services, with a clear recognition that this decrease is for a time. When this communication is sent, the board should also include goals for how long a period will be required before returning to the full tithe. The plan can propose stages for increasing the percentage within a set timeline. This period of grace should never exceed two years. In extreme circumstances, the church may need to completely halt all payment of the tithe to the national church. If a church remains in this state for the duration of a full year, the National Leadership Team will intervene and see what can be done regarding the church's viability.

Churches intending to plant new churches are normally expected to be giving a minimum of 5% to the CORE ministries budget prior to launching a new church.

¶375.4 Policies Guiding Healthy House Church Relationships within the FMCiC

House churches can function effectively within the FMCiC where there is understanding as to how the partnering relationship between the house churches and the FMCiC works; how the roles of approved leaders fit into the current denominational structure; and, how the house churches fit into the larger accountability structure of the FMCiC.

Five unique characteristics of house churches are:

- a. These house-sized communities are full functioning churches, not small groups.
- b. House churches will focus on Christ centered relationships and might not organize themselves into any form that looks like a "service" or "program."
- c. Every approved house church leader is released to be a responsible minister in his/her community.
- d. House churches do not intend to own real property or buildings specifically used for church gatherings.
- e. House churches intend to grow by multiplying new house churches, not by simply adding to the existing groups.

House churches best multiply through the intentional training and approval of “non-ordained” local leaders. These leaders administer the most important actions in ministry. This includes baptisms, funerals, marriages and serving communion. The weight of these actions is heavy enough that only approved leaders with sufficient training will facilitate these acts. These local leaders accept the overall responsibility for the people within a local house church.

New house church planters are released on the basis of their calling, commitment to training, competence to lead and character (1Timothy 3:2-13; Titus 1:6-9; Galatians 5:22). Even though a new house church might have one or two leaders, small teams of people will be established whenever possible to start new works.

Local Leader Qualifications

Local house church activities happen through the full participation of the people within the house church itself, facilitated by a plurality of local leaders. These leaders are Christian men or women who are approved with consensus from the network (HCN) and the local house church, who have completed or are currently taking house church leadership training and are committed to accountable and consistent relationships within the house church network.

Local Leader Job Description

These local leaders are responsible to:

- Model and encourage biblical church values (Loving God, Living Community, Everyone Growing, Everyone Contributing, Depending on God, Responding back to God, Finding Wholeness, Reaching Out, etc.)
- Actively serve people through tasks like: discipleship, organizing gathering times, hosting (cleaning, cooking, welcoming), teaching, being available, following-up, initiating accountability, communicating values, casting vision for multiplying and encouraging & modeling personal evangelism.
- Take overall responsibility so that sharing together in the Lord’s Supper, baptisms, marriages and funerals are administered in a godly and biblical fashion. “Administration” refers to the correct oversight or organization of such events, not necessarily their “hands-on” execution of them.

Accountability Structure

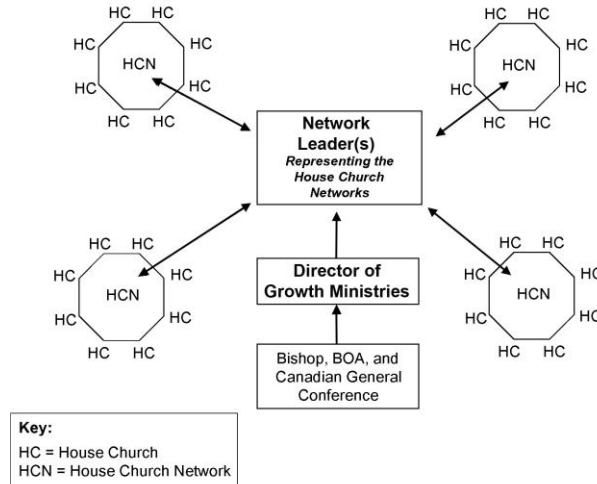
Healthy relationships among the local house churches through House Church networks (HCN’s) and between the HCN’s and the denomination are beneficial. It allows for both freedom at the grass roots and accountability on a larger level.

House Church Networks (HCN) – see diagram below

These networks will consist of the leaders of house churches meeting regularly with other house church leaders for training, encouragement and accountability. They will be tied to one another through relational connections. Most leaders, when first entering a house church network, will work through foundational theological and church practice material. Later, these network meetings may become more relational in nature.

Denominational Connection

Each of these networks will have a reasonable span of care. An HCN is led by a MEGaP-approved network leader from within one of the house church networks. This house church leader is either ordained within the FMCiC or has been given a lay minister's license by the HCN. The HCNs are careful to include the denomination's network values. It is at this HCN level that the house churches pursue society status within the FMCiC.



Accountability of Funds

House Church leaders will be self-supporting and unpaid. From time to time, some financial support may be given to leaders of networks for their time and any costs associated with regional training and networking. For this reason, the gathering and dispersing of donations happens primarily on a house church network level. It is on this level that the appropriate charity status is applied. Like any other Free Methodist society, it is also from this house church network that any financial support is given to the FMCiC.

Guiding Principles for the Accountability Structure

- *Accountable vs. Controlled*
The house churches and leaders need biblical accountability – people who will walk beside them spiritually, doctrinally and financially. This functions best through clear lines of relationship developed by the house church networks.
- *Relational vs. Positional*
If the house churches and their leaders know the people to whom they are accountable, they will follow, listen and take guidance. Relationships are key to working well along side denominational and network leaders.

¶375.5 Role of the Local Church Delegate

Delegates are local church members elected to act as liaisons between the local churches and the general conference. The delegates represent the local church at general conference as voting members and communicate important information they receive at general conference to the local congregations by reports and announcements. The delegates, along with the pastors, are the local church contact persons for MEGaP and the national leadership team (NLT). The annual pastoral performance appraisals are organized through the delegates. The delegates report its results to the pastors, the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health and the official boards. The delegates must commit to the term of office that relates directly to the frequency of the general conference.

Here is a checklist of the responsibilities of the delegates:

A. The delegates as local church members:

- Support the pastor and local church by giving of their time, talent, and resources to the local church. (See ¶630.3.3)
- Are persons of prayer.
- Personally model the principles in Matthew 18:15-18 in healthy relationships.

B. The delegates as active board members:

- Understand their own gifting and personality traits by completing Base 3 Ministry SHAPE profile or its equivalent to help the official board and church to make discerning decisions to guide the elections of delegates.
- Commit to the term of office that relates directly to the frequency of the General Conference. (Presently, this is three years.) This commitment to the local church provides the necessary continuity to the vision and ministry of the church.
- Help to initiate, coordinate and communicate the results of the Natural Church Development surveys within their congregation, alongside the pastor and the official board

C. The delegates as liaison with the Conference:

- Provide feedback to the FMCIC on the state of the local church. On behalf of the official boards, they communicate congregational concerns to the Ministry Centre on an ongoing basis as well as any concerns with respect to the senior pastor's ministry.
- Oversee the pastor's annual performance appraisal. They initiate, coordinate and participate in the performance appraisal of the pastor at the local church and communicate that information to the pastor. They also submit a report of the performance appraisal results (Form 5) to the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health office.
- Act as a communication link. With the pastor, they ensure that important information sent to them by email or other means from the Ministry Centre is communicated to the congregation.
- Serve on the pastoral leadership task force (PLTF) during transition. They communicate the activity of the PLTF to the Director of Leadership Development and Church Health or his designate.

D. The delegates as voting members of the General Conference:

- Study the current issues of the Church in order to vote intelligently under God's direction regarding policies and theological and doctrinal issues.
- Attend the general conference sessions as voting members and interact with the issues of the conference
- Provide a report of the general conference to the local church within a reasonable time frame after the end of the conference.

¶376 RESOURCES

Other local church resources are available on The Free Methodist Church in Canada website.

¶380 LOCAL CHURCH FORMS

The following forms are provided at <http://fmcic.ca/380-local-church-forms/> on The Free Methodist Church in Canada website:

- ¶380 LOCAL CHURCH FORMS
- ¶381A LAY MINISTER'S LICENSE
LAY MINISTER'S LICENSE-CHURCH PLANTER
- ¶381B RENEWAL OF LAY MINISTER'S LICENSE
- ¶382A TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP
- ¶382B TRANSFER OF ADULT MEMBERSHIP TO ANOTHER DENOMINATION
- ¶382C TRANSFER OF YOUTH MEMBERSHIP
- ¶383A RESTORATION OF CREDENTIALS
- ¶383B RECOMMENDATION FOR MINISTERIAL CANDIDACY
RECOMMENDATION FOR MINISTERIAL CANDIDACY- CHURCH
PLANTER
- ¶384A QUESTIONS TO BECOME AN AFFILIATED
CONGREGATION
- ¶384B FREE METHODIST AFFILIATION CERTIFICATE
- ¶385 INCORPORATION AND DEEDS
- ¶386A APPLICATION TO MORTGAGE PROPERTY OF THE FREE METHODIST
CHURCH
- ¶386B APPLICATION TO PURCHASE PROPERTY FOR THE FREE METHODIST
CHURCH
- ¶386C APPLICATION TO SELL PROPERTY OF THE FREE METHODIST
CHURCH