

CHAPTER 4

GENERAL CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

- ¶ 400 Introduction**
- ¶ 405 Membership**
- ¶ 410 Special Regulations**
- ¶ 415 Officers of the General Conference**
- ¶ 420 Committees of the General Conference**
- ¶ 425 Board of Administration**
- ¶ 430 Ministerial Education, Guidance and Placement Committee**
- ¶ 435 Real Property**
- ¶ 440 Funding**
- ¶ 445 Compassion Ministries and Social Concerns**
- ¶ 450 Affiliated Organizations**
- ¶ 455 Parliamentary Authority**

APPENDICES

- ¶ 460 Organization Charts**
- ¶ 465 General Conference Forms**

CHAPTER 4: GENERAL CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

¶400 INTRODUCTION

On August 6, 1990 the Canadian General Conference was inaugurated and the evangelical vision of historic Methodism was reaffirmed – to preach the Gospel to the lost, to raise up congregations of deeply committed Christians, to call believers to lives of holiness and devoted service to others. The general conference as a governing body exists to enhance and co-ordinate that vision.

At the December 1994 adjourned sitting, the Canadian General Conference approved recommendations for a re-organization. Under this re-organization the four existing annual conferences and districts were merged, and their roles and responsibilities were assumed by the Canadian General Conference. After subsequent reviews of this legislative action by the international Constitutional Council, the Canadian General Conference agreed that it would take steps to re-instate some form of annual conference structure “when growth permits.” The following applies until such time as annual conference structures are re-instated. Amendments to some sections will be required at that point. The general conference will function as a single annual conference as regards ministerial membership until such time as annual conference structures are formed. (Organization Charts are located in ¶460.)

¶405 MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership of the general conference is defined in ¶250.2.1
2. Delegates to the general conference are members when duly seated.
3. The following shall be ex officio members without vote: The non-ordained directors employed by the board of administration, the president of Lorne Park Foundation, and the chair of the board of the *Free Methodist Foundation in Canada*.
4. The board of administration of the Free Methodist Church of North America is invited to send two fraternal delegates, one ministerial, one lay.

¶410 SPECIAL REGULATIONS

1. The general conference is the only legislative body in the church. It shall have full power to make rules and regulations under the limitations and restrictions described in ¶250. Only the general conference has power to submit a resolution for a denominational referendum.
2. The interval between sessions shall be approximately three years, unless otherwise ordered by the general conference. It shall be held at a time and place to be determined by the board of administration.
3. Physical proximity, language and cultural similarities and long-standing church ties between the Canadian and American churches have forged a special relationship. This relationship is recognized through a Letter of Agreement between the Board of Administration and Free Methodist World Missions, and co-operation in such areas as the Study Commission on Doctrine and the Association of Free Methodist Educational Institutions.
4. If so invited, the Canadian bishop is authorized to accept an honorary seat at the meetings of the Board of Bishops of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

5. Any annual conference (when they exist), society or individual member of a local society shall have the right to submit resolutions to the general conference and to have them fully heard. These must be introduced by a member of the general conference and are subject to the rules of that body.
6. Robert's Rules of Order in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure.

¶415 OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

1. **President:** see ¶250.2.3
2. **Secretary:** The general conference shall elect a member to serve as secretary during each session. The secretary may appoint an assistant.

¶420 COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

1. Study Teams

The board of administration shall establish study teams in advance of a general conference session. These study teams will be authorized to study ministry and administrative needs of the Canadian church and present working papers and recommendations to the general conference for its consideration. The teams shall serve from their appointment to the close of the general conference session. The number of teams and their specific areas of study shall be defined by the board of administration. The members of these study teams shall be nominated by the nominating committee and appointed by the board of administration.

2. Standing Board and Committees

The general conference shall elect, according to the principles outlined in ¶420.2.6, the following standing board and committees that will serve from the end of the session until the end of the next regular session. No person may serve on more than one standing board or committee. These leaders in the conference shall meet the leadership qualifications of ¶630.3.3

2.1 Board of Administration

The general conference shall elect a board of administration of 10 members. Membership should include equal ministerial and lay representation; Recognizing the importance of diversity, we will pursue a balanced board that reflects the age, gender, geography, race and ethnicity of the FMCIC. The functions and authority of the board of administration are defined in ¶425.2.

2.2 Ministerial Education Guidance and Placement (MEGaP) Committee

The general conference shall elect a MEGaP committee of up to 34 members, with equal ministerial and lay representation. The committee shall be composed of two or more sub-committees to serve in the various geographical areas of the Canadian church. The members shall be persons of spiritual depth and wisdom competent to work with all candidates for the ministry. The functions and authority of MEGaP are defined in ¶430.2.

2.3 Nominating Committee

2.3.1 Election of the Nominating Committee:

The general conference shall elect a nominating committee of no fewer than eight members, who are not members of another standing board/committee of the conference. The committee shall have, to the extent possible, equal lay and ministerial representation and balanced representation from the various geographical areas of the general conference. The number of persons on the general conference nominating committee to be elected for each region will be set by the board of administration. A national leadership team member will be an ex officio member of the committee.

The network leaders will meet apart from the national leadership team and develop a slate of nominees to the nominating committee from the various regions of the church to present to the general conference. The network leaders will consult in advance with local pastors regarding gifted and credible candidates.

Opportunity will be given for nominations from the floor of general conference after the nominations from the network leaders are presented.

2.3.2 Authority and Functions:

The committee will be responsible for providing nominations for:

- study teams for the general conference
- the secretary of the general conference
- members of the board of administration and committees listed in ¶420 (except the nominating committee)
- any board of administration or committee position which becomes vacant during the interim between sessions of the general conference.

2.3.3 Process:

In order to ensure that the standing board and committees are made up of gifted and credible Christian leaders, the general conference nominating committee will solicit input from local churches, network leaders and national leaders.

If the nominating committee is not able to identify an ordained minister from a geographic region to serve on the board of administration or on a general conference committee, it may nominate a ministerial candidate. If no ministerial candidate is available from that geographic region, the nominating committee is authorized to set aside the principle of regional representation in this case and nominate an ordained minister from another region.

2.4 Study Commission on Doctrine

The general conference shall elect a study commission on doctrine made up of nine members consisting of both lay and ministerial members. The commission shall provide a forum for the debate and discussion of issues related to doctrine, membership and ritual and serve as the editorial board for *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*. It may also undertake additional duties as assigned by the board of

administration. The commission shall report to the general conference and to the board of administration in the interim between general conference sessions.

2.5 Delegate(s) - Free Methodist World Conference

In accordance with the delegate formula of the constitution of the Free Methodist World Conference, the Canadian General Conference is represented at the World Conference by a ministerial and a lay delegate. The bishop shall serve as the ministerial delegate and the chair of the board of administration as the lay delegate. Reserve delegates shall be elected by the board of administration from among its members.

2.6 Term of Office

- The term of all board or committee members shall begin at the end of the general conference session at which the member is elected and continue until the end of the next regular session.
- The members of any board or committee of the general conference may serve for a maximum of three consecutive terms of office.
- If nominated, members may serve for more than three consecutive terms if elected by a two-thirds majority vote.
- The nominating committee shall ensure that at least one-third of the members of the board and standing committees are retired and replaced at each general conference session.

¶425 BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

1. Membership

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

2. Authority and Functions

- 2.1 The board shall have general organizational, promotional and supervisory powers over all activities of the church during the interim between general conference sessions. It shall meet regularly, at times to be determined by the board, but no less than once in each 12-month period. A majority of the members elected shall constitute a quorum.
- 2.2 The board shall constitute the members of the corporation of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.
- 2.3 If the office of bishop becomes vacant for any reason, a new bishop shall be elected, except for vacancies occurring in the last six months preceding a general conference. The election shall be conducted according to the procedures outlined in ¶860.
- 2.4 The board shall have the responsibility to determine the number of senior staff (national leadership team members) to be employed by the corporation, and to define the general duties and responsibilities of these positions in consultation with the bishop. The bishop will create a hiring task force, which must include at least one member of the board and one

member of MEGaP. This task force will be responsible for the process from job posting to recommendation of a candidate to the board for approval.

- 2.5 The board shall publish annually an audited financial statement outlining the assets, liabilities, and financial standing of the corporation of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.
- 2.6 The board shall have the power to accept resignations, fill vacancies and remove for cause any of its members or any denominational executive (not including the bishop) during the interim between general conference sessions, subject to other sections of *The Manual*.
- 2.7 The board shall have the power to declare that a local society ceases to exist if the society does not have the personnel and financial resources needed to carry out an effective ministry plan, or is unable to elect an official board and trustees. The board shall also have the authority to declare any local or national church property surplus. It may authorize the management committee to take control of the title to the real and personal surplus properties and to transfer the title to the Corporation. It may direct the management committee to sell or otherwise dispose of such property. The proceeds of such sale may be used as directed by the board, provided they are first applied to clearing any remaining debts of the former society.
- 2.8 The board shall be involved in the discipline of lay and ministerial members and congregations as provided for in chapter nine of this *Manual*.
- 2.9 The board may approve Letters of Agreement with the board of administration of The Free Methodist Church of North America and the Department of World Missions as needed to advance the ministries of The Free Methodist Church in Canada. As the Corporation of The Free Methodist Church in Canada, the board may approve any legal agreements with other organizations or affiliated Free Methodist organizations as necessary to further the interests of the church.

3. Officers of the Corporation (Board of Administration)

At its first meeting following its election by the general conference, the board of administration shall:

- elect a chair from among its lay members.
- elect the following officers of the corporation from among its members: vice-chair, secretary, treasurer.

When employees of the corporation participate in meetings of the board of administration, they do so without a vote.

4. Committees

At its first meeting following its election by the general conference, the board shall organize its members into such committees as the board shall deem to be necessary to organize and administer the ministry programs of The Free Methodist Church in Canada. Among these committees shall be the audit, management and personnel committees.

To establish a link between the board of administration and the North American Commission on Missions, the Canadian representative to the North American Commission on Missions shall be appointed by the board of administration from among its members sitting on the committee responsible for overseas missions.

4.1 Audit Committee

The management committee shall nominate three persons who are members of a local society or of the Canadian General Conference for election by the board of administration as the audit committee for the term between general conferences. The audit committee will meet independently with the external auditor to receive and review the auditor's report. The nomination and election is to take place at the first meeting of the board of administration following general conference. The members of the audit committee may not be members of the board of administration.

4.2 Management Committee

The management committee of the board of administration shall consist of four members appointed by the board of administration from among its members, one of whom is clergy. The committee shall meet in conjunction with board of administration meetings and at such other times as it deems necessary. It shall report to and be amenable to the direction of the board of administration in the interim between general conference sessions. The committee shall:

- 4.2.1 have general oversight of the financial resources of the Corporation of The Free Methodist Church in Canada;
- 4.2.2 prepare annual budgets for Core Ministries for approval by the board of administration;
- 4.2.3 act as administrators of the Ministers' Pension Plan;
- 4.2.4 manage the Ministers' and Employees' Benefit Program (Life, LTD and Medical/Dental Insurance);
- 4.2.5 develop and manage a salary plan for denominational executives and staff;
- 4.2.6 serve as the Trustees of the Corporation of The Free Methodist Church in Canada. As the national trustees, the committee shall have the authority, subject to the general directions of the board of administration to provide local church trustees with the conference consent required to mortgage, lease or sell local church property (See ¶350.1.3);
- 4.2.7 provide local churches with general guidelines regarding pastoral salary and employment policies.

No member of the committee shall benefit directly or indirectly from the funds under the care of the committee. It shall follow conservative investment practices with due regard for the preservation of capital.

4.3 Personnel Committee

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

¶430 Ministerial Education Guidance and Placement (MEGaP) Committee

1. Membership

The general conference shall elect a MEGaP committee of up to 34 members, as defined in ¶420.2.2. The bishop and the director of leadership development and church health shall receive notification of all MEGaP meetings and minutes, and shall be entitled to be present and participate fully without vote in all meetings.

2. Authority and Function

- 2.1 The committee shall assist the director of leadership development and church health in the recruiting, interviewing, screening and evaluation of ministerial candidates. It shall recommend lay ministers for ministerial candidacy and ministerial candidates for commissioned ministry, or ordination and membership in the conference when they are deemed ready. It shall be available to counsel ministers in personal growth and professional advancement. The committee shall consider the character and performance of each minister, including located ministers and report to each session of the general conference.
- 2.2 The committee shall appoint ministers to their various ministries, in consultation with the bishop, director of leadership development and church health and pastoral leadership task forces. The process for changes of appointments is described in the *“Transitions Handbook for Churches.”* The MEGaP committee shall have the authority to make changes in appointments without the request of the local society when this is deemed to be in the best interest of the local church or pastor.
- 2.3 A minister may be appointed to a church without being given charge of that church. In such cases, the church shall be listed “under the bishop” who shall assume responsibility for its administration.
- 2.4 Any minister who refuses to serve when appointed shall not be appointed by another conference without the approval of the MEGaP committee.
- 2.5 The MEGaP committee may grant a leave of absence to any ordained minister. If not restored to active ministry after a two-year leave of absence, the minister’s membership shall be located to a local church (see ¶845). Located ministers may be restored to active ministry by the MEGaP committee. Leave of Absence appointments shall designate the reason for a leave of absence.
- 2.6 Located Ministers have the place of their membership determined by the MEGaP committee. In the process, the minister and official board of the church involved shall be consulted.
- 2.7 The MEGaP committee shall rule on divorce cases related to persons preparing for or involved in ordained ministry. (See ¶816) The bishop shall appoint a Divorce Review Committee of four MEGaP members to assist with the preparation of recommendations related to divorce cases.

¶435 PROPERTY

1. Real Property

- 1.1 The management committee (Trustees of the Corporation) shall have the legal authority to act on behalf of the corporation in all matters pertaining to administration and management of the real properties of the corporation.
- 1.2 The management committee shall have the power to mortgage, lease, sell or otherwise encumber the real property of the corporation, with the consent of the general conference or the board of administration. Where the real property in question is the property of a former local society or property that has been declared surplus, the general policy direction of the board of administration regarding disposal of such property and the use of proceeds shall be considered to be the consent of the board needed for sale or disposal of such property.

¶440 FUNDING

1. The finances for operating the ministries of the Canadian General Conference shall be provided for through two programs known as Core Ministry and Giving Streams. Policies related to these programs are found in ¶375.3.

2. Core Ministry

2.1 The Core Ministry funding program shall provide for the financing of the general operating needs of the general conference and the Corporation of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

2.2 Each local society in The Free Methodist Church in Canada shall contribute a tithe (10%) of its general operating income to the support of the Core Ministry program. For this purpose (only) the general operating income is defined to include all donations to the local society, LESS funds raised for:

- Giving Streams.
- Special short-term fund raising programs for local church projects (such as campaigns for building programs or debt reduction).
- Funds raised for special ministry programs outside of the local church (such as funds raised for the World Relief, and funds transferred to other Christian organizations).
- Bequests.

3. Giving Streams

3.1 The Giving Streams funding model shall provide for the support of the ministries of The Free Methodist Church in Canada in the following areas:

- Global Ministries: Support for global ministries proceeding from Canadian church involvements.
- Church **Planting**: Ongoing development of new Free Methodist churches in Canada, related financial assistance, and related leadership training and development.
- Leadership Development: Financial support for the Leadership Scholarship Program.

3.2 Financial support for Giving Streams shall be raised through voluntary free-will donations made by the individual members and adherents of local churches in Canada.

3.3 The Giving Stream model will be promoted through the communications department.

¶445 COMPASSION MINISTRIES AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

1. International Child Care Sponsorship Ministries – Canada (ICCM)

International Child Care Ministries-Canada is the child sponsorship program of The Free Methodist Church in Canada, supporting children in third-world countries. The Canadian Child Care Ministries Director shall supervise this ministry.

2. World Relief Fund

World Relief Canada is a Christian organization designated as the official humanitarian assistance arm of Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Because it represents several denominations working in partnership with a commitment to the indigenous church, famine and disaster relief projects have access to additional Canadian government funding through matching grants. The Free Methodist Church in Canada, through World Relief Canada, also participates in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

The World Relief Fund is supported voluntarily by Free Methodist churches across Canada usually through a fall campaign or as determined by the local church through the year. Funds designated to World Relief are channelled through the Canadian church or directly to World Relief Canada. Seventy percent of the funds received are disbursed to World Relief and 30% is designated to the Bishop's Relief Fund for similar Free Methodist specific projects world-wide.

3. Moral Issues and Social Action

Involvement in moral issues and social action within society has always been the concern of vital Methodists. The congregations of The Free Methodist Church in Canada are encouraged to promote the development of social conscience among their people and in their communities. Each local church is encouraged to be a member congregation of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and to support its initiatives.

¶450 AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

A number of organizations are affiliated with The Free Methodist Church in Canada. These affiliated organizations provide for a range of ministries and services to The Free Methodist Church in Canada, the local churches and their members. These include:

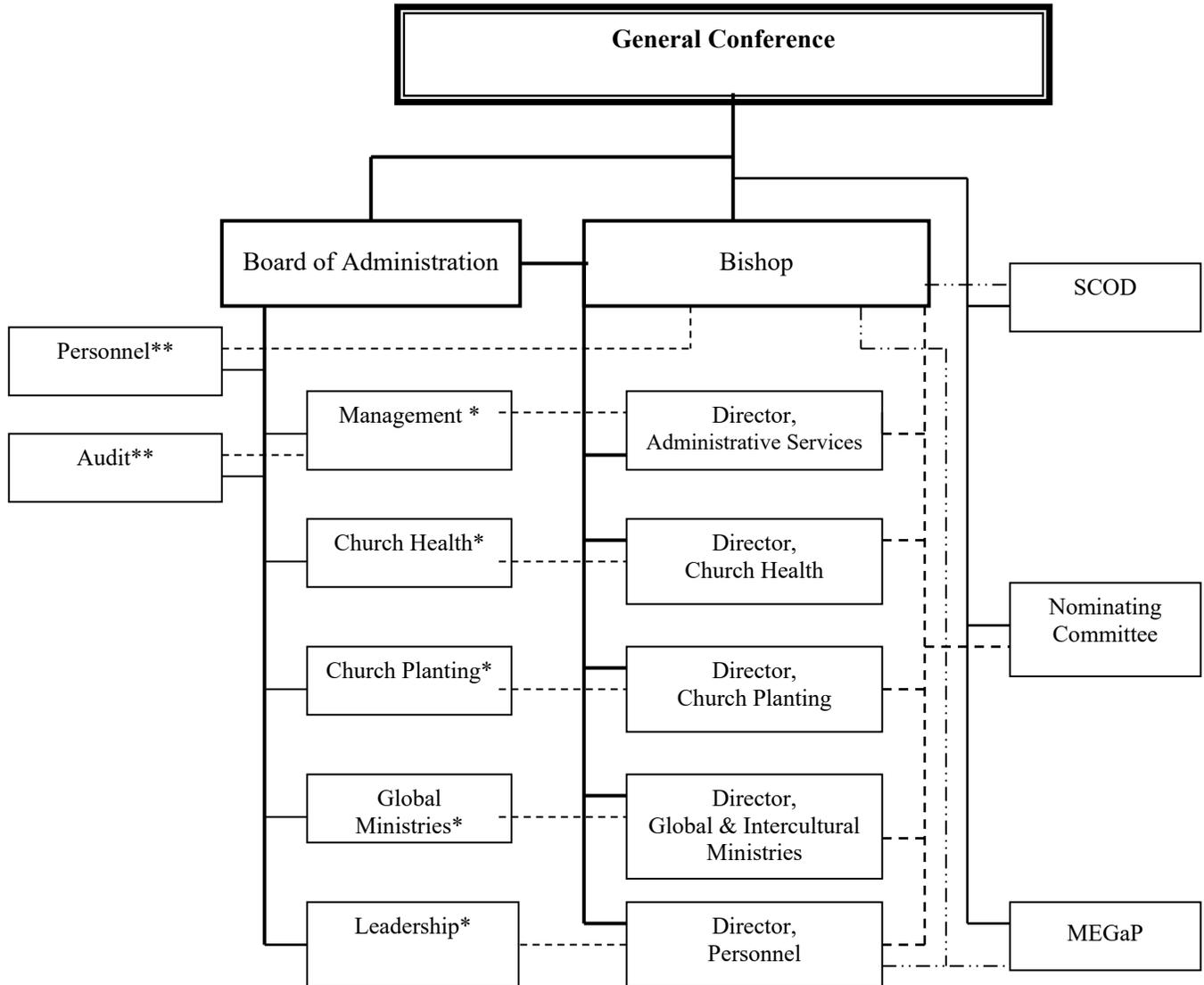
- Arlington Beach Camp and Conference Centre
- Echo Lake Camp
- Free Methodist Foundation in Canada.
- Kakabeka Falls Camp
- Lorne Park Foundation
- Maple Grove Christian Retreat Centre Inc.
- Pine Orchard Camp
- Severn Bridge Camp
- Wesley Acres Inc.

¶455 PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order in the latest edition shall be the standard of parliamentary procedure.

¶460 A ORGANIZATION CHARTS

The Free Methodist Church in Canada Organization Chart

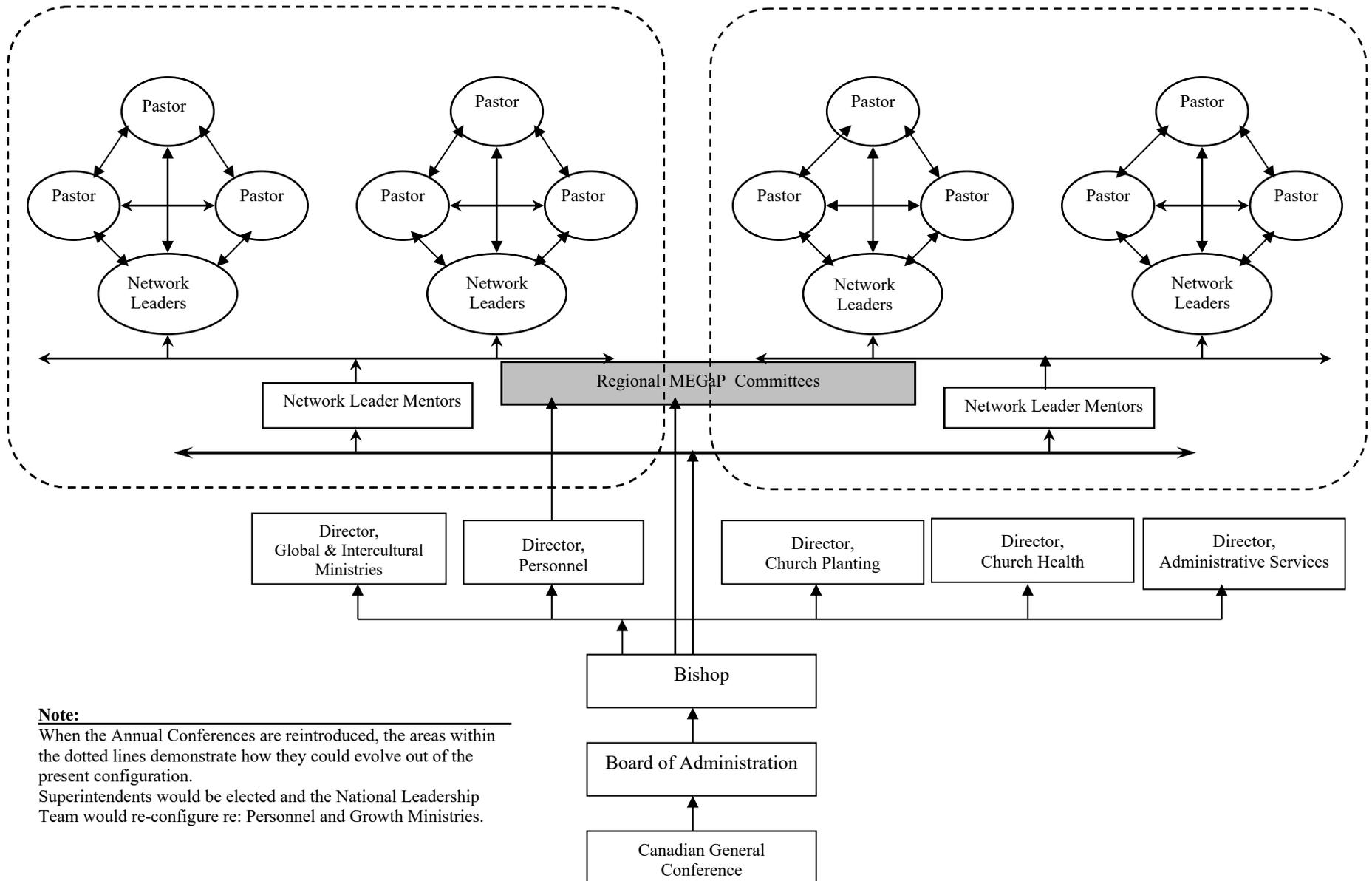


* Number & role defined by Board
 **Include members from outside the Board

----- Bishop chairs SCOD
 -.-.-.- Bishop & director of leadership development and church health chair MEGaP
 NLT members resource BOA subcommittees and Nominating Committee

460 B ORGANIZATION CHART: NETWORKS AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM CHART

THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA
 NETWORKS AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM CHART



Note:
 When the Annual Conferences are reintroduced, the areas within the dotted lines demonstrate how they could evolve out of the present configuration. Superintendents would be elected and the National Leadership Team would re-configure re: Personnel and Growth Ministries.

THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA
GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATE CREDENTIALS

THIS CERTIFIES THAT _____
NAME

OF _____ / _____ / _____ / _____
STREET CITY PROV POSTAL CODE

_____ / _____
PHONE EMAIL

was duly elected to represent the _____ *Church at the*
Canadian General Conference to be held in _____ *commencing on the*
 _____ *day of* _____, 20____.

Delegate ***Guidelines for electing delegates and reserve delegates are published
 in *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*, Par. 320.3**

Reserve Delegate

Decided at the Board /Society Meeting held at _____
on the _____ *day of* _____, 20____.

Pastor _____ Secretary _____

THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA
GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATE CREDENTIALS

THIS CERTIFIES THAT _____
NAME

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Reserve Delegate

Decided at the Board /Society Meeting held at _____
on the _____ *day of* _____, 20____.

Pastor _____ Secretary _____