

## **Reviewing M&P Committee's Role and Function**

### **Origin:**

#### **1. What is the issue? Why is it important?**

The M&P committee has developed organically over the life of the United Church of Canada, permitting both flexibility and confusion. Simultaneously, requirements for employers have evolved separate at both the federal and provincial levels, and vary by province. For the church to adapt to its current context, support growth, and live into its equity commitments and its commitment to be a good employer, there is a need to review this aspect of our polity.

#### **2. What is happening now?**

Each M&P Committee is unique, but there are some general, anecdotal observations.

- Many governing bodies struggle to recruit M&P Committees members.
- Although voluntary M&P committee training is available, many do not take advantage of the training for a variety of reasons.
- Understanding of the role and responsibilities of M&P committees vary significantly by community of faith.
- Some ministry personnel and staff feel supported by their M&P, while many do not.
- Some M&P members or prospective members feel overwhelmed by the legal responsibilities of the role.
- M&P committees range in practice from almost never meeting, to frequent meetings where they take on the role of a corporate "line manager" of ministry personnel and staff.
- Sometimes there is confusion between the role of M&P committee, who are often asked to interview/hire lay staff, and the role of the search team seeking to call ministry personnel.
- Some congregations are experimenting with models where a "lead minister" acts as head of staff.
- Communities of faith are sharing ministry personnel and staff outside of the pastoral charge structure and create ad-hoc shared M&P committees.
- Ministry personnel are under the dual supervision of the Office of Vocation and the regional council, with the Office of Vocation establishing standards and expectations and disciplining ministry personnel and the regional council providing support "towards health, joy and excellence" and for "informal conflict resolution".

### **3. What is the recommendation?**

The General Council might

- Begin by defining the specific objectives for oversight and support in the community of faith.
  - Acknowledging that the M&P committee is only one possible method of achieving the above objectives, consider other ways the objectives could be achieved.
  - Acknowledging ministry personnel are under the dual oversight of the Office of Vocation and the regional council what, if any, objectives can only be achieved with a third oversight body located in the community of faith.
- Collect data on the different ways in which M&P committees are functioning and the different models of ministry personnel leadership provided. Determine what can be learnt from these natural experiments.
- Using the above, provide recommendations to the church.

### **4. Background information:**

M&P committees remains one of the two mandatory committees for all governing models, even though there is now great flexibility in governance structure and practice.

The role and responsibility of the M&P committee was not examined as part of recent comprehensive review efforts.

As an example of the organic evolution, at one time there were separate committees for each point in a pastoral charge, then a pastoral charge committee was added, then the individual committees were taken away and replaced with a single pastoral charge committee.

### **5. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

As a locus of significant power in the community of faith, the M&P committee has great ability to affect the formal and informal working conditions of ministry personnel and staff. While it is designed to be a place for conflict resolution, it can also be a place of conflict. Ministry personnel and staff from equity seeking communities could experience greater vulnerability in this forum. The role of M&P committees in living into the church's commitments on equity are not clearly articulated.

**For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

Please select the appropriate option and provide the key discussion points for items being forwarded to the General Council:

- Agree
- Disagree without forwarding to the General Council
- Disagree and forwarding to the General Council
- Take no action at this time

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Who will present (by prerecorded video) this proposal on behalf of the transmitting body?**

Email contact:

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to: [GC45@united-church.ca](mailto:GC45@united-church.ca)