

Appointing An Electoral Policy Committee as the First Step Towards Federated Multimodal Congregationalism

Gideon Lee, 5/28/2024

Since her inception, Crosspoint Church has been blessed with a history of continual growth according to multiple measurements, including but not limited to the Baptist cliché of 3Bs (buildings, budgets, and baptisms). To continue this growth, it has become evident to some Crosspoint members that it is time to evolve the church governance model towards more:

1. Equitable distribution of representation among congregations in church leadership.
2. Proportional allocation of budget across congregations.
3. Local autonomy in congregational ministry.
4. Accountability in executive decision and policy making.

Federated multimodal congregationalism is a multi-congregational church polity designed for such objectives. Inspired by how the USA federal government shares power with the state governments, federated multimodal congregationalism aims at decentralizing the leadership and resources of the church among the congregations in an equitable and proportional manner so that each can be more effective in their own local context.

This presentation does not aim at defining federated multimodal congregationalism precisely. To do that, a more thorough background consideration in ecclesiology would be necessary. Moreover, a concrete policy proposal detailing the authority and responsibility of different governing entities within the church would be necessary. There shall come an appropriate time for both exercises. Instead, this presentation draws the focus on **the electoral policy of policy makers**. Once a new generation of leaders is put in place using the reformed electoral policy, the new leaders can take on both exercises with a collective mind that is more broadly representative of the whole church.

As a first step, this presentation proposes **the appointment of an electoral policy committee** whose primary mission is to identify the essential governing entities and the election process of such entities. The electoral policy committee will furnish the details of the skeletal framework envisioned below, primarily through establishing quantitative criteria in the composition of the different entities:

1. **Congregation**: The church is organized as a collection of congregations. Every church member will belong to a congregation. Conceptually, a congregation is

related but not identical to a campus. Multiple congregations can share a campus building, e.g. there might be different language congregations meeting at the same building. Conversely, a congregation may span multiple sites. A quantitative criterion for congregation is the minimum number of members required, e.g. 50 members.

2. **Trustee:** Every congregation is equally represented at the board of trustees. Trustees are competitively elected by the congregation they represent. A quantitative criterion for trustees is the number of seats each congregation has on the board of trustees, e.g. 2 trustees per congregation.
3. **Deacon:** Every congregation is proportionally represented at the board of deacons. Deacons are competitively elected by the congregation they represent. A quantitative criterion for deacons is the number of seats each congregation has on the board of deacons, e.g. 1 deacon per 50 congregational members.
4. **Employee Headcount:** The employee headcount ceiling for a congregation is proportional to its general offering. A quantitative criterion for employee headcount is its ceiling, e.g. (50% congregational general offering / median household income).
5. **Congregational Lead Pastor:** The lead pastor of a congregation is nominated by a congregational pastoral search committee and approved by the congregation. A quantitative criterion for lead pastor is the percentage required in the congregational approval for his appointment, e.g. two-third approval.
6. **Congregational Pastoral Search Committee:** The congregational pastoral search committee is an ad hoc committee responsible for nominating the congregational lead pastor. Its members are nominated by the trustees and deacons representing the congregation. A quantitative criterion for congregational pastoral search committee is the percentage required in the congregational approval of the appointment of its members, e.g. two-third approval.
7. **Compliance Committee:** The church-level compliance committee is a standing committee responsible for investigating allegations of policy violation and reporting the findings to all church members. A quantitative criterion for the compliance committee is its composition, possibly in terms of the number of seats each congregation has on the committee, e.g. 2 committee member per congregation (i.e., like the board of trustees) or 1 committee member per 50 congregational members (i.e., like the board of deacons).
8. **Credentials Committee:** The church-level credentials committee is a standing committee responsible for checking the eligibility of church-level and congregational-level committee candidates by reviewing documentation of

credentials. A quantitative criterion for the compliance committee is its composition (see examples above in compliance committee).

9. **Nominating Committee:** The church-level nominating committee is a standing committee responsible for nominating members of church-level committees. An existing policy informs the annual formation of the nominating committee currently. But it is conceivable that a new policy can be established to establish the quantitative criteria used in determining the composition of the nominating committee (see examples above in compliance committee). For example, a new policy could make the nomination of nominating committee members the responsibility of the trustees and deacons.
10. **Electoral Policy Committee:** The church-level electoral policy committee is an ad hoc committee responsible for drafting the electoral policy envisioned by this proposal, releasing the draft to collect feedback, and sending the final draft to the members for approval. Its composition must first be decided before this proposal can be realized. Their policy is characterized by the quantitative criteria described above and could be summarized by a table like the following:

<i>Entities</i>	<i>Composition Criteria</i>
<i>Congregation</i>	Minimally 50 members
<i>Trustee</i>	2 per congregation
<i>Deacon</i>	1 per 50 congregational members
<i>Employee Headcount Cap</i>	50% congregational general offering / median household income
<i>Congregational Lead Pastor</i>	Two-third congregational approval
<i>Congregational Pastoral Search Committee</i>	Two-third congregational approval
<i>Compliance Committee</i>	2 per congregation (like the Board of Trustees)
<i>Credentials Committee</i>	1 per 50 congregational members (like the Board of Deacons)
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	1 per 50 congregational members (like the Board of Deacons)

A conceivable timeline is as follows:

- Year-end 2024 membership meeting:
 - Appoint the Electoral Policy Committee.
 - Appoint the Compliance Committee.
- Mid-year 2025 membership meeting:

- The Electoral Policy Committee releases a policy draft to request for comments.
- Year-end 2025 membership meeting:
 - Approving the Electoral Policy.
- Year-end 2026 membership meeting:
 - Trustees and Deacons are competitively elected using the new Electoral Policy.