

Identifying Leaders and Managing Expectations

Guidelines for helping leaders recognise a potential candidate for ordained ministry as a church leader and expectations when taking on a CMC

Introduction

When a lead pastor recognises someone in their congregation has the character and calling necessary for ordained ministry, they should encourage them to step up and become a Local Ministerial Candidate which is the first step toward becoming a Conference Ministerial Candidate (CMC). It is an exciting moment in the life of the prospective candidate as they will have been seeking God for confirmation while serving their local church and sensing the call towards ministry. Recognising someone's call is also significant in the life of the church in which they serve. It needs serious consideration as overseeing a candidate comes with certain responsibilities that the pastor and leadership team must carefully consider before they put someone forward. These guidelines are to help pastors identify potential leaders in their churches and help manage expectations of what that means.

The Start of the Journey

A potential CMC should have been serving in the local church for some time (minimum one year as an LMC) and have gained the respect and trust of the leaders and congregation. Ideally, they have been an LMC (Local Ministerial Candidate) for at least a year prior to being put forward as a CMC (refer to the LMC Handbook). A period of time as an LMC gives both the candidate and the leaders time to recognise a calling to pastoral ministry. We also recommend doing the M4 Ready programme during this time.

Characteristics of a Potential Candidate

It is vital that the candidate is able to articulate their conversion experience and the difference it's made to their life. Other necessary or important characteristics are:

- Someone who is willing to surrender everything to Christ, who is spiritually hungry, who is sure of, and secure in, their identity in Christ.
- Someone who demonstrates the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- Someone who relates well to those in authority and is also able to lead others.
- Someone who shows a willingness to learn and has a heart to encourage others in their faith journey.

- Someone who, by serving in their church, demonstrates the gifts and attitude in keeping with one called to ministry and in whom others identify a calling on their life.
- Someone who embraces the theology of the Free Methodist Church.

Gifts

We value individuality and creativity in its many forms and each candidate's specific giftings. People have different strengths and weaknesses. Godly leadership is "shepherd- leadership" and this is important whatever personality type and leadership style the candidate has.

Financial Implications

The MEG Board offers a study bursary of £200 a year to help towards training costs. It is hoped that the local church is willing to match this. FM online modules cost around £50 each and typically are 6-7 sessions. Sometimes these are spread over 12-14 weeks i.e. fortnightly. The three compulsory FM weekends cost approximately £150-£200 each to cover food, accommodation and training. One weekend is done each year. It is not unusual for a CMC to be bi-vocational.

Personnel Implications

The overseeing pastor is responsible for the welfare and development of the CMC within the church setting. There should be a clear job/role description that both sides sign up to. The CMC should ideally be on the leadership team and invited by the lead pastor to attend all church activities and be exposed to all aspects of ministry. Over the course of the three years the CMC should take an increasing level of responsibility so that by the end of their CMC journey they have experience/s of taking a funeral, dedication, wedding, leading an Alpha course (or similar), organised mission/outreach events and had multiple experiences of preaching, leading services, communion, small groups etc.

The CMC Handbook makes it clear the CMC is responsible for their own progress in terms of driving their learning journey and asking for leadership responsibilities in their local church. The MEG Board keeps careful track of each CMC and invites feedback or questions at any time. Good communication is key to a successful journey.

CMC Agreement

The MEG Board draws up a CMC Agreement that the candidate signs before the Annual Conference when they officially start their three-year journey. This CMC Agreement details what studies the CMC needs to do during their three years and what is expected in terms of their

participation in a monthly Connect Group, attendance at leaders' events, and the Annual Conference each May.

The study requirements are tailored to suit each candidate based on their prior knowledge and ministry experience. The Agreement also tells the CMC who their FM mentor is and gives information on mentoring. The CMC is assigned an FM mentor by the MEG Board. The CMC may also choose a 'life mentor' who may be from outside FM. The FM mentor is asked for feedback twice a year (March and October) via a simple online form. The Chair of the Personnel Committee and the CMC both sign the Agreement. The overseeing pastor needs to be aware of the contents of this document.

Please refer to the CMC Handbook (March 2023) for further information about the CMC process.

Rebecca Townley on behalf of the MEG Board

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