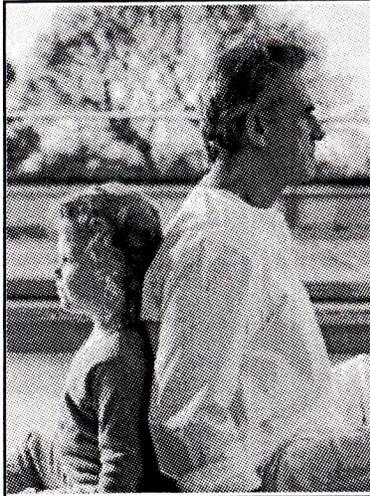


Report of the Mature Study Team



MATURE

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Note: Draft Report subject to change.



Report of the
MATURE Study Team

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1. Revised Summary of Recommendations for the Mature Study Team

Mature Recommendation #1 (Replaces previous Mature Recommendation #1 on p. 3)

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.

(Rationale: A champion is needed to ignite forward motion in maturity that will thrust further toward the vision of a healthy church; also ties this to the FMCiC Commission mission statement re: Commissioning "prepared people to purposeful service".)

Passed Defeated *Referred to* _____

Mature Recommendation #2 (Replaces previous Mature Recommendation #2 on p. 3)

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.

(Rationale: Calls for ownership by the local church and ties this to the JDPAS work on vision, mission and core values.)

Passed Defeated *Referred to* _____

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.

(Rationale: Calls for ownership by the denomination and accountability/support for the pastoral leader)

Passed Defeated *Referred to* _____

Mature Recommendation #4

That the Network Leaders be reaffirmed in the crucial role they play in the development of healthy churches. And that, the NLT 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."

(Rationale: Affirms the Network Leaders and calls for evaluation and refining of the network System)

Passed Defeated Referred to _____

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.)

(Rationale: Calls for denominational research to design easy access to resources for local church leaders. The Mature Study Team to give a clear definition to the Communications Think Tank as to what is envisioned.)

Passed Defeated Referred to _____

What led the Mature Study Team to present these recommendations is that we, as pastors and practitioners, see the challenging needs that exist in the local church. Within our Free Methodist context, it will be important to address these needs in order to make progress toward accomplishing our vision to see healthy churches within the reach of all people in Canada and beyond.

If we are to see healthy churches within the reach of people in Canada and beyond; if we are to see healthy churches planting healthy churches; if we are to see healthy leaders leading healthy churches, then we need to address the needs of our existing structures. Further support within the context of the networks and the implementation of the Natural Church Development process will enhance our preferred outcome of health.

In essence, on all levels, we need to become champions of health and develop ways and means to champion support within the structural system.

1. Summary of Recommendations for the Mature Study Team

Mature Recommendation #1 (Page 6)

~~That the National Leadership Team put mechanisms in place to provide the following:~~

- ~~_____ a) Resource/coach/mentor to assist SPN, PCN, CSN networks~~
- ~~_____ b) Network consultations with local church/pastors~~
- ~~_____ c) Assistance in inspiring and igniting local churches~~
- ~~_____ d) Assistance in developing a healthy leadership culture. (e.g. developing an empowering leadership plan, etc.)~~

Passed Defeated Referred to _____

Mature Recommendation #2 (Page 7)

~~That the National Leadership Team oversee the development of an interactive site (within The Free Methodist Church in Canada website) as a discovery access tool for developing healthy local church environments.~~

Passed Defeated Referred to _____

1. What is Maturity?

The Mature Study Team of 2002 focused on defining maturity within the body the Christ. Their findings (as printed in their report to General Conference 2002) were as follows:

“We determined that our first task was to define “mature”. What is maturity, and what does it look like in practice? Each of the age-level teams endeavoured to define “maturity” in relation to their particular area (i.e. How do we mature children versus maturing young adults?). *The Message* interprets 1Peter 2:1-3 in this way, “So clean house! Make a clean sweep of malice and pretense, envy, and hurtful talk. You’ve had a taste of God. Now, like infants at the breast, drink deep of God’s pure kindness. *Then you’ll grow up mature and whole in God*” (italics mine). Apparently, “maturity” is about “tasting” God, and “drinking deep of” Him. Maturity is not about programming as much as it is about “discipleship”. The flavour of this report is therefore discipleship. The objective of every Free Methodist ministry must be to bring people to the Father to “taste and see that He is good”. For the not-yet-believer, opportunities must be presented to taste for the first time (discipleship necessarily includes evangelism). For the “been-there-done-that-got-the-t-shirt believer”, opportunities must exist to taste more of Him (sacraments, disciplines, etc)!”

2. Results of the 2002 Recommendations

1. The Mature Study Team 2002 divided into sub-committees to study age specific levels of maturity. The 2002 study team’s full report will be included along with our presentation on the CD that will be made available at registration. We felt that the working tool that the previous team provided includes valid information, resources, and strategies regarding maturity within children, youth, next generation, and early retirees.

2. The Mature Study Team 2002 Recommendation Adopted by the General Conference

That a network of youth leaders be established that would provide the following:

- *A forum to exchange ideas, strategies and resources (possibly even sharing resources).*
- *An opportunity to connect for sharing, support and prayer.*
- *A chance for training (and mentoring).*
- *The further development of a resource list.*
- *The development of an on-line forum to further enhance networking and if possible face-to-face meetings.*
- *The development of regional, and possibly national, youth events*
- *Further, we recommend that a coordinator or coordinators be appointed to provide leadership to this network.*

3. Results of Recommendation

In May 2004 Andrew Brown assumed the position of Student Ministries Director for The Free Methodist Church in Canada. The mission of The Free Methodist Church in Canada Student Ministries is “**Turning Students into Disciples of Jesus Christ**”, and this is accomplished through supporting /encouraging /developing Free Methodist Student Ministries...locally, regionally and nationally with "God being our Helper".

As part of a strategic plan our Student Ministries Director has been developing relationships with churches, pastors, student ministry leaders and students themselves to share the vision of Free Methodist Student Ministries and to hear from those same individuals about their needs, desires and passions with respect to student ministry. He has participated as well on the Mature Study Team of the General Conference 2005.

There are numerous focus areas that are beginning to bring students and student ministry leaders together through common interests. These include: youth events, leadership training, 24/7 prayer, sports ministry, and missions. As these initiatives begin to grow, the networks of individuals involved are growing along with them.

Connectedness amongst students and student ministry leaders is also being developed through various communication methods. Student Ministry updates are communicated through email correspondence (via a national database of Free Methodist student ministry leaders and key student leaders), there is a regular "Student Ministry" section of the *Mosaic*, and the Student Ministry website networks us across the country.

3. What is the Mature Study Team focus for General Conference 2005?

First of all, the team would like to thank Cliff Fletcher and the Mature Study Team 2002 for building a thorough platform base for maturity. With this maturity base established, the Mature Study Team 2005 began to focus on some "what next" envisioning for the maturity team process.

A key factor for the Mature Study Team was the importance of being faithful in fulfilling the vision set by The Free Methodist Church in Canada denomination, "It is the vision of The Free Methodist Church in Canada to see healthy congregations within the reach of all people in Canada and beyond."

A key factor that began our thought process was the biblical principle found in Ephesians 4:12, 13. ***It is our goal "to prepare God's people (of any age!) for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."*** (NIV), ***then we need to ignite pastor's/delegates at General Conference to this end...*** Eph. 2:10, "...work that we better get doing!" (Message) (Italics mine!)

When you ponder these words of scripture, one realizes that the church has a natural instinct for the healthy nurture of people. A healthy environment will result in a dynamic expression of faith, hope, and love. It is thought provoking to realize that most of our lives should be given to preparing the next generation for the same works of service that we have been prepared for. A healthy relationship exists when we perpetually give ourselves away so that our actions will give way to a new generation created for new works of service in God's redemptive plan.

In McManus's, *Unstoppable Force*, he states, "The only way church buildings stay filled through generations is if the church lives and dies and is born again over and over." To continually make an impact in our time and place in history, I believe this statement to be true. As leaders, responsible to fulfill all that God has placed before us, we need to become health

environmentalists! We need to create an environment of health so that all people can discover their God given purpose and faithfully live their purpose to its fullest extent.

Rest assured, the Mature Study Team did not want to present itself before General Conference 2005 with a quick fix for creating a healthy environment. Nor, was it our intent to present “Ten Easy Steps to a Healthy Environment”. There is an old joke about the Sunday school teacher who asks his students, “What has four legs, is furry, climbs trees, and eats nuts?” One student hesitantly raises his hand and says, “I think it’s a squirrel, but I’m going to go ahead and say Jesus.” The implication is that our purpose is not to force any single particular way of developing a healthy environment. We did not want to force feed you simplistic strategies and methods to be contextualized in such a complex and wonderfully diverse body of Christ. No! As leaders, in care of Christ’s church, we must discover for ourselves our own contextual building blocks for a healthy body. In essence, we need to freely discover and identify a squirrel and, at the same time, thank Jesus for creating it.

With this, the purpose of the Mature Study Team 2005 is:

“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.”

It is the intention of the Mature Study Team to heighten your awareness to the uniqueness of a God created human spirit. When this unique person is matched with the potential God has placed for the purpose of their lives, we are convinced that an eruption of empowerment will emerge. In simple terms, a healthy culture produces healthy people.

We want to take you on a journey of discovery for General Conference 2005. Please note that all parts of this journey have been recorded onto the CD provided for your resource use within your local church. No rights or reserves have been placed on these materials. Our intention is that we would provide resources for your implementation.

4. Recommendations from the Mature Study Team:

1. The Mature Study Team would like to make the following recommendations:

Mature Recommendation #1:

That the National Leadership Team put mechanisms in place to provide the following:

- a) Resource/coach/mentor to assist SPN, PCN, CSN networks
- b) Network consultations with local church/pastors
- c) Assistance in inspiring and igniting local churches
- d) Assistance in developing a healthy leadership culture. (e.g. developing an empowering leadership plan, etc.)

Mature Recommendation #2:

That the National Leadership Team oversee the development of an interactive site (within The Free Methodist Church in Canada website) as a discovery access tool for developing healthy local church environments.

2. Rationale

What led the Mature Study Team to present these recommendations is that we, as pastors and practitioners, see the challenging needs that exist in the local church. Within our Free Methodist context, it will be important to address our needs disposition to accomplish our vision goal “to see healthy churches within the reach of all people in Canada and beyond.”

If we are to see healthy churches within the reach of people in Canada and beyond; if we are to see healthy churches planting healthy churches; if we are to see healthy leaders leading healthy churches, then we need to address the needs of our existing structures. Further support within the context of the networks and the implementation of the Natural Church Development process will enhance our preferred outcome of health.

In essence, on all levels, we need to become champions of health and develop ways and means to champion support within the structural system.