

Minutes of the 2005 General Conference

The Free Methodist Church in Canada

**Theme: Called to declare Jesus . . .
anywhere . . . anytime . . . in all kinds of ways!**

May 27-30, 2005

The Sixth General Conference of The Free Methodist Church in Canada convened on Friday, May 27, 2005 at 7:00 pm in Markham, Ontario at the Hilton Suites Conference Centre.

A time of worship led by the praise team from the Barrie Free Methodist Church began the conference session.

Bishop Keith Elford and the National Leadership Team (Dan Sheffield, Jared Siebert, Alan Retzman and Norm Bull) presented their report, based on the theme of the General Conference and the text, 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness out of His wonderful light." The report created a spirit of optimism and thanksgiving.

Bishop Keith Elford called us to order and invited all members in good standing and delegates with credentials to take their assigned seats within the bar of conference.

Two hundred forty (240) Ordained Ministers and delegates were present.

On motion, the Agenda was adopted as circulated.

On motion, the Standing Rules were adopted.

The chair indicated that a summary of the Rules of Parliamentary Procedure was included in the conference binder.

Bishop Elford introduced Doug Griffin, who would be serving as Parliamentarian.

Mike Hogeboom, chair of the Nominating Committee, nominated Lloyd Eyre to serve as the Secretary of the conference, which was approved by a show of hands. Bishop Elford indicated that Lloyd Eyre had chosen Steve Cylka as Assistant Secretary.

On motion, the nominated tellers were approved, with Grant Wolfe serving as the chair. The tellers were: Mary Lee DeWitt, Normand Doucette, Rob Duncan, Jan Gurnick, Joy Kentie, Andrew MacKay, Laurie McAlister, Matthew McEwen, Heather Miller, Kathy Sellwood, Phyllis Slessor, Sheldon Sutton, Grant Wolfe, Coral Young.

Attention was drawn to the priority agenda items for Saturday, and directions were given for participation in interactive sessions (following this evening's session) regarding the Find, Mature and Commission Study Team reports.

The Bishop introduced Tanya Prinsep, Conference Coordinator. All announcements were to be written out and given to Tanya to read at the close of each session.

Greg Langille served as Prayer Coordinator for the conference. Members of conference, delegates, and honorary members were assigned 15-minute blocks of time so that prayer was offered 24 hours a day. The Jasmine Room was the location of the prayer room.

Bishop Elford introduced Bishop Jose Ildo Swartele de Mello of Brazil who was our devotional speaker.

He also introduced Bishop Joseph James and Zonda Haase, who represented the Free Methodist Church of North America. Bishop James brought greetings and led in prayer.

Conference recessed until 8:00am Saturday, May 28.

Conference reconvened on Saturday, May 28, 2005 at 8:00am.

Two hundred fifty-one (251) Ordained Ministers and delegates were present.

A time of worship signaled the reconvening of General Conference.

Bishop Jose Ildo brought a message from John 4:31 entitled, "The Food of Jesus: His motivation and His vision as a model for us." His message focused on two points:

1. Inspiring us to look at Jesus' enthusiasm for doing the will of God with such deep love and compassion for seeking people like he showed when he reached out to the woman at the well. Evangelizing and completing the mission he was sent to do was more vital and pleasurable than eating. He urged us to let nothing stifle our passion for doing God's will and to discipline ourselves to "see the harvest" and not let ourselves off with excuses for not being fruitful.
2. Urging us to have optimism in our ministries that sees beyond the circumstances, the obstacles, barriers, frontiers, and natural conditions because, with eyes of faith, our vision of reality is the perspective of heaven and of the miraculous. What is impossible for us is possible for God!

The conference moved to a consideration of the Free Methodist World Conference Resolutions.

After explanation the ballots were collected by the tellers.

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Of the two hundred sixty one (261) votes cast, two hundred forty-four (244) were in favour of World Conference Resolution A (to be prorated to 71 out of 76 votes as per the decision of the 1996 General Conference), six (6) were opposed, eleven (11) were spoiled.

WORLD CONFERENCE RESOLUTION A

(An Amendment to Requirements for Membership - Proposed changes are in bold and underlined.)

WHEREAS, membership in the Free Methodist Church signifies loyalty and commitment to the ministry of God and

WHEREAS, the membership covenant is a promise that members will minister to others and make disciples,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That ¶151.3 in The Manual be amended to read as follows: “A covenant to support the church, to live in fellowship with the members thereof, **to be an active participant in the ministry of the Church**, and to seek God’s glory in all things.”

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Of the two hundred sixty one (261) votes cast, two hundred forty-four (244) were in favour of World Conference Resolution B (to be prorated to 71 out of 76 votes as per the decision of the 1996 General Conference, seven (7) were opposed, ten (10) were spoiled.

WORLD CONFERENCE RESOLUTION B

(An Amendment to Termination of Church Membership Section)

WHEREAS, membership in the Free Methodist Church should be mission driven; and
 WHEREAS, membership in the Free Methodist Church is ministry based; and
 WHEREAS, membership in the local church is relational and discipleship based,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That ¶153.4 read as follows: “Persistent neglect of church relationship by a member, which in effect is voluntary withdrawal.”

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WORLD CONFERENCE RESOLUTION C

(A Proposal to Amend the Constitution of the Free Methodist Church [Chapter Two in *The Manual*])

Recommendation: That the Constitutional Proposal prepared by the World Conference Executive Committee be adopted by the World Conference and be placed into referendum by the World Conference Executive Committee with the following motions for General Conferences to vote on.

Motion #1 *There were two hundred fifty three (253) people who responded to World Conference Resolution C.1. Two hundred thirty-eight (238) were in favour (to be prorated to 71 out of 76 votes as per the decision of the 1996 General Conference), one (1) was opposed, fourteen (14) were spoiled.*

Motion #1: That the first two chapters of every Free Methodist *Book of Discipline* (or its equivalent) be together known as **The Common Constitution of Free Methodism** and be entitled as follows:

- a) Chapter ONE - **The Common Constitution of Free Methodism: Doctrine and Membership**
- b) Chapter TWO - **The Common Constitution of Free Methodism: Organization.**

Motion #2 There were two hundred sixty one (261) people who responded to World Conference Resolution C.2. Two hundred forty-five (245) were in favour (to be prorated to 71 out of 76 votes as per the decision of the 1996 General Conference), one (1) was opposed, fifteen (15) were spoiled.

Motion #2: That the attached Constitutional Proposal proposed by the World Conference Executive Committee and amended by the World Conference be adopted by the General Conferences to replace the present Chapter Two in every *Book of Discipline* (or its equivalent).

Report of the Board of Administration

Betty Humphrey brought the report of the BOA.

Prompted by her report, a standing vote of thanks to the National Leadership Team and their staff was offered by the conference.

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On motion, the following BOA recommendation was adopted.

BOA RECOMMENDATION #1:

**(An Amendment to Nominating Committee Election)
(Changes are in bold and underlined.)**

MOTION: That ¶420.2.3 in The Manual be replaced with the following:

2.3.1 Election of the Nominating Committee:

The general conference shall elect a nominating committee of no fewer than eight members, the majority of whom are not members of a standing board/committee of the conference. The committee shall have, to the extent possible, equal lay and ministerial representation and balanced representation from the various geographical areas of the general conference. **The number of persons on the general conference nominating committee to be elected for each region will be set by the board of administration. A National Leadership Team member will be an ex officio member of the committee.**

The network leaders will meet apart from the National Leadership Team and develop a slate of nominees to the nominating committee from the various regions of the church to present to the General Conference. The network leaders will consult in advance with local pastors regarding gifted and credible candidates.

Opportunity will be given for nominations from the floor of general conference after the nominations from the network leaders are presented.

2.3.2 Authority and Functions:

The committee will be responsible for providing nominations for:

- study teams for the General Conference
- the secretary of the general conference

- members of the board of administration and committees listed in ¶420 (except the nominating committee)
- delegates to the Free Methodist World Conference
- any board of administration or committee position which becomes vacant during the interim between sessions of the general conference.

2.3.3 Process:

In order to ensure that leadership teams are made up of gifted and credible Christian leaders, the general conference nominating committee will solicit input from local churches, network leaders and national leaders.

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On motion, the following BOA recommendation was adopted.

BOA RECOMMENDATION #2:

At the request of the Board of Administration, the Network Leaders met and developed the following slate of nominees to be elected as the 2005-2008 Nominating Committee.

Motion: That the following be elected as the 2005-2008 Nominating Committee:

CLERGY

- Sheldon Carlson – BC
- Bob Munshaw – Prairies
- Mike Hogeboom – Ontario
- Jim Kesselring – Ontario

LAY

- Rita Carlson – BC
- Ron Alexander – Prairies
- Corey Peters – Ontario
- Jay Natividad – Ontario

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On motion, the following BOA recommendation was adopted.

BOA RECOMMENDATION #3:

**(An Amendment to National Leadership Team Hiring Protocols)
(Changes are in bold and underlined.)**

Motion: That ¶425.2.4 in The Manual be replaced with the following:

2.4 The board shall have the responsibility to determine the number of senior staff (National Leadership Team) to be employed by the corporation, and to define the general duties and responsibilities of these positions in consultation with the bishop. **The bishop will create a Hiring Task Force, which must include at least one member of the board and one member of MEGaP. This Task Force will be responsible for the process from job posting to recommendation of a candidate to the board for approval.**

[**Note:** This amendment provides for a hiring process that ensures consultation between the bishop and the BoA (which was required under the original 425.2.4); and changes who hires (making it consistent with Par. 425.2.4 which gives BoA power to remove for cause any denominational executive.)]

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On motion the following BOA recommendation was adopted.

BOA RECOMMENDATION #4:

(Updated Ontario Child Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Policy in Appendix 2.)

Motion: That the updated Ontario Child Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Policy in Appendix 2 be adopted and circulated to Ontario churches and that the Board of Administration be authorized to approve and circulate updated versions for other provinces as soon as they have been prepared.

On motion the report of the Board of Administration was received.

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Election of the Bishop

Bishop Elford vacated the chair, and Bishop Joseph James assumed the chair as we prepared for the election of a Bishop. Ballots were prepared, collected and counted by the tellers.

There were 246 ballots cast, 124 necessary for election. Keith Elford received 225 and was declared elected. The conference responded with a standing ovation. Bishop Elford offered thanks to the Lord for the support of his wife, Donna. He also thanked us for our prayers during a time of serious illness in December 2004.

Dr. Brian Stiller of Tyndale University College and Seminary was introduced to the conference and brought greetings.

Report of the Find Study Team

Howard Olver introduced the report of the Find Study Team.

Jared Siebert, Director of Growth Ministries, introduced David Blondel and Chris Vyn who are co-pastors of the Third Space church plant in downtown Peterborough. He also introduced Dan Jansen, pastor of Pineridge House, a house church in Calgary. All three church planters spoke briefly to the body about their ministries.

Dan Sheffield introduced David Kneeshaw, lay delegate from Kamloops, British Columbia, who brought a summary of his report on ministry possibilities among First Nations.

Howard Olver reported that there are 15 churches in the Intercultural Church Network in Metropolitan Toronto. Pastors that were present were introduced to the body.

Howard Olver introduced Nathan Umazekabiri, pastor of the St-Henri Church in Montreal; Michael Tesema, pastor of Gospel of Love Church in Toronto; Ed Da Silva, pastor of Igreja Metodista Libre in Toronto; Peter Paul, pastor of Asian Christian Church in Mississauga.

Howard Olver introduced Victor Stonehouse, Senior Pastor of Wesley Chapel and Bruce Kellar, Senior Pastor of Pineview FMC, Cloyne, Ontario who spoke about the concept of “incubator” churches.

Dan Sheffield introduced Dr. Arthur Brown, Director of World Missions, FMC in North America. He talked about the “new wineskins” that are emerging around the world in how the Free Methodist Church is doing missions. Reference was also made to the new Joint Ministry Agreement that has been established between Free Methodist World Missions and the FMCiC.

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On motion the following Find Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Find Recommendation #1

That the Board of Administration and the National Leadership Team be directed to explore additional creative sources to provide sufficient funding for church planting in keeping with the mission of the FMCiC.

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On motion the following Find Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Find Recommendation #2

That a national strategy be developed for Church Planting and Ministry among First Nations peoples, in conversation with First Nations leaders, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and other possible partners.

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On motion the following Find Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Find Recommendation #3

That an Intercultural Ministries Task Team be established to develop principles and practices for planting and affiliating intercultural congregations, taking into account the need to be open to a range of possible church-planting models.

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On motion the following Find Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Find Recommendation #4

That intercultural “incubator” congregations be planted and/or developed in strategic locations across Canada.

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On motion the following Find Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Find Recommendation #5

That a capital fund be established to provide properties for multi-ethnic and “incubator” congregations.

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On motion the following Find Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Find Recommendation #6

That a Special Study Commission on Ecclesiology (study of the church) be established by the Board of Administration to look at alternative church planting movements and structures to support church development.

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On motion the report of the Find Study Team was received.

Dr. Arthur Brown led us in prayer.

We recessed for lunch at 12:00 noon.

After the break for lunch, the conference reconvened at 1:00pm and the Worship Team led us in songs of praise.

The memorial service was led by Kevin and Beverly Kay. The following ministers, missionaries and spouses of ministers, who had passed away since last General Conference of 2002, were remembered.

Ministers and Missionaries

Lorne Ball

Ernest Cooper

Lyndall Frost

Naomi Lindsay

Clarence Lyons

Wilfred Lyons

Harold McNutt

Douglas Russell

Gary Shearer

Willis Stonehouse

Wilbur Teal

Victor Williams

Lily Babcock

Leonora Bauder

Isabel Buchanan

Edna Dargan Campbell

Mabel Childerhose

Eneiz Jaglall

Mabel Lyons

Report of the Mature Study Team

Bob Quick introduced the Mature Study Team report.

Rick Hancock reflected on the recommendations of the 2002 Mature Study Team report to General Conference. As a result of one of these recommendations, the denomination hired Andrew Brown as Student Ministries Director in May 2004.

Andrew Brown then reported on the developments in student ministries in the last months. He highlighted the 24/7 prayer time initiated by students. He also informed the body about the first National Sports Ministry Summit. Three mission opportunities designed for youth are available in the summer of 2005. Finally, he reported on "Connect Initiatives" such as Acquire the Fire and regional networks.

The Mature Study Team report continued led by Jennifer Wager, Jan MacPhail, Bob Quick and Rick Hancock.

Jennifer Anderson posed the question, “Why pastors don’t empower people?” She then provided possible answers to that question. (*The persona*, “I am the ordained one by the FMCiC”; *The fear*, “Someone might do it better than me”; *The insecurity*, “I have control issues”; *The lack of vision*, “No need to empower—there’s not much going on”; *The perfection*, “They might make mistakes. It will look bad on me”; *The time*, “I don’t have time to empower. Too busy being pastor”; *The training*, “I don’t know how or where to begin”; *The stroking*, “I won’t get the recognition I deserve.”)

The members of the study team presented a skit that provided further answers and insights into the question she posed.

The purpose of the Mature Study Team 2005 was: “We desire to *inspire* you (pastors/delegates) and *ignite* your passion to *intentionally*:

- *Identify* the potential in people
- *Invest* in them, so that they will be
- *Involved* in fulfilling God’s purpose for their lives.”

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On motion the following Mature Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Mature Recommendation #1

That the National Leadership Team develop an integrated strategy and identify a person(s) to encourage and support local church commitment to developing "Identify, Invest, Involve" plans in order to mature and deploy prepared people to purposeful service throughout the FMCiC.

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On motion the following Mature Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Mature Recommendation #2

That each local church in the FMCiC intentionally develop a "Identify, Invest, Involve" plan that supports the local church's vision, mission and core values and is approved and implemented by the Official Board and/or Ministry Leadership Teams.

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On motion the following Mature Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Mature Recommendation #3

That the FMCiC networks take an active role in supporting (through teaching, coaching and accountability) and celebrating each local church's "Identify, Invest, Involve" implementation.

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On motion the following Mature Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Mature Recommendation #4

That the Network Leaders be reaffirmed in the crucial role they play in the development of healthy churches. And that the National Leadership Team give leadership to evaluating (and improving) the effectiveness of the network system in light of our vision "to see healthy churches within the reach of all people in Canada and beyond."

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On motion the following Mature Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Mature Recommendation #5

That a study be conducted by the Communications Think Tank to research the possibility of developing a FMCiC interactive website to be used by local church leaders as a resource discovery access tool for developing healthy local church environments. (A document defining the concept and the preferred outcomes will be provided by the Mature Study Team.)

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On motion the report of the Mature Study Team was received.

Former bishop Dr. Gary Walsh led us in prayer.

Report of the Commission Study Team

Alan Retzman, Director of Personnel introduced the Commission Study Team Report.

A leadership development panel shared how leadership development is happening in their local churches and/or networks. They included Steve Lougheed, Wade Fitzpatrick, Will Keller, Howard Olver, Jared Siebert, Brenda Haggett, Dan Sheffield and Randy MacDonald.

Alan Retzman reported that there have been 24 JDPAS weekends, 105 board approved job descriptions are on file or in process, and 28 churches have completed performance appraisals for their Senior Pastor.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #1

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that telephone calls to delegates by National MEGaP and telephone calls to pastors by BOA be made only once a year.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #2

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that the two Ontario MEGaPs be merged and the total number of committee members be increased from 12 (6 lay, 6 clergy) to 16 (8 lay, 8 clergy) to be used throughout Ontario, to create the necessary teams according to geography, availability, and illness/emergency situations that keep a member from attending a scheduled interview.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #3

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that the Pacific-Western MEGaP committee be increased from 8 (4 lay, 4 clergy) to 12 (6 lay, 6 clergy) to be used throughout Western Canada, to create the necessary teams according to geography, availability, and illness/emergency situations that keep a member from attending a scheduled interview.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #4

Whereas, the number of candidate interviews has increased, and;

Whereas, there are capable leaders available from within the MEGaP committee able to handle the task of chair person, and;

Whereas, this is an aspect of leadership development,

Therefore, the National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that National MEGaP appoint and train chair people to oversee regional MEGaP interviews, on the occasions when it is not feasible for the Director of Personnel to be present.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #5

Whereas substitutes are often needed for MEGaP interview teams, and;

Whereas we need to get a “read” on future potential MEGaP committee members, and;

Whereas, MEGaP interviewing develops skills in leaders,

Therefore, the National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that the National MEGaP maintain a list of names of suitable replacements (as suggested by the elected MEGaP committee members) to assist as a “non-lead” member of an interview team, having the gifts and graces, skills and competencies, to be a substitute when needed in their geographic area. Telephone or personal training will be provided prior to being asked to participate.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #6

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that Continuing Education be tracked by the Personnel office for all ministers who are members of conference and honorary members who have completed their tracking. Continuing Education Unit (CEU) tracking commenced effective September 1, 2004.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was referred back to the National MEGaP.

Commission Recommendation #7

Whereas, we recognize the complexity of the issue of spousal support for a married candidate pursuing ministry, especially in the instance where a new convert is sensing a call to ministry and the spouse has not yet been converted. At all times, MEGaP, supervising pastors, Network Leaders and others who have influence need to be monitoring whether ministry is causing undue stress to the marriage and adversely affecting the ministry of a candidate. Ministry should not be the basis of continued relational pressure within a marriage that could contribute to the failure of the marriage, and;

Whereas, ministry requires sacrifice, and if spouses are not supportive of and appropriately involved in the ministry of the local church, it is evident that they lack commitment to the congregation and this may eventually cause misgivings and even opposition to the candidate's ministry within the congregation, and;

Whereas, since leading by example is one of the most powerful forms of leadership, a married candidate needs to be able to exemplify in his/her marital relationship what he/she is teaching by personal example. Additionally, while he/she cannot be expected to counsel from perfection, he/she needs to counsel from a place of marital strength and visible support of his/her ministry,

Therefore, the National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that a candidate for ministry and his/her spouse are to be committed and growing Christians (equally yoked) who will pull together in the demands of ministry.

All candidates need to understand that substantial spousal support is necessary in order to have a healthy ministry.

If a candidate's spouse is non-supportive, either aggressively or passively, to his or her involvement in ministry, the candidate should not be allowed to proceed to ministry candidate (which is the identification of a call to ministry) or continue in the process toward Local Pastor or Ordained Minister.

While it is recognized that personal life circumstances vary (e.g. health, employment schedules, etc.), spouses need to be members actively living out the membership covenant of the local Free Methodist church -- unless they are ministers appointed to another ministry.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #7a

MOTION: The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that Paragraph 818-Separation, Divorce and the Ministry (see below) replace the current Paragraph 816-Divorce and the Ministry in *The Manual*.

¶818 SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND THE MINISTRY

A person who has been divorced or is married to a spouse previously divorced, shall not be admitted to ministerial candidacy, nor to the conference, nor by transfer, nor allowed to be under any type of appointment unless cleared by the MEGaP committee. (See ¶430.2.2.8.). Divorce shall not in itself bar a person from consideration for conference membership, or for an appointment.

When there is marital stress and conflict in a ministerial marriage, ministers are urged to initiate early intervention and to take proactive steps to access conference resources to receive professional help to heal the relationship with their spouse. If the conflict escalates to the point where it is no longer advisable or healthy for the couple to continue to live together and separation becomes necessary, the minister must immediately apply to the official board for a leave of absence. If the official board grants a paid leave of absence, the length of the paid leave is to be determined by the official board, but it is suggested that more than 8 weeks would only be granted in very unusual circumstances.

If the ministerial couple has not reconciled by the end of the paid leave of absence, the minister must request permission from the bishop to be released from his/her appointment so that he/she can focus on regaining marital health. If the separation becomes permanent or eventually results in a divorce, the following guidance is to be followed.

A minister, who is permanently separated, is divorcing or being divorced by a spouse must provide MEGaP with a statement of the circumstances and grounds for the permanent separation or divorce and be cleared by MEGaP before being considered for an appointment. He/she may not remarry while the former spouse lives unless MEGaP has reviewed the case and determined that the minister has scriptural grounds for remarriage. A minister who marries contrary to these guidelines shall be subject to discipline and shall not be re-appointed by the conference until cleared by MEGaP. This provision shall also apply to a minister who wishes to remarry, whose fiancé has been divorced contrary to the grounds accepted by the Free Methodist Church from a mate who still lives. (See ¶630.3.1.)

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #8

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that the name of “company courses” be changed to “foundational courses.”

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #9

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that the FMCiC continue to offer the four required foundational courses only, namely: “The Heart of Canadian Free Methodism”, “Introduction to Bible”, “Introduction to Christian Doctrine” and “Wesleyan Theology.” The office of the Director of Personnel will guide candidates on acquiring the remaining educational requirements for all ministerial tracking.

We propose the frequency of the four required foundational courses be increased, as needed. In addition, we propose that the required foundational courses be made available in a variety of languages as needed and additional instructors be trained to teach these added courses.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #10

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that the internship policy continue to be developed and implemented through the office of the Director of Personnel.

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #11

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that the Leadership Development model be adopted in principle. (See Commission Appendix 1.)

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On motion the following Commission Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Commission Recommendation #12

Manual rewrites

The National MEGaP recommends to the General Conference that the revised Chapter 8, ¶¶810 – 827, ¶871 and Chapter 3, ¶383b & ¶383c material be approved to replace ¶¶810 – 825, ¶871 and ¶383b in *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*. (See Commission Appendix 1)

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On motion the Summary Report of MEGaP activities since General Conference 2002 was adopted. Within this report is a MEGaP motion with respect to the MEGaP’s review of the character and performance of ministers.

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On motion the report of the Commission Study Team was received.

Attention was drawn to the priority agenda items for Monday, and directions were given for participation in interactive sessions (after dinner) regarding the Interpret, Invest, and Celebrate Study Team reports.

We recessed for dinner at 6:00pm.

On Sunday, May 29, the following events took place:

- 10:00am Worship with Bishop Elford preaching on the conference theme: “Called to Declare Jesus – anywhere, anytime, in all kinds of ways.”
- 12:30 pm Luncheon for Retirees honored in the morning service:
Present: Ron Ashton (Ruth), Carl Bull (Sue), Clarke DeMille (Ellen), Fred Hubert (Patricia), Weldon Johnston (Marie)
Absent with regrets: David Ashton (Amy), David Benson , Robert Buchanan (Elaine), Vernon DeMille (Susan), Allan Hyndman (Vivian), Bobby Jaglall (the late Eneiz), Raymond Klatt (Marjorie)
- 2:30pm Workshops
- 4:15pm International Child Care Ministries Banquet
- 7:00pm From Jerusalem to Colombo: “Healthy Churches in Canada and Beyond”
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Conference reconvened on Monday, May 30, 2005 at 8:00am. The Worship Team from the Barrie FMC led us in singing.

Two hundred and twenty-one (221) Ordained Ministers and delegates were present.

Bishop Ildo spoke on the theme, “The integral nature of our mission,” taken from Matthew 13:31-32, the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

His address focused on the biblical concept of the Kingdom of God being both “here and now” and “there and then.” The Kingdom of God has both come and not yet fully come. He proposed that the teachings of Jesus showed no final conflict between evangelism and social action. He then connected the teachings of Jesus with the understanding of John Wesley regarding the Kingdom of God and showed their similarities.

He concluded his address by challenging us to reject a “prosperity theology” and embrace a “pilgrim mentality” with its simple lifestyle and condemnation of materialism. “Satan,” he declared, “is the lord of materialism.” Bishop Elford led in a prayer of repentance and resolution for us not to be just “hearers” of the word but also “doers.”

Report of the Nominating Committee

Mike Hogeboom, chair of the Nominating Committee, brought the report of the Nominating Committee.

On motion the following Nominating Committee recommendation was adopted.

Motion: That Paragraph 420.2.3.2 and Paragraph 420.2.5 be amended to read as follows (changes are shown in bold):

2.3.2 Responsibilities of Nominating Committee

The committee will be responsible for providing nominations for the secretary of the general conference; members of the board of administration and committees listed in ¶420 (except the nominating committee); study teams; ~~delegates to the Free Methodist World Conference~~; any board of administration or committee position which becomes vacant during the interim between sessions of the general conference.

2.5 Delegate(s) - Free Methodist World Conference

In accordance with the delegate formula of the constitution of the Free Methodist World Conference, the Canadian General Conference is represented at the World Conference by a ministerial and a lay delegate. The bishop shall serve as the ministerial delegate and the chair of the Board of Administration as the lay delegate. Reserve delegates shall be elected by the Board of Administration from among its members.

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The following Nominating Committee recommendations were presented. Ballots were collected and counted and the following were declared elected.

BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION

Lay		Clergy	
Anathalie Jean-Charles	(CE)	David Barbour	(CP)
Laura Beach	(CW)	Linda Dixon	(CE)
Mary Lee Dewitt	(CGL)	Wade Fitzpatrick	(CW)
Ike Doornekamp	(CE)	Daniel Graham	(CW)
Patrick Duncan	(CP)	Marc McAlister	(CGL)
Bryon Hall	(CGL)	Don Miller	(CE)
Randy Miller	(CW)	Jay Mowchenko	(CE)
Vance Sider	(CE)	Greg Pulham	(CGL)
6-CE-Canada East	4-CGL – Canada Great Lakes	4-CW – Canada West	2-CP – Canada Pacific

STUDY COMMISSION ON DOCTRINE

Lay		Clergy	
Amy Caswell	(CW)	David Ashton	(CE)
Wes Fidler	(CGL)	George Fleming	(CGL)
Matthew McEwen	(CE)	Tom Gurnick	(CGL)
Keith Schnell	(CW)	Vic Stonehouse	(CE)
Steve Wriston	(CW)		

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The following Nominating Committee recommendations were presented. Evelyn Lawrence and Cameron Montgomery were nominated from the floor as write-ins. Ballots were collected and counted and the following were declared elected.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT COMMITTEE

		Lay	Clergy
<i>QUEBEC REGION</i>	(6)	Micheline Cadet Chantal Lemaire Luc Ebenga Lukano	Réal Gagné Jean-Robert Noël Nathan Umazekabiri
<i>ONTARIO REGION</i>	(16)	Davina Anderson Richard Cooke Neta Dawson Jim Dunford Evelyn Lawrence Cam Montgomery Sam Salaam Mark Snider	Kent Bandy Terry Clyne Steve Cylka Doug Dawson Glenn Dixon Robert Lay Joan Stonehouse Barry Taylor
<i>PACIFIC - WEST REGION</i>	(12)	Vonda Dozlaw Neil Merrick Paula Moriarity Heather Persson Sylvia Shepherd John Rigby	Jackie Barbour Dennis Camplin Vern Frudd Steve Lougheed Randy MacDonald Bob Munshaw

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On motion the report of the Nominating Committee was received.

Report of the Interpret Study Team

John Vlainic and George Fleming presented the Interpret Study Team report.

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On motion the following Interpret Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Interpret Recommendation #1

That the following statement on Same-Sex Marriages and Blessings of Same-Sex unions be approved and inserted in *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada* as ¶630.3.1.9.

¶630.3.1.9 Same-Sex Marriages and Blessings

The Free Methodist Church in Canada holds that Christian marriage can only be the union of “one man and one woman” who have made a public covenant and vow before God and the state (Genesis 2:20-24, Mark 10:6-9). Therefore, it would be a breach of the doctrine and polity of our church for ministers or members of The Free Methodist Church in Canada to conduct a Christian blessing of a union between a same-sex couple, or to perform the marriage of a same-sex couple. In light of our beliefs, ministers and members of The Free Methodist Church in Canada reserve the right of conscientious objection to any demands to perform marriages of same-sex couples.

The Free Methodist Church in Canada holds that its congregations are stewards of the church property. The blessing of a union between a same-sex couple or the performance of a same-sex marriage in any Free Methodist church would be a violation of consecrated Free Methodist property. Therefore, such blessings or marriages may not be performed at Free Methodist churches.

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On motion the following Interpret Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Interpret Recommendation #2

That the following statement on Free Methodist church facilities be approved and inserted in *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada* as ¶630.3.1.10.

¶630.3.1.10 Use of Free Methodist Church Facilities

It is the policy of The Free Methodist Church in Canada that the facilities of Free Methodist Churches are to be rented or used only by individuals or groups that are not incompatible with the goals, values, policies and statements of The Free Methodist Church in Canada and for purposes which are not incompatible with the goals, values, policies and statements of The Free Methodist Church in Canada.

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On motion the following Interpret Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Interpret Recommendation #3

That the following revised statement on homosexual behaviour be approved to replace the present statement in ¶630.2.8 in *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*.

¶630.2.8 Homosexual Behaviour

Homosexual behaviour is condemned by the Scriptures as immoral because it is a distortion of God’s created order, a practice contrary to nature (Romans 1:26,27; I Corinthians 6:9,10; I Timothy 1:8-10). The sanctity of marriage and the family is to be protected against all manner of conduct that moves away from the Creator’s design.

This behaviour is contrary to God's intention for humans and therefore harmful to those who participate in and form habits toward such behaviour. Homosexual behaviour is different from homosexual inclination; and persons with homosexual inclinations are accountable to God for their behaviour (Romans 14:12). Because Christians are part of fallen humanity we must deal with many inclinations to sin, but we trust that the grace of God is available and completely adequate to forgive and heal us (I John 1:9; Hebrews 7:25; Luke 4:18; I Corinthians 6:9-11).

While some Christians, regrettably, violate the church's historic commitment to the deep worth of all persons, The Free Methodist Church in Canada affirms it (See ¶630.2.1). Therefore, Free Methodists have a responsibility to minister in love to those of homosexual behaviour or inclination and give them support as they learn to live a Christian life that is wholesome and pure.

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On motion the following Interpret Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Interpret Recommendation #4

That the revised Chapter 9 (Church Discipline) material be approved to replace the present Chapter 9 of *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*. (See Interpret Appendix 1.)

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On motion the report of the Interpret Study Team was received.

Dr. John Martin, President of Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary was introduced to the conference and brought greetings.

Doug Griffin led in prayer.

Report of the Invest Study Team

Norm Bull introduced the Invest Study Team Report.

Lloyd Eyre, President, Lorne Park Foundation presented the report of the Lorne Park Foundation. He reported that Lorne Park Foundation now has assets of \$1.9 million dollars. He also reported that an interview with a candidate for the vacant Donald N. & Kathleen G. Bastian Chair of Wesley Studies at Tyndale Seminary will take place on May 31.

Norm Bull presented the report of the Free Methodist Foundation. He indicated that the assets of the Free Methodist Foundation are now \$4.8 million dollars with a return on investment of 9.4% in 2004. He also introduced Crown Financial Ministries as means to teach biblical financial values. Will Keller came to share the positive impact Crown Financial Ministries had on his local church.

Dan Sheffield updated the conference on our response to the Tsunami Relief Project in Sri Lanka. The total amount raised to date is \$132,000.

Bishop Ildo took the Chair.

Bishop Elford presented a document entitled, “Generating Resources Together for Creatively Funding Healthy ‘in Canada and Beyond’ Ministries.” It will be used as a working document by the National Leadership Team and the Board of Administration between now and the next General Conference.

Bishop Elford returned to the Chair.

On motion the report of the Invest Study Team was received.

Prior to going to lunch Coral Young led us in prayer.

We recessed for lunch at 12:15pm.

After the break for lunch, the conference reconvened at 1:30 pm and the Worship Team led us in songs of praise.

Report of the Celebrate Study Team

Heather Sutton and Carol McDowell presented the Celebrate Study Team report.

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On motion the following Celebrate Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Celebrate Recommendation #1

That The Free Methodist Church in Canada Ministry Centre continue to produce and distribute a regular video communication from the Bishop/Ministry Centre to the people of the local churches to present the ‘big picture’ vision messages and tell how God is working in and through The Free Methodist Church in Canada and worldwide. These communications should be made available to every person in Free Methodist Church congregations.

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On motion the following Celebrate Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Celebrate Recommendation #2

That a focused commitment be made by the pastors, delegates and official boards to faithfully place all communication in front of their congregations.

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On motion the following Celebrate Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Celebrate Recommendation #3A

That the description of the Role of the Delegate (Appendix 1, page 7) be referred to the Study Commission on Doctrine and be approved by the Board of Administration prior to inclusion in *The Manual of The Free Methodist Church in Canada*.

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On motion the following Celebrate Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Celebrate Recommendation #3B

The Free Methodist Church in Canada will make contact with the delegates to inform them of:

- their role,
- the type of communication they should expect from the Ministry Centre,
- possible ways for them to communicate information from the Ministry Centre to the local church, and
- a Ministry Centre contact person for assistance.

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On motion the following Celebrate Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Celebrate Recommendation #4

That The Free Methodist Church in Canada show leadership in using technology to share information, facilitate discussion, and encourage peer-to-peer information sharing among local churches, lay people and pastors.

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On motion the following Celebrate Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Celebrate Recommendation #5

That the Board of Administration of The Free Methodist Church in Canada begin to investigate the need and feasibility of hiring a Director of Communications staff person.

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On motion the following Celebrate Study Team recommendation was adopted.

Celebrate Recommendation #6

That the National Leadership Team make reasonable effort to produce a live web cast of the Sunday Morning Worship portion of General Conference and a DVD of the highlights in order to celebrate, on a national level, what is happening within the Body to the local congregations.

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On motion the report of the Celebrate Study Team was received.

Philip Robillard of World Relief Canada was introduced to the conference and highlighted the ministry of World Relief Canada.

Complimentary Resolutions

Raymond Biggs, delegate from Calgary Free Methodist Church, brought complimentary resolutions. Thanks were expressed to:

- Bishop Keith Elford
- Bishop Ildo
- Bishop James
- Norm Bull
- Alan Retzman
- Dan Sheffield
- Jared Siebert
- Lloyd Eyre
- Steve Cylka
- Doug Griffin
- Tanya Prinsep
- Ministry Centre staff
- Those involved in Study Teams, the worship team, the prayer ministry, workshop leaders, tellers, airport greeters, and many others involved in the smooth operation of the conference.

Closing Actions

A time of prayer for the National Leadership Team was led by Stephen Bond. Randy Miller urged us to pray for the teens in our congregations as they are our future leaders and for the ministry of Andrew Brown, Student Ministries Director.

The worship team led us in the singing of “How Great is Our God” and “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing.”

Upon adjournment, the General Conference will meet again at the call of the chair.

The conference adjourned at 3:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lloyd R. Eyre, Secretary