



MCC Governing Board Report To General Conference XXVII

FORWARD

God said, “Go out and stand at the mountain before the Lord. God is passing by.” A very strong wind tore through the mountains and broke apart the stones before God. But God wasn’t in the wind. After the wind, there was an earthquake. But God wasn’t in the earthquake. After the earthquake, there was a fire. But God wasn’t in the fire. After the fire, there was a sound. Thin. Quiet. - I Kings 19:11-12, CEB

In ancient Christianity a *thin place* is described as a place where the distance between heaven and earth disappears and God’s glory shines through.

This may seem a strange way to begin a summary of the work of your Governing Board since we last met in Victoria in 2016. When we left General Conference, the Governing Board (seven of whom were newly elected) faced multiple challenges in leading our denomination: appointing an Interim Moderator following the General Conference decision to not elect a moderator; crafting a transitional time focused on healing and reconciliation, addressing historic challenges regarding racism, diversity and inclusion; reviewing and evaluating the current system of assessments through the formation of an Assessments Commission; addressing our financial health as a denomination while facing continuous decline in traditional resources; and preparing our denomination and movement for the 2019 General Conference. These challenges left many of us in a thin (and perhaps, fragile) place.

The Governing Board created and implemented a process to identify and appoint an Interim Moderator. Within three months, the Governing Board reached consensus and affirmed the appointment of Rev. Rachelle Brown as Interim Moderator.

The remainder of 2016 included:

- a healthy transition between MCC's retiring Moderator, Rev. Dr. Nancy Wilson, and Interim Moderator, Rev. Rachelle Brown.
- a conversation on diversity and inclusion programs and work in the denomination
- the initiation of formational tasks to create a global Assessments Commission
- the creation of the 50th anniversary and 2019 General Conference committees
- a historic face-to-face gathering of MCC's three leadership bodies (Governing Board, Senior Leadership Team, Council of Elders) in Washington, D.C.
- a blessing ceremony for the Interim Moderator's appointment
- the development of priorities for the season of transition including:
 1. Healing and building healthy relationships between churches, networks and global denomination
 2. Expand and establish sustainable, culturally appropriate systems and protocols for recruitment, development and support of leaders
 3. Develop realistic sustainable financial models
 4. Expand and strengthen a lived commitment to diversity and inclusion

Building on these priorities, the Governing Board began 2017 with a thorough review of denominational financial stability and concentrated efforts to shift our budgeting process to align with the transitional priorities, including a move from office-based funding to program-based funding. This process included a review of staff in relation to operational needs, Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable, current financial realities and projections, and the first of several transfers of investment funds to cover cash shortfalls. The board was seeking, alongside financial staff, to create a sustainable model, including repayment of transferred investment funds, while seeking to raise revenue through development efforts while acknowledging continued cash shortfalls.

The first half of 2017 included:

- creating the framework for a Listening Tour created by the Interim Moderator, including participation by representatives from the Governing Board, Council of Elders and Senior Leadership Team, as available
- forming the Assessment Commission
- working with the Board of Pensions, U.S.A. to establish a virtual Special General Conference to consider an increase in pension contribution rates
- receiving a report of extraordinary ministry taking place in the Brazil Network
- strengthening the relationships with churches by offering assessment agreement support to keep giving current

- creating the Collaborative Response Relationship Leadership Team as mechanism for collective leadership teams to consult and address denomination wide issues which remains a work in progress
- meeting Face to Face in July/August in conjunction with Senior Leadership Team and PAD Conference
- developing long-term strategies
- proposing sale of Sarasota property
- supporting renewal of MCC vision and mission statements
- receiving report of Multiple Pathways to Ministry plan from OFLD.

In August 2017, the Governing Board, SLT, and COE were informed about a staff restructuring plan, initiated by the Interim Moderator. The varied reactions to the plan and lack of broad discussion required the Governing Board to create answers to questions (FAQs) raised by members of the denomination. This matter, along with significant concerns regarding financial stability and ethical disagreements, led to the resignation of three Governing Board members at the end of September: Sarah-Jane Ramage, Rev. Dr. William Knight and Rev. Dr. Stephanie Burns.

In September 2017, the relationship with MCC in Canada, serving as the non-government organization for MCC churches, strengthened through formal agreements to meet both Canadian and UFMCC ministry and financial needs. Additionally, the five Governing Board members began the process to fill the vacancies and by the close of 2017, appointed Rev. Victoria Burson, Rev. Miak Siew and Dr. David Williams.

The new Governing Board members began 2018 with orientation and the adoption of a budget. In addition, the Governing Board adopted motions to recognize the Global Justice Institute as an aligned non-government organization, established the Australia Federal Organization to better align with MCC Australian churches, and collaborated with local leaders to establish formal MCC Charities in Germany and the UK.

Following the late 2017 hurricanes and change in the real estate market in Florida, the Governing Board removed the Sarasota property from the market and leased the space for monthly income. The Interim Moderator and the Governing Board adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Board of Directors at Church of the Trinity MCC in Sarasota, Florida, USA, to establish an office for UFMCC operations.

As a means of informing the General Conference of the ongoing financial concerns, the Governing Board scheduled the first in a series of webinars to better communicate the financial realities and challenges facing the denomination.

In the first half of 2018, the Interim Moderator and the Governing Board completed a MOU with the UFMCC Board of Pensions, U.S.A. to formalize staff support, reporting and accountability.

Additional actions in 2018 included:

- Face to Face meeting in April with financial review, board training with Dan Hotchkiss, and Assessment Commission recommendations
- Moderator Nominating Committee selected
- Bylaw Proposal Team named
- Governing Board Nominating Committee selected
- Financial webinar to address financial realities and challenges
- Discussion of significant budget reductions in response to income shortfalls
- Scheduling and implementing a Special General Conference to consider recommendations of Assessments Commission
- Budget reduction of \$450,000 approved
- Discussion of designated funds and repayment plan
- Governing Board vacancies filled with combined executive and open call search
- Celebrated \$425,000 Lilly Grant received through Office of Formation and Leadership Development for leadership development and mentoring
- Special General Conference vote affirming 10% assessment rate beginning in 2019
- Appointment of Marsha Warren, Bob Niehaus, Christy Temples and Rev. Onetta Brooks to fill Governing Board vacancies
- Orientation of new Governing Board members

The close of 2018 and beginning of 2019 welcomed new voices and perspectives to the Governing Board. Their shared commitment to right the financial challenges of the denomination, included a repayment plan of designated funds which had been utilized to address cash flow issues. Their goals include the creation of a sustainable, realistic budget and accounting system, updated audits, and continued efforts to adopt mutual assessment agreements with churches. The Governing Board also approved the charter for the Intentional Transition Team (ITT). This ITT will serve alongside the Interim Moderator and the newly elected Moderator to plan for and facilitate the transition of the leadership of MCC from the outgoing Interim Moderator to the incoming elected Moderator in 2019.

The Moderator Nominating Committee announced a slate of three candidates for the office of Moderator to be elected at General Conference. The Governing Board Nominating Committee announced a slate of 10 candidates for eight (8) positions, which included the resignations of Rev. Joe Cobb, effective 28 February 2019; Christy Temples and Bob Niehaus, effective 10 April 2019. In essence, the election will name

a new board. The Bylaw Proposal Team completed its recommendations for proposals to present to the General Conference. Business Meeting preparations were underway starting in December 2017 until present.

The three years since the 2016 General Conference have been filled with thin places. And, while incredibly stressful and challenging, we believe that God's glory is and will be revealed through painful and liberating moments in our life together.

Thank you, General Conference, for your prayers and for believing in the good work God began in Metropolitan Community Churches, and for continuing to believe that God will be faithful to continue and complete in God's time.

Respectfully,

Rev. Miak Siew, Vice Chair, 2018-2019

(Christy Temples, Secretary, October 2018 - 10 April 2019)

Dr. David Williams, Treasurer, 2018 - 2019

Rev. Onetta Brooks, (Interim Clerk, 12 April -); October 2018 - 2019

Rev. Victoria Burson, 2018-2019

(Mr. Bob Niehaus, October 2018 -10 April 2019)

Ms. Marsha Warren, October 2018-2019

(Rev. Joe Cobb, July 2016- 28 February 2019)

Rev. Elder Rachelle Brown, Interim Moderator, Chair

SECTION I: COMMUNICATIONS

The past three years have given us many opportunities to communicate with you. At times your letters and emails were filled with questions and worry. At other times you simply wished to remind us you were here, praying for all of us. Though it may have seemed that your words and sentiments went into the nether on occasion, we did read and feel each word.

Due to the many issues we faced during this three-year period, we did not always respond in a timely manner. We found ourselves at a disadvantage - too many issues, not enough board members. This did not make you feel your words, thoughts, and feelings mattered to us. For this we sincerely apologize.

In late 2018 we began to respond to past inquiries as well as to the ones arriving each week. We have tried to honor our promise to be timely in our replies and to be as transparent as possible. We have viewed our time in our various roles as time to serve each of you. For this we thank you.

We leave you with this: You are who make MCC the beautiful, vibrant place it is. We will continue to grow and learn, together. The best is still to come.

The Communications Team

Ms. Marsha Warren, Committee Chair (12 April - 2019)
(Ms. Christy Temples, Chair, (01 January 2019 - 10 April 2019))
(Mr. Bob Niehaus (2019 - 10 April 2019))
(Rev. Joe Cobb (2016- 28 February 2019))
Ms. Linda Brenner, Associate Director of Communications

SECTION II: DEVELOPMENT

Over the last decade, MCC development has either focused on grants or individual donors, with emphasis dependent upon staff and programs. Grants have successfully funded programs for leadership development, education resources, community cohorts, and the early stages of a spirituality program. Some churches have successfully secured local grants to support charitable ministries. Direct donations through the Moderator's Circle and a small number of individual major donors have provided cash flow and funded various programs and staff positions.

Considering the potential for generous giving, U.S.-based research is clear: a majority of people give, but the amounts given to congregations and religious organizations has changed. Many strategies and adjustments occurred as giving fluctuated during late 2016 - early 2019. Campaigns in 2016, 2017, and 2018 increased individual donations while grant applications led to the largest grant ever received by MCC.

In 2016, MCC had a full-time Development Director. This position was eliminated in early 2017, which shifted development strategy to the Governing Board to form campaigns, and to staff administrative assistants to manage the Donor Perfect database. The change was positive and donors expressed gratitude in early 2018 due to increased accuracy in reports.

In 2017, Dr. Tom Melzoni brought "Culture of Generosity" training to the staff and offered cohorts for local churches. Local churches and leaders who engaged the program reported a shift in giving. In June 2018 the Governing Board consulted with Dr. Melzoni to introduce a denominational level shift in perspective towards the spirit of generosity. The intention of the ongoing work with Dr. Melzoni is to deliberately and methodically shift culture at every level of MCC.

Campaigns

Campaigns and local church special offerings provided opportunities for individuals and churches to give to further the mission of MCC.

MCC participated in "Giving Tuesday" a late November giving campaign for non-profits in 2016 and 2017. Local churches began participating in the program. In early 2018 a decision was made for the denomination to shift resources to encourage local churches to create their own Giving Tuesday campaign to increase local church potential for donations.

Local churches are invited to participate in two annual offerings: Anniversary Sunday and Easter Offering. These campaigns have a designation assigned by the Governing Board.

Other special campaigns included “Let Your Light Shine” which directly related to MCC’s 50th anniversary, and an appeal from the Finance Committee, which created opportunities for individual generosity.

A disaster relief effort was created in 2017 following the devastation of Puerto Rico by Hurricane Maria Giving amounts by various campaigns and individual gifts include the following:

- In 2017, generous individuals gave \$187,614.64 USD through special offerings and the Moderator’s Circle
- Disaster relief donations for Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria reached \$14,754.35 USD.
- In 2018, as assessment revenue declined, campaigns and individual donors increased in generosity giving of \$196,648.91 USD.

Grants

Applications for grants is another vital development activity supported by MCC Staff. Some grants were completed during the last three years. In 2018 MCC received a Lily Grant of over \$400,000 for Thriving in Ministry, a five (5) year program. In 2019, a grant application for educational programming has been submitted to a grant agency with a decision anticipated in later in the year.

Next Steps

The Development Committee, through the direction of the Governing Board, is discerning a new name for the Moderator’s Circle, shifting away from a person or position, to encourage individuals to give monthly, quarterly, or annually to MCC.

Legacy Giving is another area in which the Development Committee is working to ensure a healthy financial future for MCC in a manner than honors the life and legacy of MCC members and friends.

In Conclusion

The generosity of many through a season of change is a testimony to the level of commitment to MCC’ Mission. It is our hope that every member and friend of MCC will generously support their local church and become part of the wider mission by giving directly to MCC.

SECTION III: GOVERNANCE

The Governance Committee has focused on formation of the nominating committees, bylaw team and policy handbook updates. This important work was accomplished by clergy and lay leaders composed of Governing Board members, ad hoc committee appointees, and MCC staff persons contributing their collective abilities to provide oversight for our denomination. We recognize this report does not capture all contributions over the past three (3) years since General Conference 2016, given the transitions within the Governing Board, however, it does reflect the last 18 months.

A New Revised Charter

In February of 2018, a new revised charter for Governance Committee, Moderator Nominating Committee, and Governing Board Nominating Committee were created to rebuild trust within our processes of doing business led by the newly appointed Governance Chair, Rev. Victoria L. Burson. Each member of the committee played an intricate part alongside the sub-committee Team-Leads: Rev. Mel Martinez, Rev. Doretha Williams-Flournoy, and Rev. Lori McPherson, in the creation of the charter. The Charter was approved by the Governing Board.

Bylaw Proposal Team

In March 2018, the Governing Governance Committee selected, and the Governing Board approved, the appointment of Rev. Lori McPherson to lead the Bylaw Proposal Team through General Conference XXVII. The Bylaw Proposal Team managed the process identified in Addendum 1 - Procedures for Submitting Bylaw Proposals.

Governing Board Nominating Committee (GBNC)

In June 2018, the Governing Board announced the appointment of Rev. Tijuana Gray (USA), Mr. Leo Rosetti (Brazil) and Ms. Terry White (USA) to the Governing Board Nominating Committee (GBNC). They have successfully presented a slate of 10 candidates, five (5) members of the clergy, and five (5) members of the laity, to stand for election to fill four (4) clergy seats and four (4) lay seats. We are thankful for their many hours of service.

Moderator Nominating Committee (MNC)

In May 2018, the Governing Board announced the appointment of Rev. Gavin Ward, Co-Chair (Australia), Ms. Velma Garcia (USA), Co-Chair, Rev. Brendan Boone (USA), Ms. Kelly Taylor-White (USA) and Mr. Stan Kimer (USA) to the Moderator Nominating Committee (MNC). They effectively presented a slate of

three candidates of two clergy persons and one lay person for one position as Moderator of MCC.

Policy Manual

The Governance Committee periodically updated the Governing Board Policy Manual including Policy 11, Governing Board/Moderator Transition Dates; and Policy 26, General Conference Assessment rates, to name a few.

Other Accomplishments of the Governance Committee

- Successfully held a Special General Conference 7-8 November 2018, to adopt a 10% assessment rate for affiliated churches beginning 1 January 2019.
- Prepare for General Conference XXVII that celebrates MCC's 50th anniversary to be held in Orlando, Florida, USA, in July 2019.

Governance Committee 2018-2019

Rev. Victoria Burson, Governance Committee Chair

Rev. Miak Siew

Rev. Doretha William-Flournoy

(Rev. Mel Martinez - 2018)

(Rev. Joe Cobb - 2018)

(Rev. Angel Collie - 2018)

(Rev. Jakob Hero-Shaw - 2018)

Rev. Carolyn Mobley-Bowie

Rev. Lori McPherson, Bylaw Proposal Team, Lead

Rev. Onetta Brooks, GC Business Meeting Planning Team, Chair

SECTION IV: FINANCIALS

Financial Report to General Conference XXVII

*(Financial summary for calendar years: 2016, 2017, 2018 will be provided before General Conference.
Regular monthly Financial reports are located on: <https://www.mccchurch.org/how-we-work/finances/>
Thank you for your patience)*

UFMCC Finance Committee 2018-2019

David Williams, Governing Board
Tammy Erwin, Associate Director of Finance
Marsha Warren, Governing Board
Cathy Campbell, Member
Doug Berger, Member

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS PRESENTED BY
THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY CHURCHES FOR CONSIDERATION BY GENERAL CONFERENCE XXVII:

MOTIONS:

1. **Motion** for the Governing Board and Moderator to create a Commission to continue a pathway of healing and reconciliation in order to shine a light on elements that have fractured MCC relationships since General Conference 2016 and continues. The commission composition will include representatives from Governing Board, Council of Elders, Strategic Leadership Team, Intentional Transition Team, Laity, MCC churches, outside consultants, to name a few.

2. **Motion** for the Governing Board to form a committee to review and analyze the current Clergy House and Lay House delegate(s) structures; and make recommendations to the General Conference on viable alternatives for the 21st century MCC.

3. **Motion** to approve an assessment rate for Emerging Churches which is 50% of the approved Affiliated assessment.

Rationale: As UFMCC continues to expand its global outreach, Emerging Churches are expected to adhere to the assessment policy set forth in Bylaw Article IX part B. However, this bylaw does not provide for a set amount nor a percentage for the assessment. This motion identifies Emerging Churches as just beginning and is offered as a way for these churches to have a set rate to fulfill their obligation. The motion is written in way so that further adjustments are unnecessary when the affiliated church rate changes.