

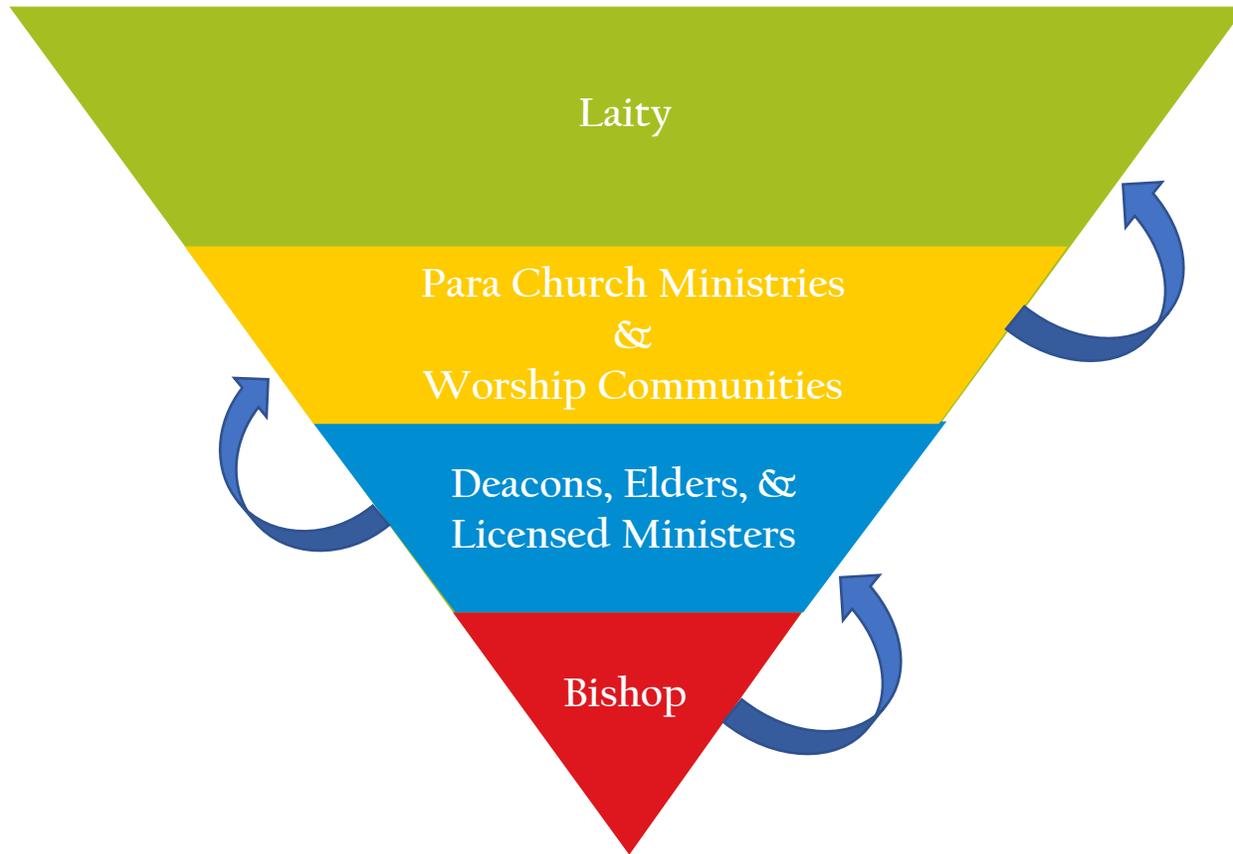


The
Convergent Christian Communion

Our Polity

As approved by 2 Sessions of General Assembly in June 2018 and August 2018

A Model of True Christian Hierarchy



Article 4 of the Constitution States:

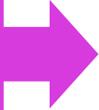
The government of the Convergent Christian Communion shall be vested in our Para Church Ministries and Worship Communities through their lay delegates and duly qualified clergy, gathered at General Assembly.

The Leaders of this Communion are answerable to the will of the members of the Communion.

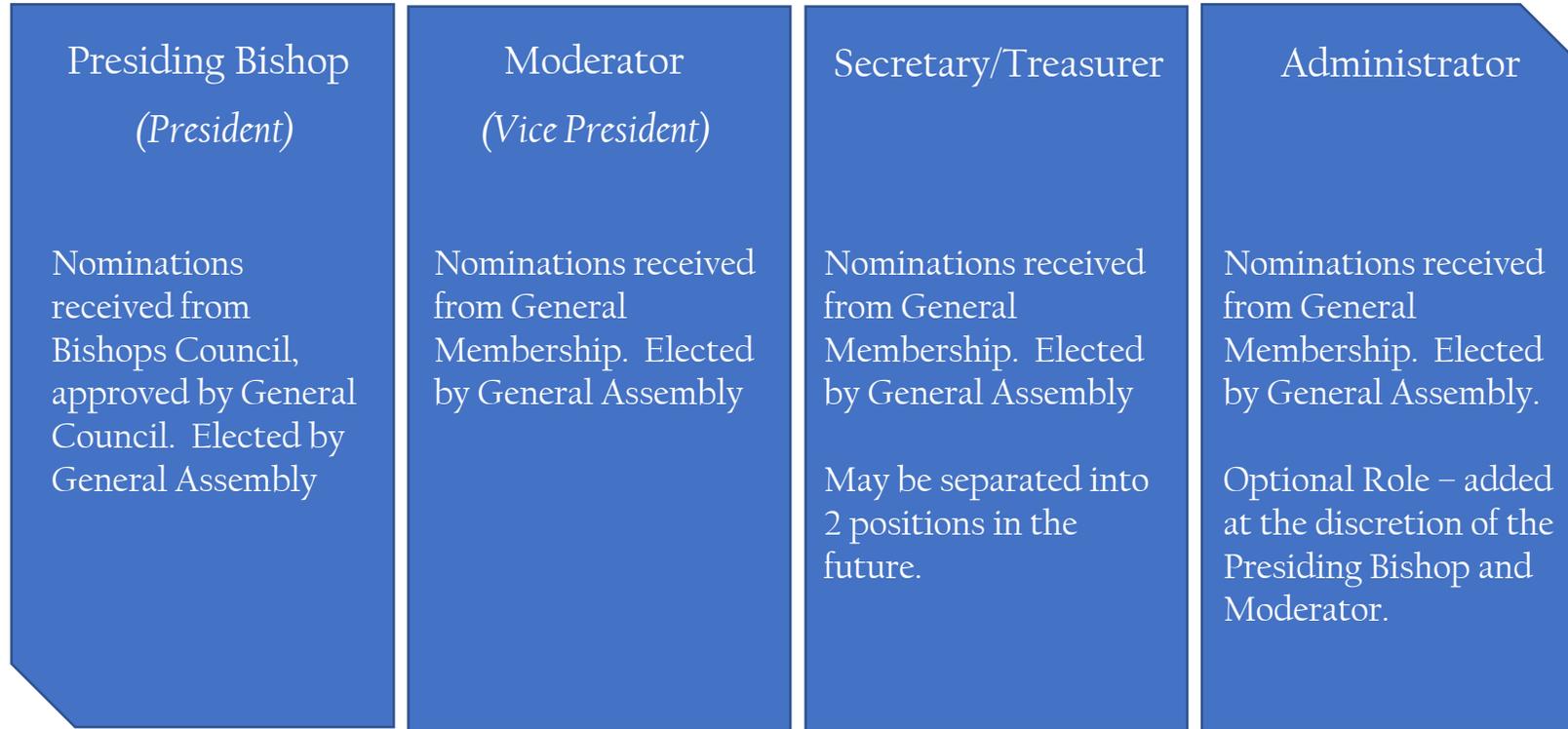


Network Governance Structure

Ultimate authority resides in the General Assembly. All Decisions are binding.



The General Council



2 Advisor may be appointed by the PB. Voice no Vote.



The Bishops Council

Suffragan

Area

Regionary

Presiding

- The Presiding Bishop is the Chair of the Bishops Council.
- The Bishops Council is accountable to the General Council and General Assembly.
- The Bishops Council is charged with Pastoral Care of our Communion. They are responsible for setting baseline requirements for welcoming new members (Clergy, Ministries, etc) to the Communion. All baseline requirements will need to be approved by the General Council.
- The Bishops Council manages the Communion Formation Programs.
- Bishops of this communion are charged with performing Ordinations; they may perform the ordination on their own or by using a proxy Bishop.
- Decisions made by the Bishops Council, can be overturned by the General Council or General Assembly by a 2/3rd majority vote.



The Bishops Council

Suffragan

Area

Regionary

Presiding

- It is the view of the C.C.C. that all Bishops are elected to their role.
- As a matter of policy, Bishops welcomed to the Communion as new members, shall take on the role of Suffragan (Assisting Bishop). The role of Suffragan is limited to the sacramental responsibilities delegated by the Area Bishops and Regionaries.
- An election is triggered should the role of Area Bishop or Regionary occur. All elections are called when a candidate receives a 50% + 1 majority vote.
- Currently, elections are held nationally with the Presiding Bishop assigning regional oversight. As the Bishops grow their regions, elections for Area Bishops will commence. For accountability purposes the Council is ordered by function. When voting collegially, each bishops vote has equal weight.
- Bishops serve until they reach the age of retirement, resign or are removed from office.



Frequently Asked Questions

What does a Bishop do?

Bishops are called to:

- gather the whole community in celebration, presiding over the sacraments and ordaining new elders and deacons
- proclaim the Gospel as an Apostolic witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- be a teacher, guardian and interpreter of the faith and Christian traditions
- be active in making and nurturing disciples
- be a shepherd (pastor) of the whole people of God, with special concern for the clergy under his/her care
- be a prophetic voice for the voiceless

Bishops are to be committed to the life of the Church, to the wider communities in which they minister and to civil society. It is the calling of Bishops to be bridge-builders, reconcilers and symbols of unity, representing the local to the universal and the universal to the local, taking their place within a world-wide Church of Christ as visible representations of Christ and the Apostles to the world.

- inspired by 2008 Lambeth Conference, Bishops in the Anglican Communion



Frequently Asked Questions

How is our polity different from Connexional governance?

Our current model of governance is very similar to Connexional polity (i.e. Methodist governance) but with deviations. Connexional polity is a variety of Episcopal polity characterized by a strong central organization which holds an annual Conference. The connexion is divided into Districts in the charge of a Chairperson. The defining difference in this model and our own model is that the Chairperson of any region or District will be called Bishop (some groups use superintendent), ideally as we grow it is our intention for the regions to have their own councils consisting of lay and clerical representatives. The Bishops of the Communion will not rotate between regions/areas/districts as is common with Connexional governance.

How is our polity different from congregational governance?

Our governance would be a marriage of Episcopal and Congregational Polity. Each congregation is charged to govern and order itself as it sees fit but with guidance from the Bishop and council. There are restrictions on utilizing the terms Bishop, Elder and Deacon outside of the Communion definitions to ensure consistency in messaging. Congregations have the freedom to associate (based on membership process) and disassociate (based on agreed standards) at any time and retain all rights to their properties, name and ministries. Congregations would choose their own leaders; it is understood that a congregation choosing to associate with the Communion would elect a leader who meets the minimum qualifications to hold that position in our Communion (Elder or Deacon).



Frequently Asked Questions

How would this model differ from Hierarchical governance?

Our governance is not one of Hierarchical polity (Roman Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, etc). Bishops holding jurisdiction (Area, Regional, Presiding) are elected by the Communion. Bishops are not be the final authority, even in Council, the Bishops are accountable to the General Assembly, The General Council and later to their regional/district councils. Councils (General, Regional, District) would consist of democratically elected members from clerical and lay orders in that area. Ideally the national governance model would be copied down the chain to the local congregation.

What is a Bishop?

The titles Bishop, Overseer and Superintendent are derived from the same Greek word *epískopos*. A Bishop is called by God and the Church to be a shepherd who feeds the flock entrusted to his or her care. A Bishop is an overseer of the flock and as such is called to propagate, to teach, and to uphold and defend the faith and order of the Church willingly and as God leads – not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to his care, but being a wholesome example to the entire flock of Christ (1 Peter 5:2-3). These requirements are in addition to the requirements set forth for Deacon and for Elder. Bishops are consecrated for the whole Church and are successors of the Apostles through the grace of the Holy Spirit given to them. They are chief missionaries and chief pastors, guardians and teachers of doctrine, and administrators of godly discipline and governance. No bishop is "higher" in rank than another.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Apostolic Succession?

Apostolic succession is the method whereby the ministry of the Christian Church is held to be derived from the apostles by a continuous succession, which has usually been associated with a claim that the succession is through a series of bishops. This series was seen originally as that of the bishops of a particular see founded by one or more of the apostles. Those who hold for the importance of apostolic succession via episcopal laying on of hands appeal to the New Testament, which, they say, implies a personal apostolic succession (from Paul to Timothy and Titus, for example). They appeal as well to other documents of the early Church, especially the Epistle of Clement. In this context, Clement explicitly states that the apostles appointed bishops as successors and directed that these bishops should in turn appoint their own successors.. Further, proponents of the necessity of the personal apostolic succession of bishops within the Church point to the universal practice of the undivided early Church (up to AD 431), before being divided into the Church of the East, Oriental Orthodoxy, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Christians of the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Old Catholic, Anglican, Moravian, and Scandinavian Lutheran traditions maintain that "a bishop cannot have regular or valid orders unless (s)he has been consecrated in this apostolic succession." Each of these groups does not necessarily consider consecration of the other groups as valid. However, some Protestants deny the need for this type of continuity, and the historical claims involved have been severely questioned by them; Eric G. Jay comments that the account given of the emergence of the episcopate in chapter III of the encyclical Lumen Gentium (1964) "is very sketchy, and many ambiguities in the early history of the Christian ministry are passed over". These denominations, instead, hold that apostolic succession is "understood as a continuity in doctrinal teaching from the time of the apostles to the present."



Frequently Asked Questions

Why should our Communion care about Apostolic Succession?

The Convergent Christian Communion, as a ministry, exists within nexus of Christian tradition. Currently, the majority of our members/applicants originate from the Evangelical and Charismatic traditions. A survey of some independent sacramental ministers found that these ministers were apprehensive toward our Communion because we lacked Apostolic Succession. It is recognized that Evangelical/Charismatic ministers give very little weight to this claim but many have accepted the position of Bishop. By obtaining Apostolic Succession, our Communion has been able to expand our reach through partnerships with other independent sacramental groups. These groups have offered to assist with ordaining ministers in areas where it would be difficult for our leaders to travel (such as international locations). Obtaining Apostolic Succession has already opened the door for those on the fence about our Communion.

