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29 September 2017

Dear Madame Moderator & Governors,

As one of the former GB members that helped to draft the GB Policy Handbook and served on the founding Governing Board's Governance Committee, I wanted to share my experience and interpretation of the Policy Handbook and UFMCC Bylaws in light of the angst and consternation being expressed and flamed by those who do not agree with recent decisions made by MCC's current Moderator. I have shared my thoughts via the MCC Clergy & Lay Facebook group but also want to formally submit them to you.

On "Interim" Moderator role, responsibility and accountability

It has been expressed repeatedly by some that there are missing bylaws and/or policies that detail the role, responsibility and accountability of a Moderator serving an interim term.

UFMCC Bylaw Article V.E.2.d outlines what is required by the Governing Board when there is a vacancy in the office of Moderator. I have read this bylaw repeatedly and see that the only defined difference between an elected Moderator and appointed Interim Moderator is the term of office. An Interim serves until the next General Conference when an election for a new Moderator can take place versus the full six year term an elected Moderator would serve. The "interim" portion of the title "Interim Moderator" is in reference to the intervening time one serves. Therefore, any bylaw or policy that details the Moderator's role, responsibility and accountability is applicable to those that fill the Office of Moderator regardless of how they ascended to the position.

For those that continue to question whether or not Moderator Rev. Elder Rachelle Brown has the same role, responsibility and accountability as our previous Moderator or those to come, the answer is a simple yes.

On the Moderator's and Governing Board's Role of Staff Management

When drafting the GB Policy Handbook back in 2010-11 the Board used the metaphor of nesting mixing bowls taught to us by church governance consultant from the Alban Institute, Dan Hotchkiss, author of "Governance & Ministry." The mixing bowl metaphor was used to help us understand that it is a best practice to set clear and distinct boundaries between the board and staff. Management of the staff is, by design and intent outlined in the Policy Handbook, clearly resting only with the Moderator's bowl.

Dan notes in his book that "management is the staff's (in our case Moderator's) sphere...staff accepts the responsibility for managing its own internal relationships and for using the authority it has been delegated." The delegation of authority by the Governing Board to the Moderator is clearly outlined in the Policy Handbook. Dan goes on to note, "A staff that continually seeks approval or permission from the board diminishes its own effectiveness and robs time from the board's real work."

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With that history in mind I have listed a variety of highlights from the Policy Handbook that were instituted seven years ago to explicitly detail the delegation of authority given to the Moderator. While you are of aware of this, I feel it is still necessary to point out that these specific policies that delegate this authority to the Moderator have not be amended since their creation on 17 Aug 2010, whereas other policies have been amended and added resulting in eleven editions of the handbook. This means not only did those of us who authored the first release of the handbook find these policies acceptable, but that all subsequent members of the Governing Board have also validated these policies as complete, clear and binding. Otherwise, at any time they would have exercised what is outlined in Policy 9.*

Excerpts from Governing Board Policy Handbook Version 12 Released 5 July 2017

Section 2

Philosophy of Governance

As much as possible the Governing Board shall delegate management decision-making to the Moderator.

Management

The MCC Governing Board is broadly charged with management of MCC; however, the Moderator is charged with the denomination's day-to-day operations. Therefore, it shall be considered that the GB delegates and entrusts to the Moderator those management decisions necessary for MCC's routine organizational function accordingly, and to satisfy reasonable measures of MCC Governing Board effectiveness, the GB will ensure that this delegation, like all others, is inherently structured with a proper balance of authority, accountability, and guidance.

Delegation

As head of staff, the Moderator will be the individual accountable to the Governing Board for effective management of all operations of the UFMCC. Therefore, the Moderator shall have the authority and responsibility to make operational decisions, adopt administrative policies and allocate denominational resources except as limited by the policies contained herein.

The Moderator is responsible for staff performance, and provides the primary communication link between the denominational staff and the Governing Board. The Moderator is responsible for maintaining a productive and effective denominational staff.

The Moderator shall be responsible for maintaining a productive and effective staff, for ensuring that the staff's efforts are directed toward fulfilling MCC's mission and vision of ministry, and for all issues and matters related to the staff's compliance with GB policies.

- Compensation for denominational staff should be competitive and comparable to that offered for similar positions in the local or denominational markets; every effort will be made to comply with all guidelines for fair compensation. The Moderator may handle compensation plans provided the overall budgeted amount is not exceeded, and the plans are, in the aggregate, compliant with GB financial policies (see Care for Resources section).

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- The MCC Personnel Handbook will contain all information and policies related to time worked and benefit packages, including health and retirement plans.
- All hiring and firing practices will adhere to and comply with applicable local and federal laws, as well as any applicable labor laws, and will be conducted as outlined in the MCC Personnel Handbook
- Yearly evaluations for all staff members will occur in accordance with the MCC Personnel Handbook

Powers Reserved to the Board

All powers, excepting those explicitly delegated in this document and those limited by UFMCC Bylaws, the Governing Board Charter, and/or applicable statutes and legislation, are reserved to and shall be within the purview of the GB.

Section 3

Policy 1 – Role of the Board and its Board members

The roles of the Governing Board and its Board members are defined in the UFMCC Bylaws Article V. E.3 and Addendum 2, Charter of the Governing Board as approved by General Conference 2010 in Acapulco, Mexico. The goal of this policy is to address Board roles implied, but not explicitly stated in the Bylaws.

Policy:

The Governing Board has primary governance, management and oversight of responsibilities for MCC. The day-to-day operations are not the responsibility of the Governing Board. The primary role of the Chair/Moderator of the Governing Board is to manage and execute the day-to-day operations of the Senior Leadership Team and report the status/results to the Governing Board at their regular meetings.

Board Member's Duty of Obedience

- To contribute to defining the organization's mission and governing the fulfillment thereof
- To carry out the functions of the office of Board Member as stated in the UFMCC Bylaws
- To support in a positive manner all actions taken by the Governing Board even when in a minority position on such actions
- To refrain from intruding on administrative issues that are the responsibility of management, excepting to monitor results and prohibit methods that conflict with Governing Board policy.

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MCC Governing Board Service Commitment Letter

I, _____, recognizing the important responsibility I am undertaking in serving as a member of the MCC Governing Board, hereby pledge to carry out in a trustworthy and diligent manner the duties and obligations adherent to my role as a Board member.

I acknowledge that my primary roles as a Board member are:

1. To contribute to defining the organization's mission and governing the fulfillment of that mission,
2. To carry out the functions of the office of Board member as stated in the bylaws, and
3. To develop policies that governs the implementation of institutional plans and purposes.

My commitment:

I will exercise the duties and responsibilities of this office with integrity, loyalty and care.

I pledge to:

Refrain from intruding on administrative issues that are the responsibility of management, excepting to monitor results and prohibit methods that conflict with Board policy.

Support in a positive manner all actions taken by the Board even in the event that I am in a minority position with regard to an action.

****Policy 9 – Policy Making***

The Governing Board is responsible for establishing broad policies that provide the basis for planning, implementation and evaluation of all efforts to fulfill MCC's purpose, vision and direction. To that end, the GB sets forth these standards, procedures and methods, i.e. this Policy Making policy, for instituting and/or amending its own guiding principles.

I offer this letter to you as a resource for your use and most importantly to express my support as an invested adherent to the mission of Metropolitan Community Churches, former Chair of Lay Ministry Council and former member of the inaugural Governing Board.

Your Sibling in Christ,



Bryan Parker