

Memo

To: Board of Administration (BOA)
From: Bishop Leadership Task Force
Date: October 28, 2016
Subject: BLTF process update and recommendation

The BLTF is incredibly encouraged and excited to provide this report to the BOA. We have had a front row seat to this important process that has shown us that God is working in His people, creating a passion and joy for the work of the Lord balanced with a burden and drive for the people towards whom the Mission and Vision of the FMCiC is directed. We certainly feel that the Holy Spirit has led this process and indeed we recognize that He has known His plan all along and we have been tasked to walk in faith and discover what that plan is.

Our request to the denomination throughout this process has been to pray and as a team we felt the impact of that prayer. There were no foregone conclusions in our work and indeed at many stages we were happily surprised by the outcomes which arose. We asked for peace and where there was un-ease we slowed down and re-examined things, allowing God to keep us open to what He wanted us to do.

We recognize that while the result of our work is expected to be the election of a Bishop, we feel the discussions and thought processes started during this journey may have long lasting impacts on various ministry walks and we are excited to see where those may lead in the future. There is comfort for us as a BLTF in our final recommendation due to the sense of unity and peace that came with the ultimate decisions made along the way. Prior to giving our recommendation we wish to ensure we explain the steps which were tasked to us and undertaken to bring us to this point.

Process steps

This BLTF process, as put in motion by the BOA, provided the opportunity to solicit a wide response from the people of the FMCiC. It was not limited or segregated to the Pastors and Delegates but also lay leaders and any who attended the Regional Gatherings held across Canada. The search for the nomination for Bishop was national and opportunity was provided at the Regional Gatherings as well as a final call to email in any nominations for those who could not attend a gathering.

Qualities of the next Bishop

The Regional Gatherings and specific key groups in the denomination produced nearly 300 general comments, thoughts or ideas of what qualities or characteristics the next Bishop of the FMCiC could embody. While such a list can become quite impossible and even one person noted that “once you have everyone’s opinion of required characteristics the apostle Paul ... won’t have the qualifications”, this feedback provided an opportunity to perform a “key theme” analysis which provided a sense of common and frequent themes. A study of the adjectives/topics from this feedback produced well over 1,500 individual characteristics which

could be separated from the feedback comments. Attached to this report is a word map of those adjectives showing the relative strength of each (the larger words being more frequent than the others). This formed an important part of our toolbox for evaluation and discernment. It would allow for a description of the next Bishop such as (for example):

The next Bishop of the FMCiC has been identified as one who is called to champion the FMCiC through God-driven vision casting while navigating through the changing Canadian culture with wisdom and integrity. This Bishop will be able to relationally connect and clearly communicate with all segments of the FMCiC, creating a collaborative team atmosphere through humble and prayerful leadership, equipping God's people to live out His plan in the vision and mission of the FMCiC.

Many variations and aspects of the feedback could be created but the main themes helped guide the BLTF through this process, as we feel that God has specific plans for the FMCiC at this specific time in FMCiC history.

The nominations

As previously communicated the BLTF received 174 nominations spread across 37 names. The team examined the list of names received for all eligible nominations (ie: ordained) and those that could be identified (some names or "just first names" could not be deciphered) reducing the list to 31.

This was the first cross road for the BLTF. After spending prayer time individually with the nomination list the team determined that even a single nomination would be fully considered rather than an approach of the most frequent names, thereby giving each the same weight and consideration in the process, allowing for a small voice to be as equally heard as a loud group of voices. Each eligible person nominated was notified and given the opportunity to prayerfully contemplate whether they would let their name stand for consideration. This resulted in a list of 7 individuals willing to search God's call on their lives for the role of Bishop.

The 7 individuals were then invited to provide their resume as well as take time to contemplate and prepare responses to initial questions provided by the BLTF, in particular in relation to the LifePlan and Regional Gathering data that had been gathered to that point in time and which was publicly available for viewing. We intended to initiate and frame discussions in the BLTF process with the concurrent LifePlan and ensure that our discussions and framework included this important juncture in our history. After the time period set for response, 6 responses were received from those who wished to continue in the process. Dedicated time was then spent prayerfully considering each individual's response and submissions.

During this time the BLTF was thankful to receive valuable feedback from the LifePlan Study Team. Not only did it solidify some of the early feedback from the Regional Gatherings, it provided another lens to evaluate the candidates and their submissions prior to considering a short list.

Each BLTF member had individual time to consider and pray over each written response provided by the candidates in preparation for a significant conference call meeting where we one-by-one went through in great detail each document. The BLTF had the opportunity to carefully discuss the submissions and deliberate on how they matched up with the data we had received, the official Bishop job description and Manual description as well as our understanding of the Life Plan findings to date. A decision on a short list was made during that call and then we implemented a "cooling-off" period where we took that decision to the

Lord for confirmation. God provided a response to the team and after further discussions and adjustments following the cooling-off period, the nominated candidates were short listed to 3 for continuation with in-person interviews and reference checking.

Interviews

References for each of the 3 short listed candidates were interviewed by a member of the BLTF and the data compiled prior to the interviews taking place. Preparation for the interview included consideration of the Regional Gathering & LifePlan feedback, the candidate's resume and written responses, results of the reference checking along with the official Bishop job description and the Manual description of the role of the Bishop.

The interviews were conducted on October 15th. Again as we prepared for this important step, we purposefully surrounded the candidates and the process in prayer, asking that God prepare hearts, minds and ears. We asked God to be there with us, and He was. It really shouldn't surprise us but again God made smooth the interview day, our discussions and the time spent afterwards deliberating which provided all the BLTF the opportunity to openly share and express impressions and thoughts as we worked through the day.

Spousal input

Once the interviews were completed, the BLTF was able, as mentioned before, to work in unity and peace to reach a unanimous conclusion which we are excited and confident to present to the BOA today. However, it was identified that as part of this process, family and spousal support is a very key element to any strong ministry walk and in particular to this role. As such we ensured that we took the opportunity to meet our final candidate's spouse in person to bring them into the discussion, confirming their support and God's call on them individually as well as their spouse as a ministry couple. This step was a solidifying one, as we were able to identify that the candidate and their spouse have the same ministry calling and passion for the church and discipleship, and maintain a strong marriage and family life.

BLTF RECOMMENDATION: CLIFF FLETCHER

Cliff Fletcher is being put forward by the BLTF to the BOA for approval as the nominee for the next Bishop of the FMCiC. After much consideration and the process as described above the BLTF is confident in providing one name for the ballot and that the Holy Spirit has been preparing Cliff for this role.

Attachment: Profile