

Senior Management Accountability

Origin: Rev. Amadeus Pyrallis

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

Briefly describe (approximately four sentences) the issue and its significance.

While there is a great deal of accountability for congregational clergy within the denomination, there is virtually no accountability for those in General Council Office and Regional Office positions, particularly in the roles of General Secretary, Moderator and Executive Ministers. We are told that personnel in these roles are accountable to the Office of Vocation in the same way as other clergy but this has been proven not to be the case. If we do not address this issue we will continue to see a rise in distrust between General Council, the Regions and the Communities of Faith.

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Ensure that all those in positions of leadership be accountable and transparent in their dealings with the Church and be held to the highest Ethical and Professional Standards within the denomination.
- Ensure evaluation processes for senior management are free from unconscious bias and that people serving in management positions are accountable to the whole church on a regular basis

2. What is happening now?

Provide a description of the current practice or policy in question, identifying/citing the source of this information.

- The new governance structure has given more power to fewer people. It is crucial that people serving in such positions adhere to the highest possible standards of ethics and professionalism.
- Currently Senior Management are said to be accountable to the Office of Vocation in the same way as other clergy. This has been proven not to be the case. (Eg. Most clergy are not allowed to see the complaint they must respond to in a Review process until the Review is over, whereas an Executive Minister is not only allowed to see the complaint but they are allowed to respond to it without a Review taking place.)
- Senior management have the resources of denominational legal support, whereas other clergy must seek out and pay for their own representation.
- Senior management personnel are currently reviewed by selected task groups who do not represent the entire body of the church. Meetings occur behind “closed doors” and the Body of the Church is not solicited for input. The key stakeholders of the denomination in Communities of Faith are not being heard.
- Without an external review process, conducted by an impartial professional Christian body outside of the denomination (such as Credence, or the Alban

Institute), embedded, unconscious biases in evaluation and staff development emerge; systemic power imbalances can allow abuses to emerge/continue.

3. What is the recommendation?

Describe how the General Council might respond to the issue.

- Implement an external review process, by knowledgeable and unbiased Christian facilitators (such as Credence, or the Alban Institute) for people in senior management, specifically, the General Secretary, Moderator and all Executive Ministers.
- The process should engage the whole church not strategically selected task forces or focus-groups. Given current technology, feedback can be solicited from all communities of faith, clergy and staff for a fulsome review.
- The assessment should include an analysis of how well the position and the person serving in the position serves the Church.

4. Background information:

Provide details the General Council needs to make an informed decision on the proposal.

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

Describe in broad terms how this proposal engages with the United Church’s established principles and positions on equity.

Engaging in an external process involving the entire church, gives voice to those who may have been silenced in the past. Feedback would be solicited from all members of the Church of whatever culture, ethnicity, heritage, race, sex or gender identity, physical, mental and intellectual ability or socio-economic status, in order to mitigate discrimination, intentional and enculturated, individual and systemic.

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 _____

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

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