

## **SK Conference Nomination Restructuring Substantiation – March 2008**

### **Saskatchewan Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches**

This document will outline a proposal for the redesign of the provincial nomination committee and future processes to be used for searching and calling suitable candidates for current and future provincial board vacancies. This proposal is a result of numerous Executive Board conversations around the current provincial nomination process, and a clearly stated desire for change at the October 20, 2007 Executive Board meeting in Saskatoon.

This proposal is being submitted by the Executive to the Executive Board, the Council of Boards, and then convention delegates, for consideration and ratification.

#### **Issue**

There has been an increased reluctance from the general MB church constituency to consider serving in a role at the provincial conference level. With the efforts of the Canadian and Provincial conferences to increase awareness and move churches towards being a healthy and missional church, there will be an increased need for leaders in the local church. At the same time, the successful implementation of the long term missional vision of the Saskatchewan Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches will result in a need for more leaders answering the call for provincial leadership involvement. The requirements for these leaders will be more specific, with in some cases, a pre-determined set of skills being required.

Quite simply put, it is the Executive Board's desire for a new nomination and election paradigm. It is felt that the current process is not working despite numerous revision attempts. No longer can the conference leadership structure operate with a nomination process that commences in January with a sole objective to find and fill vacant positions.

There is a significant amount of work to be done and too few resources available for the conference leadership to be constantly revisiting the nomination process, worrying about resources or lack thereof.

#### **Vision**

It is the vision of the Executive Board that Council of Board and Executive positions be filled by members of the Conference, filled with a passion for furthering the kingdom work of Jesus Christ. It is the wish that these positions be filled with a vision of succession planning, to ensure the long term longevity of Boards, current work in progress, and future initiatives. It will be necessary to continually staff positions in line with the vision of leadership development.

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## Current Process

- Executive is responsible for providing nominations for the nomination committee which are to be elected to position
- Nomination process typically starts work in January in order to provide nominees for vacant positions.
- Nominations committee responsible to provide a list of nominees to the Executive for presentation to the convention delegates for elections
- Terms of office – 2 year terms; maximum 4 consecutive terms on same board.

## Proposed Nomination Process

### A. Formal Structure

1. The Executive shall appoint a Nominations Committee as part of their duties.
2. The Nominations committee will typically consist of the Executive Secretary and the Conference Board Chairs. The Executive Secretary will provide coordination and direct liaison to the Executive as part of his/her normal role. The proposal also provides the flexibility to add human resources to the nominations committee when required or appropriate.
3. All positions on the Executive and Council of Boards will remain filled by election or affirmation at the provincial conference held annually in the province of Saskatchewan.
4. All prospective candidates will have their names presented to the convention delegates by way of a nomination. The Executive shall be responsible for the presenting of such list.
5. The formal board structures will remain with 6 positions. Should there be more than 6 people willing to serve on any board, these individuals will be allowed to serve. Such provisions will be documented in the policy and procedures manual.
6. It is further proposed that the statements restricting an individual's length of service on a board be removed. Rationale: the Executive Board feels that in this new paradigm, it is not desirable to deny an individual's willingness to continue service to the Conference based solely on the length of service that person has previously served.
7. Also proposed is the removal of nominations being accepted from the floor on the day of the convention. Rationale: the conference leadership, under direction from the Board of Faith and Life, has implemented a policy where all people serving on provincial boards are required to complete a "Ministry Agreement Form". Nominations from the floor does not allow for the processing of these forms.

### B. Critical Success Indicators

Critical to this initiative's success and long term sustainability is the recognition and commitment by all conference leadership positions that this is a continuous process occurring throughout the year. The successful implementation of this initiative will also be dependant on strong buy in and participation by all Council of Boards members. Left up to just the chairs, it will be destined to be no less effective than the current process.

It is also crucial that the Board Chairs and Board members utilize their personal networks of contacts to assist in this nomination process. Communication between Board Chairs will be required in order to suggest potential candidates to each other. Example: a person, when contacted, declines service opportunities on that particular board, but should be asked if any other board provides interest.

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### C. Logistics – Nominations and filling of vacancies

1. The Executive Secretary will provide coordination and leadership in the nomination process. The Executive Secretary will also be the prime point of contact for interested individuals to contact conference leadership about service interests and opportunities.
2. The Executive (together with consultation of the Executive Board) would be responsible for the succession of the Executive positions.
3. The responsibility for the discernment and finding of potential Council of Board nominees will rest primarily with the Board Chairs. Once an individual has agreed to let their name stand, these names shall be forwarded through the Executive Secretary to the Executive and Executive Board for approval. This approved list of nominees shall then be presented to the convention floor for election.
4. Board chairs would be encouraged to develop and use their networks of friends, pastors, and church boards to further identify and recommend persons for their or other boards. Pastors and church leaders would also be encouraged to participate by identifying and forwarding names of potential leaders to the new nominating committee. These networks and contacts are seen as another avenue of identifying individuals who may be interested in provincial conference service opportunities.
5. Mentorship - Board Chairs will also be responsible for identifying and bringing into boards new individuals in an apprenticeship or mentoring role. Allowing members to investigate and initially participate in leadership roles as an apprentice strongly aligns with our provincial Leadership Development mandate. The successful incorporation of opening up our boards in this way will be critical in assisting all levels of conference leadership in succession planning.
6. There will be also be a process or mechanism whereby individuals can express personal interest in serving, or where they could forward suggestions to the conference leadership for follow up. These process will flow through the Executive Secretary position.