

The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

of the

39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006

August 13 – 19, 2006

Thunder Bay, Ontario



Issued by

The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada
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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA/L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

Constituted June 10, 1925 by the union of the Methodist Church, Canada, Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, the Congregational Union of Canada and the 2nd Council of Local Union Churches. The Canada Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church entered The United Church of Canada on January 1, 1968.

OFFICERS OF THE INAUGURAL GENERAL COUNCIL TORONTO, JUNE 10 – 19, 1925

Denomination	Chairperson	Secretaries
Methodist	Rev. Samuel Dwight Chown, D.D.,LL.D.	Rev. Thomas Albert Moore, D.D.
Presbyterian	Rev. George Campbell Pidgeon, B.A.,B.D.,D.D.	Rev. William George Wallace, M.A.,D.D.
Congregational	Rev. William Henry Warriner, M.A.,D.D.	Rev. William Thomas Gunn, M.A.,BD.,D.D.

SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Year	Place	Moderator	Secretary
1925	Toronto, ON	Rev. George C. Pidgeon, B.A.,B.D.,D.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.
1926	Montreal, PQ	Rev. James Endicott, B.A.,D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.
1928	Winnipeg, MB	Rev. William T. Gunn, M.A.,B.D.,D.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.
1930	London, ON	Rev. Edmund H. Oliver, M.A., Ph.D.,D.D., L.L.D.,F.R.S.C.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.
1932	Hamilton, ON	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.,S.T.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.,S.T.D.,L.L.D.
1934	Kingston, ON	Rev. Richard Roberts, D.D.,D.Litt.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D., S.T.D.,L.L.D.
1936	Ottawa, ON	Rev. Peter Bryce, D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.,S.T.D.,L.L.D.
1938	Toronto, ON	Rev. John W. Woodside, M.A.,D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A.,D.D.
1940	Winnipeg, MB	Rev. Aubrey S. Tuttle, M.A.,D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A.,D.D.
1942	Belleville, ON	Rev. John P. Sclater, M.A.,D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A.,D.D.
1944	London, ON	Rev. Jesse H. Arnup, B.A.,D.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A.,D.D.
1946	Montreal, PQ	Rev. Thomas W. Jones, M.A.,B.D.,D.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A.,D.D.
1948	Vancouver, BC	Rev. Willard E. Brewing, B.D.,D.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A.,D.D.
1950	Toronto, ON	Rev. Clarence M. Nicholson, B.A.,D.D., L.L.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A.,D.D.
1952	Hamilton, ON	Rev. Alexander A. Scott, M.A.,B.D., B.Paed.,D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Gordon A. Sisco, M.A.,D.D.
1954	Sackville, NB	Rev. George Dorey, B.A.,D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D.
1956	Windsor, ON	Rev. James S. Thomson, M.A.,D.D., L.L.D.,F.R.S.C.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D.
1958	Ottawa, ON	Rev. Angus J. MacQueen, B.A.,B.D., D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D.
1960	Edmonton, AB	Rev. Hugh A. McLeod, M.A.,B.D.,D.D., L.L.D.,S.T.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D.
1962	London, ON	Rev. James R. Mutchmor, M.A.,B.D., D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D., L.L.D.
1964	St. John's, NF	Rev. Ernest M. Howse, B.A.,B.D.,S.T.M., Ph.D.,D.D.,D.Litt	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D., L.L.D.
1966	Waterloo, ON	Rev. Wilfred C. Lockhart, M.A.,Ph.D.,D.D., L.L.D.,D.C.L.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D., L.L.D.
1968	Kingston, ON	Dr. Robert B. McClure, M.D.,F.R.C.S., F.I.C.S.,D.D.,L.L.D.,D.Litt.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D., L.L.D.
1971	Niagara Falls, ON	Rev. Arthur B. B. Moore, O.C.,B.A.,B.D., D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Ernest E. Long, B.A.,B.D.,D.D., L.L.D.
1972	Saskatoon, SK	Rev. N. Bruce McLeod, M.A.,B.D.,Th.D., L.L.D.,D.D.	Rev. George Morrison, B.Comm.,B.D., D.D.,F.C.A.
1974	Guelph, ON	Rev. Wilbur K. Howard, B.A.,B.D.,D.D., L.L.D.,D.de Un.	Rev. George Morrison, B. Comm.,B.D., D.D.,F.C.A.

Year	Place	Moderator	Secretary
1977	Calgary, AB	Rev. George M. Tuttle, B.A.,B.D.,Th.D., D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Donald G. Ray, D.F.C.,B.A.,D.D.
1980	Halifax, NS	Rev. Lois M. Wilson, O.C.,B.A.,M.Div., D.D.,D.C.L.,D.Hum.L.,L.L.D.	Rev. Donald G. Ray, D.F.C.,B.A.,D.D.
1982	Montreal, PQ	Rev. W. Clarke MacDonald, B.A.,M.Div., D.D.	Rev. Donald G. Ray, D.R.C.,B.A.,D.D.
1984	Morden, MB	Rev. Robert F. Smith, B.A.,B.D.,Th.D.,D.D.	Rev. Philip A. Cline, B.Th.,Th.M.,D.D.
1986	Sudbury, ON	Dr. Anne M. Squire, B.A.,M.A.,D.D.,L.L.D.	Irene Evans Parker (acting)
1988	Victoria, BC	Rev. Sang Chul Lee, B.D.,Th.M.,S.T.M., D.D.,L.L.D.	Rev. Howard M. Mills, B.A.,M.Div., S.T.M.,Ph.D.,D.D.
1990	London, ON	Rev. Walter H. Farquharson, B.A., M.Div.,D.D.	Rev. Howard M. Mills, B.A.,M.Div., S.T.M.,Ph.D.,D.D.
1992	Fredericton, NB	Rev. Stanley J. McKay, B.A.,B.D.	Rev. Howard M. Mills, B.A.,M.Div., S.T.M.,Ph.D.,D.D.
1994	Fergus, ON	Dr. Marion S. Best, D.D.	Rev. Randolph L. Naylor, B.A.,B.D., B.D. Hon (acting)
1997	Camrose, AB	Rev. William F. Phipps, B.A.,B.D., L.L.B.	K. Virginia Coleman
2000	Toronto, ON	Rev. Marion Pardy, M.A.,D.Min,L.L.D.	K. Virginia Coleman
2003	Wolfville, NS	Rev. Peter B. Short, B.A., M.Div.,D.D.	Rev. James H. Sinclair, B.A., M.Div.,D.D.
2006	Thunder Bay, ON	Rev. David Giuliano, Th.M., B.A.,M.Div., M.Sc.,C.S.D.	Rev. James H. Sinclair, B.A., M.Div.,D.D.

Designation: Present Ordained Moderator: “The Right Reverend”;

Past Ordained Moderators: “The Very Reverend”;

Lay Ministers: designated by personnel title and as they wish.

In fulfilment of its mandate of 1925 to be a “uniting” as well as a united church, The United Church of Canada has been enriched by several unions in the past seventy-three years.

The Fourth General Council of The United Church of Canada (1930) approved the union of the Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda with The United Church of Canada on the condition that the Synod shall function as a Presbytery of the Maritime Conference without interference with the rights and powers conferred by the Legislature of Bermuda in The Wesleyan Methodist Church Act, 1930.

The Twenty-second General Council of The United Church of Canada (1966) approved the Plan of Union whereby the Canada Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church became part of The United Church of Canada, effective January 1, 1968.

At various times, congregations of other Christian communions have become congregations of The United Church of Canada, including the following:

American Presbyterian Church (1925) Montreal, Que.; Central Street Christian Church (1928) Oshawa, Ont.; St. John’s Reformed Episcopal Church (1928) Susses Corner, N.B.; Brougham Christian Church (1930) Brougham, Ont.; Welsh Presbyterian Congregation (1932) Bangor, Sask.; Welsh Presbyterian Congregation (1932) Llewelyn, Sask.; Augsburg Lutheran Congregation (1949) Hagensburg, B.C.; St. John’s Evangelical and Reformed Church (1956) Snyder, Ont.; Ebenezer Congregation of the Reformed Church of America (1958) Edmonton, Alta.; German Evangelical Congregation (1961) Toronto, Ont.; Salem Evangelical and Reformed Church (1961) Vegreville, Alta.; Armenian Evangelical Church (1964) Montreal, Que.; Mewassin Evangelical and Reformed Church (1964) Duffield, Alta.; The Church of the Brethren (1968) Arrowwood, Alta.; The Church of the Brethren (1968) Irricana, Alta.; Taiwanese Christian Church (1983) Toronto, Ont.; St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (2004) Lachine, Quebec

* Part of the Presbyterian Church in Canada dissented from the union and continues under the former designation.

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IN MEMORIAM

(June 1, 2003 to August 19, 2006)

“They rest from their labours and their works do follow them” *Rev. 14:13*

Name	Date of Birth	Year Entering Ministry	Date of Death
Newfoundland and Labrador Conference			
Bent, Sonja	Jun. 16, 1946	1999	Mar. 17, 2005
Best, Douglas Legge	Oct. 23, 1920	1961	Jul. 16, 2004
Currey, John Ellis	May 17, 1922	1975	Jul 2, 2003
McKim, John Arthur	Sep. 26, 1908	1940	Aug. 21, 2003
Murphy, John Thomas	Feb. 9, 1955	1979	Nov. 16, 2003
Snow, Bertram Boyd	Feb. 8, 1913	1943	Aug. 27, 2004
Williams, Edgar Hatcher	Feb. 15, 1920	1968	Mar. 16, 2006
Maritime Conference			
Ashford, Glenn Jackson	Oct. 27, 1931	1959	May 29, 2004
Bartlett, Hubert Martin	Aug. 16, 1929	1957	Jun. 6, 2004
Bone, Lawrence Wallace	Nov. 29, 1927	1954	May 14, 2006
Boyd, Ellis Fletcher	Jan. 26, 1916	1956	Apr. 1, 2004
Brooks, Garland Chapman	Jan. 21, 1909	1937	Sep. 1, 2005
Chapman, Herbert William	May 5, 1939	1966	Nov. 9, 2004
Crowther, George Llewellyn	Mar. 13, 1917	1968	Apr. 14, 2006
DeMarsh, Roy Grant	Jul. 8, 1922	1948	Jul. 30, 2005
Dixon, Ronald Alexander	Sep. 8, 1919	1957	Oct. 13, 2003
Earle, Allan Douglas Cameron	Apr. 4, 1929	1953	Jul. 30, 2003
Gass, Douglas Howard	Apr. 7, 1915	1943	Oct. 17, 2003
Gripton, James Edward	Jul. 10, 1956	1987	Dec. 5, 2005
Houston, Kenneth	Feb. 27, 1932	1966	Mar. 16, 2004
Humby, Reuben Crewe	Feb. 14, 1917	1950	Sep. 29, 2003
Kaill, Robert Cecil	May 28, 1921	1952	May 05, 2004
Kean, James Heber	Apr. 19, 1926	1956	Apr. 4, 2006
King, Harold Robert	Jan. 2, 1937	1961	Oct. 17, 2005
Leadbeater, James Cecil	Jul. 10, 1912	1942	Sep. 23, 2005
Lemon, Shirley Glen	Aug. 28, 1926	1969	Feb. 13, 2005
Long, Arthur Herbert	May 19, 1907	1935	May 10, 2006
MacDonald, Charles Dawson	May 6, 1913	1942	Apr. 20, 2004
Matthews, William Owen Ernest	Oct. 3, 1936	1986	Jun. 30, 2006
Metzler, Darrell Addison	Nov. 27, 1932	1956	Apr. 11, 2004
Outerbridge, Margaret Craig	Jun. 1, 1934	1984	Jan. 12, 2005
Paw, Edward George William	May 1, 1943	1974	Jun. 8, 2005
Riggs, Carman Wilson	Jun. 8, 1919	1943	Mar. 8, 2005
Russell, John George	Jul. 21, 1907	1933	Jun. 29, 2003
Shannon, Clarence Elden	Feb. 23, 1919	1973	Nov. 26, 2004
Snow, Bailey Wallace	Aug. 14, 1925	1965	Aug. 16, 2003
Stevens, Ronald Likely	Mar. 23, 1919	1957	Oct. 26, 2004
Stratton, Walter George	Jul. 14, 1927	1971	Apr. 11, 2006
Walls, Smith Grant	Jun. 28, 1930	1954	Aug. 3, 2006
Woods, Douglas Raymond	Dec. 2, 1934	1974	Sep. 9, 2005

Montreal and Ottawa Conference

Beaudon, Londa Ann	Jan. 6, 1915	1964	Oct. 22, 2004
Belbin, Robert	Sep. 3, 1929	1970	Dec. 28, 2005
Deschamps, Guy André	Nov. 2, 1933	1960	Dec. 1, 2003
Grégoire, Rolland André	Oct. 20, 1913	1943	Aug. 28, 2004
Hewitt, Frederick Booth	Oct. 19, 1911	1957	Oct. 24, 2003
Kennedy, Harold Alexander	Dec. 16, 1921	1952	Feb. 26, 2005
McDowell, Samuel Melbourne	Sep. 8, 1917	1946	Aug. 11, 2006
McGlashan, Murray Alexander	May 27, 1930	1969	Nov. 23, 2004
Moore, Aubrey George	Jul. 19, 1913	1943	Mar. 15, 2006
Munson, James Edward	Jul. 24, 1910	1938	Sep. 21, 2003
Nelis, Marc Michel	Aug. 19, 1919	1949	Jul. 29, 2003

Bay of Quinte Conference

Bailey, Harold Masters	Apr. 28, 1914	1939	Apr. 19, 2004
Baker, Jean Winnifred	Aug. 23, 1951	1986	Jan. 23, 2005
Ballantyne, Gordon Percival	Jan. 14, 1921	1958	Jan. 1, 2005
Bickford, William Desmond	Nov. 18, 1925	1959	May 6, 2006
Cresswell, Arthur Eric	Mar. 11, 1911	1943	Apr. 17, 2004
Cronk, Boyd Keith	Jan. 7, 1912	1941	Oct. 29, 2003
Elmhirst, Francis Renwick (Frank)	Apr. 5, 1948	1985	Apr. 30, 2006
Horton, Edward William	Feb. 15, 1907	1932	Dec. 31, 2004
Hoult, Gordon Herbert	Jun. 7, 1923	1961	Jun. 7, 2003
Howlett, Floyd George	Feb. 7, 1921	1948	Jun. 28, 2003
Judd, Charles Ross	Jun. 16, 1902	1957	Aug. 18, 2005
Kewley, Arthur Edward	Sep. 24, 1909	1935	Jul. 1, 2005
Lee, Bernard Stanley	May 10, 1923	1970	May 8, 2004
Lentz, Arthur Benjamin	Nov. 6, 1916	1971	Jul. 10, 2006
Levan, Girtle Victor	Apr. 1, 1918	1947	Mar. 6, 2006
Meiklejohn, Grant Albert	Nov. 16, 1913	1940	Jul. 19, 2005
Mundy, George Ashford	Sep. 17, 1923	1954	Apr. 24, 2004
Paul, Lennox Blair	May 15, 1915	1970	Jan. 30, 2005
Phillips, William George Barnard	Aug. 28, 1928	1973	Feb. 22, 2005
Porter, John	Jul. 20, 1919	1959	Aug. 21, 2003
Sedgwick, Wendell Murray	Aug. 29, 1931	1964	Dec. 11, 2004
Stewart, William Henry	Dec. 28, 1918	1947	Dec. 11, 2003
Warren, Douglas Stewart	Feb. 24, 1928	1960	Jan. 23, 2005

Toronto Conference

Besley, Bruce Watson	Feb. 18, 1922	1957	Oct. 28, 2004
Brisbin, Frank Gordon	May 9, 1919	1942	Sep. 1, 2004
Brown, Joseph Ketcheson	Jul. 26, 1907	1933	Oct. 28, 2005
Cowan, Alexander Farquhar	Jul. 18, 1916	1943	Sep. 14, 2004
Day, Alfred Lee	Dec. 15, 1914	1936	Oct. 1, 2003
Elliott, Clifford Allan Stuart	Mar. 30, 1919	1942	Feb. 27, 2006
Gillingham, Ralph Garland	Aug. 23, 1920	1950	Mar. 27, 2005
Hamilton, Arthur Addy	Feb. 3, 1914	1942	Jun. 28, 2005
Hilborn, John Charles	Jul. 5, 1935	1961	Mar. 28, 2006
Joblin, Kingsley John	Feb. 23, 1912	1936	Jul. 15, 2003
Kempling, Harold Wilson	Aug. 1, 1916	1966	May 20, 2006
Kundrats, Anne-Geale Joanne	Aug. 31, 1951	2001	Jun. 28, 2006
Lucas, Calvin Glenn	May 24, 1929	1954	May 9, 2005
MacQueen, Angus James	Jul. 3, 1912	1935	Feb. 2, 2006

McColgan, Margaret Elizabeth	Aug. 22, 1922	1957	Oct. 8, 2003
McDonald, James Gilbert	Sep. 14, 1920	1944	Dec. 23, 2005
Merriam, Ethel May	Jun. 18, 1913	1947	Dec. 4, 2005
Moddle, Harold Dwight	Oct. 2, 1926	1950	Dec. 8, 2005
Moore, Arthur Bruce Barbour	Feb. 4, 1906	1930	Sep. 9, 2004
Morrow, Paul Orland	Sep. 25, 1927	1953	Jan. 7, 2006
Newman, Robert Gordon	Apr. 29, 1932	1957	Oct. 10, 2005
Oben, James William	Feb. 17, 1936	1962	Nov. 10, 2003
Pentland, Howard Milton	Apr. 27, 1928	1952	Jan. 15, 2006
Rodgers, Arthur Meighen	Sep. 1, 1926	1980	Aug. 20, 2004
Smith, Allan George	May 21, 1919	1944	Aug. 15, 2006
Stephenson, Marjorie McKimm	May 9, 1933	1983	Mar. 1, 2004
Styles, Frederick Arthur	Apr. 11, 1935	1964	Apr. 15, 2005
Upward, Leslie Dermott	May 27, 1935	1962	Mar. 29, 2005
Wells, William Thomas	Aug. 3, 1938	1965	Aug. 4, 2005
Williams, Hedd-Wyn Mynorydd	Sep. 20, 1917	1946	Aug. 14, 2004
Wilson, Roy Fyfe	Apr. 9, 1925	1949	Dec. 26, 2005

Hamilton Conference

Ashley, Elmer Emerson	Jul. 19, 1909	1935	Sep. 21, 2003
Ballantyne, William Bruce	1928	1967	Sep. 24, 2004
Boyd, John Melville	Oct. 29, 1906	1935	Oct. 26, 2004
Brown, Wilena Grace	Aug. 9, 1929	1953	Nov. 23, 2005
Carr, Cuthbert Bernard	Aug. 29, 1910	1954	Mar. 5, 2004
Cook, Albert John	Apr. 29, 1924	1958	Jul. 20, 2005
Dahms, Theo Edward	Jul. 26, 1927	1956	Jan. 21, 2005
Dobson, Harold George	Dec. 6, 1913	1942	Nov. 11, 2005
Dowden, Josiah James	Aug. 1, 1950	1980	Nov. 24, 2004
Doyon, Jesse Ghislain	Jan. 26, 1958	1983	Jan. 9, 2005
Eustace, Andrew Elias	Jul. 15, 1916	1941	Oct. 23, 2005
Hyde, Robert Gerald William	Aug. 12, 1945	1972	Sep. 11, 2003
Johnston, Ralph Burton	Feb. 6, 1931	1955	Jun. 15, 2004
Jull, Kenneth Playfair	Oct. 27, 1915	1942	Aug. 27, 2005
King, Charles Henry	Aug. 19, 1929	1974	May 6, 2006
Kirker, Elbridge Allister	Apr. 3, 1926	1955	Dec. 30, 2004
Lake, William Reed	Aug. 11, 1911	1941	Dec. 29, 2005
Lapp, Douglas Clarke	Aug. 1, 1926	1953	Feb. 4, 2005
Liles, James David	Dec. 20, 1931	1966	Jun. 12, 2004
Lock, John Armstrong	Jan. 18, 1931	1964	Feb. 9, 2006
Nettle, Mary Ellen	Jun. 1, 1929	1958	May 3, 2006
Newbery, James William Edward	Mar. 31, 1909	1934	Oct. 12, 2004
Oestreicher, John Samuel	Sep. 3, 1934	1968	Mar. 21, 2006
Parker, Harold Collington (Collin)	Nov. 6, 1937	1994	Feb. 5, 2006
Patterson, John Henry	Jul. 8, 1938	1963	Dec. 30, 2003
Petherick, William Richard	Aug. 2, 1920	1948	Feb. 1, 2005
Pipe, Donald William	May 20, 1920	1951	Nov. 25, 2003
Russ, Kenneth Harvey	May 7, 1939	1964	Aug. 23, 2005
Smith, Philip Manning	May 5, 1915	1948	May 22, 2004
Stevenson, Harry Robert	Jul. 7, 1911	1944	Aug. 23, 2004
Stotesbury, Earle Francis	Aug. 2, 1916	1956	Mar. 13, 2004
Welsh, Darwell Aldyn	Sep. 15, 1933	1958	Aug. 11, 2004
Williams, John Fraser	Aug. 27, 1939	1967	Apr. 17, 2004
Wright, George William	Jun. 18, 1913	1937	Sep. 18, 2003

Wyman, Harold Carlyle	Feb. 27, 1918	1946	Apr. 15, 2006
London Conference			
Beck, Donald Robert	Aug. 14, 1929	1969	Mar. 12, 2005
Chapman, John Douglas	May 2, 1927	1953	Mar. 29, 2006
Coates, Lloyd John	Oct. 12, 1927	1952	Jul. 26, 2003
Johnson, Maxwell Fuller	Jul. 27, 1920	1973	Nov. 15, 2005
Johnston-Kemp, Ruth J.	Jul. 4, 1923	1975	Oct. 7, 2004
LeDrew, Eric Lester	Aug. 18, 1925	1961	Sep. 7, 2004
Lindsay, Raymond Charles	Jun. 8, 1929	1964	Nov. 11, 2003
Martin, James Delmer	Dec. 24, 1905	1936	May 29, 2004
Menzies, Albert Edward Armstrong	Dec. 4, 1901	1925	Oct. 25, 2003
Moorhouse, Herbert Ernest	Dec. 14, 1912	1941	Apr. 8, 2004
Palmer, Philip Wentworth	Dec. 29, 1916	1970	May 6, 2005
Platts, Maurice	May 31, 1916	1955	Jun. 7, 2005
Smith, Alymer Percy	Dec. 2, 1931	1967	Sep. 27, 2005
Ward, Florence Louisa	May 16, 1925	1957	Jan. 6, 2005
Ziegler, Willy	Jul. 14, 1924	1971	Mar. 30, 2005
Manitou Conference			
Hobin, Cecil Paul	May 31, 1914	1977	Jul. 8, 2006
Jackson, Hope Erna	Oct. 2, 1922	1966	Jun. 23, 2003
Maynard, George Godfrey Oliver	Aug. 1, 1934	1993	Sep. 11, 2005
Strapp, Jackson Wright	Jul. 17, 1926	1955	Jul. 19, 2003
Zuffanti, Norma	May 27, 1936	1962	Jul. 29, 2005
Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario			
Barber, John Garfield	Mar. 23, 1922	1952	May 21, 2006
Bill, Hugh	Apr. 18, 1916	1942	Sep. 5, 2005
Blokland, Agnes I.	Mar. 31, 1925	1977	Feb. 10, 2005
Craig, Kerry Marie	Mar. 23, 1956	1985	Jun. 14, 2004
Harland, Harry Gordon	Dec. 27, 1920	1945	Dec. 8, 2003
Hilton, Donald William Newton	Mar. 15, 1930	1955	Jul. 20, 2005
Hughes, Owen Tudor	Aug. 22, 1915	1952	Aug. 12, 2004
Kendall, Richard George	Oct. 24, 1926	1960	Feb. 26, 2005
Kilpatrick, David George	Oct. 14, 1926	1953	May 20, 2005
Lovering, Gordon Lloyd	Sep. 10, 1920	1958	Aug. 6, 2003
McCrea, Edward Wyatt	Jun. 5, 1918	1962	Oct. 3, 2005
McLeod, Graham Douglas	Mar. 3, 1931	1986	Apr. 28, 2004
Saunders, Thomas	Feb. 21, 1909	1938	Jan. 15, 2005
Scott, James Walter	Jun. 16, 1931	1959	May 11, 2005
Walmsley, Sidney Arthur	May 16, 1924	1957	Oct. 28, 2003
Saskatchewan Conference			
Anderson, John Raymond	Nov. 21, 1918	1943	Jun. 7, 2003
Clark, Ronald Reginald	Jun. 2, 1940	1967	Nov. 15, 2005
Cunningham, George B.	Jul. 21, 1918	1951	Apr. 26, 2005
Francis, Rodney Lalonde	Apr. 16, 1926	1955	Oct. 8, 2003
Fraser, Irving Frederick	Jun. 3, 1927	1955	Feb. 9, 2005
Graham, Richard	Sep. 6, 1906	1972	Apr. 28, 2003
Grigg, Ann Eileen	Mar. 31, 1921	1979	Jan. 26, 2005
Hamilton, Louis Stevenson	Feb. 20, 1923	1963	Nov. 28, 2003
Harper, Roland Sydney (Bud)	Feb. 9, 1929	1953	Jun. 12, 2004

Hayden, Walter Everett	Jun. 29, 1914	1968	Aug. 17, 2003
Livingston, Roy William	Feb. 12, 1931	1969	May 6, 2006
Nixon, Wesley Robert Burnside	Oct. 22, 1914	1940	Mar. 16, 2005
Phillips, Thomas B.	Oct. 10, 1914	1968	Dec. 11, 2003
Sadler, Ray Lorne	Oct. 17, 1934	1975	Feb. 10, 2006
Swann, Robert William	Jul. 13, 1915	1950	Jan. 20, 2003
Trowell, James Garwood	Feb. 27, 1925	1985	Mar. 30, 2006
Williams, Lillian Romona (Underwood)	Jan. 29, 1914	1962	Mar. 29, 2006

Alberta and Northwest Conference

Barkwell, William Hanna	Dec. 1, 1920	1953	Jan. 8, 2004
Bursey, John Richard	Oct. 3, 1950	1989	Oct. 4, 2005
Chan, Paul Chi-Man	Nov. 18, 1934	1984	Aug. 2, 2005
Day, John Hugh	Dec. 11, 1926	1990	Jul. 5, 2005
Hare, William Edward	May 14, 1935	1965	Jan. 16, 2005
Harvey, William Aitken	Apr. 10, 1921	1946	Apr. 12, 2004
Henderson, Winnifred Hilda	Apr. 18, 1912	1948	Jul. 19, 2004
Hunter, Norman	Oct. 9, 1917	1944	Aug. 26, 2003
Jordan, Kenneth Virgil	Oct. 29, 1929	1966	Jan. 31, 2006
Kling, Georgene Laurie	Feb. 16, 1953	1978	Sep. 5, 2003
Martin, Cyril Edward	Feb. 18, 1900	1929	Nov. 17, 2003
Munro, Ileen Etta	Jul. 8, 1924	1951	Nov. 7, 2004
Powell, Charles Dwight	Jan. 21, 1912	1936	Oct. 8, 2005
Ream, Peter Tennant	Mar. 29, 1925	1953	Oct. 31, 2004
Thormin, Vincent Ignatius	Jan. 26, 1905	1968	Sep. 2, 2003

British Columbia Conference

Anderson, Laurence Ernest	Feb. 4, 1914	1937	Apr. 14, 2006
Anderson, Valentine Jackson	Feb. 14, 1929	1953	Mar. 30, 2006
Baird, Robert Graham	Jan. 20, 1940	1970	Nov. 4, 2004
Boston, Henry	Nov. 14, 1917	1960	Jun. 12, 2006
Brenn, Cecil Ivan	Apr. 19, 1916	1944	Nov. 17, 2003
Bridge, Lewis Everett	Jul. 5, 1920	1945	Oct. 21, 2003
Browne, Donald Elgin	Apr. 28, 1919	1951	Jul. 17, 2005
Bulman, Thomas William	Nov. 11, 1928	1954	Jan. 29, 2006
Burnham, William Lemuel	May 28, 1926	1954	Aug. 18, 2006
Carr, Arthur Drummond	Mar. 18, 1916	1943	Mar. 27, 2006
Chalmers, Duncan	Jun. 11, 1920	1962	Feb. 1, 2005
Clark, Russell Francis	Jul. 30, 1919	1965	May 24, 2003
Colwell, Bryan Collins	Aug. 12, 1920	1950	Apr. 6, 2006
Conlan, Douglas R.	Jan. 9, 1924	1952	Sep. 4, 2004
Davidson, John Arthur	Jun. 25, 1919	1949	Mar. 18, 2005
Dixon, Allan Robert Thomas	Jun. 28, 1915	1942	Jun. 21, 2004
Elden, Thomas Ernest	Feb. 27, 1923	1968	Apr. 23, 2006
Eutin, Nelson Kermit Axel	Jun. 4, 1918	1962	Apr. 17, 2006
Ford, James	Sep. 26, 1914	1967	Sep. 21, 2004
Hill, Ernest Matthew (Ernie)	Jan. 20, 1915	1995	May 16, 2006
Johnstone, David Cathels	Nov. 15, 1926	1955	Aug. 4, 2003
Jones, Trevor Dixon	Feb. 23, 1918	1947	Apr. 28, 2005
Jokisaari, Olli Henry	Jul. 28, 1915	1968	Jul. 5, 2006
Judge, Edgar Walter	Mar. 05, 1926	1967	Feb 26, 2005
Kasahara, Osamu	Feb. 24, 1945	1989	Sep. 9, 2004
Kim, Won Jang (Jay)	Jun. 6, 1952	2000	May 16, 2004

*Thunder Bay, Ontario**39th General Council 2006**August 13 – 19, 2006*

King, Albert Edward	Aug. 30, 1917	1948	Mar. 22, 2006
Lanceley, Thomas Leonard William	May 8, 1922	1952	Nov. 9, 2004
Lindsay, George Ward	July 3, 1918	1976	August 7, 2006
MacDonald, John Donald	Nov. 1, 1924	1948	Mar. 4, 2004
MacLeod, William Stuart	Apr. 9, 1916	1939	May 29, 2006
McDonald, Donald Ramsay	Feb. 28, 1921	1966	Dec. 7, 2003
McDonald, Harold Martyn	Feb. 8, 1923	1976	Jul. 11, 2003
McLeod, Kenneth Colin	Aug. 23, 1912	1942	Aug. 14, 2005
Mundy, Arthur Henry	Apr. 24, 1928	1958	Oct. 1, 2005
Murdoch, Marjorie Bonney	Jun. 19, 1945	2001	Sep. 17, 2005
Newell, David Richard	Jan. 30, 1930	1956	Nov. 27, 2003
Oliver, Jessie	Sep. 25, 1918	1952	Jul. 9, 2006
Payne, Gerald William	Jun 23, 1912	1941	Aug. 13, 2005
Philip, Alice M.	Apr. 19, 1910	1964	Jan. 7, 2005
Pinkerton, Stanley H	Mar. 5, 1910	1936	May 18, 2006
Raymont, Charles George	May 14, 1926	1957	Mar. 5, 2005
Scott, Norman William	Jan. 5, 1924	1954	Sep. 17, 2003
Smallman, John Richard	Oct. 15, 1941	1990	Jul. 30, 2003
Veitch, James David Christie	Feb. 14, 1922	1958	Mar. 12, 2006
Vickers, Russell Kenyon	Feb. 12, 1918	1940	Jan. 31, 2004
Woodcock, Stanley Arthur	Apr. 6, 1921	1951	May 12, 2004
Wttewaall, Gustaaf Wolfgang	Nov. 4, 1926	1961	Jul. 2, 2006
All Native Circle Conference			
Mary Keno		2001	Apr. 6, 2003
Snow, John	Jan. 31, 1933	1963	Jun. 15, 2006

MODERATORS AT THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006

	Years Served	General Council
Rev. George M. Tuttle	1977-1980	Calgary, AB
Rev. Lois M. Wilson	1980-1982	Halifax, NS
Rev. Robert F. Smith	1984-1986	Morden, MB
Rev. Sang Chul Lee	1988-1990	Victoria, BC
Rev. Stanley J. McKay	1992-1994	Fredericton, NB
Dr. Marion S. Best	1994-1997	Fergus, ON
Rev. William F. Phipps	1997-2000	Camrose, AB
Rev. Marion Pardy	2000-2003	Toronto, ON

GUESTS AT THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006

Rev. Eugenio Poma Añaguaya

Rev. Poma is currently the Programme Executive for the Indigenous Programme of the World Council of Churches (based in La Paz, Bolivia) as well as serving as Pastor of the “Good News” Church in La Paz, Bolivia. He has Master’s degree in Urban Education from Governor’s State University in Illinois and a Master’s degree in Divinity from the Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.

Rev. Poma’s vast work experience includes teaching experience in both the U.S. and Bolivia. He has ministered to congregations in Bolivia and Texas as well as being a former Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Bolivia. He is also the co-author of the book “Asi es Aymara” edited by the University of Washington, U.S.A. He is married to Antonia Callisaya Torres and father to Gabriel, Marco and Alex.

Aisake Casimira

Aisake Casimira has been involved with the church in Fiji through theological colleges, church structures and research institutions since the 1990’s. He has recently joined the staff of the Pacific Conference of Churches. Since the 2000 ethnic conflict in Fiji, Casi has taken a lead in creating a Peace Program focusing on ethnic conflict, and has published several papers on issues of church leadership; the Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill of the Fiji government; water, fair trade and globalisation; human rights and terrorism; and governance. He was also instrumental in setting up a new organization relating to a network on globalisation and women’s development. He is deeply committed to the role of church in society, through various media.

He has worked closely with the World Council of Churches – Pacific desk since the late 1990’s on regional and international issues on economics and trade, and the environment. Casi is married with two children.

Jennifer Chiwela

Jennifer Chiwela has worked in the field of education for the last 42 years. In the latter period, and with more exposure and understanding that education is a human right, she has developed a passion for reaching the hard-to-reach rural communities. After completing her service with Government, she founded a non governmental organisation whose mission is to promote empowerment of rural communities through non formal education. That has meant embracing a holistic approach in service delivery and advocacy for orphans and vulnerable children, disadvantaged youth and adults that need a little push to escape poverty through education.

She served in leadership roles from the mid 70s – in both Government and Non-Governmental service, at both local and international levels. Jennifer is currently the Executive Director of People’s Action Forum. She is Chairperson of the Zambia National Education Coalition – an umbrella organisation of over 30 civil society organisations in education; and Moderator of national coalitions of 12 countries in the southern African sub-region – belonging to the Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA). She is married, has 4 children and 11 grandchildren.

Rev. James Christie

The Reverend Doctor James T. Christie is the newly elected President of The Canadian Council of Churches for the 2006-2009 triennium. Currently the Dean of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Winnipeg and Dean of the University's Global College, Jim is a United Church of Canada minister (most recently serving Southminster United Church in Ottawa) with a doctorate in inter-faith dialogue and extensive and long-standing experience in Ecumenism and Global Governance. He has held numerous leadership positions in Church and Academia and is the current Chair of the World Federalist Movement internationally.

Mary Corkery

Since 2003, Mary has been Executive Director of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, a social justice organization of seven major Canadian Churches, including The United Church of Canada. KAIROS' work includes research, education and advocacy on economic justice, human rights and peace-building in the Global South and in Canada. She has a degree in Adult Education. She has also worked for CUSO, OXFAM, The Jesuit Centre, Development and Peace and several women's groups.

Edward Elkin

Rabbi Edward Elkin has served synagogues in Calgary, Montreal and Kingston, in addition to his current posting as rabbi of the First Narayever Congregation in downtown Toronto (where he has been since the year 2000). A graduate of Princeton University, he was ordained a rabbi at the Reform Movements Hebrew Union College in New York in 1990. He is married to Linda Lipsky, a professor at York University, and is the father of Maeka, 14 and Tali, 6.

Doniecia Ganness

Doniecia Ganness was born in 1986 in Grenada. She is the last of her parents' children. She has studied at MacDonald College and received an Associate Degree in Business at the T.A. Marryshow Community College. She is currently studying to become a professional teacher at the Samaritan Presbyterian School. She worked at St. Mark's Secondary School where her main duties were to teach and prepare students for the CXC (Caribbean Examination Council) exams in June 2006.

Her special interests involve reading and socializing with others. She attends the Samaritan Presbyterian Church where she is a Sunday school teacher. She is also the treasurer for the church youth and young adult group. Doniecia is considering pursuing a career in economics at a later date.

Major Neil Parker

Rev. Neil Parker is a Canadian Forces chaplain working in the office of the Chaplain General in Ottawa, in support of the ecumenical team of military chaplains serving across Canada and overseas. Neil is a United Church chaplain who has served in Maritimes, British Columbia, and Bay of Quinte Conferences and is a member of the Council of United Church Chaplains.

Abdul Hai Patel

Imam Abdul Hai Patel is Coordinator of Islamic Council of Imams-Canada, representing the Islamic religious leadership. He has been serving as Imam and Community Leader for 37 years

in Canada. He also served as a Commissioner of Ontario Human Rights Commission from 1999-2005. He is a Governor of National Board of Governors of Scouts Canada.

He serves on two committees of Toronto Police Service: Chief's advisory Council and Co-Chair of Muslim Consultative Committee. He is a Muslim Chaplain at the University of Toronto and served for six years as Chaplain at Whitby Mental Hospital and Chaplaincy consultant to other hospitals and correctional facilities. Last December, he conducted Chaplaincy training in Nairobi, Kenya on behalf of Hospital for Sick Children.

He is a founder and member of several interfaith groups and active in interfaith dialogues. He is a regular speaker in national and international conferences. He is Patron in Chief of Muslim Children Aid and Support Services and Director of Ankara Foundation's project for establishing shelter for homeless in Toronto.

He has served in various capacities on Boards of Hospitals, Social Services and Community Legal Clinics and International development and relief organizations and is the recipient of Governor General and Ontario Government's awards for Community Service.

Dr. Maggie Hodgson

Dr. Maggie Hodgson is a member of the Nadleh Whuten Carrier First Nation who has worked locally, nationally and internationally on Justice and Healing initiatives.

She has been a community developer, church and government policy lobbyist, co-author of four books, and has managed an Aboriginal education research and health promotions institute for 16 years. She has served as an advisor to the world health organization on addictions prevention.

She is the recipient of numerous honours including selection as one of the 1000 women from around the world nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize project.

Maggie is currently working on residential schools healing and reconciliation issues. Her work serves to support choices available to Aboriginal peoples to settle civil litigation. She is a wife, a mother and an auntie who has helped raise other children. Maggie values building relationships in families of communities within the limits of our humanity and with the Creator's guiding hand.

Kofi Hope

Kofi is a 22 year old University of Toronto Student, who will be graduating in June 2006. Majoring in Political Science and minoring in African Studies and World Religions. He is chairperson and founder of the Black Youth Coalition Against Violence (BYCAV), a group that works to foster empowerment amongst Black youth and advocates for Black youth in discussions around the issue of gun violence and President of the UofT Black Student's Association 2006-2007, Vice President of Operations 2005-2006. Director of the Erin Mills Youth Outreach Program (2002-2005), a youth drop in and literacy program run out of Erin Mills United Church that served children primarily of African Canadian descent. Kofi has been a dedicated community activist since high school and through BYCAV has advocated for Black youth to

prime ministers, politicians and across the national media. He was named by the Toronto Star one of the 10 People to Watch in 2006.

Carmencita P. Karagdag

Carmencita Karagdag is currently serving as the Coordinator for PEACE FOR LIFE a non-governmental agency located in Quezon City in The Philippines. She is a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches as well as the Justice, International Affairs and Development Committee of the Christian Council of Asia. She sits on the Commission on Ecumenical Relations and International Affairs, Philippine Independent Church (PIC). She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of the Philippines and an MA in Asian Studies.

Previous Positions/Involvements include:

- Member, Executive Committee, WCC
- Vice Moderator, Working Group on Diakonia and Solidarity, WCC
- Program Secretary, Ecumenical Education and Nurture, National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)
- Virginia Cadbury Fellow, Selly Oak College, United Kingdom
- Executive Director, Commission on Ecumenical Relations and International Affairs, PIC
- Executive Director, Resource Center for Philippine Concerns, Tokyo-based
- Founder, Mission to Filipino Migrant Workers in HK, HK-based
- Founder, Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA), HK-based

She is the editor/publisher of the following works: *Peace, Disarmament, and Symbiosis in Asia-Pacific, Beyond the Cold War, No Time for Crying.*

Eunice McMahan

Eunice is an Anglican working at St. Paul's Church and appointed to the Faith and Worship Committee and the Anglican – Lutheran Commission. She has been a member of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples for 10 years. She has been married to Lyman for 40 years and has three children, Paula, Michael and Leila.

Eunice has always taken personal interest in Aboriginal culture e.g. Circle, rituals and issues such as why Aboriginal people do not attend church or haven't returned to church. She describes herself as an Elder for different groups particularly social service workers who work with Native people in communities off the reserve. She provides workshops and helps social workers to become actively involved in these communities. She also volunteers in Native network groups.

Rev. Dr. Luis M. Melo, S.M.

Rev. Dr. Luis Melo is a Catholic and a religious of the Society of Mary (Marianists), an order committed to community for faith-formation and the collaboration of laity and religious in evangelization. His graduate work was in ecumenical theology. Presently, he lectures in Catholic Studies at St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba and serve as Director of the Office of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs for the Archdiocese of Saint-Boniface where he co-chairs the Mennonite-Catholic and Jewish-Catholic dialogue. Regionally, he serves as President of a Catholic network of diocesan/eparchial coordinators of ecumenism. He is also a member of

the Anglican-Catholic dialogue for Canada. He has a special interest in new ecclesial communities in movements in the Catholic Church and to spiritual accompaniment of individuals and lay communities in their discipleship.

Rev. Manuel Quintero

Born in Santa Clara, Cuba in 1951 and is married with four children. He holds a degree in Electrical Engineering (Villa Clara Central University, 1973) and one in Social Communications (Salesian University of Quito, 2003). He is an Elder of the Reformed-Presbyterian Church in Cuba. He was staff of the World Student Christian Federation in Latin America, based in Mexico between 1979 and 1982 and then with the international office in Geneva, Switzerland from 1983 to 1990. From 1991 to 1993 he worked as organizing secretary of the Ecumenical Gathering of Youth and Students (EGGYS), held in Brazil in 1993. In April 1994 he was appointed director of communication of the Latin American Council of Churches and worked in this capacity until January 2005. Since February 2005 he has been the director of Frontier Internship in Mission (FIM), based in Geneva and has done extensive travel around the world with participation in numerous ecumenical events. Has written the following books: *Renaciendo para una esperanza viva. Crónica de la III Asamblea General del CLAI* (Ed. CLAI, Quito, 1995), *Misión en las fronteras. Una historia de Frontier Internship in Mission* (Ed. CLAI, Quito, 1997), *Mission from the Reverse of History. A brief history of FIM* (FIM Geneva, 1998), *Su Santidad en Cuba: la lectura (interesada) de la prensa escrita* (Ed. CLAI, Quito, 1998) *Tribunas de la verdad. La prensa ecuatoriana en la crisis bancaria y el conflicto regional de 1999* (Ed. Oveja Perdida, Quito, 2004).

Rev. Nellie Ritchie

Bishop Nelly Ritchie, a pastor of the Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina (IEMA), was ordained in 1980. She was superintendent of the Patagonian region for four years (1985-1989) and was elected as bishop of the church for the first time in 2001 and re-elected in 2005. Her current term will continue through to 2009.

Bishop Ritchie studied primary education and social work before undertaking theological studies at the Superior Ecumenical Institute of Theology (ISEDET). She has a long-standing interest in work with children, youth, and women and has served as a pastor in a number of congregations.

Bishop Ritchie also has a strong interest in ecumenism, particularly the relationships and mutual learnings that result when diverse spiritualities, histories, and cultures encounter one another. She was a delegate for IEMA at the World Council of Churches' Assembly in Canberra where she was elected as a member of the Central and Executive Committees and served as vice moderator of both.

Bishop Ritchie looks forward to sharing her experiences with The United Church of Canada, especially because IEMA has had a long and fruitful relationship with the United Church over many years. She hopes to learn more about the United Church's organisational style and its way of making decisions while sharing in the blessing of being part of the Body of Christ, companions in the mission which God entrusts to us.

Rev. William Somplatsky-Jarman

Rev. William Somplatsky-Jarman is the Associate for Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and has served in that capacity since 1984. He is staff director of the MRTI Committee which implements the church's social investment policies.

A graduate of Yale Divinity School, his present and past responsibilities include:

- Membership on the Board of Directors of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) and involvement in national and international work on environment and climate change.
- Represented the PCUSA at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.
- Represented the U.S. Protestant churches on the World Council of Churches Climate Change Program.
- Treasurer and past Chairperson of the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches of Christ.
- Leader of experiential education seminars to Appalachia, U.S./Mexico border and the Brazilian Amazon.

Rev. Somplatsky-Jarman has authored several articles in journals such as *Christianity & Crisis* and *The Disciple*, and contributed a chapter in *The Social Investment Almanac*, and *Christianity and Ecology*.

Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom

Jeremy Milgrom is an American-born rabbi who has lived in Israel since 1968. Ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, he has served congregations, was a Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute and taught Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University and Achva Teachers' College, but has mostly pursued a just peace in the Middle East throughout his career.

Rabbi Milgrom has had leadership roles in emerging Israeli peace groups during the last three decades: he was the first to bring Peace Now's message to American Jewish community in 1978, established the pattern for lecture and fundraising tours on behalf of Yesh Gvul (in support of Israeli soldiers who refused to serve in Lebanon) in 1983, and was a founding member of Rabbis for Human Rights in 1988 and its co-director from 1995-1998.

A pioneer in interfaith partnerships with Christian and Muslim Palestinians, he founded and directed Clergy for Peace with Rev. Shehadeh Shehadeh and, since 1998, has brought hundreds of volunteers to tutor Bedouin children of the Jahalin tribe who have been forcibly moved from the Negev to the West Bank.

A veteran of the Israeli army, Milgrom became a pacifist after the birth of his first child and was finally released from reserve military service ("Miluim") after an eight year struggle. Among his many publications is "Let your love for me vanquish your hatred for him: Modern Judaism and Non-violence."

He is a frequent lecturer at conferences in Israel and abroad on resolving the Middle East Conflict, the Religious roots of Non-violence and related subjects. During the past year, his lectures for the World Council of Churches' program for Ecumenical Accompaniment for Peace in Palestine and Israel have been devoted to helping participants appreciate the place of Zionism in the minds and hearts of Jews in Israel and the Diaspora and to distinguish between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

Reverend Nzeba Kalombo Berthe

Reverend Nzeba was unable to obtain a visa to attend.

Reverend Nzeba was the first woman theologian in the Église du Christ au Congo and is a Member of the Circle of African Women Theologians. Her journey in the Faculty of Theology opened the door for many women theologians who are essential to the church and in society.

Rev. Nzeba roles include being the General Secretary of the Église du Christ au Congo in charge of the Department for Women, the Family, and Children, in which she has 19 years of experience. She also has 28 years of experience in the role of Director of Formation of Women Executives.

Areas of operation for which she has responsibility are numerous and include:

- Formation of women leadership for capacity building;
- Food security;
- Food industry transformation (based on local fruits)and conservation;
- Poverty alleviation;
- Assistance for university students in difficult situations, primarily as a result of the conflict;
- Accompaniment of women in the accomplishment of projects and in resource creation through income generating activities;
- Civic and higher education;
- Training of marital counsellors;
- Reproductive health and HIV and AIDS;
- Handicrafts.

Rev. Nzeba has also worked for 18 years as a Pastor. She has been Counsellor to the Committee of Protestant Women Theologians of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and President of Presbyterian Women for the West Kinshasa Synod. She is married and the mother of six children. Rev. Nzeba speaks Lingala, Tshiluba and Swahili as well as French and some English

Mr. Ramzi Zananiri

Ramzi Zananiri was unable to attend.

He is the Executive Director, International Christian Committee (ICC), DSPR's Near East Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Works (NECC)

Organizational History and Structure:

NECC-ICC has served the Palestinian community since 1949. Since it's founding as an international organisation, NECC-ICC has evolved from a relief based organization to one with a strategy of rural based grass roots development that includes mother and child centers, infrastructure development, social work and training in nutrition and gender awareness as well as

vocational training. Through over fifty years of work and experience with the Palestinian people, NECC-ICC has positively affected over 450 rural villages.

Structurally, NECC-ICC operates as the area committee for the Department of Service to the Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), which is a service department of the umbrella organization, the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). MECC is an international organization, which acts as ecumenical forum of service for all Christians of all denominations in the Middle East.

COMMISSIONERS TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006

General Council

Ministry Personnel

Pardy, Marion
Short, Peter
Sinclair, Jim
Stewart, Lori
ter Kuile, Martha
Total M: 5 records

Lay

Blanchard, Jim
Butt, William
Dwarka, Diane
MacDonald, Gary
Total L: 4 records
Total GC: 9 records

Alberta & Northwest

Ministry Personnel

Bolitho, Sheri
Carlson, Heather
Choi, Sung-Chul
Gairns, Allan
Gregg, Blaine
Hare, Fran
Irving, Dale
James, Danielle Ayana
Kett, Roger
Koots, Donald
Langejans, Jope
Lochhead, Jim
MacLean, Catherine
Sawyer, Tom
Snyder, John
Takashima, George
Total M: 16 records

Lay

Bardock, Edison (Ed)
Beller, Merrilee
brecka, diana
Brodrick, Susan
Bye, Carol
Dawson, Martha
Dickson, Joyce
Flewelling, Wayne
Kerr, Kathleen
Klassen, Fern
Koehler, Kathy
Moore, Katharine
Piebiak, Jill
Roberts Butler, Carole
Rogers, Louise
Stewart, Lillian
Total L: 16 records
Total Alberta &
Northwest: 32 records

All Native Circle

Ministry Personnel

Hart, Nelson
Jacques, Alan
Monague, Brian
Muskego, Gloria
Saulteaux, Bernice
Severight, Janet
Sinclair, Allan
Wright, Robert
Total M: 8 records

Lay

Blacksioux, Maxine
Lickers, Twila - X

McDougall, Murdo
McKay, Rene
Saulteaux, Aletha - X
Steinhauer, Alvina
Sword, Lindsay
Whiteye, Tarance
Total L: 8 records
Total All Native Circle:
16 records

Bay of Quinte

Ministry Personnel

Alston, Harold
Bodnaryk, Sharron
Boyd, Alan
Brotherton, Michelle
Brown, Jean
Giesbrecht, Caroline
Hollingsworth, Richard
Magie, Rick
Price, Lynda
Reed, Paul
Service, William (Bill)
Smart, Karen
Vollmer, Warren
Whitney, Audrey
Wilson, Jean
Wood, Terry
Total M: 16 records

Lay

Bagshaw, Nora
Beach, Pat
Boone, Mary-Margaret
Harman, Bronwen
Hutchinson, Bruce

Ibbitson, Sarah
 Mason, Wendy
 McColl, David
 McColl, Mary
 McWilliams, Myra
 Mirowski, Alexandra
 Reed, Daniel
 Soble, Norma
 Stenson, Linda
 Ueberer, Noreen
 Williams, Lloyd
 Total L: 16 records
 Total Bay of Quinte: 32 records

**British Columbia
 Ministry Personnel**

Boyd, David
 Burton, John
 Carter, Jenny - X
 Copeman-Haynes, Cari
 Cryder, Cathy
 Freed, Foster
 Harris, Marianna
 Kao, Everest
 Odney, Blair
 Seal, Hilde
 Theunissen, Bethan
 Tysick, Allen
 Young, Janice
 Total M: 13 records

Lay

Angus, Jim
 Ashbaugh, Martha
 Autio, Jake
 Bois, E. Alexandria
 Bourke, Beth
 Carr, Marion
 Carter, Sarah - X
 Gillespie, Evelyn
 Hill, Ha'eis Clare
 Kasmer, Julianne
 Lewis, Sydney
 Shearer, Jo
 Tupholme, Sarah
 Total L: 13 records

Total British Columbia:
 26 records

**Hamilton
 Ministry Personnel**

Bain, Margaret
 Blanchard, Diane
 Boratto, Gary
 Conteh, Prince
 Cranston, Wendy
 Davies, Heather
 Davies, Thom
 Duffus, Caroline
 Dunseith, Terry
 Ferguson, Nancy
 Laksmanis, Ed
 Leffler, Heather
 Lougheed, John
 McLeod, Maggie
 Paradela, Christina
 Rutledge, Louise
 Smith, Neville
 Vincent-Haven, Roz
 Warren, Allan
 Total M: 19 records

Lay

Buchner, Phyllis
 Calnek, Lynne
 Coffman, Lewis
 Cronkwright, Norma
 Driver, Bonnie
 Hagemeyer, Mary
 Hill, Amy
 Hills, Arthur
 Hurst, John
 Kigar, Debra
 Kivell, Mary
 Leffler, Sarah
 Penalagan, Craig
 Phillips, Colin
 Shulist, Judy
 Sowa, Walter
 Steer, Patricia
 Stewart Savage, Catherine
 Ward, Joyce
 Total L: 19 records

Total Hamilton: 38 records

**London
 Ministry Personnel**

Arthur, Marilyn
 Billings, Marilyn
 Bowman-Woodall, Donna
 Cameron, Susan
 Carruthers, Jean
 Cook, Bruce
 Gibson, Deanna
 Kim, BoJeong
 Kostecki, Ted
 McGauley, Robin
 Newman, Philip
 Pilkey, Bonnie
 Scott, Heather
 Stevens, Matthew
 Swan, Colin
 Urbasik-Hindley, Kathi
 Willis-Whitwell, Sharon
 Wright, Doug
 Total M: 18 records

Lay

Alexander, Ted
 Anderson, Susan
 Avey, Edward
 Cook, Hugh John
 Cooke, Christopher
 Graham, Jane
 Graham, Kerri
 Honor, David
 Kilner, Adam
 McMillan, Charles
 Milliken, Patricia (Pat)
 Moffat, Robyn
 O'Keefe, Thom
 Patterson, Shannon
 Root, Jesse
 Scott, Peter
 Spence, Gord
 Woodall, Matt
 Total L: 18 records
 Total London: 36 records

**Manitoba &
Northwestern Ontario
Ministry Personnel**

Baker, Julie
Brinn, Robert
Campbell, Janis
DeLisle, Ken
Fickling, Chris
Flook, Frances
Giuliano, David
Halstead, Allison
Highmoor, Kathy
Jardine, Barb
Kauppila, Melanie
Kinney Matheson, Cheryl
Robbins, Heather
Waldie, Cathie
Total M: 14 records

Lay

Boese, Gay
Bott, George
Creith, Lois
Douglas, Leanne
Dudgeon, Marina
Ivany, David
Kauppila, Melanie
Kelly, Betty
McNally, Ryan
Parypa, Lois
Quon, Denie - X
Stewart, Anna
Ward, Nona
Total L: 12 records
Total Manitoba &
Northwestern Ontario:
25 records

**Manitou
Ministry Personnel**

Desilets, Cindy
Frazer, Elizabeth
Harrison, Ted
Heuer, Kay
Laing, Cindy
Miller, Kitty

Somerville, Catherine
Thompson, Erwin
Total M: 8 records
Lay
Barfoot, Laura
Carscadden, Sylvia
Hemingway, Desmond
Hemingway, Dorothy
Holotuk, Ron
Lane, Ken
Piper, Elizabeth
Rogers, Bill
Total L: 8 records
Total Manitou: 16
records

**Maritime
Ministry Personnel**

Adeniyi, Amos
Beairsto, Ellen
Blois, Barbara
Burse, Jeffro
Crocker, Lori
Eagles, David
Ettinger, Jay
Frame, Janice
Harrison, Ian
Kerr, Gerald
Kuschnik, Linda
Longmoore, Steven
Lovelace, Donna
MacLachlan, David
MacPherson, Donald
(Don)
MacQueen, Lorna
Moase, Ewen
Moriarity, Mary-Beth
Pick, Shelley
Roach, Duncan
Vincent, Ron
Wilson, Nancy
Zwicker, Kathi
Total M: 23 records
Lay
Barkhouse, Catherine
Bartlett, Robert

Carson, Dorothy
Carver, Sandra
Cleave, Shirley
Dickson, Craig
Elliott, Karen
Fraser, Bonnie
Gallant, Sheila
Gray, Elaine
Greenlaw, Barbara
Hale, Lawrence
Jones, Robert
MacDonald, Iris
MacKeigan, Shirley
Morrison, Donnie
Rafuse, Barbara
Rudderham, Ruth
Smith, Rita
Uhlman, Mya
White, Mary
Wilson, Tara-Ann
Zwicker, Nathan - X
Total L: 23 records
Total Maritime: 46
records

**Montreal & Ottawa
Ministry Personnel**

Bachem-Jennings,
Elisabeth
Black, Isabel
Cassidy-Wise, Melany
Clark, Howard
Copeland, Brian
Cornelius, Brian
Delay, Thierry
Hutchinson, Jean
Lisson, Patricia
Moon, Sharon
Roberts, Lillian
Skinner, Dale
ter Kuile, Martha
Williams, Bob
Total M: 14 records
Lay
Balson, Richard
Barr, Anna

Boothroyd, Lynn
 Braman, Fred
 Carmoy, Anne-Marie
 Fairfield, Tracy
 Griffith, Charlotte
 Johnson, Andrew
 Lousley, Janet
 Reynolds, Barbara
 Sheffer, Frederick
 Stark, Shirley
 Vanstone, James
 Total L: 13 records
 Total Montreal & Ottawa:
 27 records

**Newfoundland &
 Labrador
 Ministry Personnel**

Cole, Wayne
 Crawford, Kate
 March-MacCuish, Ian
 McGonigle, John
 Min, James Young-Key
 Parsons, Scott
 Thorne, Karen
 Vardy, Paul
 Total M: 8 records

Lay

Brenson, Mary
 Easton, Brad
 Ford, Gregg
 Hender, Claude
 Hudson, Fannie
 Myles, Gloria
 Snook, Benjamin
 Squires, Shirley
 Total L: 8 records
 Total Newfoundland &
 Labrador: 16 records

Saskatchewan

Ministry Personnel

Antosh, Kim
 Burnett-Cole, Teresa
 Carter, Liz
 Christie, Catherine
 Hurd, Linsell
 King, Lorna
 Knobbe, JoAnne
 Liberty-Duns, Jeanette
 Moors, Dave
 Porter, Alan
 Sundberg, Laura
 Tessier, Joan
 Total M: 12 records

Lay

Anderson, Linda
 Archibald, Barbara
 Dornan, Dwaine
 Joyes, Todd
 McKague, Terence
 Mundt, Karen
 Roberts, Barbara
 Sonmor, Gordon
 Spratt, Edward
 Thurlow, Diane
 Wiebe, Vic
 Yeo, John
 Total L: 12 records
 Total Saskatchewan: 24
 records

Toronto

Ministry Personnel

Arnott, Thelma
 Ball, James
 Combs, Frances
 Kooiman, Michael
 Leckie, Jean
 Lee, Amy Yea-Kyong

Lee, John
 Logie, Kevin
 McGee, Kristal
 Mills, Alan
 Moore, George
 Mountain, Jennifer
 Nicholson, Brian
 Nicholson, Darren Liepold
 Parsons, Desmond
 Rieder, Barry
 Shearman, David
 VanderLugt, Susanne
 White, Barbara
 Total M: 19 records

Lay

Brissenden, Jane
 Brushey, Julie
 Evans, Patty
 Galbraith, Gwen
 Harding, Carolyn
 Huismans, Maureen
 Hunter, Donald
 Lam, Karen
 Lee, Hannah
 Lee, Jean E.
 Lobsinger, Julia
 MacKinnon, Joyce
 McKibbin, Jim
 McKinley, Rick
 Parsons, Linda
 Reid-James, Lynella
 Sawyer, Margaret
 Stott, Paul
 Thompson, Linda
 Walker, Margaret
 Total L: 20 records
 Total Toronto: 39
 records
 Grand Total: 382

X – Commissioners unable to attend

LETTER FROM THE MODERATOR, PETER SHORT

May 15, 2006

To the Commissioners, guests and visitors of the 39th General Council,

In the General Council Office we are busy. You might even say we are preoccupied. This doesn't make us any different from ministers and lay leaders who do the demanding work of sustaining their congregations in these days. But I think it's good sometimes to acknowledge that we are all of us busy, all of us in some sense preoccupied. This would not be an unfair description of the state of the church and of its leaders – busy and to some extent preoccupied.

Where you live and work this busyness and preoccupation will have its own dimensions and manifestations. Here it looks like this: we see the 39th General Council 2006 coming over the horizon. The meeting of the Executive of the General Council at the end of April was the last before the council. There is so much to organize and prepare for. So many demands for time on the agenda. So many pressing issues. So many worthy initiatives. Proposals will be coming in from Conferences. Local arrangements with Lakehead University and travel preparations must be seen to.

The good news is we've got the resources we need. Let me tell you, we are blessed in The United Church of Canada. We have \$3.6 billion in property. We have more franchises across the country than Tim Horton's and a 50% brand recognition in the Canadian market. We have an income of \$350 million dollars a year. 2400 highly trained professional leaders, 600,000 people who have signed on with us for our work and 3 million who call us their spiritual home. We're blessed with resources on a scale that is literally beyond our imagining.

The bad news is we are starving. The income to The United Church of Canada from the Mission and Service Fund has remained constant at \$30 million for the last 20 years. During that time inflation has reduced the church's real income by 25%. So for 20 years we have been making cuts, reducing support to programs and partners, trying all the while to protect our people and their important work. If we had known 20 years ago that our income would be reduced by 25% we might have done things differently. But we had no crystal ball and we have experienced a long, slow, general starvation of our community and its work. Our congregations are experiencing the same challenges. They are struggling to live in a world that is a fundamentally different world from the one in which their buildings were built. Their ministers are under tremendous pressure to make things work. So many of our congregations and their leaders are hungry too. Starving, maybe. Presbyteries/Districts and Conferences are familiar with this story as well of course.

As odd as it might sound, we are busy and we are preoccupied and we are wealthy and starving. This means that the spiritual atmosphere in which we live is one of distraction and anxiety. The harder we work and the faster we go the behinder we get.

We have no magic bullet. We have no six principles for a successful church or seven steps to a total makeover. There is always a tendency for us who work on the national landscape and who receive daily the church's hopes, anxieties and dilemmas to begin to see the church as one big

spinning problem. We receive calls for help and pleas for changes and demands for new policies and expectations for strategic solutions. The church can appear to be one big problem but it isn't. Of course the church is so beautiful and so strong in so many of its congregations and manifestations. But it's mighty hard and discouraging for a lot of our people too.

We are approaching the next General Council. If we follow the patterns of past councils, this one will be a diverse and complex series of debates over policies, procedures and programs. If we follow the patterns of past councils the result will be a list of actions handed to the General Secretary for implementation. New policies, changed policies, new programs, new statement of faith, changed categories of ministry, new studies and task groups. The list will not be accompanied by an interpretation by the Council itself of what is most important and of how the actions fit into a larger purpose and plan. That means we will be preoccupied for the next triennium trying to fit all the new pieces into the already burdened organism. I am convinced that while there is fundamentally important work which we must do (and we will do it), we must at the same time be prepared to depart from that familiar pattern.

While we will be busy with proposals and issues, I think that we are at the same time being led to a very different place spiritually. I think the spirit is taking The United Church of Canada to a still point. I'm not talking about an inert place or to a hopeless place but a still point. There will be lots of work to do at the Council – important work and necessary – but spiritually the church is approaching a still point. It will be perhaps a turning point or a threshold place where choices must be made about who we are, not just about what policies and procedures we will adopt.

At the still point you can hear the cries and the weeping. In the still point you can feel the silence, you can see the loss and the destruction of these difficult years, you can see beauty you had missed, you can let go of what you have loved and lost, you can embrace life as it must be now, you can listen for the speaking of a voice we had been too preoccupied or too anxious to hear.

At the still point you know to turn toward God, the way a flower knows to turn toward the sun. You hear again or maybe you hear for the first time what God is calling you to. This will be the most important work of the 39th General Council 2006.

I don't believe that the Council has to come up with a vision, a nifty new plan that everybody must be convinced to sign on to. Vision is always problematic because it comes from the leader who must persuade everybody else to follow his or her vision. What is essential, what this Council is hoping to be able to do, what cannot be dispensed with, is clarity of purpose for the church. What is the work? Why does The United Church of Canada exist? What are our congregations for? What is the work?

The General Council is a complex organism. In a complex organism anyone can affect the system. No one is in absolute control. Those of us preparing for the Council are asking ourselves, "How does a body speak?" We believe a body speaks by devolving power to the people so that their voices may be heard and so that they can hear one another. The people speak and the leadership listens. Then the leadership gives back what it has heard, testing the message

with the people. The people clarify their meaning and the message is shaped until it delivers the mind of the meeting.

I believe that the 39th General Council 2006 must deliver a message to the church, a message of purpose, a clarity about the work for which we exist, a message that is not simply a compendium of proposals adopted or denied, a message that is not generated by the various organizations and interest groups within the church system competing for a place in the sun and a piece of the pie, a message of purpose generated by the General Council itself.

Then we will be able to move out from the still point toward the purpose we have named. Then we will be able to get on with the work, allocate the resources, let go with dignity those things that are worth doing in God's world but that are not our work, embrace those new things that are becoming our work. Then we will be able to call, train and equip leaders for the task.

To everything, says the preacher, there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven...a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to plant and time to uproot what is planted. The hardest thing will be letting go. The past has to be laid to rest with respect and gratitude in order that it does not become an imperfect guide to the future.

So we are preparing for the work of discernment. In a sense the Arnprior Assembly on Ministry was a prelude, an experiment in dialogue and discernment, a sign of what this 39th Council will be called to work at.

The spirit is guiding us past preoccupation with policies, proposals and programs to the still point. If we are able to get there and to stay there long enough to hear the voice, we will know how to take at least the next step from there. If we cannot do this we can expect something like business as usual. I confess, I am not in favour of business as usual. When the familiar becomes intolerable the unfamiliar can be explored. I think we're there.

Sincerely,
The Right Rev. Dr. Peter Short
Moderator

LETTER FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY, JIM SINCLAIR

A warm welcome to General Council Commissioners, honoured guests and valued visitors to the 39th General Council of The United Church of Canada, Thunder Bay, Ontario, 2006.

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Risen One. And a sincere thank you for your willingness to contribute your time and wisdom to the 39th General Council 2006 this coming summer. As we offer our appreciation to you, so do we express our gratitude to families and congregations that will make significant adjustments to summer habits so that you are available for this important task.

One of the abandoned Haida Gwaii villages in the Queen Charlotte Islands off Canada's West Coast is Ninstints. I have had the privilege of entering its quiet harbour on a sunny afternoon, and being captured – like all who travel there – by its gentle beauty, the aging totem poles, and the decaying remnants of large lodges of another century.

My first response was simply to be overcome. The hush of the heat, the stillness of the forest, the clear water, and the sense of saints past was overwhelming. My companions felt the same way. Their respect for those who once lived here was evident. It was hard to speak. No cathedral could inspire any greater sense of awe.

That same sense of reverence was only heightened talking to Haida young people who were serving as watchkeepers on the site. This is a sacred place. It holds essential – foundational – memories as they establish what is needed for the coming generations of their people.

As The United Church of Canada addresses how best to lay the foundation for its “third generation,” in a time very different from its own earlier days, there are some similarities to the meanings of Ninstints and all of Haida Gwaii for its people. Its past is honoured. Its traditions and values are seen as critical. And its future requires fresh insights in terms of how best to move into a new time, with all the integrity of its heritage.

We look forward to welcoming you this summer. As all of us prepare for our meeting, thank you for reflecting on that which is sacred about our past, and for prayerfully considering what God requires of us to be faithful in the next century.

In this first workbook (a second will follow early in July) you will find **proposals** for action by the General Council from its Executive. Several reports are included for **information**. You will also find details about training for those who have special roles at the Council. There are **instructions** about travel arrangements, and about orientation to the processes of how we will work together.

As you read all of this, please remember also there will be a rich mixture of worship, music, presentations, visits with other Commissioners and ecumenical and global partners, plus moments of great celebration and joy as the Council elects its next Moderator and appoints a new General Secretary.

Throughout time, even as the Haida community itself has moved into different patterns still solidly connected to past strengths, the faith tradition of which we are a part has expressed its beliefs and practices in different and fresh ways. May the contributions of all of us help make the words of our ancestor Haggai come true again, that “the latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former.”

Faithfully,
Jim Sinclair
General Secretary, General Council

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE AGENDA AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

In the Shadow of the Sleeping Giant

Debra Bowman, Chair of the Agenda and Planning Committee

It is appropriate that we are gathering in the land of the Sleeping Giant, the geological wonder that gives shape to the horizon of Thunder Bay. Bono, the internationally known lead singer for U2 and passionate social prophet has referred to the church as a sleeping giant. “Christ’s example is being demeaned by the church if they ignore the new leprosy, which is AIDS. The church is the sleeping giant here. *If it wakes up to what’s really going on in the rest of the world, it has a real role to play.*” (Cathleen Falsani, quoting Bono in Chicago Sun-Times, December 3, 2002 italics mine). His reference is to the potential impact the Church could have in resisting the spread of AIDS, but we could hear his commentary and critique in a broader sense.

It is not new information to you that the church is living in a time of radical change. The very ground under our feet is shifting, and how we serve meaningfully in this new time and new context is an open question. Perhaps we have been in danger of being or becoming a sleeping giant, but now it is time to wake up to a new reality. Who are we now and where are we going? Or, perhaps more faithfully, Whose are we and where are we being led? It is time for us to allow ourselves to be reacquainted and reawakened with God’s purpose for us.

One of the ways we will seek to clarify our underlying purpose is through the Kerygma Café. Imagine some time has gone by since you’ve seen some dear friends. You agree to meet for coffee; to sit at a small table, lean your elbows into the space and with your hands wrapped around the mug, hear from each other about your lives, about what’s going on and what’s coming up. The hours pass as you enjoy a conversation that matters about life, purpose, meaning. Your heart is filled as your relationships are strengthened, and you leave with a new sense of connectedness, a new strength and clarity about your place and your purpose in the world. We will seek to offer that kind of opportunity for conversations about life; life as disciples of Jesus Christ, life as servants from congregations all over the country, and with servants of the Church from all over the world. Conversations that allow us to lean into each other and the Spirit and to discern together God’s yearning for The United Church of Canada in the 21st Century.

Kerygma is about the heart of the Gospel; the very essence of what we believe. That we don’t all agree on how that essence is expressed or lived out is why Café conversations about Whose we are and where we are being led are critical at this time. On a regular basis, almost every morning, we will turn away from our papers and preoccupations and turn into each other and the Spirit. We will listen attentively to our neighbours and for the voice of God. Then we’ll move, we’ll form another conversation group and we’ll listen again. And once again we will be heard - what’s on our hearts and minds, what we celebrate and what keeps us awake at night - will be heard by our neighbours and by God. In the midst of it we will look for common threads, for some shared ideas of the deep purpose of The United Church of Canada in its third generation.

We will seek to be attentive to what is being said, and to what is not being said, we will consider, weigh, discern and attempt to uncover the overall voice and message of the meeting. We will test to see if we have captured, or if we have been captured by, a defining call, a sense of

purpose. A purpose that will guide the incoming Moderator, the General Secretary, and the members of the Executive of the General Council as they assist all of us to direct our efforts and our resources towards living our purpose. This work of discernment is critical to the life of our church at this moment; the clearer the mind of the meeting about purpose and direction, the more directly the Executive of the General Council and the General Council Office can focus all our resources on making real what we have discerned.

As well as seeking to identify the broad direction and purpose of The United Church of Canada, we will be doing all the other related work required of the General Council: electing a Moderator, appointing a new General Secretary, considering reports and proposals that only this body can adopt. There will be learning options available in which you can learn more about and discuss more thoroughly some of the reports and subjects coming to the General Council. In commons time and in commissions you will be asked if you approve the direction and intent of a report or proposal. Although in some cases the details of implementation will be with the reports, those are details that will be developed by the elected and appointed members and the staff that are close to the work and more able to grapple with its realization. While the decision making process will not include parsing the particulars, in your workbook and during table time there will be opportunities to offer comment and feedback to these groups. Our task is to focus on the long term, big picture purpose of The United Church of Canada. We will need all the time available to us to achieve this end, which we pray will be reached by considering what is being revealed through the more traditional business decisions as well as through the Kerygma Café.

And of course, there will be opportunities for socializing and developing new relationships within the Body of Christ. Local outings, chapel and alternative worship services, and the largest pub on a Canadian campus will all offer chances to gather. The Youth Forum has invited us to a Coffee House one evening and to dance another. These two events will be ‘dry’, giving us a chance to all be together, and to include those who are committed to refraining from alcohol consumption.

In his song, “Gingerbread,” Bob Bossin’s daughter sings: “There are no breadcrumbs here. We can’t get back the way we came.” (Bob Bossin, *Gingerbread on The Roses on Annie’s Table* CD) Discovering God’s path for us in the 21st Century will be hard work. We will be offered moments of grace and moments of confusion. We will be tempted by work avoidance – seeking to detour around the hard labour of waiting and wondering what’s next for us. Bring to the work your patience and your curiosity – a curiosity about the life of the church in and for the world, and a curiosity about your place in it. As you take up this workbook, may you find privilege and joy in the important work that you are doing for and with the church. Invite your friends and your congregation to pray for you and all of us. And welcome – brothers and sisters – to the Sleeping Giant and the Kerygma Café and the work of The United Church of Canada!

NOMINEES FOR MODERATOR

James Angus

Jim was born to James and Amelia Angus on traditional Gitxsan territory of Kuldo, now an ancient village site on the mighty Skeena River in the Northwest of British Columbia. There was no doctor to deliver him but there likely was a midwife. Both parents are of Gitxsan ancestry and Jim was raised according to cultural traditions and is a fluent speaker of his first language. He spent his childhood participating in all the necessary seasonal work required for survival and sustenance. He and his father had a team of horses which they worked to supply poles. His elementary schooling was done in a small schoolhouse in Kispiox. His Grandmother, Alice, was particularly concerned about his education. She insisted that he stay in school despite the family's need for financial assistance.

Jim carried out his first political act when he was to enter Grade Eight at a residential school along with several Kispiox peers. They were at the train station about to leave for Edmonton when they decided they did not want to go. Why should they? They stayed home and caused quite a stir with Indian Affairs representatives in the area. The school in nearby Hazelton became "Hazelton Amalgamated" which meant that First Nations students could study there. Jim graduated from this school in 1960 with twelve peers.

He had always been sharp in Mathematics and was mechanically inclined so he went off to the Vocational School in Prince George to study Auto Mechanics. This became a four year process with a full apprenticeship at a Ford Motor dealership. During this time he met and married Doreen; they have been together for 39 years. Doreen is from the neighbouring Wet'suwet'en nation. They have three children and are blessed with nine grandchildren. Their eldest, Valerie, is a teacher; their son, Trevor, is involved with a First Nations family services organization, and Melanie is a social worker. The children have all been born in the Gitxsan nation area and have names in their adopted Frog Clan along with their mother. A number of nieces and nephews have called the Angus residence home over the years.

Jim inherited the title Wii Eelast, becoming a house chief in the Lax Gibuu (Wolf) Clan following the death of his uncle, Steve Morrison. Uncle Steve was a long time Secretary of the Pierce Memorial United Church Board in Kispiox dating back to the 1940s and 1950s, being a good translator at the time. The United Church in Kispiox has a long, colourful history; a 100th Anniversary Celebration was held in 1998. Jim's family name is included.

Since moving back to Kispiox in the early 1970s, Jim and Doreen have been involved with the local church as Board Members and have been active in leadership roles. Jim served on the Board Executive for years including Board Chair and on the finance committee. In the 1980s, Jim became involved with the Native Ministry Council of B.C. and was introduced to Dolly Lansdowne, Stan McKay, and others. He has remained active in the Native Ministry movement and was a leader in the planning of a 1983 National Consultations in Kispiox. Prince Rupert Presbytery work has also been part of Jim's experience – he served as Chairperson and in other Executive capacities. In Presbytery work Jim was a protégé of Gordon Pokorny, bless Gordon's organizational mind and dry humorous wit. They worked together for years. Jim has been especially active in the Home Mission portfolio. In the Native Ministry Council work, Jim's long time cohorts are Alvin Dixon and Charlotte Sullivan. Many years of experience in these

three bodies, minds, and spirits. They and others are founding members of the Native Ministry Consortium which works along with the Vancouver School of Theology.

Jim's Presbytery work and involvement with the Native Ministry Council led to a nomination for B.C. Conference President which he won in 1989. His was a most rewarding term of office in terms of learning, interaction with many congregations, and meeting such a variety of interesting people across the province. Perhaps the most rewarding part was that the learning was a two-way process.

Recently, Jim has once again become involved with Native Ministry work across our wonderful land with friends in the All Native Circle Conference. He is thankful to Laverne Jacobs and Cheryl Jourdain for their support and friendship. Prestigious people such as The Very Reverend Bob Smith, Rev. Stan McKay, Marion Best (all former Moderators!), and Jim Elliot, Henri Lock, Leslie Black, and Gwen Boyd along with numerous other members of the United Church family are faithful friends and mentors. Their role modeling over the years has left its mark and will continue to guide the spirit of Jim Angus, along with the Creator's hand and Gitxsan ancestral teachings. Granny Alice, Uncle Steve, and Jim's parents are smiling...

Jim has completed over twenty-five years of service to Anspayaxw Education Society as their School Administrator. He also remains active in the Gitxsan Treaty Society as Chairperson of the Board. His involvement in the Gitxsan community has always been for the betterment of his people.

Statement of the Major Issues Facing The United Church of Canada

In the past number of years, I have been considering who we are as a church. There are several issues which are on the forefront and will continue to bear constant prayer, thought, and action. We all know that our church is in a leadership position in our country when it comes to global justice issues, multiculturalism, environmental issues, and First Nations concerns.

Issues such as global warming, the conservation of water, and all the sacred gifts from our Creator are providing us with challenges. We are facing such challenges with due diligence, I feel, as we work with agencies and the government in dealing with critical issues such as the current news about 9-11 kind of activity. Major attention is being given to HIV-AIDS, Bird Flu, and Mad Cow Disease, and rightly so.

Canada is an expansive country and the different regions have all their own issues. Our church is affected by the country's economics, the many cultures and languages, as well as the gap between the wealthy and the poor. To walk with people and to be a voice where necessary is important both abroad and at home.

Multiculturalism itself is helping our church to be a leader in our country. So much needs to be done to promote understanding of different cultures. Spiritually, how do we bridge cultures in a respectful manner? We have excellent resource people within our church who are working to this end.

To provide balance to the work our church needs to do in the world, we also need to look inward and work on our own declining numbers. The lack of young people in our church is a major concern. I'm pleased with the "Emerging Spirit" initiative – all congregations need to live and breathe the revitalization work. I was shocked to hear that our current numbers are one-half of what they were forty years ago. I believe we should have discussions at all levels of the church. How do we make our church more appealing? Are there things we could do differently in the church, in the community, in our schools, or through the media? Intergenerational education is necessary – the world has changed drastically since the youth of our elders. What is the image of our church to the youth of today? Communicating with our youth will be most challenging.

I really struggled with our system as I watched and listened for short periods in the courts as lawyers cross-examined the Residential School Survivors. We have tried various ways to deal with the Residential School issues. After all, we're left with a damaged society among First Nations. The loss of culture, traditions, and language among First Nations leaves our church with many challenges. This will take decades to remedy. How shall this happen? Not only do we as a church have to look at our healing but the Government of Canada has to seriously look at how we can revitalize our cultural traditions. This will only succeed if we collectively (First Nations, Government, Church) plan short term and long term strategies. The prevention of suicide is of immediate concern and requires strategies on many fronts.

The Apology to First Nations is now twenty years old. How are we living out the apology? Making First Nations a part of the governance structure of The United Church of Canada is step one. I truly believe that the First Nations people in The United Church of Canada have a lot to offer in terms of our world view, our connection to the land, and our traditional teachings and values which parallel the theology of our church.

If I am elected Moderator of The United Church of Canada, I will spend three years doing my best to apply the values of my Gitksan traditions, culture, and spirituality. I was taught by my parents and grandparents. To be nominated is a tremendous honour and I will share my God-given gifts. I have always believed that we are all here for a purpose. Whatever the results of the election, it was meant to be. May the Spirit guide us as we plan our future in The United Church of Canada. God Bless.

Patricia "Patty" Evans

I am told that at about the age of four, I announced to my mother that I was going to be a missionary nurse. I am one of those whose childhood impulses became reality.

I was raised in a minister's family in California. Those early dreams and the faith that sustained them were nurtured in a marvellous blend of a loving home and caring, vibrant, congregational life. Through the hospitality of our home, I was introduced to the broader community and the wider world by the folk who gathered around our table. And there was always music...at home, at church, at school. I sang my faith before I could articulate it any other way. The

accompanying I now do began at the piano in the junior department of the Sunday School, and once I started, I never stopped.

I completed my formal studies with a graduate degree in nursing education. After teaching in Seattle and in Tunisia on the SS HOPE (the American hospital ship), the original dream came together. My involvement with The United Church of Canada began 36 years ago this August when I married Dr. Jim Evans and was appointed to serve with him for the last two of his terms in Congo (formerly Zaire).

We returned to Canada from the last term in 1978, with our three children: Rick, Rob and Wendy. Subsequent committee work in the Division of World Outreach (DWO) led to my becoming Chairperson of the DWO and a member of the General Council Executive (1992-2000). I served on the Moderator's Advisory Group from 1994 to 1997.

Representative work on behalf of The United Church of Canada has included:

- a consultation with Presbyterian Church Republic of Korea in Seoul
- an ecumenical conference for Latin America and the Caribbean churches in Brazil
- a seminar with the Church of Christ in Congo
- the UCC representative to the Wesley Tercentenary in Britain
- meetings in Ottawa with government officials

As a trained mediator, I now serve as a UCC Conflict Resolution Facilitator. In addition, I provide training in conflict resolution and decision making processes with focus on consensus models. I also facilitate congregational, Conference, and national events, workshops and retreats, and consult with ministry personnel, individually and/or in teams.

My local worshipping community is Knox United in Sutton, Ontario. It has provided for my family and me a wonderful place of belonging with opportunities for spiritual growth and service. I participate in committees, the UCW, music leadership, and have chaired the Knox Council.

Other involvement includes:

- The Arnprior Assembly on Ministry
- Facilitator of and presenter in the *Shaw Transformational Leadership Programme*, Queen's Theological College (2005 to present)
- Acting Global Mission Personnel Secretary, General Council Offices (2002)
- Toronto Conference Partner in Residence Task Group (2002-2004)
- Theme speaker and/or preaching assignments for Conference Annual Meetings and in pastoral charges
- Member-at-large, York Presbytery (1992-1998, 2006)
- Staff Associate—Christian Development, Knox United, Sutton (1990-1992)

Statement of the Major Issues Facing The United Church of Canada

We are not alone. We live in God's world.

The New Creed resonates in my mind and heart as I consider the challenges we, in The United Church of Canada, are facing. As we engage the issues of today and discern what God requires

of our church in its third generation, we are asking big questions. We pose these questions as the gathered community, the Body of Christ, surrounded and held by God's Spirit. We do so in company with global and ecumenical partners, through interfaith dialogue, and in our interdependence with all creation. Together, we seek the ways in which we can best participate in God's world-mending activity.

***We believe in God, who has created and is creating,
Who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new,
Who works in us and others by the Spirit.
We trust in God.***

This is our starting point—our foundation. It is our being in right relationship with God who is trustworthy and who invites us to be co-creators in bringing about the new thing that God is doing in our midst. *Isaiah 43:19*

We are called to be the church,

One of the big questions is “Who are we as the church in today's context and what does that mean for our future?” We call ourselves The *United Church of Canada* and we celebrate the diversity within our midst. So we should. But it is time to claim anew the unity that binds us together as beloved children of God and explore how we are united in order that our congregations and the wider church may model community to a divided world.

These are times of great complexity. The position of the church vis a vis the nation and the world has altered irrevocably. Transition is an unsettling space, but one that holds the greatest creative possibilities. Douglas John Hall has observed that such change requires significant theological reflection—holding the text against today's context, as well as the courage to risk. The church needs leaders at all levels who model such theological reflection, recalling people to their purpose and kindling in them a passion for mission. The church must provide trustworthy communities within which we are challenged to risk and venture with purpose into the future.

To celebrate God's presence,

Through vibrant worship we celebrate God's presence. We have witnessed such worship among our global partners. These folk, though they daily struggle for survival, join in the dance of life, praising God with body, mind, and spirit. In my own congregation, God's presence is celebrated with a joyful spirit that is inviting and contagious. The Emerging Spirit research indicates that this is not the universal experience across the church. To create communities others want to discover, we must let the Spirit loose to breathe in us life anew. Wherever God's people are, God's presence should be evident.

To live with respect in creation,

To live in right relationship with the earth is a sacred responsibility. It is the most significant spiritual issue of this century. We need an understanding of eco-theology to guide our interaction with creation, within which exist all of our other relationships. As the current resources on water both bless and challenge us spiritually, we will only live with respect in creation as we take action on this issue and others, making changes personally and locally and advocating for systemic change.

To love and serve others,

Motivated by love, we are called to build, tend, and mend relationships. Jesus said “to love the Lord our God...and our neighbours as ourselves.” *Luke 10:27* In loving God first and foremost, we are given fresh eyes to see who our neighbours are, from the pew to across the world. The care and compassion we bring to relationships should be evident in our local faith communities. In our cultural and religious diversity, we also need openness to becoming neighbours on terms other than our own.

To seek justice and resist evil,

We cannot love without seeking justice, for they walk hand in hand. Relations are only right when they are just. Sometimes we have failed – the history of Residential Schools bears witness to that. As part of the General Council leadership group invited to Port Alberni in 1998, my understanding of the depth of pain from that system and of the importance of the church and nation apologizing and acknowledging complicity and responsibility was transformed through listening to the stories. Even as we mark the 20th anniversary since the first apology and acknowledge this and other steps made, we need to listen well and deepen our commitment to continue the journey toward right relations and healing for us all. This is, for the whole church, a moral and spiritual imperative.

In fact, we need to strive toward right relations *wherever* there is exclusion, marginalization, or division. We live within and are part of world systems that are death-dealing at their core. As those seeking justice, we are called to move to the periphery where we can prophetically imagine, live out and reflect back alternative models that are life-giving. The edge is a risky place to live, but the church was not promised the easy road or the comfortable pew.

To proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

We are Christ-centred people with good news to share. We should be ready at all times to give account of the hope that is in us. *1 Peter 3:15b*. The hope we proclaim comes out of our theology of life. Death is not the end. Jesus promised abundant life for all—no exceptions.

I have great hope for the United Church—not false optimism—but hope based on the God of all possibilities. Changes are afoot – the challenges are many. The changes will have to begin within each of us. It is good then to be reminded that “...it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for God’s good pleasure.” *Philippians 2:13*

As the church discerns the leadership it will require in the next term, I offer my passion for the work, my commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and my experience and skills gained within the church and beyond. Should I be elected moderator, I would do my utmost to provide the spiritual leadership that the United Church would need to live its purpose fully. I could undertake such a responsibility only in the knowledge that

***In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.***

David Giuliano

“Who am I? I am a descendant of deeply faithful Southern Ontario Quakers, born-again Baptists and Italian-American immigrant Catholics. I am a child of The United Church of Canada. I am a father, husband, friend, and pastor. I am a creative spirit, a sensitive man who has always wept more easily than I would like. Then, I laugh easily too. I am deeply connected to the earth, the sky and the water in a particular place. I am tainted down to my DNA with a Godly dream for creation that will not let me go. Above all, I am a disciple of the Way of the Christ.” – David Giuliano

David serves with the United Church folk in Marathon, ON where he was settled in 1987. There have been several chapters, but the threads of spiritual depth, intentional community, creativity and service have been woven throughout their “Journeying Together Toward God”.

He teaches with the Ontario Jubilee Program for Spiritual Direction and led courses on Biblical Spirituality and on Gospel Studies for the In-Community Program for Ordination project.

Earlier in life, he worked for the University of Guelph as the Human Rights Commissioner, a Conference Co-ordinator, and as a Residence Manager. In 1980, he and Pearl spent 4 months making friends in Cap Hatienne, Haiti.

David has given testimony to the hope that is in him as Conference Theme Speaker, Celebration of Ministries Preacher, at the Ocean Park Maine Chautauqua, and at the Biidaaban Healing Lodge, Pic River First Nation, among others.

More than fifty pieces of David’s writing and poetry have appeared in *PMC*, *The United Church Observer*, *Clergy Journal*, *Exchange*, *Gathering*, and *Presence*. For five years he wrote a column in *The Marathon Mercury*.

Currently, David is on The General Council Executive and its Sub-Executive, Conference Executive and the Christian Outreach and Social Action Committee of Presbytery.

He has served the Church in a variety of roles, including chairing Ministry, Personnel and Education at Presbytery, working with the Conference Communication, Education and Justice Committee, and helping with Presbytery Youth events. He has offered Theological Reflection in several courts of the Church.

In Marathon, David is active in community development. He was the founding chairperson of several groups: the regional Restorative Justice Program; The Community Collective, a food bank/thrift store cooperative; The School Community Council; and the Four Colours Anti-Racism Committee. He is co-chair of the municipal Community Development Committee and Chair of the Marathon Sick Children’s Fund.

David is a continuous learner. His degrees include, BA, MDiv, ThM, and MSc. He completed a year of Clinical Pastoral Education, Ministry of Supervision Training and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction. Presently, he is a member of a Peer Learning Group through Columbia

Seminary in Atlanta, GA and is completing a certificate in Expressive Arts from Fleming College in Haliburton, ON.

Pearl and David have been together since he was 15 when they met at their United Church youth group in Windsor. They have two children Jeremiah (18) and Naomi (16). He enjoys Nordic skiing, kayaking, biking, and running the bush trails along Lake Superior.

Statement of the Major Issues Facing The United Church of Canada

There are many issues bobbing on the surface waters of our life together. Issues like how we will stay afloat, like budgets and buildings and numbers on Sunday morning and this theology or that worship style are churning within us.

We are anxious to honor our heritage of social action, commitment to justice, inclusivity, diversity and community. I cherish these and many other things about who we are as The United Church of Canada. I believe that the ecumenical Body of Christ would be weakened by our absence.

When I think about the issues and challenges we face in this threshold time – the stuff that is rocking our boat – I keep finding myself at the cross. For followers of Jesus, the journey is always one that is made bearing the cross of Jesus, from death to life.

A few years back, our present Moderator was asking an evocative question: “Why don’t we talk about Jesus in the United Church?” He asked it, not with finger-wagging judgment but with genuine curiosity. The answers were fascinating: In a pluralistic world it feels wrong, even vitriolic to talk too much about Jesus; or We don’t want to be lumped in with our more fundamentalist Christian cousins; or The rise of Biblical Scholarship leaves us wondering what, if anything, can be said with confidence about Jesus.

My hunch is that our problem is as much with the cross as it is with Jesus. Can we be honest for a moment? We are confronted with death, crucifixion even.

Like a family or friends gathered around a palliative loved one and our denial we want to pretend that what is happening beneath our noses will not come to pass. “Hang in there buddy! You’re gonna be just fine!” “You gotta fight this thing.”

The familiar church that we know and love is clearly on the ropes, if not already down and out for the count. Sunday mornings more Canadians can be found at Tim Horton’s or the arena or golf course than can be found at worship. Shopping on Sunday is no longer prohibited. It’s fast becoming the busiest shopping day of the week. Gone are the days when our pronouncements cause a ripple on Parliament Hill. Gone are the days when children are taught *The Lord’s Prayer* at public school (and in a pluralistic world those days *should* be gone). Long gone are the days when belonging to a church might enhance one’s career. These days it’s probably safer to keep that little secret to oneself during a job interview. The simple math of our annual statistics – Baptisms minus Funerals – gives us about 15 years before we turn out the lights and lock the door.

Mercifully, the math is never simple. Sociologist, Reginald Bibby, predicts a resurgence of religious interest and even suggests that The United Church of Canada is uniquely positioned to welcome this new generation of seekers. That said, the church in which many of us grew up – with its overflowing Sunday Schools, denominational loyalties, huge pools of volunteers, healthy budgets and passion for order and buildings – is clearly palliative. Let's try to be Christian about it.

Maybe the problem we have with the word "Jesus" is the same problem that "doubting" Thomas had. I'm with those who suspect that what Thomas doubted was not the resurrection but the wounds. After all, the writer of the Gospel of John has Thomas doing his doubting after he'd seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. And, there were other claims of resurrection making the rounds. Jesus being raised might not have been so far fetched in Thomas mind.

What *would* have been far fetched for Thomas was a *wounded* Christ. Thomas doesn't say: "I'll believe it when I see Jesus breathing, talking and walking." He says, "If I do not see the scars of nails in his hands, and put my hand in his side, I will not believe." Thomas anticipated a perfect, suffering-free resurrected body. What he couldn't believe were the wounds and the scars. "Could this wounded creature", he must have wondered, "be the body of Christ?" I wonder too sometimes.

Our church, perhaps now more than ever, needs to believe in, needs to live, a resurrection that includes woundedness. Rather than hovering about the palliative bed of the church-as-we-know-it uttering invectives to fight, we do well to touch the wounds and believe something of God's promise is to be found there. We have been mostly a church of joy and resurrection and life. We have, until recent history, ridden a wave of growth and new life. We haven't suffered much, not really. Mostly, we've been the winners, the middle class, the educated, the fortunate. Maybe the name "Jesus" catches in our throat because the smell of crucifixion clings to it. Yet, this is the promised path to new life.

Jesus said that God's Realm is like a mustard seed. We tend to hear that saying as akin to the "small acorn" promise – what started out small and vulnerable will grow into something huge and powerful. That interpretation is a hang-over from western Christian colonialism. Mustard plants don't really grow all that big. According to records from the time of Jesus, mustard plants were two things: fiery and *impossible to get rid of once established*. God's dream for us and in us is like that.

The church-as-we-know-it is dying. That's the good news. It means that God is doing something new.

There is some dying to do. But, it is not the-church-as-we've-always-know-it, or the church at all, that we are called to serve. We are part of the wounded, up and walking, body of Jesus Christ. Maybe we can find in the wounds some consolation, some solace. Maybe, like our ancestors in faith, we will find our hope being renewed as we bear the cross in the world. Maybe angels continue to whisper "Fear not" and the Realm of God rolls on, unstoppable as mustard weed.

W. Peter Scott

Peter Scott was born in 1941 to Mary and Cameron Scott and raised on a farm near Leamington Ontario. He attended a one-room country elementary school and the Leamington District High School. Upon graduation he farmed for six years while also serving actively in his local congregation as a Sunday school teacher, choir member, camp counsellor and lay delegate to Presbytery at the age of 21. He accepted a call to ordained ministry and then attended the University of Windsor for one year and the University of Western Ontario for three years graduating with an Honours B.A. in English and History.

He studied theology at Emmanuel College, was ordained in 1972 by Hamilton Conference and was settled in Tobermory where he served for 3 years and 4 months. During that time Peter was instrumental in starting an annual community bar-b-que that continues to this day. He helped get a doctor established in the community as well as helping to finance and build a medical clinic. He also helped fund and build a new manse and was one of the founders of an environmental club and newspaper.

In 1975 he was called to St. David's United Church in Woodstock, Ontario where he served for the next 17 years. During that period he served two years as chair of Oxford Presbytery, and one year as President of London Conference as well serving on numerous Presbytery and Conference and General Council Divisions and committees in different capacities. During Peter's time at St. David's the congregation grew and prospered. A \$365,000 building program expanded St. David's Christian Education facilities, and made the building more energy efficient and therefore more ecologically responsible. During those 17 years St. David's also sponsored two refugee families, donated approximately \$180,000 to Ventures in Mission and raised its annual M&S givings from \$5,000 to \$60,000.

In 1992 Peter left pastoral ministry and was appointed Executive Secretary of London Conference where he served for almost 14 years until his retirement on May 31, 2006. During those years he has attended numerous General Councils both as a Commissioner and as a corresponding member. He has attended General Council Executive meetings as a corresponding member and he has served both the General Council and its Executive as parliamentarian and as a member of many committees.

In 1996 Peter married Heather Smith who was a candidate for ordained ministry and serving as a student minister on a pastoral charge. Peter then made the agonizing decision to resign from the Order of Ministry under section 366 of The Manual. His reasons were two-fold. The most obvious was that because of a combination of United Church policy and Revenue Canada policy, his family would experience a \$10,000 per year penalty for his being ordained. Feeling that this was unfair and that someone needed to point out this injustice to the United Church which claimed to be an equitable employer but seemed willing to let its clergy bear the burden of a tax law that subverted that church policy, Peter went public. He could have taken the money quietly as others had done before but instead he sent his story to the Observer and it was published so that the whole church could see what was happening to clergy couples. The decision was not widely understood and he received a few threats because of it but to this day the church continues to struggle with how it understands ministry and how ministers will be justly compensated for their service. Peter Scott understands this struggle from both sides.

Statement of the Major Issues Facing The United Church of Canada

The United Church of Canada is facing a major identity crisis. It is no accident that when the Senior Leadership Team of the General Council Office first “rolled out” its scheme for “re-branding” the United Church it was entitled “Identity Project”. Two years and two titles later the latest version, called “Emerging Spirit” is still about that same crisis.

Ostensibly, Emerging Spirit is intended to entice 30 to 45 year-old Canadians to give the good old United Church a try since so many of them seem to value the same things that we value. Apparently we need to do this because our membership is aging and dying and it is not being adequately replenished by members of succeeding generations. As a parent of adult children in the “target demographic” I share the anguish of apparently having failed to communicate to those I love, the riches of a relationship with Jesus Christ and participation in his church, but I fear that Emerging Spirit is in danger of merely dealing with the symptoms of a problem. The members of the Senior Leadership Team were intuitively naming the real problem when they called the original version the “Identity Project”.

The United Church of Canada was founded in 1925 in an attempt to begin uniting the protestant part of the Body of Christ in Canada. It was not just to be a “united” church but a “uniting” church. The vision was noble but the vision failed to become reality. Only the Evangelical United Brethren decided later to come to the party. The Anglicans, Lutherans and even some Presbyterians elected to retain their own identities rather than join the big united protestant melting pot and now we have even more protestant denominations than there were in 1925 as the “body” continues to fracture over doctrine and interpretation and social issues.

The vision failed in other ways too. This United Church was to be a national church created by an act of Parliament and it was to wield political influence, for good of course. It was to “speak truth to power” to use a totally worn out phrase. Because it was to be large and national it would be a political force to reckon with. It would be the conscience of the nation. Well that didn’t work very well either although we like to point at one or two good things that have been done by government and think that we helped to make them happen. By and large government goes where the votes are and our little bit of influence merely nudges politicians in directions that other factors have already pointed them.

Our dream in 1925 was predicated on the illusion that Canada was and would always be a predominantly “Christian country”. The Christendom myth was alive and well in 1925 and our church was actively engaged in sending missionaries to Christianize the “heathen masses” around the world. Today we engage in interfaith dialogue with those same groups of people, trying our best not to convert anyone to Christianity. The only major population growth in Canadian today is through immigration and those immigrants are mostly of religions other than Christianity. Already Christianity is a minority religion in Canada and that minority will likely continue to shrink as a percentage of the population.

Is it any wonder then that the United Church is in the middle of an identity crisis? Our founding myths have all collapsed around us and now our buildings are starting to do the same. Every year the number of congregations that disband or amalgamate or simply wither and die, is growing. In rural Canada where we once were strong we are now disappearing like the self-

sufficient family farm. Even in major cities where the population of the country now is concentrated, we have many shrinking, struggling congregations. If some of the departed faithful had not left generous bequests we would have even more. Are we to become a denomination of large trust funds and empty buildings? Is that what The United Church of Canada is being called to? I hope not.

The vision of 1925 was of a big, united, powerful, influential, protestant denomination in a Christian country. Is that God's vision for us today? It doesn't seem so. Was it ever God's vision or was it a human construct like the dream the first disciples had of Jesus as an earthly king? Is God calling us, through this identity crisis, back to God's vision of the body of Christ as a faithful minority that acts like leaven in a lump of dough rather than a Roman legion sweeping all before it? Is it time for us to stop trying to prop up the castle that we started in 1925 and find a way to live humbly and faithfully like the one we call Lord? Is God bringing us to our knees in the hope that when we get there we might learn to pray like Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, "not my will but thine be done"?

If through prayer and study and silent waiting we discern that this is in fact God's call to the United Church today then we have some models around the world from which we can learn. One example is the Christian church in Japan. Always a small minority in a non-Christian society, the church in Japan has much to teach us about how very small groups of faithful people can live out their faith day by day with joy and commitment, never dreaming of power or influence, but simply of faithful service to their God. In many places in the world I am sure there are that similar lessons could be learned. We only need to decide that these are the lessons God wants us to learn and then we will begin to find them.

There are, of course, many issues facing the United Church today but most of them are related directly or indirectly to this larger identity issue of who we believe God is calling us to be as part of the Body of Christ. If we believe we are called to be a big, powerful force for good in this country then we will continue to try to attract large numbers of people to fill large buildings and make our loud voices heard in the corridors of power. If we believe that we are called to be servant people reaching out individually and personally to a neighbour in need then we won't worry about all that "Christendom stuff".

Ivan Illich, shortly before he died, suggested that the "corruption of Christianity" began when individual Christians stopped keeping a spare mattress, a candle and a piece of bread in their homes in case the Christ should come to the door in the person of someone in need. Instead of doing that, people started paying money to religious organizations to do their "good works" for them. If Illich was right, our first step back toward faithfulness as a denomination might be to begin to help our people find ways to involve themselves more personally in such small acts of faithfulness. Others might see and do likewise. Thus did the church grow strong but not large in the first century. It just might happen again in the twenty-first century if it be truly the will of God.

Colin Swan

Colin was born in Montréal and raised in Windsor, Ontario. He is married to Jane and together celebrates four adult children. They currently live in Kingsville, Ontario where Colin pastors the Epworth United congregation.

Like many others within The United Church of Canada, Colin was raised within a congregation of the United Church but left the church in his early 20s. Even after giving his life to Christ during an evangelistic crusade, Colin searched for a spiritual enlightenment amongst other denominations and other world religions, including secular humanism. Following a 10 year career as a broadcast journalist, and much inner struggle, Colin, returned to a congregation of the United Church where he found a spiritual home that was warm, loving, supportive and uplifting. It was within this context that Colin began the journey towards ordained ministry.

Colin returned to school and completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Waterloo in Religious Studies and studies in personality and religion. During this time, Colin served as a student supply in Huron-Perth Presbytery. He continued his service as a student supply in Lambton Presbytery while completing his MDiv at Emmanuel College. He is currently enrolled as a Doctor of Ministry student at Ashland Seminary.

His continuing education has been specialized in the interlocking areas of: loss and bereavement, trauma counselling, marriage and family counselling and mediation. As a trained and experienced mediator, Colin is adept at drawing individuals out of hardened positions to deal with needs and interests in resolving conflict.

Colin was ordained by London Conference in 1988 and has since served three pastoral charges within that conference. He has chaired Interchurch-Interfaith committees at both conference and presbytery level. He has also served on the General Council Interchurch-Interfaith committee,

Colin has taken his faith into the wider community through ecumenical involvement resulting in the establishment of several needs-based services including a food bank, a farm help line, and interfaith marriage preparation courses. He has also served through inter-church worship celebrations, and chaplaincy appointments within St. John Ambulance, Scouts Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion, and long-term care facilities.

For these efforts, the communities in which Colin has served have recognized him both formally and informally for his ministry in the wider community.

Within Essex Presbytery, Colin serves on education and students, pastoral relations, pastoral care and oversight, ministry and personnel, and the Board of the Resource Centre. Colin presently also serves on the Board of Directors of Iona College and fills the role of director of its School of Theology.

Statement of the Major Issues Facing The United Church of Canada

When I was asked to allow my name to stand as a candidate for the position of moderator, I was both humbled and shaken. It felt like being before the burning bush and saying, “Lord, you’ve got the wrong person.” But in prayer and reflection, I came to feel that I was being called to offer myself to the church in a new way. My response to the individual who asked me was this,

“If you truly believe that placing my name in nomination is the moving of the Holy Spirit, then you may do so.” When my name was placed before the court of Essex Presbytery, my words to the court were the same. I now say the same to those of you who are members of the General Council of this United Church of ours.

In allowing my name to be placed before you as a candidate for moderator, it is absolutely clear to me, as I pray it is to you, that it is not about me... It’s all about God.

Those words may sound vaguely familiar, especially if you’ve read *The Purpose Driven Life*. It’s not about me. It’s all about God. That brings me to my concerns in my prayers for our church. Those who asked me to allow my name to stand did so because they feel that the very foundation of our church, the local congregations, is not being heard. Many within the United Church feel alienated from the very church that they have grown up in.

One of our great celebrations within the United Church is our focus on social justice. However, in those issues we need to be aware that when we are trying to be inclusive and recognize diversity, that we are not at the same time, falling into the melting-pot of inclusivity to the exclusion of a true mosaic. Those who hold to an orthodox faith within our tradition need also to be included. We need to keep Mission and Tradition in balance.

When we don’t keep Mission and Tradition in balance, we lose the focus not only of being about God, but we end having a focus that reduces us to mere survival of the institution. We need to be able to hear all of the voices within the United Church. We need to mediate and hold valuable all those on any side of any issue rather than devaluing some in the search for justice.

The hardest task before us as individual believers and collectively as an institutional church is to hold fast to the values and beliefs of our faith while respecting the values and beliefs of others.

Many of the issues that are before the General Council, now and in the coming years, require that our ability to mediate between groups, both within and outside the church is an absolute necessity. As we listen, and as we seek to find common ground, it is also essential that we do not lose the foundation of our faith. It is essential that those who hold to an orthodox faith also feel included. Again, keeping balance between Mission and Tradition is essential to who we are as part of the Body of Christ.

For me that means beginning with the Resurrection and the forgiveness and grace offered in Jesus. It means not being ashamed of whom I am in Christ even as I listen with respect to the faith of others. May the blessings of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, guide us in all of our deliberations and decisions.

BUSINESS PROCESSES

What We're Doing and How We Propose to Do It

What is the purpose of the General Council meeting, and how will we seek to accomplish that purpose? When I was first appointed to the position of Chair of the 39th General Council 2006 Agenda and Planning Committee I realized that I was not absolutely certain as to why we gather. There is no shortage of information about the powers and mandate (see section 505 of *The Manual*) and plenty of assumptions about what should happen, ranging from directing the national government to act in a particular way to ensuring that there is adequate time to visit the area where the meeting is being held. But the very specific purpose of the gathering was not clear to me. In response to this question I have been directed to a number of documents that assert the General Council "...is the body that establishes the broad vision and direction of the United Church." (*Redesigning the Way We Work Together – the report of the Directions Committee, November, 2001*). Also, as the Executive of the General Council began work on developing its strategic plan it identified that "General Council ...does the work of discernment, visioning, and direction setting that will serve as a basis for a Strategic Plan." (The Executive of the General Council, April 21, 2005, p. 13 of Minutes)

Very often we have identified our broad vision and direction by reading backwards into the work we have done. By looking at our policies and our actions we have been able to intuit what mattered to us and what we thought mattered to the Spirit. At this meeting we will still do some reading backwards – considering what reports and actions have been adopted and identifying what those decisions imply about our overall direction. We will also be coming at this task in a more head on fashion – having conversations together specifically about the broad direction and purpose of the church.

Being clear about the purpose of the church is critical at this time in our life. For one thing; the strategic plan that the Executive of the General Council must develop needs to be rooted in a firm foundation of purpose. Also, and perhaps more importantly, as all organizations undergo shifts in response to our changing world, they need to become reacquainted with or perhaps identify a whole new purpose. We need to be sure of God's purpose for us, so that all actions and decisions can arise from that deep sense of what we are for.

The purpose as discerned by this meeting will inform the Executive of the General Council as it goes about assisting the church to be the Church in its third generation. When the United Church was flourishing and gifted with many resources it was not as critical that the purpose be identified so specifically. Now, as we find our way as a much diminished, although no less faithful organization, it becomes paramount that we are informed by purpose, so that our reduced resources can be directed as effectively and faithfully as possible in the direction towards which God is calling us. The Executive of the General Council needs direction from the General Council, so that it may faithfully exercise stewardship and leadership over the coming years.

This means that as Commissioners you will need to keep your eye on the big picture – on a picture no less large than God's yearning for The United Church of Canada in the 21st Century. This will not be easy to do. Waiting on a word from the Spirit, waiting patiently to hear from each other and our neighbours, requires patience and a curiosity that is not always our strongest suit. It is easier to move manage detail, to argue over particulars than to weigh together a way

forward. However, discerning our broad direction will take much time – which means we will have less time for the word-smithing and careful parsing of details that we are more accustomed to. You will be asked to consider overall direction and intent of reports. If you decide that particular work should be set in motion you will be asked to leave the operational labour of putting wheels under it to the committees and staff closer to the work.

In our time together, our commons time, our time when we are gathered all together in community, we will make decisions about three major matters: the Emerging Spirit report, the new Statement of Faith, and the Isolation in Ministry and Ministry Compensation reports. Other materials will be clustered in commissions – bodies that make decisions on behalf of the larger body. In all the work, you will be working with the Spirit and on behalf of the wider church. You have been elected as spiritual elders, leaders of the church. You come not as representatives of a congregation, with a particular point of view to communicate, but as parts of the Body assembled to wait on the will and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, often made known in each other. What will matter is not your personal opinion about an item, but what your opinion is regarding what we are called to do as part of the Body of Christ.

The material in the commissions will be organized thematically around ecclesiology (the nature of the church), mission and leadership. The work is gathered together to seek coherence, so that you can see the interconnected nature of what is coming before you, and so that, to the best of our abilities, the work does not stand in isolation but is informed by other work. Obviously, subjects will overlap; the subject matters are not exclusive. Each of you will have a coloured dot on your name tag that will indicate which commission you are in – red, green or blue. If you have ideas or input you want to offer another commission, seek each other out, have conversations, enrich each other with your ideas.

You will have four possible responses to the work. You can accept it, amend it, receive it and take no action or reject it. Both in commons time and in each commission there will be resource people who have already put in considerable effort to organize the work so that you can use your time as richly as possible. They will be available to all of us if we find we need clarification about how to move forward. While we make adjustments to how we do our work we will be surrounded by a host of saints, both living and dead who will encourage us and offer us their best wisdom, if we remember to take the time and ask for it.

Thank you for coming forward to do this work on behalf of our church. Thank you for your commitment, your labours, your grace and your wisdom. All of us who have worked to prepare for the meeting look forward to receiving you, and to being enriched by your contributions.

PROPOSALS OF THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006

What is a proposal?

The definition from *The Manual 2004* – Section 001 is: “Proposal means a formal request for specific action within the jurisdiction of the Court to which it is directed.” The “Court” is the 39th General Council 2006 gathered in Thunder Bay. There are 139 proposals to the Court.

Where do proposals come from?

Proposals come from three sources:

one of the 13 Conferences (83 proposals)

the Executive of the General Council (17 proposals)

the General Secretary, General Council (39 proposals)

28 of the 39 proposals are from the General Secretary about *The Manual*

11 of the 29 proposals are from the General Secretary about other matters

How will the General Council manage the 139 Proposals?

The General Council will take action on 7 proposals in the Commons – that is all Commissioners will review, respond and vote on the proposals related to the Statement of Faith, Emerging Spirit, Ministry Compensation and Isolation in Ministry.

The balance of the proposals (132) have been assigned to three “commissions” – Blue, Green and Red. What is a commission? The definition from *The Manual* 2004 – Section 001 is: “Commission” means a member or members of the United Church appointed by a Court or its Executive and given power to do a specific task and to make a Decision or Decisions.” Each commissioner will be appointed to one of the commissions by a motion at the beginning of the General Council meeting. The 132 proposals have been assigned to one of the Commissions by the General Secretary and the Business Process Group of the General Council Agenda and Planning Committee.

The work of the commissions will be on the Thursday. Commission Blue has 38 proposals. Commission Red has 35 proposals. Commission Green has 59 proposals. Why so many proposals in the Commission Green? In Commission Green there are 28 proposals from the General Secretary and the Manual Committee and we expect most of these proposals to be processed in an omnibus motion. That leaves about 30 proposals as the primary work of that Commission. Each commission may collect a group of proposals into an omnibus motion where there is agreement.

How do you dispose of a proposal?

There is an open conversation process for dealing with a proposal. The person presiding (The Moderator in the Commons and the Chairperson in a Commission) directs the commissioners (often working in their table groups) to examine a proposal. Commissioners are invited to ask questions of clarification of the Resource people about the proposal.

All proposals are on yellow paper. The ‘whereas’ statements are background and rationale for the suggested action in the box. The ‘whereas’ statements can not be changed (nor can the reports on the white pages). Commissioners may suggest changes to the text within the box only of a proposal on a yellow page.

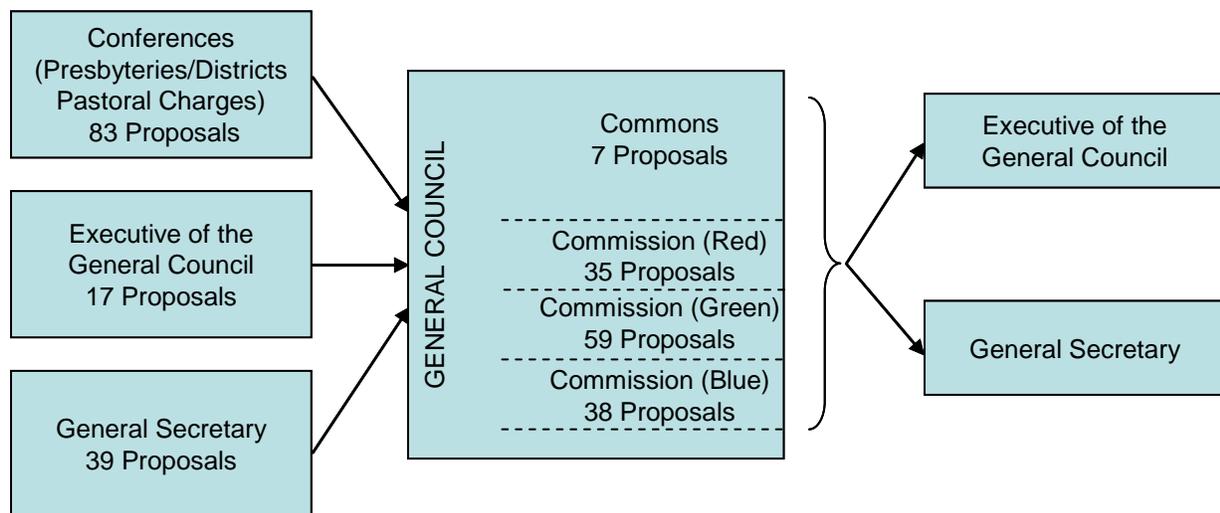
The person presiding will direct the conversation as an informal process until the proposal is shaped, reflects the consensus of the court (or commission) and clearly defines a course of action. When the court (or commission) is ready, the proposal is put forward as a motion to the court (or commission). The normal rules of debate and procedure (see *The Manual*, Appendix III) are then applied.

There are five ways a court (or a commission) can dispose of a proposal:

1. Adopt the proposal (as is or with changes)
2. Take action different from that requested in the proposal but dealing with same subject matter
3. Refer to the proposal to the one of two places:
 The General Secretary, General Council
 The Executive of the General Council
(The General Secretary or the Executive may refer work to other bodies)
4. Receive the proposal for information and take no action
5. Defeat the proposal

A Picture Paints a Thousand Words

The following picture shows the three sources of proposals (Conferences, Executive of the General Council, General Secretary), how the General Council will manage the 139 proposals (Commons and three commissions) and the two bodies that will carry forward to actions of the General Council (Executive of the General Council and the General Secretary).



MEDIA COVERAGE AT GENERAL COUNCIL

The secular media’s presence at General Council varies from year to year, depending on the degree of local interest and the relevance of the Council’s agenda to the wider world.

It is customary for reporters to identify themselves as journalists whenever they are working. To help them do this, the General Council Newsroom asks that all media people who are attending General Council wear special nametags.

As a Commissioner or Youth Forum delegate, you may be approached by reporters wanting to interview you. All accredited media, including *The United Church Observer*, *General Council News*, and *United Church Television*, will be wearing **press/media** identification badges.

Also, as a Commissioner or Youth Forum Delegate, if you have been asked to report on the work of the 39th General Council 2006 for your local newspaper, or other media outlet, please come to the Newsroom for proper identification. Any participant at General Council who is also functioning as a journalist should be wearing a media nametag. This is particularly important if you intend to quote individuals who may not be aware that comments made in private conversation may also appear in a news report.

Please remember that while you are encouraged to cooperate with the media, it is usually best to assume that **all** conversations with reporters are **on the record** (that is, for publication). Some reporters may agree not to identify the source of their information, however, these terms must be agreed to **in advance** of the conversation with the reporter.

Remember also, that when you speak to a reporter, you are being asked for your personal views on matters being discussed by the General Council. This is true, unless of course, you have been named a designated spokesperson for a particular group.

While reporters are not permitted onto the floor during business sessions, stewards may deliver messages from reporters who wish to meet with you. The message will indicate when and where you are to meet, and usually the subject matter to be discussed. We would ask that you indicate to the person delivering the message whether you are able to meet with the reporter or suggest an alternate time that would be more convenient.

Usually we suggest that reporters schedule interviews with Commissioners during breaks in order not to disturb your participation in Council. There are times, however, when reporters have an immediate deadline and need to speak to you as soon as possible. When this happens, the message you will be handed will ask that you slip away at your earliest convenience.

Stewards may also hand you a message indicating that a reporter wishes to speak to you long distance. You are welcome to return these phone calls by calling collect from the Newsroom.

In addition to the secular media's coverage of General Council, the United Church's own reporters, including *The United Church Observer* and the *Spirit Connection* crew, play a significant role in the life of General Council. *General Council News* staff and volunteers will be publishing daily news reports throughout Council. These news summaries will be posted on the United Church's Website (www.united-church.ca) and will be distributed to commissioners at their table groups. Also, please note that the final edition of *General Council News* will be mailed to Commissioners after General Council.

Again, if you are asked, I encourage you to cooperate with the media. Reporters are here to do an important and difficult job of reporting accurately and fairly what is happening at General Council. To do that job well, they need our help.

And finally, if you have any questions regarding the media's presence or coverage of General Council, please contact me on-site in the General Council Newsroom.

Mary-Frances Denis
Communications Officer
Office of the Moderator and General Secretary
June 1, 2006

LIST OF ACRONYMS

A&P	Agenda and Planning Committee
ADR	Alternate Dispute Resolution
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ANCC	All Native Circle Conference
ANW	Alberta and Northwest Conference
AOTS	As One That Serves (Men's Ministries)
ARCH	Archives
AVEL	Audio Visual Education Library
BC	British Columbia Conference
BQ	Bay of Quinte Conference
CAYT	Children and Young Teens Program at General Council
CCC	Canadian Council of Churches
CES	Conference Executive Secretary(ies)
COC	Community of Concern
DM	Diaconal Ministry
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EM	Ethnic Ministries Unit
FFE	Faith Formation and Education Unit
FIN	Finance
FinS	Financial Stewardship Unit
FS	Financial Services Unit
GC	General Council
GCE	Executive of the General Council
GCM	General Council Minister(s)
GCO	General Council Office
GCSE	General Council Sub-Executive
GP	Global Partner(s)
GPBP	Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
GCM	General Council Minister
GS	General Secretary
HAM	Hamilton Conference
ITS	Information Technology Services Unit
JGER	Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit
LM	Lay Ministry

LON	London Conference
M&O	Montreal and Ottawa Conference
M&S	Mission and Service
MAL	Member(s) at Large
MAR	Maritime Conference
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
MEPS	Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit
MNWO	Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference
MOD	Moderator
MTU	Manitou Conference
N&L	Newfoundland and Labrador Conference
NWO	National Women's Organization
OM	Ordered Ministry
OMGS	The Offices of the Moderator and General Secretary
OMNI	Omnibus
PAR	Pre-authorized Remittance
PC-FIN	Permanent Committee, Finance
PC-GPBP	Permanent Committee, Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
PC-MEPS	Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
PC-PMM	Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry
PMM	Programs for Mission and Ministry
ROP	Record of Proceedings
RPD	Resource Production and Distribution Unit
RSSC	Residential Schools Steering Committee
SK	Saskatchewan Conference
SLM	Support to Local Ministries Unit
SPK	Speaker
T&F	Committee on Theology and Faith
TOR	Toronto Conference
UCC	The United Church of Canada
UCTV	United Church Television (Spirit Connection)
UCW	United Church Women
UMiF	Unité de Ministères en Français / Ministries in French Unit
VU	Voices United
WCC	World Council of Churches
YF	Youth Forum Program at General Council

OPENING WORSHIP

Sunday, August 13, 2006, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Presiding

The Right Rev. Dr. Peter Short, Moderator

The Rev. James Sinclair, General Secretary

The Rev. Susan Ivany, Westminster United Church, Thunder Bay

Gathering

Prelude

Processional Music: “Over My Head” (African-American spiritual, arr. Stephen M. Lee)

Words of Welcome (The Moderator)

Lighting the Christ Candle

(a member of Children and Young Teens program and Karen Bridges)

Voice One (child): Why do we light this candle?

Voice Two (adult): This is the Christ candle.

Voice One: What does it mean?

Voice Two: We light this candle when we come together as God’s people. It reminds us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and he is at the centre of everything we do and everything we are.

Voice One: Why is it white?

Voice Two: White is the colour that the church uses for big celebration days such as this one.

We’re celebrating this wonderful week that we can share together in worship and work as God’s people.

Voice One: So when we light the candle, the worship begins?

Voice Two: That’s right. Let’s light the candle together.

(Candle is lit...)

All: With Christ as our light and our way, we come now to worship. Thanks be to God!

Call to Worship

(Susan Ivany)

The theme for this week is “No Theme.”

No theme?

That’s right. We are here to reflect, to find the still point, discern, and listen for God’s call upon our lives.

But, what is our task?

To breathe, to feel the nudge of the Spirit, to share, and to seek out our deep purpose as the body of Christ in the world.

In the Spirit of Christ, who promised to always be with us, we are invited to engage our worship and work with openness and faith. Let us celebrate God’s presence in our midst!

Hymn: “Bring Many Names” (Voices United #268)

Prayer

Gracious God, as we begin our time together, we pray that you will bless and bless and inspire us in all that we do and all that we share. May our worship and work be one, and may our faith journey together be enriched and enlivened. This we pray in the name of Jesus, who invites and challenges us to live the way of peace, love and justice. Amen.

Drama:

“All Microphones” (written and directed by Peter Fergus-Moore)

Choral Reflection: “This Little Light of Mine” (arr. Joel Raney)

A New Creed (The Moderator)

Hymn: Tout est fait pour la gloire de Dieu/All is done for the glory of God (words and music, Abed Hmiunji, Cameroons)

Service of the Word

Isaiah 11: 1-10 (Ethnic Ministries)

“A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots...”

Psalms 46 (interpreted by the Image Sacred Dancers; reader: Susan Ivany)

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble...”

Refrain (sung by all): “Don’t Be Afraid” (words and music, John L. Bell)

Mark 1: 1-14 (Aboriginal Ministries)

“...John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins...”

Sung Response: “Hallelujah” (Julian Pattison)

Anthem: “Ubi Caritas” (performed by the Dulcisono Choir; composer, Eleanor Daley)

Sermon (The Right Rev. Dr. Peter Short)

Hymn: “Healer of Our Every Ill” (words and music, Marty Haugen)

Service of the Table

Invitation to Offering (Jim Sinclair)

Offering (music by The Uncalled Four)

Presentation of Gifts

Offering Prayer (Jim Sinclair)

Source of Life, source of all that is good, we bring ourselves and our offerings for the blessing of all creation. We pray, accept these gifts and grant us wisdom, strength, and courage in their use. Amen.

Hymn: “We Are One” (words, Doreen Lankshear Smith; music, Jeeva Sam, arr. David Kai)

The Invitation

Eucharistic Prayer (written by the Rev. Don Uhryniw)

We are not alone
We live in God’s world
Birthed in the depths of past history
alive in the presence of the eternal and the Divine
We are not alone
we are part of the community of faith
the communion of saints
the living hands and feet of Jesus
We are the people of the covenant
embraced from the womb of creation,
liberated from injustice, refined in exile,
forgiven in restoration
The spirit of joy has called us to this place
from sea, from sea and from sea
the spirits of the land call out to us
to be present to the holy, to be alive for evermore,
and so we invoke the power of the spirit
we cry out to the voices of the past
and we embrace the spirit of the future as we say

Reform us!
Change us!
Mould and recreate us!
We are the people of God!

You have called us, Divine friend, to this place
show us your spirit, show us your strength,
show us your courage to be people of the covenant
Our God has given us blessings in the prophets of the past,
in the pastors of the present
and in the priests singing our future
and so we gather,
in this time, and in this place,
in the colours and hues of our faces and friends
straight and gay,
clergy and lay
women and men,

young and young at heart
aching for your voice
desperate for your touch,
anxious for your embrace
bursting to sing to the colours of the earth

“Holy, Holy, Holy Lord...” (words and music, Steve Bell)
Because you call us to a new path
the same direction, but a new way of getting there
because you call us to a new path
in the same retinue but with a new spirit
because you call us to a new path
in the same creation, but with renewed energy
and so we call upon you again, as your spirit hovered over creation,
as it spoke in fire and smoke, sea and sky
we reach out to the voices of the land as we cry

Reform us!
Change us!
Mould and recreate us!
We are the people of God!

Jesus, the one of the past, the present and the future
your wisdom, your hands and heart,
present to all of us, present in all of us
who came as one of us
singing love
who came as one of us
dancing life
who came as one of us
daring to be fully in your presence

And so we come,
from sea, from sea and from sea
into this place, and into the presence of one another, praying

Reform us!
Change us!
Mould and recreate us!
We are the people of God!

Jesus, the one before time, came and was betrayed.
He was your shape of love,
your mould of life, your melody of love.
He offered a new way of being
but it was rejected

he offered a new way of loving
but it was hated
he was a new way of being present to you
but we absented ourselves from him
He taught the people of faith a new song saying

Reform us!
Change us!
Mould and recreate us!
We are the people of God!

But the vision became obscured,
your voice became muffled, our path less certain
And then came the darkness
This is my body
and then came the loneliness
this is my blood

But the creator grasped into the chaos
and brought forth life
the creator strained into the darkness
and brought forth light
and the creator wooed into the life
and birthed eternity

And so we gather,
in the glow of your spirit, in the rhythm of your dance,
in the fire of the spirit of the Divine,
and so we pray, great potter of time
weave together the sinews of our souls that we may sing:

“Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Christ is Lord of our days.” (Voices United, #415, verse 6)
Send, O God, your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts,
that all who share in this bread and cup may be the body of Christ:
light, life and love in the world.
Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory is yours, Loving God, now and forever.
Amen.

We gather these and all our prayers, thankful that we may turn to you as to a loving Mother, and
as... (the Lord’s Prayer to be recited in the language of your choice)

Words of Institution
Breaking the Bread and Sharing the Cup
The bread of life

Thanks be to God!

The cup of blessing

Thanks be to God!

Hymns During Communion

Prayer After Communion (together)

Most Wondrous Creator, we give you thanks that we have been nurtured and refreshed at your table. Send us out now to share the blessing of your presence in our midst. Guide us and lead us forward in faith, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hymn: “Draw the Circle Wide” (words and music, Gordon Light, arr. Michael Bloss)

A Prayer for Blessing (The Moderator)

Benediction (The Moderator)

Sung Response: “Over My Head” (en français)

Postlude (music by The Uncalled Four)

Many thanks to all who have offered leadership in our worship!

Music Team

Diana Wilcox (Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference)

The More Voices Team (Sandra Beardsall, Lynn Boothroyd, Rick Gunn, Bruce Harding, Bill Kervin, Lloyd MacLean, Mike Schwartzentruber, Alan Whitmore, Sid Woolfrey)

Choirs/Musicians

Massed choir comprised of singers from around the Thunder Bay area

The Dulcisono Choir (Thunder Bay. Led by Susan Marrier)

The Uncalled Four (Thunder Bay. Ken Jacobson, Andy Ritchie, Dave Nattress, Ray Laponen)

Liturgical Dance

By the Image Sacred Dance group (Thunder Bay)

Director and Choreographer Claudia Otto

The Boreal Home Companion Drama Team

Peter Fergus-Moore (Writer & Director)

Jann Sampson, Joyce Fergus-Moore, Dan Saunders, Christina Stricker, Arlene Hardick, David Duncan

Offering – Donated to the Mission and Service Fund

SERMON PREACHED BY THE RIGHT REV. DR. PETER SHORT

Living History, Making Home

Sunday, August 13, 2006, at the opening worship of the 39th General Council 2006. Revised from speaking notes.

Sisters and brothers of the 39th General Council, we're making history. We're not just having a meeting here, we are living and making history. Who knows, maybe some day, some sunny day, you'll be sitting there on the porch winded from a game of chess, trying to get the rocking chair started, and you'll be telling stories to some youngster and you'll be saying, "You know, I was there at that 39th General Council—Thunder Bay back in ought six." And their eyes will get wide and they'll whistle softly and they'll say, "I'm so not into history."

Well, actually, I am interested in history because for one thing I'm so old I've been around for three quarters of the history of The United Church of Canada. But it's not just that I've been hanging around for so much history. There's something about love in it, too. Both my grandmothers were Methodists and though they've long gone, I love them still. Death may end a life but it doesn't end a relationship. When the United Church was formed they were in their 20s and I like to imagine them that age today. They are with me here now, you know, Dorothy and Lillian, the musician and the dreamer. I am grateful for my grandmothers. I am grateful for the whole great cast of characters whose living and whose faith have formed The United Church of Canada. They have bequeathed to us the heart and the hope we have.

I am grateful for the eight Moderators who are here, and the three who could not be present. They include

- the only Moderator ever to have ridden a horse into General Council
- the only Moderator who started out as a nurse and came into the church led by a baby
- the only Moderator whose first language is Cree and who led a team to listen to the heartache and the dreams of a province whose first language is French
- the only Moderator ever to have been appointed to the Senate of Canada and thus to achieve a title longer than she is tall
- the only Moderator ever to throw out the first pitch at an American League baseball game and to give us the exceptional gift and opportunity of making national news out of Christology
- the only Moderator who grew up as a refugee in Siberia, whose courage and humour held us through some of our hardest days
- the Moderator from Newfoundland whose patience, fortitude, and willingness to weather the storms helped bring us through the most difficult changes the General Council Office has ever experienced
- the Moderator who walked out of the Council hall and down a long hill to a teepee where he entered and spoke to the Elders the words of an apology the likes of which had never before been heard from the church and changed the way we think about ourselves, about God, about this country, and about one another
- the youngest Moderator ever elected, the one who changed the face and the soul of the office, who was elected in Saskatoon 34 years ago and who is therefore the dean of the Moderators even though he looks like he could outrun us all

- the Moderator who presided with such exceptional courage and grace while the Council made its passage toward Victoria through those momentous days in 1988 and who held the space while the church took the first steps in a passage that would change our life
- and the only Moderator who, in that momentous year 1988, could have written the lines: “Stay with us through the night, stay with us through the dread, stay with us blessed stranger, till the morning breaks new bread.”

I am grateful for the presence of all who have served this office before me: preparing a way, leaving a strong legacy and a light to go by, each one bringing something precious, something no one else had brought before.

We’re living history, we’re making history, and one day, dearly beloved in Christ, we’ll all be history. But today we live. The church may be many generations old but it’s only one generation deep. Today we are the living ones whose hearts and hands make the gospel of this United Church live. Look around you at the faces that are living and making history. There’s nobody here but us chickens. It is stunning to think that the Creator in her wisdom chose to match the likes of us with this frightening and pregnant hour in the world and in the church. If there are any fans of the Grateful Dead, any deadheads out here, you may be remembering Jerry Garcia saying, “With the world the way it is, somebody’s got to do something. It’s just such a damn shame it has to be us.”

But we are not alone. There is not a person here who does not owe more than can be named or even imagined to those on whose shoulders we stand.

I am a minister in a United Church congregation in Fredericton, New Brunswick. The congregation to which I am called began life as the Fredericton Methodist Church. It was formed by 11 people in 1791, the year that John Wesley died.

I love Methodist history. I love how Methodists have from the very beginning been all mixed up in literacy and tavern music and micro-credit and the gin trade and in the things of life both painful and beautiful that are the medium of the gospel; just as bread is a medium of the gospel and coins and pearls and swine and houses built—some on rock and some not—and sons lost and found.

I love the story of the Methodist Chapel, the one they called the Great Lighthouse. It was a little church in Seneca Falls, New York, in the middle of the 19th century. They called it the Great Lighthouse because lives were redeemed there to the sound of the wonderful music at the gospel services. And they called it the Great Lighthouse because that little church was a station in the underground railroad that helped slaves make their exodus toward freedom.

One day that Methodist Chapel opened its doors to a meeting of people who wanted to do something about women’s rights—especially the right to vote. They drew up what they called a Declaration of Sentiments. In the chair that day was a local woman named Elizabeth Cady Stanton. It was a meeting that would spark a movement, a movement that would change the world.

But as the years went by the little chapel was closed and it was converted into an opera house. Eventually the opera house became a meeting hall. As more years passed the meeting hall became a car showroom. The car showroom gave way to a laundromat. One day the laundromat went out of business and the dilapidated old building was abandoned and left boarded up and empty. By the middle of the 20th century, none of the townsfolk even knew that there had once stood a Great Lighthouse where the old laundromat used to be.

Then in the 1970s, some women came to Seneca Falls because they knew it to be the home town of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Through their research, it was discovered that hidden in the shabby interior of that abandoned building were the original roof trusses and window frames of that Methodist Chapel. Today that building has been restored and stands at the centre of a small national park dedicated to the recovering of women's history.

It's not only buildings that start out as a Great Lighthouse and end up abandoned, boarded up, and shabby inside. People do, too, people whose souls need to hear the music, hear it sung for them until they can sing for themselves the redemption songs.

I love Methodist history but like all human history I am appalled by some of it, too. One of my grandmothers was the daughter of a Methodist preacher in the little villages north of Kingston in the Bay of Quinte Conference. Let me tell you the story of her brother.

My grandmother had an older brother named Charlie. Charlie was coming home from school one day when some boys gave him some cider to drink. It turned out to be the wrong kind of cider for a son of the Methodist manse to be drinking. When he got home, Charlie's father, the Methodist minister, sent him to bed without supper. In the night Charlie called out for some water and my grandmother, hearing him, went with a glass of water for her brother. She was caught in this act and given a beating by her father, the minister.

That night Charlie disappeared. He never came back. Ever.

Why did he go and never come back? We don't know. It's like suicide—you never know exactly why, but you do know exactly how deeply it hurts.

My grandmother, when she was old enough to decide for herself, left the Methodist Church. She practised a spiritual discipline all her life, though, and so I suppose in a way she left the church but the gospel didn't leave her. Lot of people like that around, don't you think? People who have left the church but whom the gospel has not left.

I know the gospel never left my grandmother. Yes, she had witnessed cruelty and loss and shame and regret on behalf of what the church was said to stand for. But still she found a way in her life to pass on grace and delight and love and respect and healing and laughter and compassion. She used to tell me when I was very small that she always knew when I was coming to visit her because when I was on my way to her house a bird would come into her garden and sing my name: "Peter. Peter. Peter." Imagine—a child of such significance in the wide realm of creation that even the birds of the air know his name and announce his coming.

It reminds me of the old Hasidic tale from the ghetto. On Friday at the end of the working day, a poor and exhausted old man could be seen making his way through the streets toward the candles and the Shabbat table that awaited him even in his poverty. What might not be seen was the angel who went before the poor old creature shouting, “Make way for the image of God! Make way for the image of God!”

Over the years I began to believe that it wasn’t just my name that was sung in the garden, it was Charlie’s name, too, the brother who never came back. Over the years I came to believe that somewhere he is walking down a street oblivious to the figure shouting his coming: “Make way!”

Now I’m in the church. I am a minister like my great grandfather before me. I’ve been here in the church a long time and I suppose I’ve dragged grandma back here too, because she was never afraid to go anywhere I was. Here’s something I know as one who has struggled so long and failed so often to learn the grace that is at the heart of our gospel.

Charlie is coming home.

He’s been gone a long time and lived in a far country and his skin may be a different colour now and he may speak a different language now, but I see that he is coming home.

Charlie is bitter sometimes, but there’s something in him that has never left, something calls him home to where the pain was because maybe beneath the failure, that was where the hope was, too.

He’s mad a lot of the time. He’s remembering his father, the minister whose righteousness went before him the way a rattle goes before a snake. He’s coming to set things right for his sister. Charlie is showing up every day at the church, sometimes at the back door. You may have seen him although you may not have recognized him—he’s been gone so long.

Sometimes he comes wearing a suit and fondling the Blackberry in his pocket. Sometimes he comes with hardware in his eyebrow and pants with no knees. Occasionally he seems intrigued by the church but mostly he seems indifferent.

Whether or not it is clear to you, he’s looking for grace. Don’t give him ideology. He’s looking for bread. Don’t give him a stone. He’s looking for life. Don’t give him morality. He’s come looking for home; wondering if it’s any place he’d even want to be anymore. Don’t give him an institution. He’s not sure if you’ll be glad to see him. Don’t greet him by asking him where he thinks he’s been all these years.

Tell him there’s a bird that sings his name. Tell him his sister has become a brave angel of grace. Tell him his father longs for his forgiveness. Tell him he’s not made for the church, the church is made for him.

Say to him, “Welcome, welcome home.” Say to him it’s good that he’s here.

When hurt and anger and loss and regret come home, especially after all these years, let these words of the prophet Isaiah be heard in the house of worship and in the circle of Christ:

“They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9)

They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain....

They will not hurt or destroy.

My sisters and brothers, when we are in the midst of living a hard and inexplicable history, it is never a good thing to get angry on behalf of God.

When we are living in the midst of impossible expectations and constant demands, it is always a good thing to be liberated from the need to manage the world.

When we are living history, may we always at the same time be making home.

SERMON GIVEN BY KEITH HOWARD OF EMERGING SPIRIT

Discernment at General Council 39, Monday, August 14, 2006.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1–10, (11–20).

Speak, for Your Servant Is Listening

Just after Easter this year, the polling firm Ipsos Reid asked Canadians if they had ever experienced God. Forty-two percent of Canadians testify to the feeling that they were in the presence of God. Forty-two percent!

During the last two years, Emerging Spirit, the project with which I am involved, hired the Environics research firm to gauge interest in a church like ours. They tell us that “of those between the ages of 30/45 not affiliated with any other faith group, like Judaism or Islam, 77% indicate a strong or moderate interest in some involvement with a church like The United Church of Canada.” Seventy-seven percent. Reg Bibby, in independent research with slightly different criteria, reports 62 percent.

Could something be going on out there? Could something be up? Are other voices speaking than those we are accustomed to hearing? Could it be that God is on the loose and whispering to others? And even more radically, could it be that God seeks to address us through “the others”?

Our story in Samuel involves a young person and Eli. Eli was the supreme representative of the dominant religious organization of his day.

The story begins with some sobering words: “At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room.” Eli, the prime public face of organized religion, is losing the ability to see. He seems plagued by weariness. And when we are familiar with the events up to this story, it is no wonder he is weary in the soul. But then hope flickers. Or, as the story says, “the lamp of God had not yet gone out.”

Samuel, lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, hears “Samuel! Samuel!”

Samuel springs up and runs to the representative of the religious establishment of the day thinking that surely the voice came from there, because do not they have the franchise on hearing the voice of God? Are they not the ones who knows the twists, turns, and puzzles of the Bible?

People ask about the Da Vinci Code because they assume that if anyone knows about Jesus it would be those church people. If anyone hears from God on a regular basis, would it not be those people who are always using the divine name?

Eli says, “Wasn’t me. Go back to your sleeping.”

Yet again the voice stirs the one who lives in another room. By now, for those familiar with biblical patterns, a suspicion begins to form. Perhaps this persistence may be a clue of something else afoot? Yet again, the younger one stirs, certain that a voice, a call has been directed his way. And again, the path leads to the religious establishment.

We do not have the entire conversation. Perhaps Eli was grumpy: “What’s the matter with you? Can’t you see I’m tired, that I’m burdened with family matters? I’ll get to you in the morning when things look better. Besides, what makes you think a call might be coming to you, you who do not even know enough yet to know what you don’t know, you with your confused and sloppy understanding of spirituality and smorgasbord of a moral code?” All we have is the condensed version, albeit with a slightly more compassionate tone: “I did not call, my son; lie down again.”

And then again, a third time, even though “Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.” Even though Samuel was unschooled and non-credentialed by the Interview Board, God speaks.

Now the story moves to an entirely different level and takes an unexpected turn.

Eli, the representative of the dominant religious institution according to the census, Eli shows spiritual discernment, humility, and courage.

Again we do not have the Record of Proceedings, the dialogues in the hallways, the accounting of the number of Diet Cokes consumed, the journaling that were the means of his discernment, just the bald summary statement: Eli perceived that God was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and if God calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’”

The bridge from this story to our time is a short one. You do not have to be Lara Croft or Robert Langdon to make the leap. In fact, many of you have already begun the wondering. And it is a wondering not generated by statistics or research firms, but that simply comes from being with our families, our friends, and in numerous occasions of pastoral ministry.

All across the land people seem fascinated with, and eager to talk about, matters of the spirit, prompted to wonder about other dimensions. They seek conversations to form, test, and challenge their experience and understanding of the sacred and the holy.

From a religious point of view, the interesting question becomes: Where is God in all of this? Is God speaking to those “younger than Eli,” less credentialed than Eli?

Can we, the Eli of our time, the religious establishment of our day, have the same humility, openness to discernment, and courage to put aside so much of what we know “should be” in order to hear the new word? As leaders, will we speak the words and do the deeds that allow a new chapter of the story to be heard and told? These are powerful spiritual questions.

These are powerful spiritual questions not only when it comes to this church which we are called here to lead but also when they come to each of us. At those times when God whispers to us, how will we respond?

Of these three impressive qualities that Eli exhibits—humility, openness to discernment, and courage—perhaps the critical ingredient is courage.

Eli said (to Samuel), “What was it that God told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.”

Do not hide the word of God from me! Oh, now there is a mentor to follow, a wise chief from whom to seek counsel. Because even as he said that, he knew the word would contain a word of judgment. The exact wording may have not yet been said but the echo was in the heart.

For God had said to Samuel: “For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.”

For the weeks and months preceding God’s words to Samuel, Eli had been pretending not to know. He had been pretending not to know a great deal in spite of overwhelming evidence and numerous wake-up calls not returned. The family had missed the turn. And Eli could not bring himself to face the truth so apparent to everyone else.

Now the consequences of Eli’s non-action could no longer be forestalled. Organizations, of course, can always justify non-action. How could action be taken without an adequate survey of a representative number of impacted and potentially impacted? Were all positions included? Were the outcomes clearly defined? What are the budget implications precisely? What would be the upside of not acting as opposed to the downside of acting? Analysis and consultation—that’s what is needed!

Now at this point, if I was advising Eli, I would try and shape his communication strategy with God around good intentions. “Yes, the family has made some bad decisions, has become preoccupied with its own desires and practices, but do not we all? Is it not part of the natural cycle of families and institutions?”

Sure, his sons were a bit outside the normal boundaries, but were they not his sons? Should he be chastised because of a desire to keep peace within the family? A father’s weakness, a parent’s Achilles heel—should that be condemned or rather met with sympathy and tolerance? And had Eli not worked hard, been “zealous for the Lord” in his day? Does not that legacy, that story, deserve respect?

Certainly it could be argued that his refusal to address the mutating malignancy was dangerous and its effects radiated out, infecting the entire family, organization, and religion and his leadership at a critical time was less than positive but....

In his time Eli was faithful, undoubtedly well-intentioned, and probably nice.

And yet we know. We know when we can no longer evade honesty how such infections weaken the family, the faith, the organization.

So the challenge comes to us—as a denomination, as congregations, even to us as leaders and individuals.

Have we become so enamoured with some practice, some comfort, some expectation, some entitlement, some story of ourselves, illusion, or strategy that, in the end, we almost become unable to hear the voice of God or see the movement of God? “Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see....”

Of course, part of us—whether as a denomination, congregation, or individual—responds with explanation. We can make defence. But do we want to?

Faced with the persistence of the voice, Eli chooses another way. Eli chooses to hear another story. “What was it that God said? Do not hide it from me!”

Do we want to deflect, deny, or abstract when in many ways it is not foreign to us and the stories of our people to face the word even when we suspect the hearing will require a turning?

It is not as if we are unaccustomed to the experience of God coming to us, speaking to us, despite our comfort, in surprising ways and offering astounding promises.

The Lord said to Samuel, “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.”

Have there not been times when we have caught a whiff of this—as a denomination, as congregations, as individual disciples?

Have there not been times when we have heard, when we have sensed a word, a vision, a presence that was almost too good to be true? Even in the midst of pain, yearnings, deep disappointment, frustration, losses which we hardly dare to acknowledge to ourselves....

Have there not been times when, all evidence to the contrary; we have heard the name Beloved whispered. And everything in our head said it could not be us, for were we not in the midst of failure, of divorce, of loss, of discovering an awful truth, of a leadership disaster of biblical proportions. “Grace and peace to you, Beloved. Your creation was not a mistake.” Could that be us?

Have there not been times when, all evidence to the contrary; we have heard a whisper, a call that we were tempted to explain away as compunction? And everything in our head said it could not be us because actually a large part of us is an imposter—we’re just talking, it was just a book I read, an idea I had, an interest. Said Moses to the burning bush, I was just curious, why are you making such a big deal out of this? I’m not trained, I lack the competencies, I’m already overbooked, my husband will kill me.... Too old, too young, too stubborn, too set in old ways to be re-created, reclaimed, reformed, and resurrected. “I cannot come to the banquet.” But still the call persisted.

Have there not been times when even so aware of the pain and betrayal of the world and the church, we have known deep within us that the Holy One is not yet ready to back away from the dreams for shalom, wholeness, peace, and, even when we cry like Elijah in the cave “Oh God, I’m the only one left!” we have also been away of a force, a power, a movement out there.

It is not as if we are unaccustomed to the experience of God coming to us, speaking to us in surprising circumstances, through unlikely messengers. Do we need to resist?

God, The Lord, says, “See, I am about to do something that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.” Could that really be true?

Could that be true for us as a denomination? If so, I pray that we will have the humility of Eli, the openness to attend to the word, the courage to hear the word being spoken to us “from outside,” from the unlikely, the uncredentialed, the younger? I pray we will be willing to hear and to write a new chapter in the story.

Eli said to Samuel, “... if God calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”

Speak, for your servant is listening.

God is on the loose. Oh-oh!

God is on the loose. Amen.

ORIENTATION TO DISCERNMENT: KERYGMA CAFÉ

Deb Bowman, Saturday, August 12, 2006, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario

“Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away” (Song of Solomon, 2:10, 13). In the lectionary readings that await us on Labour Day weekend, beloved calls to beloved. Arise, and come away. This leapt off the page at me, not as a call from individual lover to lover, but as a call from God to the people of God. A call from God, lover of all creation, to the church, to one of the many manifestations of the people God claims as precious, as beloved. Arise, my love, my fair ones, and come away! And so here we are. Responsive to the call. Eager to hear the voice of our beloved.

When we began work on planning for this General Council, what seems like a lifetime ago, I realized that I was not clear on the exact purpose of this meeting. I have attended several General Councils, and I was aware that there seemed to be a pattern and a dynamic that moved through each meeting, but when I considered what a “successful” meeting would look like, I wasn’t sure. When I asked General Council Executive for some clarity on the particular purpose of the meeting, they too paused. They too, while sure about the patterns that had been set over the years, were not of one mind about the purpose. And so together we were brought to a place where we realized it was time to reacquaint ourselves with purpose of the General Council meeting. And as we thought about it, we were shown that we needed to be reoriented not just to the purpose of the General Council, but to the purpose of The United Church of Canada. We had come to a place, as do all organizations and movements at some point in their lives, when so much has changed that the body needs to reacquaint itself with who and whose it is, and what it is for. GCE took the prophetic and practical step of deciding that the purpose of GC is to come to a still point and to listen for God’s yearning for the church.

This is prophetic because the temptation is to keep on doing what we’ve always done, only harder. The temptation is to put our heads down, focus on what we see in front of us, and seek to respond faithfully to that patch of our vision. It is prophetic to call the church to a still point, to down tools for a bit, to lift up our heads and our hearts and look toward the horizon of God’s possibilities for us. It is prophetic, and it is biblical. Just last Sunday we heard the author of Ephesians imploring us to consider our call. “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called...” (Eph. 4:1). We come away to be reminded of the calling, to be re-membered and re-acquainted with what is the worthy life of our calling.

This time for focused discernment is practical also. The Moderator has spoken and written about the fact that The United Church of Canada has been slowly starving over the last 20 years. In response, we have made small adjustments, a nip there, a tuck here. We have not stood back and considered the full reality of the changed financial, spiritual, demographic, and economic state of our church. We need to make more than minimal adjustments in how we work and serve. We need to identify clear areas of focus. With thanksgiving and sorrow, we may need to leave behind some areas of work we have laboured over for two generations. The General Council Executive, the elected and appointed members of committees and the staff all committed to serving the church, cannot make the kind of decisions necessary without some time out to consider where from here. Without some conversation about the future direction of our church.

Without some sense of how and where God is pulling us, attempting to develop a strategic plan will be hopeless. Be very clear: this GC will not develop a strategic plan; it will—we pray—begin to identify the broad direction in which we are to move, in alignment with God’s intentions for us. This purpose statement that it is our job to identify will be used to orient future work of the staff and elected members that serve the national church. You will have seen in many of the proposals the words: “Direct that the report inform the purpose statements to be developed by this GC.” All our decisions will inform, will be part of what helps us identify the purpose of our next generation of United Church. We will look back and ask ourselves, “What do these decisions reveal for us about who and whose we are, and where we are called to go?”

I want to be clear that this isn’t the first time we have used discernment as a “tool” for thinking together. We are, at our best, discerning people who take as one of our core values an attentiveness to God. What is different is the emphasis and effort that will be placed on being collectively attentive for longer periods than usual about different questions than usual.

We will need to be aware of the temptation to avoid the call to listening and waiting. We will be tempted to avoid looking at the horizon before us, and to fix our focus instead on tasks that are “easier” to get a handle on. I want to encourage you to be leery of the lure of work avoidance, which might ironically masquerade as the “real” work before us. We will be tempted to focus on work and ways of working that we are familiar with. Not that those things are not important and require our attention, but we need to hold them in context and in relationship with our larger task. Even if you are new to GC, and about 65 percent of us are, we have all been formed in patterns of behaviour from our participation in other parts of the church and in the world. We are trying something different; something new, an alternative way of being in community. It will be difficult, and we have all we need to do it.

Over the last year, we have tested with the GCE different methods of discernment. I asked the Executive to take on the role of Cinderella, but instead of many potential princesses trying on one glass slipper, we had a variety of glass slippers to try on the one body. We were looking for a process that would fit the foot of the Body of Christ as it is known here. What became clear as we were doing some of this trying on is that rather than trying to talk the GCE into a new way of being and thinking together, we were scrambling to catch up to a deep desire to discern differently, to be the Body of Christ together in a new way. The church, as partly reflected in the General Council Executive, has been hearing for some time the Song of Solomon, “Arise, my love, and come away.” I am grateful for your graciousness and your willingness to help us learn how to do this.

Kerygma Café is the method or process we are using to help us be in discernment together. It is not an end in itself, but a means to time away, to arriving at a still point. Some of you formed in popular education methodologies will recognize parts of the process. All of us formed by Marion Parry’s focus on Holy Manners will recognize much of what is key. Actually, much of what we need to know about being together in this way we did learn in kindergarten—be kind to each other, share, and don’t run with scissors.

Kerygma Café sees conversation/dialogue as a core process for identifying value. It takes very seriously the power of conversation to help us attain outcomes we’re looking for: new ideas,

uncovering wisdom, direction, purpose. The process, we hope, will create a space for reflection, for the exchange of regional, national, and international perspectives and for the generation of knowledge that will promote and focus our efforts to be God's people. We can and do gather knowledge from many sources, from many voices. This is not an easy process, it is not effortless work, but it is something that we absolutely can do, and do well. It is a process that we are learning how to use; we will need to be flexible and light about our learning together.

I want to offer one caution about how and what we're hearing. An important value of the United Church is that we listen to many voices. As a church that celebrates inclusiveness and diversity, we are loath to leave anyone out of the conversation. And we need to be realistic about our ability to hear all the voices and all the perspectives at one time. In a global, Internet world, we must know we can't hear everything at once. Indeed, we skate on the edge of idolatry if we think we can hear and understand everything; only God has that cosmic perspective and wisdom. So we will recognize our humanity and our limitedness. We will seek to know what we can know, in this time, in this context. We will be provisional in our prophetic declarations, aware and grateful that with each sunrise we are informed in new ways; conscious at the same time that within our limits we need to make some decisions and lurch forward in humble confidence.

Kerygma Café takes the shape of conversations with friends at a coffee table. We will be in small groups, leaning into each other, having conversations that matter.

Principles of the Kerygma Café

Listen for the Spirit

In our time together, in all the places and ways we are together, intentionally listen for the Spirit.

Gather and Share Collective Discoveries

Make collective knowledge and insight visible. Include readings, reports, and other input received prior to the meeting.

The cynical among us sometimes consider a process of listening to just each other an experience of sharing our ignorance. We are wedded to our reliance on experts; in this reliance we ignore our own experience and wisdom. In our time together we have both the "expert" input, found in the massive workbook you have read carefully and in the really hundreds of resource people here, and we have our own experience and collective wisdom. We will be attentive to all of these sources of knowledge and insight. We have what we need, here and now, to develop this statement of purpose.

Listen Together for Patterns, Insights, and Deeper Questions

Focus shared attention in ways that nurture coherence of thought without losing individual contribution.

Listen to learn: enter the conversations with the goal of learning from each other. Notice how, if you're determined to get in your own point of view, you aren't listening fully to what the other person is saying. It doesn't leave as much room for learning.

Listen for difference: be curious, listen for differences. What do the differences tell you not only about the other person but about your own assumptions?

Listen with support: encourage each other to take the thinking further. As the process moves on, try to link your thinking, follow a train of thought that is developing rather than jumping around randomly.

Listen for connections: listen together for new connections, collective wisdom or insights that you wouldn't have come up with on your own. If someone else gets 'credit' for something you mentioned earlier, let it go. Know at sometime you'll get credit for something you picked up on. Listen for what's emerging in the middle, both in the table and in the commons.

Listen reflectively: Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein has said: "Those things which we cannot understand we must pass over in silence." (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus) Sometimes silence offers up the deepest wisdom. Take some time for silence and to reflect on "What's at the centre of our conversation?"

A collection of people called the "message group" will be listening attentively to both what is being said, and what is not being said. They will help us begin to identify the mind of the meeting, through listening to what you say, reflecting on what they see written on your papers during your time together, by reviewing the notes posted on the message board. They will test with us what they think they are hearing, to see if what they think they have heard you say is an accurate reflection of our common mind. I will say more about this group later.

Connect Diverse Perspectives

Intentionally increase the diversity of perspectives and deepen the connections even while retaining a common focus on core questions.

Encourage Everyone's Contribution

Enliven the relationship between the "me" and the "we."

Set the Context

Clarify the purpose and broad parameters within which the dialogue will unfold.

The image I find most helpful to explain this is that we will identify the banks of the river even while allowing the river to meander. While the conversations wander, they need to stay within the banks. Over the week of the meeting we will be seeking to deepen our awareness of what is being learned, of what we value and what we might need to set aside, of what makes us uncomfortable and what makes our hearts sing. During the week the questions will move us deeper, below the surface of our thinking, and then, begin to move us up again, to notice what is emerging as new insights and possibilities and purpose.

Create Hospitable Space

Assure the welcoming and safe environment that nurture personal comfort and mutual respect. Be conscious of Holy Manners.

On the table cards at your large tables you will see some suggestions for how we might hold this hospitable place. Again, the passage from Ephesians offers us some ancient wisdom about how we should be together: "...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4: 2-3). All of us share in the responsibility for creating and protecting a container in which together we know we are held and nurtured, safe and yet pushed a little.

Explore Questions That Matter

Focus collective attention on powerful questions that attract collaborative engagement.

Patterned after Juanita Brown and David Isaacs, *The World Café: Shaping our Futures Through Conversations That Matter* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005)
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GCE 1 - Isolation in Ministry (Commons)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the “Isolation in Ministry” report.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Refer the “Proposed Actions for Isolation in Ministry” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Proposed Action

(For consideration after General Council by the Executive of the General Council)

Title:	Isolation in Ministry
Origin:	Permanent Committee Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

1. Initiate and fund programs that assist presbyteries, ministry personnel, and pastoral charges in the creation and sustaining of faithful, healthy pastoral relationships.
2. Provide a nationally administered program that will equip presbyteries with paid ministers whose sole function is to deliver pastoral care and vocational support to ministry personnel and their families.
3. Institute a national policy to provide programs and funding that promote collegial, supportive relationships among ministry personnel based on their call to a common vocation.
4. Institute a national policy to adequately resource the educational programs of the denomination in order to ensure that ministry personnel receive educational support from discernment to retirement thereby continuing to affirm the principle of an educated ministry.
5. Institute a national policy to provide appropriate communication technology in order to provide networking capabilities among all ministry personnel.
6. Institute a national compensation system that recognises education, years of service and special circumstances.
7. Institute the policy of clearly defining the roles and relationships of paid accountable leaders within the governance and employment structure of The United Church of Canada, with clear lines of accountability and authority.
8. Revise *The Manual* as necessary to accommodate these changes.

GCE 2 - Ministry Compensation (Commons)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report on “Ministry Compensation”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statements to be developed by this General Council.
3. Receive for information the “Proposed Actions for Ministry Compensation”.
4. Refer the “Ministry Compensation Proposed Actions” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Proposed Action

(For consideration after General Council by the Executive of the General Council)

Title:	Ministry Compensation
Origin:	Permanent Committee Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

That the Executive of the General Council:

1. Implement a centralized payroll service for ministry personnel and lay employees in all pastoral charges.
2. That ministry personnel be paid a comprehensive salary instead of a base salary and housing allowance/housing;
3. Implement a redesigned salary structure that has:
 1. minimum and maximum levels of compensation for each category to enable charges to have flexibility in attracting ministry personnel and a modest recognition of regional differences;
 2. a greater differential in the salaries of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associates; and
 3. a provision that Lay Pastoral Ministers In-Training/Staff Associates not accumulate service credits until they are recognized as Lay Pastoral Ministers
4. Establish a centrally administered vehicle to compensate those.
5. In exceptionally high-cost, remote locations and (in) clergy complies where one person is restricted from claiming a clergy residence deduction.

GCE 3 - Ministry Compensation (Commons)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

Whereas the Executive of the General Council received a number of recommendations for Ministry Compensation, one of which was a recommendation for a denominationally funded salary administration system, and

Whereas a denominationally funded salary administration system may be an opportunity to more fully live out the principles listed in the report.

Whereas as a Denomination it is our desire to share resources faithfully.

Whereas it is the role of General Council to determine the direction of the Church.

Whereas this would be a major shift in the policy of the Church.

Whereas further development of this model involves significant use of General Council Office time and resources,

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

The 39th General Council 2006:

Take no action on a denominationally funded salary administration system at this time until progress is made on other proposed actions suggested by the “Ministry Compensation” report.

GCE 4 - Lay Presidency at the Sacraments (Green)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the “Lay Presidency at the Sacraments” report with particular attention to the following paragraphs;

Polity

The United Church of Canada is conciliar, meaning that its structural constitution belongs to councils that complement each other in governing the Church. Authority and responsibility reside in the General Council for determining doctrine and polity, in the Conferences for ordering and designating ministry, in the Presbyteries for ensuring accountability in ministry and in the Sessions (or comparable congregational courts) for overseeing the administration of the sacraments.

Ministry

Ministry is shared throughout the United Church. Upon the baptized and those received into full communion rests a commitment to ministry that informs the discipleship of the laos, the whole people of God. Diverse gifts are offered and recognized for the upbuilding of the local community of faith, for the church universal and for the world in which the church is set. Amidst the laos, the United Church, through call, discernment, and preparation, identifies those whom it sets apart variously by ordination (to Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care), commissioning (to Education, Service, and Pastoral Care), and designation to particular functions. Ordained, Diaconal and Lay Pastoral Ministers comprise this group which is augmented by Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training, Student Interns, Candidate Supplies, Intern Supplies, Student Supplies, and Diaconal supplies.

Sacraments

The United Church acknowledges two sacraments: Baptism and The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). A range of theological images under gird the perception of the sacraments in the United Church. Baptism signifies God's grace by incorporating souls into a covenanted community to which they belong. Holy Communion variously quickens and mediates the dynamics of remembrance, celebration, covenant, renewal, atonement, pledge of the Messianic banquet, community and a political act. They are signs and seals of the covenant created by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. They are means of grace by which Christ quickens, strengthens, and comforts faith. They are ordinances by which the United Church confesses Christ and is "visibly distinguished from the rest of the world". (Basis of Union). Their administration and observance call for signs of that distinction.

Presidency

Many conditions obtain for the sacraments to be rightly administered. Among them is the requirement of a presider, one who officiates. It is for the sake of order that the United Church grants authority to persons to preside. The presider signifies the ministries of Christ, the church universal and the assembled community.

Authority and Accountability

Authority to preside at sacraments in the United Church is granted ex officio to Ordained Ministers. Conferences regularly give licenses to administer the sacraments to Diaconal and Lay Pastoral Ministers and exceptionally to the other designed ministries. Conditions for the granting of such license are usually some form of covenanted ministry and engagement in paid accountable ministry and appropriate training. In the opinion of the General Secretary of the General Council: "The Session and Conference have separate and distinct responsibilities in relation to the Sacraments under our Polity...While the Conference

determines who may administer the Sacraments, the Session determines when and how the Sacraments are to be administered within the Congregation.

Availability of Ministry Personnel

The question of lay presidency at the sacraments arises when two expectations are not met:

- i. That there will be sufficient ministry personnel available and positioned to administer the sacraments to all congregations
 - ii. That congregations shall according to need, i.e., regularly and frequently, have access to the administration of the sacraments.
2. Establish an office to be known as Sacraments Elder.
 3. Instruct the General Secretary to:
 - i. Determine an appropriate qualification process for this office including a standard set of outcomes for the course for Sacraments Elders, to be shared with Conferences for their use upon request;
 - ii. Revise The Manual to include licensing procedures for Sacraments Elders as recommended in the Lay Presidency at the Sacraments Report.
 - iii. Examine General Council policies for recruiting and retaining paid accountable ministers with a view to supplying sufficient ministry personnel licensed to administer the sacraments.
 4. Instruct the Committee on Theology and Faith to undertake a thorough reflection on Ministry and Sacraments, to serve as context for the further development of these processes.

GCE 5 - A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada (Green)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information and affirm the directions of the report “A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. That The United Church of Canada commit itself to becoming an intercultural church, and that intercultural dimensions of ministries be a denominational priority in living out its

commitment to racial justice, where there is mutually respectful diversity and full and equitable participation of all Aboriginal, Francophone, ethnic minority, and ethnic majority constituencies in the total life, mission, and practices of the whole church.

4. That Ethnic ministries, in partnership with the Aboriginal, and Francophone ministries, continue to lead The United Church of Canada in its efforts to become an intercultural church, by “act[ing] justly within its own structures, courts, policies, and practice”*.

*Act Justly, Section 3 of The United Church of Canada Anti-Racism Policy from the 38th General Council 2003

5. Receive for information the “Proposed Actions”.
6. Refer the “Proposed Actions” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Proposed Action

(For consideration after General Council by the Executive of the General Council)

Title:	A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada
Origin:	Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

Ethnic ministries, in partnership with the Aboriginal, and Francophone ministries, will continue to lead The United Church of Canada in its efforts to becoming an intercultural* church, by “act[ing] justly within its own structures, courts, policies and practice,”** with the following proposed actions:

*Intercultural: referring to mutually reciprocal relationships among and between cultures (Canadian Oxford English Dictionary)

**Act Justly, Section 3 of The United Church of Canada Anti-Racism Policy from the 38th General Council 2003

1. A Task Group on Intercultural Ministries be established—with peoples of Aboriginal, Francophone, ethnic minority, and ethnic majority heritages—to begin work in the fall of 2007 and to focus on:
 - researching and compiling information about contemporary models of intercultural ministries,
 - receiving and analyzing reports from a variety of inter-unit staff teams and two national consultations on intercultural ministries,
 - making recommendations through unit channels to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry, based on the research and analysis on models of intercultural ministries, the reports from the two consultations, and from inter-unit staff teams to report to the Executive of the General Council by March 2009.

2. Having heard the need for further dialogue and collaboration between Aboriginal Ministries, Ministries in French, and Ethnic Ministries, a national consultation on intercultural ministries in Canada be held with volunteer and staff representatives from Aboriginal Ministries, Ministries in French, Ethnic Ministries, and the General Council Minister: Racial Justice and Gender Justice in the fall of 2007, to consider the diversity of minority community ministry issues from their respective minority perspectives, and that the results of the consultation be reported to the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries by the spring of 2008.
3. Having heard the need for dialogue and collaboration between ethnic minority and ethnic majority peoples, a national consultation on intercultural ministries in Canada be held with volunteer and staff representatives in the fall of 2008 with representatives from Ethnic Ministries, other appropriate units, and the General Council Minister: Racial Justice and Gender Justice, to focus on:
 - developing multiple congregational models, strategies, and indicators for becoming welcoming, mutually respectful, anti-racist culturally diverse congregations,
 - identifying necessary tools to help congregations check their cultural inclusivity from an anti-racist perspective,
 - developing and re-developing ethnic minority congregations and culturally diverse congregations,
 - addressing property issues relevant to ethnic minority congregations,
 - developing strategies and programs for intercultural and multi-ethnic ministry needs, and diverse models for multi-ethnic congregational ministries;and that results of the consultation be reported to the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries by spring of 2009.
4. A variety of inter-unit task groups be established between Ethnic Ministries and other units to focus on:
 - congregational development and re-development of ethnic minority congregations and culturally diverse congregations; with representatives from Support to Local Ministries (SLM) ,
 - congregational development and re-development for newcomers to Canada; with representatives from Support to Local Ministries (SLM) and Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations (JGER),
 - creating additional anti-racist educational materials and new resources on intercultural ministries; with the General Council Minister: Racial Justice and Gender Justice, and representatives from Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations (JGER), Support to Local Ministries (SLM), and Faith Formation and Education (FFE),
 - justice issues, and related policy implications, that impact racial/ethnic minorities living in Canada; with representatives from Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations (JGER),
 - building and developing stronger ecumenical relations in Canada and outside of Canada for the purposes of filling ministry personnel vacancies; with representatives from Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations (JGER) and Ministry Employment Personnel Services (MEPS),

- theological education, including recruitment, admissions policies and processes, and course work, for racial/ethnic minority persons and persons for whom English is not their first language; with representatives from Faith Formation and Education (FFE),
- issues of isolation in ministry for ministry personnel based on ethnic culture, linguistic isolation, racial isolation, and social isolation (i.e., living large distance from family and friends, distance from former social networks); with representatives from the Ministry Employment Personnel Services (MEPS),
- pastoral relations issues with ethnic minority congregations, with representatives from Support to Local Ministries (SLM) and Ministry Employment and Policy Services (MEPS), and the General Council Minister, Regional Relations, as needed,
- property issues in ethnic minority congregations; with representatives from Support to Local Ministries (SLM), and

that all of the above-named inter-unit committees report back to the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries by fall of 2008.

5. The name of Ethnic*** Ministries Unit be changed to suit its expanding work, and that the new name of the unit be Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry.

***The term *ethnic* has Greek origins meaning heathen, (*ethnikos*) i.e. neither Jew nor Christian, and nation (*ethnos*) and *ethnic* is presently understood as non-Western cultural traditions; it has been used to further marginalize minority groups which differ from the main population in racial origin or ethnic cultural background.

GCE 6 - Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire (Blue)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information with appreciation the report “Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Receive for information the Proposed Actions – Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire.

4. Refer the Proposed Actions, *Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire*, to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Proposed Action

(For consideration after General Council by the Executive of the General Council)

Title: Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire
Origin: Permanent Committee Programs on Mission and Ministry
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee
Empire Task Group
Financial Implications: Continued Funding from the JGER Unit Budget
Source of Funding: Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit Budget

1. Call on all courts, mission units, and related bodies of The United Church of Canada to
 - a. name our complicity in empire
 - b. covenant to live faithfully in the midst of empire
2. Authorize the use of *Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire* as a basis for developing resources, in consultation with other units as appropriate, for study within The United Church of Canada, including
 - the development and application of an “empire lens” (available by early 2007) to assist congregations and other mission units in identifying opportunities to pursue justice and confront, challenge, and transform empire, and
 - the development of a proposed covenant, witnessing to empire, confessing our complicity, and calling individuals, congregations, and other mission units to commit to living faithfully in the midst of empire;
3. Direct the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry to establish a process of response from the church and further development of the covenant, and report to the 40th General Council in 2009 with recommendations concerning the proposed covenant and living faithfully in the midst of empire.

GCE 7 - Leadership Outcomes Framework for Ordered Ministry (Red)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “Leadership Outcomes Framework for Ordered Ministry”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Approve a Leadership Outcome Framework model as the statement of minimum requirements for the preparation of Ordered Ministers in The United Church of Canada.
4. Direct the Executive of the General Council to refine the Leadership Outcomes Framework in light of the purpose statement(s) of the 39th General Council 2006.
5. Direct that those parts of *The Manual* pertaining to theological study be changed to reflect the shift to a Leadership Outcomes Framework.

GCE 8 - Circle and Cross: Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality (Green)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information and affirm the directions of the report “Circle and Cross: Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.

3. Receive for information the Proposed Actions for Circle and Cross.
4. Refer the Proposed Actions for Circle and Cross to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Proposed Action

(For consideration after General Council by the Executive of the General Council)

Title:	Circle and Cross: Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality
Origin:	Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

Preamble

We make these recommendations as the first phase of a six-year project placed in the larger context of The United Church of Canada's purpose statement(s) to be developed by the 39th General Council 2006.

Phase I (Period 2006-2009)

Implementation and Feedback

- 1a. That the General Council direct this report to the Conferences, districts, and presbyteries (and their congregations) to include the Circle and Cross process (of interfaith and intrafaith dialogue) as part of their strategic planning and priority setting for implementation and praxis in 2006–2009;
- 1b. That, after testing out the Circle and Cross process (options for ways of engaging in such a process are attached in Appendix IV of the report) in their regional and local contexts, Conferences, districts, and presbyteries report their findings to the Executive of the General Council by March 2009 via the Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee and Aboriginal Ministries Unit;

Involvement of Aboriginal Congregations

- 2a. That Aboriginal pastoral charges and congregations be involved in the Circle and Cross process through their Conferences, districts and presbyteries, with reference to the vision, strategic planning, and praxis arising from the National Aboriginal Consultation held in Sudbury in July 2005;
- 2b. That staff support be provided by the Coordinator of Aboriginal Ministries and other Conference staff as appropriate especially the All Native Circle Conference (ANCC) and the Native Ministries, B.C. Conference; and
- 2c. That financial assistance to implement the Circle and Cross process in Aboriginal pastoral charges and congregations be available by applying to The United Church Healing Fund.

Strategic Planning and Collaboration

That future phases of the Circle and Cross vision (Phase II 2008–2010, Phase III 2010–2012) be integrated into General Council's strategic plan covering those periods, and that they involve inter-unit collaboration.

Phase II (Period 2008–2010)

In light of the learnings gained from the Circle and Cross process:

1. We recommend that six regional DVDs be produced documenting the Circle and Cross process, as a resource for those planning and implementing the process in their Conferences, districts, and presbyteries, or congregations, and those working to understand Aboriginal spirituality and justice. DVDs should include
 - the region's mission history
 - a study guide
 - resource for adults, youth, and childrenSuggested regions: Atlantic; Quebec; Ontario; Manitoba; Saskatchewan; B.C.; (with Alberta/Territories as an initial resource produced for Phase I)
2. We recommend that education centres develop Circle and Cross events that offer the experience for persons in their regions.
3. We recommend that theological centres and colleges emphasize the growing understanding of gospel and culture in their curriculum, including course offerings.
4. We recommend the development of worship and faith formation resources that celebrate justice and diversity.

Phase III (Period 2010–2012)

In light of the learnings gained from the Circle and Cross process:

1. We recommend the organization of Conference/district gatherings that are festivals of remembering and feasting at the time of Conference or district meetings. One component would be the honouring of Elders (non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal) in our shared histories.
2. We recommend a national gathering of our multicultural church in a time of sharing resources used in worship and work. This event would involve inter-unit collaboration including staff from Support to Local Ministries (Worship, Aboriginal Ministries), Ethnic Ministries, Ministries in French, Faith Formation and Education, and Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations (Education for Justice, Inter-Church, and Inter-Faith).
3. We recommend that Circle gatherings for interfaith and interchurch learning be hosted regionally (by Conferences or districts) before the 2012 General Council meeting, to integrate our learnings from *Bearing Faithful Witness, That We May Know Each Other*, Circle and Cross, and any other interfaith conversations and studies taking place during this period.

GCE 9 - “That We May Know Each Other” (Green)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

Preamble

The United Church of Canada is called continually in all courts of the church to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the midst of our neighbours and in the world. In accordance with that call, the 38th General Council in 2003 approved for study across the church a proposed statement and study document, *That We May Know Each Other*, on the relationship of the United Church to Islam.

People of the United Church have responded thoughtfully and prayerfully to the study document and to the proposed policy statement. This statement encompasses that response and seeks to be a faithful expression of our understanding of United Church–Muslim relations.

We believe this statement is consistent with the theology and faith of The United Church of Canada and reflects our historic witness as a Christian community. As acknowledged in *That We May Know Each Other*, from Islam’s very beginnings, Muslim–Christian relationships have presented profound theological and social challenges to Christians. Islam confronts us with the meaning of a later revelation and the question of differing interpretations of core faith stories.

We believe that the prediction of the Qur’an that Christians and Muslims can be the “nearest among them in love” (Surah 5:82) is possible and preferable to an alternative path of increasing tension, mistrust, and violence. We believe, furthermore, that the task of reconciliation between Muslims and Christians is at the heart of what the church needs to be about as we seek to be faithful participants in God’s mission today.

We believe the church can continue to affirm its own distinctive self-identity while affirming that other faiths and traditions have their own self-understanding. The Bible teaches that the Word and Wisdom of God are not limited to Christians, and the Spirit of God is free and faithful. We therefore affirm and cherish the differences between traditions as gifts of God, which can be life-giving and transformative.

We believe that the church must continue to encourage its membership to grow in understanding Muslims, as they would wish to be understood. At the same time, we must search for new ways of theologically understanding Islam and its relationship with Christianity. Through creating such understanding, it will be possible to sustain long-term mutual relationships of respect, trust, and common action for the sake of the world we all inhabit.

The Executive of the General Council proposes

That the 39th General Council 2006

1. Receive for information the report “*That We May Know Each Other*”.

2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.

3. Adopt the following statements:

As an act of witness to our desire to find new ways of understanding and working with Muslim neighbours for the sake of the well-being of our world, The United Church of Canada:

Affirms that Christianity and Islam are in essence religions of peace, mercy, justice, and compassion.

Acknowledges hostility and misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims and between Christianity and Islam.

Affirms a vision of Muslim and Christian relations no longer bound by past histories, and free from ignorance, indifference, and ill will.

Affirms that The United Church of Canada is committed to a journey towards reconciliation, understanding, and co-operation with our Muslim neighbours.

Affirms that we share with Muslims a belief in one God and a common heritage through Abraham.

Affirms that God is creatively at work in the religious life of Muslims and Christians.
Acknowledges that Jesus, as understood in Islam, is accorded special honour as a prophet in the Qur'an and by Muslims.

Acknowledges the prophetic witness of Muhammad, and that the mercy, compassion, and justice of God are expressed in the Qur'an, which is regarded by Muslims as the word of God.

Affirms that God, whose love we have experienced in Jesus Christ as boundless and resourceful, works creatively and redemptively in us and in others.

Affirms that The United Church of Canada is committed to a vision that leads us to work with Muslims and others for peace and justice for all humanity.

Invites all people of The United Church of Canada to participate in conversation and study that upholds and respects the integrity and faithful witness of our traditions.

Encourages all people of The United Church of Canada to seek out opportunities to work together with Muslims to seek justice and resist evil for the sake of the world we all inhabit.

GCE 10 - Appendix IV of *The Manual* (Blue)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “Appendix IV of *The Manual*”.
2. Approve the following policy changes for Appendix IV:
Provide for three categories of defined relationships with incorporated bodies. These categories will be defined along the following lines:

Category 1: The United Church of Canada Incorporated Ministries

This category affirms the close and vital relationship of the church to the corporation.

- These corporations shall comply with the requirements of Appendix IV.
- A majority of Board members shall be from The United Church of Canada and the Executive-Secretary of the supervising Conference shall be *ex-officio* a corresponding member of the board of the Corporation (receives notices of meetings, minutes of meetings, has right to attend all meetings – voice not vote) but would not normally be expected to attend meetings.
- There will be annual reporting of financial statements and acceptable levels of insurance coverage.
- The supervising Conference has authority to permit the Corporation to determine its own manner of naming the membership of the Corporation.
- Permission will be sought from the supervising court and higher courts, as needed, for changes to corporate by-laws and for defined forms of fundraising.
- Indebtedness will be subject to prescribed limits unless exceptions are approved by the supervising Conference.
- Oversight visits shall take place in the spirit of *The Manual* section 332 and as determined by the supervising Conference.
- These ministries will be committed to participation in the sector-appropriate duty of care program and accreditation process that is being developed in The United Church of Canada.
- Category 1 will be the default designation for all current and future incorporated bodies associated with The United Church of Canada unless it is an incorporated partnership (Category 2).
- The assets of these corporations shall be vested in The United Church of Canada in the event that the corporation ceases to function or its corporate existence is terminated and shall be subject to the real property policies of the General Council as they are amended and updated from time-to-time.
- Corporations spawned by Category 1 corporations will be organized and supervised according to Appendix IV.

Category 2: Incorporated Partnership Ministries

This category acknowledges The United Church of Canada as one of two or more partners in a corporation.

- The level of representation of corporation members and Board of Directors will normally be in proportion to the agreed level of participation of the United Church. For example, if The United Church of Canada is one of three equal partners, then one-third of the members and board members will be ~~drawn from~~ selected by The United Church of Canada.
- Responsibilities and potential risks will be similarly divided to reflect the partnership make-up and defined in the corporation's by-laws.
- Regular and annual reporting of financial statements and confirmation of insurance coverage will be required.
- Oversight visits shall take place in the spirit of Manual section 332 and as determined by the supervising Conference.
- These corporations may have their own self-defined duty of care program, participate in The United Church of Canada's Duty of Care Program, or participate in the duty of care program of one of the other partners, as long as the standards are comparable with The United Church of Canada's or higher.
- In the event that the corporation ceases to function or its corporate existence is terminated, the assets will be vested in The United Church of Canada in proportion to The United Church of Canada's participation in the partnership and will be subject to the real property policies of the General Council as they are amended and updated from time-to-time, or subject to comparable policies of one of the other partners.
- Corporations spawned by Category 2 corporations will function according to the ownership and shared liability rules governing the original corporation.

Category 3: Legacy Incorporated Ministries

This category will explicitly acknowledge the historical origins of the corporation's ministry with The United Church of Canada and the distance from the church, that has evolved, for whatever reason.

- The legal tie of the corporation to the church will be severed following appropriate consultation and agreement with the supervising court and all higher church courts.
- Appropriate consultation and approval processes that are recognized by The United Church of Canada and the people the corporation serves, including clients or participants, will take place to guard against precipitous action resulting in irrevocably severing the corporation's link with The United Church of Canada.
- The United Church of Canada will cease to have any liability or indebtedness for the corporation.
- The disposition of capital assets, including lands and buildings, will be negotiated according to the real property policies of the General Council as they are amended and updated from time-to-time.
- Ways of enhancing the relationship between Category 3 Corporations and The United Church of Canada will be nurtured, without the legal liabilities that pertain to Category 1 corporations, including
 - Developing/identifying the General Council entity which will ~~steward~~ guide the relationship between Category 3 corporations and The United Church of Canada

- Strengthening associations for specific ministries, e.g. the Organization of United Church of Canada Homes; Connections – the triennial camping conference; the gathering of community ministries, etc.
 - Developing associations where currently none is in place
3. Approve the policy changes with respect to supervision:
 With respect to the supervisory apparatus for Appendix IV corporations, Presbyteries and Congregations shall no longer have primary supervision for corporations. The Conferences shall supervise all The United Church of Canada corporations within their geographic bounds. Conferences may phase in the transfer of supervisory responsibility from Presbyteries/Congregations to the Conference within the implementation period (up to December 31, 2011). Exceptions are the two corporations, The United Church Observer and The United Church of Canada Foundation that are supervised by the General Council. Conference offices shall inform the Executive of the General Council on an annual basis of the compliance of The United Church of Canada corporations with the provisions of Appendix IV. The Executive of the General Council shall provide the required support for uniform reporting on compliance from Conferences.
4. Revise *The Manual* to reflect the policy changes.

GCE 11 - Retirement (Red)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

Summary

As a result of changes to and the evolution of social attitudes, expectations and practices within our society, mandatory retirement has been eliminated in many jurisdictions in Canada. People live longer, tend to be in better health and, whether out of necessity or choice, wish to work beyond the age of 65. Legislation has recently been introduced in Ontario to prohibit mandatory retirement based entirely upon age. This legislation *An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement* is effective December 12, 2006. Mandatory retirement is also no longer permissible in Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and most likely Alberta (the legislation there is framed differently than that of other provinces). As a result of legislation in these provinces, a legal opinion was sought regarding the United Church's ability to continue to require Ministers throughout Canada to retire at the age of 65. This opinion implies that it is no longer possible for The United Church of Canada to maintain its current retirement policy.

It is also advisable to ensure that *The Manual* is amended to remove any provisions which provide for age qualifications for a position or training opportunity.

Retirement Policy

1. Normal retirement of a member of the Order of Ministry shall be the attaining of age sixty-five or the following June 30th. [Section 365.1(b) *The Manual (2004)*].
2. Retirement may be postponed beyond the normal retirement age on application of the member of the Order of Ministry concerned, following consultation by the Presbytery with the Official Board/Church Board/Church Council on recommendation to the Conference that retirement be postponed beyond the normal retirement age [Section 365.1 (c)]
3. The approval for the postponement of retirement by the Presbytery and Conference is required to be given annually. [Section 365.1(c)]
4. Early retirement and a discounted pension is also provided for under the current policy. [Section 365.1(d)]

Whereas Bill 121 An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement was given Royal Assent on December 12, 2005

And Whereas Bill 121 amends the Human rights code to provide that every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination because of age and age is defined as eighteen years or more

And Whereas the effect of Bill 121 is to end mandatory retirement in Ontario as of December 12, 2006

And Whereas half of all ministry personnel within The United Church of Canada work in the Province of Ontario

And Whereas legislation which has the effect of prohibiting mandatory retirement exists in Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Alberta.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Authorize the General Secretary to amend the Human Resource Policy to comply with legislation which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age.
2. Direct the General Secretary to communicate these changes regarding mandatory retirement to all Conferences, Presbyteries, and pastoral charges.
3. Amend the *Manual* to comply with current legislation which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age and specifically prohibits mandatory retirement.

GCE 12 - Police Records Checks (Red)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	Minimal increase in cost of obtaining a police records check for some ministry personnel and/or pastoral charges
Staffing Implications:	None

Background

The Executive of the General Council received at its meeting October 28 to November 1, 2005, from its Permanent Committee Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, a proposal, concerning changes to the policies on police records checks. The proposal addressed two concerns:

1. That the current bylaws of *The Manual* simply indicate the requirement of police records checks for ministry personnel, without specifying the level of police records check expected, causing a lack of clarity and inconsistency of practice;
2. That church policy needs to be more precise in distinguishing whether the police records check serves as a screening tool, or as a mechanism for monitoring the activity of ministry personnel as an exercise in due diligence and duty of care.

The Executive of the General Council approved a proposal to change policy related to police records checks at the October 28, 2005 meeting, and further approved a proposal concerning the timing of implementation at the April 2006 meeting. These actions are represented in the proposals now brought before the General Council in order to effect the necessary changes.

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006 approve:

1. That *The Manual* be amended to include the vulnerable sector (Level 2) Police Records Check.
2. All ministry personnel be required to have completed a vulnerable sector (Level 2) Police Records Check no later than 90 days following the publication of the Record of Proceedings.
3. The vulnerable sector (Level 2) Police Records Check be required prior to the initiation of any new pastoral relationship, including call, settlement, appointment, and internship.
4. Prior to the initiation of a pastoral relationship (call, appointment or internship) a minimum of two references are to be interviewed by a minimum of 2 members of the search committee or appointing body; using guidelines to be provided by the General Secretary, General Council.
5. The documentation of the reference checks be included on the call/appointment form to include the name of the reference, name of interviewers, and the date of the interview.
6. Only the original Police Records Check be valid.

7. Reduce the number of vulnerable sector checks (Police Records Check) required from every three years (during scheduled pastoral oversight visit) to a maximum of every six years (or alternate triennial pastoral oversight visits) for those in a continuous pastoral relationship, whether by call or appointment, and that *The Manual* and guidelines be changed to reflect this policy.
8. *The Manual* include the requirement that paid accountable ministry personnel must immediately report to the Pastoral Relations Committee of their Presbytery whenever they have been charged with any criminal offence, in any jurisdiction.
9. That the General Secretary, General Council create a form to document that a Level 2 (Vulnerable Sector) Police Records Check has been completed and seen by the Presbytery Pastoral Relations and Oversight Committee at the second tri-annual visit of the ministry personnel in the same pastoral relationship (or 6 years).

GCE 13 - Water: Life before Profit (Blue)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “Water: Life before Profit”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Affirm its conviction that water is a sacred gift that connects all life. Its value to the common good must take priority over commercial interests. Privatization turns a common good into a commodity, depriving those who cannot pay and further threatening local ecosystems.
4. Encourage United Church congregations to learn more about, and become engaged in, water issues so that members individually, and together as communities of faith, can be better stewards of water, utilising available resources including Waters of Life: Issues, Ethics, and Actions prepared by the Justice, Global, and Ecumenical Relations Unit.
5. Encourage United Church members and congregations to participate in the advocacy campaign denominationally and ecumenically based on this statement against the privatization of water.

6. Call upon the Government of Canada to act, nationally and internationally, to ensure access to clean water for all, now and for future generations by:
 - a. Supporting publicly or co-operatively controlled water services that have genuine community participation, noting the critical need in First Nations communities;
 - b. Opposing measures in federal, bilateral and multilateral agreements and policies that promote the privatization of water services, and
 - c. Protecting and preserving natural sources of water.

GCE 14 - Anglican – United Church Dialogue (Green)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “Anglican – United Church Dialogue”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.

GCE 15 - Ecumenical Shared Ministries (Green)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	None
Staffing Implications:	None
Source of Funding:	None

Background

Ecumenical Shared Ministries is an inter-unit responsibility of Support to Local Ministries (SLM) and Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations (JGER), through the Interchurch Interfaith Committee. Work toward this proposal has been undertaken by staff from both units, in consultation with staff from Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS).

As a result of concerns raised by Presbytery and Conference colleagues where a number of Ecumenical Shared Ministry congregations are located, it has come to attention that the way of including Ecumenical Shared Ministries (ESMs) in *The Manual*, in the sections for supply and those seeking admission (sections 347 and 031), fails to take account of the unique situation and structure of these ministries. Persons who are ordained in a partner denomination, with no

intention of seeking admission to The United Church of Canada, are asked according to *The Manual*, to meet most of the steps in a process set out for those seeking admission, including: to affirm the doctrine of the United Church, conform to United Church government and polity, and meet United Church educational standards.

It has also been noted that in the yearbook, the listing for staff in ESM congregations generally states “*denomination [e.g. Anglican] appointment*” with no name given, or does not list the ministry staff at all.

The categorization as ‘supply’ and manner of listing in the yearbook gives no recognition that these are congregations with fully-functioning ministries. The result tends to diminish the work of these congregations and can create tensions with ecumenical partners and within the Presbyteries and Conferences where these congregations are located.

In those areas where ESMs have been concentrated considerable work has been done to develop guidelines for pastoral relations and other matters, which reflect the unique context and dimensions of ESM. Through the work of the Anglican-United Church Dialogue, a handbook first created in northern Alberta/British Columbia is being revised and expanded, with the intention that it be adopted by all participating denominations in Ecumenical Shared Ministries as a document guiding our involvement in these ministries. Positive feedback on this initiative has been received from our colleagues in the Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches. The Handbook includes a section on “guidelines for pastoral relations.”

A *Manual* change is therefore proposed that would recognize the particularities of appointing ministry personnel to Ecumenical Shared Ministries with a separate section which clarifies expectations of United Church personnel and those in other denominations, using the ESM Handbook guidelines for pastoral relations as a basic point of reference. Such a change would reflect an understanding that ministry personnel from another denomination with which the United Church participates in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry are not “ordained supply” to the United Church, but ministers in a partnership of which the United Church is a member.

A possible wording for a new *Manual* section on Ecumenical Shared Ministries that takes into account the resource of the *Handbook for a Canadian Ecumenical Shared Ministry* is as follows:

The Presbytery shall have authority to appoint ministry personnel of The United Church of Canada or to recognize/ratify the appointment of ministry personnel of another participating denomination to an Ecumenical Shared Ministry.

- a. Appointments of ministry personnel of The United Church of Canada shall be governed by the requirements of *The Manual* in conjunction with the “Guidelines for Pastoral Relations” of the *Handbook for a Canadian Ecumenical Shared Ministry*, subject to the regulations and procedures of the appropriate General Council Units in relation to Ecumenical Shared Ministry.
- b. Recognition/ratification of ministry personnel of another participating denomination shall be subject to fulfillment of the appropriate procedures of that denomination in

conjunction with the “Guidelines for Pastoral Relations” of the *Handbook for a Canadian Ecumenical Shared Ministry* subject to the regulations and procedures of the appropriate General Council Units in relation to Ecumenical Shared Ministry.

- c. Ministers from other denominations who choose to seek admission to the order of ministry of The United Church of Canada while serving in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry shall be governed by the procedures outlined in Section 031 of *The Manual*.

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt as policy:

1. That ministry personnel from partner denominations with which The United Church of Canada participates in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry not be designated as ordained/diaconal supply, and therefore that references to Ecumenical Shared Ministries be removed from section 342: Diaconal Supply or Ordained Supply.
2. That a new section in *The Manual* be created, which recognizes Ecumenical Shared Ministries as a unique category of pastoral relationship and clarifies expectations of United Church personnel and those in other denominations.
3. That these changes take into account the “Guidelines for Pastoral Relations” offered in the *Handbook for a Canadian Ecumenical Shared Ministry*.

GCE 16 - Partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples in Healing the Church and the World (Green)

Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

We the Aboriginal Peoples of The United Church of Canada have always recognized that we come from diverse cultures with unique languages and traditions, but yet we are all related...thus... “All My Relations”.

The first missionaries of the church, while ‘well meaning’ in their vision to teach us the gospel of Christ and to re-make us in His image, did not take the time to see that we too were a very spiritual people of the same Creator...with our own gifts to offer. This error in judgment and action by the church was affirmed in The United Church of Canada’s Apology to the Aboriginal people in 1986 in Sudbury, Ontario offered by then-Moderator Robert Smith. It stated:

... “We tried to make you be like us
And in so doing

We helped destroy the vision
That made you what you were” ...

In our caring and respectful traditions, we embraced the church with great humility. We allowed the church to lead the way and trusted that Creator would bring us together...that did not happen. We said nothing, but instead continued to share our gift of trust...trust in Creator...trust in the church. Creator has never abandoned us, but the church has. Much has happened over the history of The United Church of Canada’s relationship with Aboriginal Peoples...a legacy in which we became disconnected, dependent with a wounded spirit. Yet we survived.

Now, twenty years after the Apology, we are again asking for your attention. We have become strong in spite of our wounded spirit and we say ‘it is time; it is time to move beyond the words of the Apology’. Your words that said...

... “We ask you to forgive us
and to walk together with us
in the Spirit of Christ” ...

We are here to stay, we are not leaving. For you see, ‘we the Aboriginal Peoples’ see the United Church as part of our world, our spirituality and our healing journey.

Today we come here with a proposal ...a plan and a way of moving ahead, walking together...beyond the grief, beyond the lament to become fully active partners in the work of The United Church of Canada. We are here to help transform our historical legacy to that of a Healing Model for the world to see, to follow, and to use in practicing peace and faith in a diverse world.

Whereas, we the Aboriginal Peoples within The United Church of Canada view ourselves as an integral and important membership of this church, and

Whereas, it was the Church who first came to us to offer the Christian way of life, and

Whereas, it was the Church who wanted to make us to be like you, but it has always been at a subservient level, and

Whereas, it is the active directive of the Aboriginal People of The United Church of Canada voiced at the consultation in July 2005 in Sudbury, Ontario that we become active partners in the work of The United Church of Canada, and

Whereas, it is the active desire of the Aboriginal Peoples of The United Church of Canada to help transform our historical legacy to that of an equal and joint partnership in healing the church and world in the Spirit of Christ, and.

Whereas, we believe that a National Aboriginal Council should be established within The United Church of Canada structure to provide a strong visible presence of the Aboriginal voice and participation in discernment and ministry, and

Whereas, we believe that an Aboriginal Ministries Unit should be established within the General Council Office of The United Church of Canada to connect the Aboriginal community and its ministry to the wider church and its work, and

Whereas we believe that an Aboriginal staff position should be created at the Senior Leadership Team level and a permanent staff complement assigned to the Aboriginal Ministries Unit to support the work of Aboriginal ministries within The United Church of Canada, and

Whereas with appropriate consultation the General Secretary will establish a Steering Committee that is representative of the British Columbia Native Ministries Council, the All Native Circle Conference, other Aboriginal Membership within The United Church of Canada and the Executive of the General Council to:

- Undertake a consultation and discernment process with Aboriginal members and others within the church about a National Aboriginal Council and an Aboriginal Ministries Unit,
- develop recommendations with respect to the role, make-up and budget requirements of the National Aboriginal Council and the Aboriginal Ministries Unit, as well as the Senior Leadership Team position, and,
- bring an interim report back to the Executive of the General Council at its spring 2007 meeting and a final report at the Fall 2007 meeting,

Whereas the General Secretary will direct staff support to the steering committee from (not less than) the General Council Coordinator of Aboriginal Ministries, the Speaker of the All Native Circle Conference, and British Columbia Conference, Minister of Native Ministries, and

Whereas the General Secretary will provide for appropriate liaison between the Steering Committee and the Senior Leadership Team.

The Executive of General Council proposes

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Transform its historical legacy to that of an equal and joint partnership in healing the church and the world in the Spirit of Christ with the active partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples of The United Church of Canada

GCE 17 - General Council Commissioners (Green)

Origin: Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications: N/A
Staffing Implications: N/A
Source of Funding: General Council Budget

Whereas the number of commissioners elected by Conferences to a General Council is a complex process as outlined in *The Manual 2004*, Section 423(a):

423 General Council. It shall be the duty of the Conference:

- (a) to elect to the General Council an equal number from each of two (2) groups:
 - i. members of the Order of Ministry and lay members appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry, with the proportion of each being determined by their numbers; and
 - ii. lay members other than those appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry; (Basis 7.6.8)
 - iii. subject to the following:
 - iv. Commissioners to the General Council shall be members within the jurisdiction of the Conference that elected them both at the time of election and at the time when the General Council is convened;
 - v. the Conference may elect as a lay Commissioner any member of the United Church in any Pastoral Charge within the jurisdiction of the Conference, who is not ineligible Overseas Personnel;
 - vi. the Conference may elect as a Commissioner any member of the Order of Ministry on the roll of the Conference, who is not ineligible Overseas Personnel;
 - vii. Overseas Personnel appointed by the appropriate General Council working unit, whether Order of Ministry or lay, and whether in Canada or overseas, shall not be eligible for election as Commissioners by a Conference;
 - viii. the total number of Commissioners that the Conference shall elect to the General Council shall be determined by multiplying the total number of Commissioners to be elected by all the Conferences by the average of the ratios of the number of (1) resident members, (2) identifiable givers, (3) households under pastoral care, and (4) Ministry Personnel in the Conference to the number in the whole (national) United Church. This calculation may be expressed by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Conf RM}}{\text{Nat RM}} + \frac{\text{Conf IG}}{\text{Nat IG}} + \frac{\text{Conf Hh}}{\text{Nat Hh}} + \frac{\text{Conf Min}}{\text{Nat Min}} \times N = \text{TCC}$$

4

Where

- RM = number of resident members
- IG = number of identifiable givers
- Hh = number of households under pastoral care
- Min = number of Ministry Personnel who have been appointed to Pastoral Charges, Missions, Outreach Ministries, or special ministries
- N = total number of Commissioners representing all Conferences, established by the General Council from time to time

- TCC = total number of Commissioners to be elected by the Conference, one-half (1/2) of whom shall be members of the Order of Ministry and lay members appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry, and one-half (1/2) of whom shall be lay members other than those appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry
Where the answer (TCC) is not an even whole number, the result shall be rounded to the nearest even whole number;
- ix. notwithstanding the foregoing, each Conference shall elect as Commissioners at least eight (8) members of the Order of Ministry and lay members appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry, and an equal number of lay members other than those appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry; and
 - x. the Conference shall determine the method by which the Commissioners shall be elected. The Conference shall also elect a number of alternate Commissioners. The Conference may not delegate the election;

And whereas the N (Total number of Commissioners representing all Conferences, established by the General Council from time to time) has been N=372 for many General Councils, although the rationale for the number 372 is unclear;

And whereas the number of Commissioners for the 39th General Council 2006 based on N=372 from each Conference is:

n	Conferences
16	All Native Circle
32	Alberta & Northwest
32	Bay of Quinte
26	British Columbia
38	Hamilton
36	London
26	Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario
16	Manitou
46	Maritime
26	Montreal & Ottawa
16	Newfoundland & Labrador
24	Saskatchewan
38	Toronto
372	TOTAL

And whereas the membership of the Executive of the General Council includes twenty-six (26) persons, two (2) elected by each Conference;

And whereas under the present policy for electing Commissioners, these twenty-six (26) members of the Executive of the General Council are not Commissioners unless they are elected as Commissioners by their Conferences;

And whereas it is desirable to ensure that that these twenty-six (26) members of the Executive of the General Council also serve as Commissioners because they play a essential role in interpreting the proposals submitted to the General Council and implementing the decisions of the General Council through the Executive of the General Council;

And whereas under the present policy for electing Commissioners, the President-elect of each Conference is not a Commissioner unless elected as such by their Conference;

And whereas it is desirable to ensure that each Conference President-elect serve as a Commissioner because they play an essential role in the Conference in interpreting the decisions of the General Council;

And whereas the membership of the Executive of the General Council also includes the following ten (10) additional members:

- four (4) members at large, two (2) of whom are young and young adult representatives;
- two (2) persons from the francophone constituency;
- two (2) persons from the ethnic ministries constituency;
- a representative to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches; and
- the Chairperson of the General Council Business Table Chairperson;

And whereas it is desirable to ensure that these ten (10) additional members serve as Commissioners because the experience of and knowledge gained through participating in the General Council would be an asset to their governance role as voting members of the Executive of the General Council;

Therefore the Executive of the General Council proposes:

1. That the 39th General Council 2006 authorize the General Secretary, General Council to appoint a task group:
 - i. to review the number of Commissioners to the General Council and the process for calculating such number, including the formula “ $N = 372$ ”; and
 - ii. to report to the 40th General Council 2009 with recommendations as to any revisions to the number of Commissioners and the process for calculating such number that the task group may consider appropriate.
2. That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that the following persons be made ex officio Commissioners of the General Council:
 - i. the persons elected by the Conferences to serve on the Executive of the General Council (presently twenty-six persons, two elected by each Conference);
 - ii. the President-elect or Speaker-elect of each Conference; and

- iii. ten members elected by the General Council to serve on the Executive of the General Council (other than those elected by the Conferences or the Chairpersons of each of the Permanent Committees of the Executive of the General Council);
4. That the 39th General Council 2006 authorize a remit to test the will of the church with respect to the policy change set out in paragraph 2.

GS 1 - Proposed Statement of Faith (Commons)

Origin:	General Secretary, General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The General Secretary, on behalf of the Committee on Theology and Faith, proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Adopt “A Song of Faith” as the statement of faith of the United Church of Canada for this generation of the church.
2. Commend it to the church for faith formation and education and for theological guidance of policy and practice.

GS 2 - Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel (Blue)

Origin:	General Secretary, General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

Whereas the current situation of escalating instability and hatred in the Middle East requires the concerted and immediate action of all people to find a path to a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

Whereas the New Creed of The United Church of Canada states our belief that “We are called...to love and serve others; to seek justice and resist evil”;

Whereas The United Church of Canada has consistently striven for peace with justice in the Middle East, working ecumenically and in concert with global partners in the region such as: the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), Sabeel and the Jerusalem Women’s Centre, ecumenical networks such as the Middle East Working Group of KAIROS, and the World

Council of Churches (WCC) and Israeli partners and organizations such as Bat Shalom, B'Tselem and Israelis Against House Demolitions (ICAH), all of whom have affirmed the understanding that the ending of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is a necessary step towards a lasting and just peace in the region;

Whereas the United Church recognises and affirms Israel's legitimate security concerns;

Whereas the United Church acknowledges a history of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism within Christianity as a whole, including The United Church of Canada;

Whereas in the 38th General Council 2003 recorded its conviction that a just peace in the Middle East will require:

- the recognition by the Israeli Government of a fully sovereign State of Palestine with secure borders, and territorial contiguity encompassing the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- the recognition by the emergent State of Palestine and other neighbouring Arab States of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state within safe and secure borders;
- the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem;
- the ending of suicide bombings as well as other forms of violent attacks directed towards civilians on the part of Palestinians;
- the withdrawal of Israeli military forces to pre-1967 borders and the ending of all forms of collective punishment and violence by the Israeli Government on the Palestinian people;
- the recognition by the Israeli Government and the emergent State of Palestine of equal citizenship rights, protections, privileges and responsibilities for all their citizens regardless of religious or national origins.

Whereas the Executive of the General Council has:

- reaffirmed the commitment of The United Church of Canada to support and encourage the continued existence of the State of Israel as a secure and safe homeland for all peoples residing there, recognizing its uniquely Jewish character;
- Lamented the failure to move forward in the creation of a Palestinian state (fully sovereign, with secure borders and territorial contiguity encompassing the West Bank and Gaza), and therefore denounces:
 - the policies and actions of the Israeli government in the continued expansion of illegal settlements and in particular the transfer of Gaza settlers to settlements in the West Bank, and the continued construction of the Separation Wall within Palestinian territory restricting the development of a Palestinian State and significantly disrupting Palestinian life;
- Condemned statements calling for the destruction of Israel, all actions or policies that seek to deny the rightful and secure existence of the State of Israel, and in particular acts of violence aimed at Israeli citizens; and
- affirmed its conviction that "a necessary step towards true peace in the region will be through the implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions specifically 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948) and that these resolutions require ... the withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank including settlements";

Whereas the World Council of Churches and global partners such as the Middle East Council of Churches, Bat Shalom, Jerusalem Centre for Women and Sabeel have stated their clear understanding that an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine is a necessary and required step for a lasting and just peace in the Middle East, and have urgently renewed their call for churches, the global ecumenical family and the international community to seriously consider economic pressure as a means of action;

Whereas The United Church of Canada has in the past also called for divestment, sanctions and other economic measures on companies and governments supporting illegal activity, oppression and injustice in several countries, such as Guatemala, Myanmar (Burma), Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa and Sudan;

Whereas The United Church of Canada affirms that any divestment economic measures adopted will end when the related illegal economic behaviour ceases;

Whereas there is great hope for a non-violent answer, believing in security for Israel within just borders and sovereignty for Palestine, with the coming together of Israeli and Palestinian partners who make this call (Sabeel, Middle East Council of Churches, Jerusalem Centre for Women, Bat Shalom, Jewish Voices for Peace, Bereaved Parents Circle, Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions and others);

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006

1. Receive for information the report on “Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Invite the membership, congregations and organizations of The United Church of Canada to contribute to the realisation of a just peace in Palestine and Israel through:
 - continuing to work with the Jewish and Arab communities to promote peace and understanding and the end of hostilities in the Middle East;
 - continuing to denounce acts of violence perpetrated against civilians on both sides of the conflict;
 - adopting an pro-investment strategy with companies which engage in ethically responsible business, and contribute to peace and a secure and economically viable Palestinian state alongside a secure and economically viable State of Israel;
 - engaging in a process of selective, phased divestment with Canadian and international companies and corporations that :
 - provide products, services or technology that sustain, support or maintain the occupation;
 - have established facilities or operations on occupied land;
 - provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, and/or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement-related infrastructure;

- provide products, services or financial support to groups that engage in violence against innocent civilians; or
- provide finances or assist in the construction and/or maintenance of the separation barrier within occupied territories;
- advocacy with the Canadian government and corporations to take leadership in international efforts toward a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

GS 3 - Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel (Red)

Origin:	General Secretary, General Council
Financial Implications:	Meeting costs
Staffing implications:	United Church Legal/Judicial Counsel
Source of Funding:	Operating Budget

Whereas the 38th General Council 2003 directed the Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel to develop draft standards of practice and ethical standards for the consideration of the 39th General Council 2006;

And whereas the Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel has submitted its report together with draft standards of practice and ethical standards for the consideration of the 39th General Council 2006;

And whereas the 38th General Council 2003 also directed the Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel to evaluate the present process for discipline and oversight of Ministry Personnel, with recommendations to be made to the 39th General Council 2006 of any revisions that the Task Group may consider appropriate;

And whereas the Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel considered its primary task to be the development of the draft standards before evaluating the present process for discipline and oversight, and is requesting additional time for the task of evaluating the discipline and oversight process.

Therefore the General Secretary, General Council proposes

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “The Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel”.
2. Adopt the draft standards of practice contained in that report as the standards of practice for Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada (Section 5).
3. Adopt the draft ethical standards contained in that report as the ethical standards for Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada (Section 6).
4. Direct the Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel:

- a. to develop and execute an implementation plan for the standards of practice and ethical standards as outlined in the report; and
- b. to evaluate the present process for discipline and oversight of Ministry Personnel, with recommendations to be made to the Executive of the General Council by March 2009 of any revisions that the Task Group may consider appropriate.

GS 4 - Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the 38th General Council 2003 adopted a policy whereby those persons serving as Lay Preachers would thenceforward be referred to as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders;

And whereas changes to the Basis of Union are required in order to reflect the policy adopted by the 38th General Council 2003;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 authorize

A Remit to the Presbyteries with respect to the following changes to the Basis of Union, in order to reflect the policy adopted by the 38th General Council 2003:

5.10.2 It shall also be its [the Session's] duty:

...

(3) To recommend to Presbytery suitable lay members to be licensed as ~~Lay Preachers~~ Licensed Lay Worship Leaders;

...

6.4 It shall be the duty of the Presbytery:

...

6.4.4 to license as a ~~Lay Preacher~~ Licensed Lay Worship Leader a member of the laity who has been recommended by a Session and who has successfully completed the course of study in accordance with the procedures established by the General Council and after examination is approved by the Presbytery;

GS 5 - General Secretaries as Commissioners (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas Section 8.3 of the Basis of Union names three of the General Council Secretaries as Commissioners to the General Council;

And whereas, as a result of the restructuring of the General Council office, the positions of those General Council Secretaries no longer exist;

And whereas the General Secretary of the General Council has ruled that, as a result of the restructuring of the General Council office, there are no staff positions equivalent to those General Council Secretaries that would be appropriately designated to serve as a Commissioner;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 authorize a Remit to the Presbyteries with respect to the following changes to the Basis of Union, in order to reflect the re-organization of the General Council offices:

8.0 The General Council shall consist of:

...

8.3 the Chairperson or alternate of each General Council Division, ~~and three of the General Council Secretaries.~~

GS 6 - Audit Requirements (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the By-Laws are inconsistent in whether the requirement of an audit may be satisfied by a “review engagement.” (Subsections 167(a) and (b) specify a “review engagement” as satisfying the audit requirement; paragraph 814(c)ii. contemplates a “review engagement.” The language of an audit still appears at the end of section 170, and in subsection 187(d), paragraph 384(b)v., subsection 464(g), subsection 856(d), and Appendix II.7.)

And whereas the terms “audit” and “review engagement” have technical meanings;

And whereas the intention of the church is to ensure careful independent review of financial records;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 add a definition of “audit” to section 001 of the By-Laws, as follows:

[new] **“Audit”** means an independent examination of financial records, to determine the accuracy of financial statements, to determine whether financial transactions have been properly recorded, and to identify potential weaknesses in the accounting systems. Such an examination may be conducted by a public accountant as an audit or review engagement, or by an individual who is familiar with bookkeeping and who understands the purpose of an independent review of financial records. For Pastoral Charges or Congregations, these procedures include:

- a. ensuring that there is segregation of duties among two (2) or more people who are at arm’s length;
- b. examining the minute book of the Committee of Stewards or equivalent;
- c. examining for accuracy the books of record, by reviewing cash receipts, cash disbursements, payroll, and general ledger transactions;
- d. ensuring proper authorization of transactions;
- e. reviewing bank reconciliations for the year;
- f. ensuring that all donated monies designated for the Mission and Service Fund have been forwarded to the United Church on a monthly basis;
- g. reviewing the procedures used in the record-keeping of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, and ensuring that the chance of error or fraud is minimized;
- h. verifying cash receipts against charitable donation receipts issued; and
- i. ensuring that the annual information return was completed and submitted not later than six (6) months after the previous fiscal year-end.

And

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend section 167, section 170, subsection 187(d), paragraph 384(b)v., subsection 464(g), paragraph 814(c)i., and subsection 856(d) of the By-Laws, as follows:

167 The Committee of Stewards shall present to the annual meeting of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation:

- (a) a detailed statement of its receipts and expenditures, ~~duly audited for which an Audit has been performed~~ or subject to review engagement;
- (b) a detailed statement of the receipts and expenditures of the Board of Trustees, ~~duly audited for which an Audit has been performed~~ or subject to review engagement; and

...

170 Treasurer. The Committee of Stewards shall elect annually from among its members a Treasurer. ... At the end of the financial year the Treasurer shall present a statement for which an Audit has been performed, certified by the auditor or auditors appointed by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation or the Official Board.

187 Treasurer of the Mission and Service Fund. It shall be the duty of the Official Board to appoint a separate Treasurer of the Mission and Service Fund for the Pastoral Charge, who shall:

...

(d) present a complete ~~audited~~ report for which an Audit has been performed, to the Official Board and to the annual meeting of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation(s)

384 [Presbytery] Finance Committee.

...

(b) Duties. It shall be the duty of the Committee:

...

v. to keep accounts, ~~which shall be audited and~~ A detailed statement of receipts and expenditures, for which an Audit has been performed, shall be presented to the Presbytery annually. Interim financial statements shall be given as required by the Presbytery.

464 [Conference] Finance Committee.

...

(g) Budget Submissions. Each participant in the Conference Fund shall prepare annually a budget setting forth its estimated requirements for the ensuing calendar year, together with ~~an audited~~ a financial statement for which an Audit has been performed, for the previous year, for submission to the Finance Committee not later than April 15th of each year. The Finance Committee shall have authority to request from participants in the Conference Fund such information as it may require.

814 [Presbyterial United Church Women] Annual Meeting.

...

(c) Duties and Powers. The annual meeting shall:

...

ii. elect officers, an auditor ~~or reviewer(as necessary)~~, and delegates and alternates to the Conference United Church Women; ...

856 Responsibilities of [*The United Church Observer*] Board of Directors.
Responsibilities of the Board of Directors shall be:

...

(d) to review and approve the annual ~~audited~~ financial statement for which an Audit has been performed, for presentation to the annual meeting of members

GS 7 - Corresponding Privileges (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas there has been uncertainty about the privileges of those persons designated as Corresponding Members at a meeting;

And whereas, even though Corresponding Members shall not vote on any matter at a meeting, questions have been raised as to whether they may move or second motions,

And whereas it is advisable to set out clearly the privileges of Corresponding Members so as to eliminate confusion;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that the privileges of Corresponding Members be set out in a way that the possibility of confusion shall be minimized, and that the definition of Corresponding Member in section 001 of the By-Laws be changed to reflect this policy as follows:

“Corresponding Member” means a person to whom any one or more of the following privileges may be extended, and varied from time to time, by a Court or other body, its Executive, or a Committee:

- (a) receiving notice of a meeting;
- (b) attending a meeting;
- (c) taking part in some or all of the deliberations of such body; or
- (d) receiving minutes of a meeting.

In no event shall such privileges include the right to move or to second a motion or the right to vote. Corresponding Members shall not be counted in determining the number of members of the body; nor shall they be counted in determining whether a Quorum be present.

GS 8 - Definition of “Decision” (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the provision in the definition of “Decision” contained in section 001 of the By-Laws, that the disposition of a matter must be by motion, ensures that there is clarity and certainty as to the exact wording of the Decision;

But whereas Courts of the United Church often make Decisions following a consensus model, which means that formally there is no motion moved or seconded;

And whereas there may be instances where, by its failure or unwillingness to make any motion in respect of a matter, a Court effectively does dispose of that matter;

And whereas an Appeal can be made only from a Decision as defined;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend the definition of “Decision” in section 001 of the By-Laws, as follows:

“**Decision**” means any disposition of a matter by a Court, or by a body authorized to act on behalf of the Court, ~~by motion~~.

GS 9 - Definition of “Polity” (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Background Information

Aristotle defined “polity” as the rule by the many, who are neither wealthy nor poor, in the interests of the whole community. He believed it to be the ideal form of government, somewhere between oligarchy and democracy. The term is often used to describe a loosely organized society, such as a religious one, particularly Christian; this would include hierarchical, presbyterial, and congregational forms.

Whereas the term “polity” is often used in the church but not clearly understood by some;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 add a definition of “polity” to section 001 of the By-Laws, as follows:

[new] “**Polity**” means the form of organization and government, which in the United Church is conciliar.

GS 10 - Quorum Requirements (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the definition of Quorum in section 001 of the By-Laws refers to meetings of a Presbytery, a Conference, or the General Council, and to meetings of the Executive or the Sub-Executive of a Presbytery, a Conference, or the General Council;

And whereas there is no specific mention of meetings of a Pastoral Charge, Congregation, Session, Committee of Stewards, Official Board, Church Board, or Church Council, except implicitly in subsection (b) of the definition;

And whereas there are frequent requests from Pastoral Charges for clarification of the Quorum requirement for meetings of a Pastoral Charge, Congregation, Session, Committee of Stewards, Official Board, Church Board, or Church Council;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend the definition of Quorum in section 001 of the By-Laws, as follows:

“Quorum” Except where a higher number or a specific composition is provided in these By-Laws, “Quorum” means:

(a) in any meeting of a Pastoral Charge, Congregation, Session, Committee of Stewards, Official Board, Church Board or Church Council, of those entitled to vote, the lesser of twenty (20) persons and one-third (1/3);

~~(a)~~ (b) in any meeting of a Presbytery, a Conference, or the General Council, not less than one-fifth (1/5) of those entitled to vote, of whom at least one-third (1/3) shall be members of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training, or Staff Associates, and at least one-third (1/3) shall be lay persons except those appointed as Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training, or Staff Associates; and

~~(c)~~ ~~(b)~~ in any other meeting, including a meeting of the Executive or the Sub-Executive of a Presbytery, a Conference, or the General Council, of those entitled to vote, the lesser of twenty (20) persons and one-third (1/3).

GS 11 - Temporal Matters and Disbanding of Congregations (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the definition of Temporal Matters in section 001 of the By-Laws lists matters that are *not* considered Temporal Matters. The list includes the amalgamation of Pastoral Charges or Congregations, but does not include the disbanding of Pastoral Charges or Congregations;

And whereas Decisions regarding the disbanding of Pastoral Charges or Congregations are analogous to Decisions regarding the amalgamation of Pastoral Charges or Congregations;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend the definition of Temporal Matters in section 001 of the By-Laws, as follows:

“Temporal Matters” mean those transitory and secular affairs that pertain to the life, work, and finances of the Congregation. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, Temporal Matters do not include: the calling of a member of the Order of Ministry, a request to a Presbytery for an appointment, the election of an Elder or a Trustee, the order of worship, the discipline of the United Church, the amalgamation of Pastoral Charges or Congregations, the disbanding of Pastoral Charges or Congregations, or property matters requiring the consent of the Presbytery.

GS 12 - Notice Read “from the pulpit” (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas there is an inconsistency between sections 112, 257, and 258 of the By-Laws, which specify that notice of meetings of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation “shall be read during public worship,” and paragraph 9 of Appendix II to *The Manual* (Schedule B, the Trusts of Model Deed), which requires that notice of such meetings “shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister;”

And whereas the requirements of the Trusts of Model Deed reflect a desire that such notice be given audibly and authoritatively;

And whereas the Trusts of Model Deed can be amended only by federal statute and by legislation in all of the provincial legislatures of Canada;

And whereas it would be wise also to have consistency in section 047 of the By-Laws, which specifies that notice of meetings of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation dealing with the pastoral relationship “shall be read during public worship;”

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that, for the sake of clarity and consistency, notices for all meetings of a Pastoral Charge or Congregation shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship;

and that sections 047, 112, 257, and 258 of the By-Laws be changed to reflect this policy, as follows:

047(a) ... notice of the meeting shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, ...

047(b) ... notice of the meeting shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, ...

112(a) ... notice of the meeting shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, ...

112(b) ... notice of the meeting shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, ...

112(c) ... notice of the meeting shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, ...

257 ... notice that shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation ...

258(b) ... notice ... shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation ...

258(d) ... the Presbytery may cause notice to be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship ...

GS 13 - Grounds for Appeal (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas subsection 076(f) of the By-Laws sets out the grounds for the Appeal of a Decision;

And whereas it is necessary that, before an Appeal can be heard, the party appealing the Decision must satisfy the Appeal Committee that at least one of the grounds for Appeal has been met;

And whereas the existing grounds for Appeal could be understood to invite the Appeal Committee to substitute its own judgment on the evidence on the record;

And whereas it is advisable to re-state the grounds for Appeal to make it clear that the Appeal shall not be a re-hearing of the matter;

Now therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend subsection 076(f) of the By-Laws, as follows:

076(f) Grounds for Appeal. Grounds for Appeal are:

- i. the failure of the Court that made the Decision against which the Appeal is being made to consider the matter as completely as practicable;
- ii. that the Decision was not in accordance with the rules of natural justice~~an injustice in the disposition of the matter;~~
- iii. that the Decision was not reasonably able to be reached on the evidence ~~against the evidence and the weight of the evidence;~~
- iv. that the Decision was not in accordance with the polity of the United Church ~~wrong in law;~~ or
- v. the availability of ~~newly discovered~~ evidence that could not reasonably have been adduced and that might be relevant ~~have an important bearing on the case.~~

GS 14 - Decisions Not Subject to Appeal Individuals in the Admission or Re-Admission Process (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas subsections 077(b) and 549(b) of the By-Laws provide that Decisions about an individual in the candidacy process are not subject to Appeal;

And whereas the process for admission or re-admission to the Order of Ministry ought to parallel the candidacy process;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that Decisions about an individual with respect to the admission or re-admission process are not subject to Appeal;

and that section 077 and section 549 of the By-Laws—being identical—be revised to reflect this policy, as follows:

077, 549 Decisions Not Subject to Appeal are as follows:

[subsections (a) and (b) remain the same]

(c) Decisions about an individual with respect to the admission or re-admission process;

[subsections (c) and following to be re-lettered accordingly]

Although a Decision about an individual in the candidacy, admission, or re-admission process may not be appealed, the individual may request that the appropriateness of the procedures used to arrive at the Decision be addressed through the General Council's approved policies and procedures for conflict resolution, other than a Formal Hearing. The individual may appeal the appropriateness of the procedures used to arrive at the Decision, but only if the matter is not resolved through the policies and procedures for conflict resolution.

GS 15 - Nominations Committee (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the By-Laws make no provision for a nominations committee to serve the Pastoral Charge or Congregation;

And whereas many Pastoral Charges and Congregations have found such a committee to be useful;

And whereas section 122 of the By-Laws provides that all Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to a Pastoral Charge are ex officio members of all Committees of the Pastoral Charge except for the Joint Search Committee and the Ministry and Personnel Committee;

And whereas there is an inherent or potential conflict of interest for settled or appointed Ministry Personnel serving on a nominations committee;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 add a new section 117 to the By-Laws, as follows:

[new] **117** Nominations Committee. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation at its annual meeting shall appoint a Committee to assume responsibility for nominations. That Committee shall propose the names of persons who are eligible, suitable, and willing to serve in those positions for which the Pastoral Charge, Congregation, Session, Committee of Stewards, Official Board, Church Board, or Church Council requests nominations.

And that the 39th General Council 2006 amend section 122 of the By-Laws, as follows:

122 All Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to a Pastoral Charge shall be ex officio members of all Committees of the Pastoral Charge except for:

(a) the Joint Search Committee of the Pastoral Charge and the Presbytery ~~and~~ ;

(b) the Ministry and Personnel Committee of the Official Board or Church Board or Church Council; and

(c) the Nominations Committee of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation.

GS 16 - Ministry Personnel on Joint Needs Assessment Committee (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas section 122 of the By-Laws provides that all Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to a Pastoral Charge are ex officio members of all Committees of the Pastoral Charge except for the Joint Search Committee and the Ministry and Personnel Committee;

And whereas there is an inherent or potential conflict of interest for settled or appointed Ministry Personnel serving on a Joint Needs Assessment Committee;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend section 122 of the By-Laws, as follows:

122 All Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to a Pastoral Charge shall be ex officio members of all Committees of the Pastoral Charge except for:

(a) the Joint Needs Assessment Committee of the Pastoral Charge and the Presbytery;

(b) the Joint Search Committee of the Pastoral Charge and the Presbytery; and

(c) the Ministry and Personnel Committee of the Official Board or Church Board or Church Council.

GS 17 - Elders (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas section 134 of the By-Laws provides that Elders must be members of the United Church (with certain limited exceptions specified therein);

And whereas section 183 of the By-Laws provides that the membership of the Official Board includes members of the Session and members of the Committee of Stewards;

And whereas section 162 of the By-Laws contemplates that some members of the Committee of Stewards may not be in full membership of the Congregation;

And whereas section 131 of the By-Laws as a currently worded creates inconsistencies with other sections of the By-Laws, by stating that the term “Elder” is used to refer to the membership of an Official Board, and may include the role of Steward;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend section 131 of the By-Laws, as follows:

131 The term “Elder” is used to refer to the membership of a Session, ~~Official Board, Church Board, or Church Council, and may be used along with the term “Steward” and may include the role of Steward.~~

GS 18 - Official Board Committees (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas section 213 of the By-Laws provides for the establishment of a variety of Committees for a Pastoral Charge or Congregation using the Church Board structure, and section 228 of the By-Laws does the same thing for Pastoral Charges or Congregations using the Church Council structure;

And whereas there is no explicit provision in the By-Laws for Pastoral Charges or Congregations using the Session/Stewards/Official Board structure to establish Committees of the Session or Committee of Stewards or Official Board (in addition to a Committee to address the faith formation and education needs of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, a Manse Committee where applicable, a Ministry and Personnel Committee, and a Stewardship Committee);

And whereas it is desirable that the By-Laws state clearly what body is responsible for establishing those additional Committees and what body is responsible for appointing members of all of those Committees;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 add new sections 159, 171, and 191 to the By-Laws, and amend paragraph 153(b)iv. and sections 188, 189, and 190 of the By-Laws, as follows:

[new] 159 Other. Responsibility for the other functions of ministry incumbent upon the Session may be fulfilled through a wide variety of Committees. The number, nature, and duties of those Committees shall be determined and defined by the Session in accordance with the mission strategy of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation. The members of those Committees shall be elected by the Session.

[new] 171 Other. Responsibility for the other functions of ministry incumbent upon the Committee of Stewards may be fulfilled through a wide variety of subcommittees. The number, nature, and duties of those subcommittees shall be determined and defined by the Committee of Stewards in accordance with the mission strategy of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation. The members of those subcommittees shall be elected by the Committee of Stewards.

[new] 191 Other. Responsibility for the other functions of ministry incumbent upon the Official Board may be fulfilled through a wide variety of Committees. The number, nature, and duties of those Committees shall be determined and defined by the Official Board in accordance with the mission strategy of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation. The members of those Committees shall be elected by the Official Board.

153(a)iv. ... For this purpose a Committee to address the faith formation and Christian education needs of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, as detailed in section 242, shall be established ~~constituted~~, and its members elected, by the Session;

188 Manse Committee. The Official Board shall establish, and appoint ~~elect~~ the members of, a Manse Committee as detailed in section 243, annually, where applicable.

189 Ministry and Personnel Committee. The Official Board shall establish, and appoint ~~elect~~ the members of, a Ministry and Personnel Committee as detailed in section 244.

190 Stewardship Committee. The Official Board shall establish, and appoint ~~elect~~ the members of, a ~~carefully selected~~ Stewardship Committee as detailed in section 245.

GS 19 - Church Board Committees (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas sections 209, 210, 211, and 212 of the By-Laws provide that, for Pastoral Charges or Congregations using the Church Board structure, the Church Board is to appoint certain Committees;

And whereas section 213 of the By-Laws provides that, for Pastoral Charges or Congregations using the Church Board structure, the Pastoral Charge or Congregation may itself establish a variety of other Committees;

And whereas Resolution 92 on Unified Boards, before the 33rd General Council 1990, as amended and adopted by that General Council, contemplated that all of those Committees be established, and their members appointed, by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation;

And whereas it is desirable that the By-Laws state clearly what body is responsible for establishing those Committees and what body is responsible for appointing members of those Committees;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend sections 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, and 213 of the By-Laws, as follows:

208 Normally each member of the Church Board shall serve on a Committee according to interest or calling. Other members and Adherents of the Congregation(s) may be encouraged to serve as members ~~at large~~ of Committees of the Church Board. From among the members of the Church Board, the Pastoral Charge or the Church Board shall ~~select~~ elect officers to perform the functions of a Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

209 Faith Formation and Christian Education. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation ~~It shall be the duty of the Church Board~~ shall establish, and ~~to appoint~~ elect the members of, a Committee to address the faith formation and Christian education needs of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, as detailed in section 242. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to the Committee.

210 Manse Committee. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation ~~It shall be the duty of the Church Board~~ shall, where applicable, establish, and ~~to appoint~~ elect, ~~where applicable,~~ the members of, a Manse Committee as detailed in section 243. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to the Manse Committee.

211 Ministry and Personnel Committee. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation shall establish, and to appoint elect the members of, a Ministry and Personnel Committee as detailed in section 244. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

212 Stewardship Committee. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation shall establish, and to appoint elect the members of, a carefully selected Stewardship Committee as detailed in section 245. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to the Stewardship Committee.

213 Other. Responsibility for the other functions of ministry incumbent may be fulfilled through a wide variety of Committees, the number, nature, and duties of those Committees which shall be determined and defined by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation in its mission strategy. The members of those Committees shall be elected by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to those Committees.

GS 20 - Church Council Committees (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas sections 224, 225, 226, and 227 of the By-Laws provide that, for Pastoral Charges or Congregations using the Church Council structure, the Pastoral Charge or Congregation is to establish certain Committees;

And whereas section 228 of the By-Laws provides that, for Pastoral Charges or Congregations using the Church Council structure, the Pastoral Charge or Congregation may establish a variety of other Committees;

And whereas the By-Laws do not specify what body is responsible for appointing the members of those Committees;

And whereas it is desirable that the By-Laws state clearly what body is responsible for establishing those Committees and what body is responsible for appointing members of those Committees;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend sections 217, 224, 225, 226, 227, and 228 of the By-Laws, as follows:

217 Members of Committees. Members of the Committees shall be elected by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation ~~chosen~~ from among the members and Adherents of the Congregation(s) for maximum participation, according to the number, qualifications, and method determined by the mission strategy of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation.

224 Faith Formation and Christian Education. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation shall establish, ~~and elect the members of,~~ a Committee to address the faith formation and Christian education needs of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, as detailed in section 242.

225 Manse Committee. The Pastoral Charge shall where applicable, establish, and ; ~~where applicable,~~ elect the members of, a Manse Committee as detailed in section 243.

226 Ministry and Personnel Committee. The Pastoral Charge shall establish, and appoint the members of, a Ministry and Personnel Committee as detailed in section 244.

227 Stewardship Committee. The Pastoral Charge shall establish, and elect the members of, a ~~carefully selected~~ Stewardship Committee as detailed in section 245.

228 Other. Responsibility for the other functions of ministry incumbent may be fulfilled through a wide variety of Committees, ~~the~~. The number, nature, and duties of those Committees ~~which~~ shall be determined and defined by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation in its mission strategy. The members of those Committees shall be elected by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation.

GS 21 - Congregations Disbanding (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the By-Laws provide—in subsections 270(d), 334(e), and 428(b)—that where a Congregation has ceased to exist, all of its property is to be applied for such purposes as the Conference may determine, after having consulted with the Presbytery;

And whereas some provisions in the By-Laws—such as subsection 270(a)—embody the assumption that a Congregation ceases to exist immediately upon the Presbytery either approving a resolution by the Congregation to disband, or making a Decision to disband the Congregation;

And whereas other provisions in the By-Laws—such as subsection 269(b)—embody the assumption that there is a passage of time between the Presbytery action to disband and the effective date of the disbanding;

And whereas it would be helpful to a Congregation desiring to disband, to have time, after receiving Presbytery approval of the resolution to disband, within which to make provisions for transfer of members and to formulate a proposal to the Presbytery for the disposition of property;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend subsections 269(a), 270(a), 270(d), 334(e), and 428(b) of the By-Laws, as follows:

269(a) In order for a Congregation to initiate the process to disband, the Congregation shall pass a resolution indicating its desire to disband and proposing an effective date, and shall seek the approval of the Presbytery of the resolution to disband.

270(a) A Congregation may cease to exist as of a specified date in one of two ways:
i. by the Presbytery approving a resolution passed by the Congregation to disband as of the specified date; or
ii. by the Presbytery making a Decision to disband the Congregation as of the specified date.

270(d) Where a Congregation has ceased to exist as of a specified date, either by the Presbytery approving a resolution passed by the Congregation to disband as of the specified date or by the Presbytery making a Decision to disband the Congregation as of the specified date, all of its Property, Real and Personal, shall after that date be applied for such purpose for the benefit of the United Church as the Conference may determine after having consulted with the Presbytery.

334(e) Where a Congregation has ceased to exist as of a specified date, either by the Presbytery approving a resolution passed by the Congregation to disband as of the specified date or by the Presbytery making a Decision to disband the Congregation as of the specified date, all of its Property, Real and Personal, shall after that date be applied for such purpose for the benefit of the United Church as the Conference may determine after having consulted with the Presbytery.

428(b) Where a Congregation has ceased to exist as of a specified date, either by the Presbytery approving a resolution passed by the Congregation to disband as of the specified date or by the Presbytery making a Decision to disband the Congregation as of the specified date, all of its Property, Real and Personal, shall after that date be applied for such purpose for the benefit of the United Church as the Conference may determine after having consulted with the Presbytery.

GS 22 - Membership of Presbytery Executive (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas section 322 of the By-Laws specifies a potentially limiting requirement for the composition of the Executive of the Presbytery, namely: that such Executive shall consist of at least five (5) persons, of whom at least two (2) shall be lay persons; if the Executive consists of more than five (5) persons, the proportion of lay members shall be maintained;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that the Presbytery be free to choose the most appropriate composition of its Executive with as little limitation as necessary;

and that section 322 of the By-Laws be changed to reflect this policy, as follows:

322 Executive. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery to provide for the continuing work of the Presbytery between regular meetings by appointing an Executive. Such Executive shall consist of at least five (5) persons, of whom at least ~~two (2)~~ one (1) shall be ~~lay persons~~ a lay person other than a Lay Pastoral Minister, Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training, or Staff Associate, and at least one (1) shall be a member of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Minister, Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training, or Staff Associate. ~~if the Executive consists of more than five (5) persons, the proportion of lay members shall be maintained.~~ Such Executive has all of the duties and powers of the Presbytery unless the Presbytery otherwise determines. When the Executive acts for the Presbytery between regular meetings, its actions shall be reported to the Presbytery for information and for record in the minutes.

GS 23 - Reviews involving Effectiveness of Ministry Personnel (Red)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas a Presbytery may initiate a review of a Pastoral Charge under section 333, or a review of Ministry Personnel under section 363, or both;

And whereas a review initiated under section 333 alone has no mandate to review Ministry Personnel;

And whereas there may be instances where a review undertaken under section 333 indicates that there is a question regarding the effectiveness of Ministry Personnel;

And whereas to require another review would require meeting with many of the same people and asking many of the same questions, all over again, causing delay and frustration for those people;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that a review of a Pastoral Charge mandated under section 333 may, with certain procedural safeguards of the interests of Ministry Personnel, incorporate a review of Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to that Pastoral Charge under section 363;

and that a new subsection be added to section 333 of the By-Laws to reflect this policy, as follows:

[new] **333(c)** If during the review process it becomes apparent to those conducting the review that there is a question regarding the effectiveness of Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to the Pastoral Charge, then, with the prior written consent of that Ministry Personnel, the review may incorporate a review of the effectiveness of such Ministry Personnel, without requiring a fresh mandate from the Presbytery. The review may need to effect changes in process in order to protect the interests of such Ministry Personnel. The Presbytery, in turn, may make any one or more of the Decisions contemplated in subsection 363(d).

(A similar provision in section 363 to allow for a section 333 review is unnecessary, in view of the provisions of paragraph 363(d)i. for the disciplining of the Pastoral Charge.)

GS 24 - Membership Requirement for Conference Executive Secretaries (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the By-Laws do not provide that a Conference Executive Secretary must be a member of the United Church;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that a Conference Executive Secretary must be a member of the United Church;

and that section 433 of the By-Laws be changed to reflect this policy, as follows:

433 [Conference]Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the Executive of the General Council according to the procedures adopted by the General Council. The appointment shall be made only after consultation with the Conference. The Executive Secretary shall be a member of the United Church.

GS 25 - Balance between Ministry Personnel and Lay Members (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas subsection 501(a) of the By-Laws states that the General Council shall consist of an equal number, elected by the Conference, from each of two groups: members of the Order of Ministry and lay members appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry; and lay members other than those appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry;

And whereas section 520 of the By-Laws states that the Executive of the General Council shall be composed as nearly as possible of an equal number of members of the Order of Ministry and lay members;

And whereas subsections 521(b), (e), and (f) of the By-Laws describe certain components of the Executive of the General Council consisting of equal representation from two groups: members of the Order of Ministry; and lay persons, which latter group could include Ministry Personnel who are not members of the Order of Ministry;

And whereas it is desirable that there be a balance between paid accountable ministers and those who are not paid accountable ministers, rather than a balance between ordered and lay;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend sections 520 and 521 of the By-Laws, as follows:

520 Composition. There shall be an Executive of the General Council, which shall be composed as nearly as practicable possible of an equal number from each of two (2) groups: of members of the Order of Ministry and lay members.

(a) members of the Order of Ministry and lay members appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry; and

(b) lay members other than those appointed by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge or other Presbytery Recognized Ministry.

521 Membership. The Executive of the General Council shall consist of:

...

(b) twenty-six (26) members, two (2) elected by each Conference, one (1) of whom shall be a lay member as described in subsection 520(b) person, to be elected for two (2) terms;

...

(e) two (2) persons, one (1) of whom shall be a lay member as described in subsection 520(b) person, from the francophone constituency;

(f) two (2) persons, one (1) of whom shall be a lay member as described in subsection 520(b) person, from the ethnic ministries constituency;

...

GS 26 - Membership Requirement for General Secretary, General Council (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the By-Laws do not provide that the General Secretary of the General Council must be a member of the United Church;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that the General Secretary of the General Council must be a member of the United Church;

and that section 512 of the By-Laws be changed to reflect this policy, as follows:

512 General Secretary. The General Council shall appoint a General Secretary of the General Council, who shall be a member of the United Church. The General Secretary of the General Council shall continue in office until a successor is appointed.

GS 27 - Duties of the General Secretary, General Council for Budget (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas subsection 513(h) of the By-Laws places with the General Secretary of the General Council the responsibility for preparing annual budget of the United Church, for submission through the Executive of the General Council to the appropriate General Council working unit;

And whereas this provision reflects the former structure of the General Council offices;

And whereas under the current structure, the General Secretary of the General Council prepares an annual budget and submits it to the Executive of the General Council for approval;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend subsection 513(h) of the By-Laws, as follows:

513 Duties of General Secretary. ... In discharging this primary duty, the General Secretary shall be responsible for the following, inter alia:

...

(h) to prepare, for submission ~~through to~~ the Executive of the General Council ~~to the appropriate General Council working unit~~, the annual budget of the United Church as it relates to interdenominational bodies, inter-church relationships, the General Council office, and any other matters related to the work of that office;

...

GS 28 - Duties of the General Secretary, General Council for Retirees (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas subsection 513(j) of the By-Laws places with the General Secretary of the General Council the responsibility for reporting to the General Council those senior staff persons who will be retiring within the three years following the rise of the General Council;

And whereas under pending legislative change to Ontario law—which law applies to all staff of the General Council office—mandatory retirement at age 65 will be abolished;

And whereas, without mandatory retirement, it will no longer be possible for the General Secretary of the General Council to report which senior staff persons will be retiring within the three years following the rise of the General Council, unless those staff have already given notice that they intend to retire within that period;

And whereas it is the Executive of the General Council, and not the General Council, that initiates search processes for new senior staff, and has the power under subsection 524(k) of the By-Laws to appoint those senior staff, except for the General Secretary of the General Council;

And whereas the placement of the responsibility for appointment of senior staff with the Executive of the General Council suggests that the retirement of senior staff persons is more the concern of the Executive of the General Council than that of the General Council;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 delete subsection 513(j) of the By-Laws, as follows:

513 Duties of General Secretary. ... In discharging this primary duty, the General Secretary shall be responsible for the following, inter alia:

...

(a) ~~to report to the General Council those senior staff persons who will retire within the three (3) years following the rise of the General Council;~~

...

[subsequent subsections to be re-lettered accordingly]

GS 29 - National Extra Appeals (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas subsection 524(o) of the By-Laws authorizes the Executive of the General Council to consider any proposal to solicit funds from the Pastoral Charges of more than one Conference for any purpose other than the Mission and Service Fund;

And whereas such proposals appear to require both the approval of the Executive of the General Council and a recommendation of approval by the Extra Appeals Committees of the relevant Conferences;

And whereas the current wording of subsection 524(o) results in confusion about the process to be followed in obtaining such approval;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend subsection 524(o) of the By-Laws, as follows:

524(o) to consider any proposal to solicit funds from the Pastoral Charges of more than one (1) Conference for any purpose other than the Mission and Service Fund, ~~on recommendation of the lead staff of the appropriate General Council working unit.~~ Such proposal request for approvals shall be submitted to through the lead staff of the appropriate General Council working unit, by the party seeking to solicit funds. ~~Conference Committees before recommending the authorization of such appeals shall consult with the Committees of other Conferences involved, in order that the time of the beginning and ending of the appeal will be reasonably acceptable to each Conference.~~ The lead staff of the appropriate General Council working unit shall review ~~be responsible for reviewing~~ any such proposals, and shall consult including consultation with the appropriate Extra Appeals Committees of the relevant Conferences, including consulting as to the time frame for the appeal, before ~~prior to~~ making recommendations to the Executive of the General Council;

GS 30 - Motion to Table (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas motions to table can easily cause confusion, as they are understood by some to involve setting a matter aside but by others to involve opening discussion on a matter;

And whereas no obvious distinction exists between “tabling a motion” and “postponing a motion indefinitely,” although section 4 of Appendix III to *The Manual* accords them significantly different priorities;

And whereas section 10 of Appendix III provides that the effect of a motion to table is to set the motion aside “until there is no further business before the Court,” itself a point in time susceptible of various interpretations;

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that the terminology “to lay a motion on the table” no longer be used as part of the rules of debate and order within the United Church;

and that sections 4 and 10 of Appendix III to *The Manual* be changed to reflect this policy, as follows:

4. Order of Priority on Motions

- (a) To fix the time to adjourn.
- (b) To adjourn.
- ~~(c) To lay on the table.~~ [re-designate following subsections]
- (d) To take an immediate vote (two-thirds (2/3) vote required).
- (e) To limit or extend limits of debate (two-thirds (2/3) vote required).
- (f) To postpone definitely.
- (g) To commit or refer.
- (h) To amend.
- (i) To postpone indefinitely.
- (j) To deal with main motions.

10. Motion to ~~Lay on the Table~~ Postpone Indefinitely

A motion to ~~lay on the table~~ postpone indefinitely, when in order, must be put without debate. If the motion is lost, it cannot be repeated or reconsidered. If carried, the motion along with all amendments is ~~laid on the table~~ removed from debate. At any time ~~when there is no business before the Court~~, it may be ~~taken from the table~~ brought back before the Court by motion duly seconded and carried. In such case the question is before the Court in exactly the position it held at the time it was ~~laid on the table~~ removed from debate. A motion to ~~lay on the table~~ postpone indefinitely can have no conditions attached to it. If a time is specified, it immediately ceases to be a motion to ~~lay on the~~

~~table~~ postpone indefinitely and becomes a motion “to postpone definitely” and is debatable.

GS 31 - Committee of the Whole (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Manual Committee

Whereas the use of a Committee of the Whole has been a procedural convenience in many instances;

And whereas Appendix III to *The Manual* sets out the United Church’s rules of debate and order;

And whereas it is desirable there to elaborate upon the way in which a Committee of the Whole can be established and function;

Now therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend section 13 of Appendix III to *The Manual*, as follows:

13. Committee of the Whole

(a) Any Court, for greater freedom of discussion, may ~~be resolved~~, on motion duly made, seconded, and carried, move into a Committee of the Whole. Any such motion is neither debatable nor amendable, except only as to the scope of the subject to be discussed. The motion is not in order if there is a pending motion to adjourn the meeting or to postpone discussion on the subject.

(b) The first act of the Committee of the Whole is to appoint a ~~Presiding Officer~~ chairperson and a secretary. A separate minute of the proceedings is taken.

(c) The ordinary limitations of debate do not prevail in the Committee of the Whole. The chairperson restates the matter(s) to be considered. Discussion is then opened and is conducted informally. Motions need not be seconded. Unless the resolution creating the Committee of the Whole imposes restrictions, there are no restrictions, within reason, on the number of times a member may speak or on the length of speeches, except that priority is given to a member who has not yet spoken.

(d) ~~When the Committee rises, the original Court is automatically reconstituted and the Presiding Officer reports to the Court. When the deliberations of the Committee of the Whole are concluded, the Committee will dispose of a motion that the Committee rise~~

and report; this motion does not require seconding and is neither debatable nor amendable. When this motion is passed, a report is prepared and submitted to the chairperson of the main meeting, who reconvenes the main meeting.

(e) A Committee of the Whole ~~cannot~~ can neither adjourn nor terminate; it only can report back to the main meeting. It can, of course, recess briefly to prepare its report.

[existing subsections 13(b), (c), and (d) to be renumbered as subsections 14(a), (b), and (c)]

GS 32 - Emerging Spirit (Commons)

Origin:	General Secretary, General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The General Secretary proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report on “Emerging Spirit”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statements to be developed by this General Council.
3. Approve in principle the Emerging Spirit Project as outlined in the report.
4. Direct the Executive of the General Council in November 2006 to consider an expenditure of up to \$10.5 million dollars for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 for the Emerging Spirit Project.
5. Direct the General Secretary to secure interim funding to initiate the media campaign for the Emerging Spirit Project in 2006.

GS 33 - Nominations to the Executive of the General Council and Committees of the General Council (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
Nominations Committee

The members of The United Church of Canada are one body in Christ. Our gifts differ. All are needed for the building up of the body. Inspired by Paul's words to the Romans 12:4-8 ("one body in Christ... gifts that differ"), we seek a comprehensive approach to recruiting, selecting, supporting and recognizing those who are elected or appointed to serve as members of all councils, committees or groups of the General Council; one that is:

- Informed by the Spirit
- Accountable to the General Council
- Shares Leadership
- Open and Transparent
- Inclusive
- Flexible
- Continuously Improving

(From "Guiding Principles, Practices and Processes for Members of Committees and Task Groups" approved GCE 2004-04-23-115)

The Nominations Committee follows these guiding principles to recruit, select, support and recognize over 500 active members of over 100 committees, task groups and representative roles of the General Council and the Executive of the General Council.

Recognition of Service of Members of Committees and Task Groups of the General Council

We extend gratitude for the service of the following people who completed or ended their terms during this past triennium.

Executive of the General Council

- Marion Pardy - OM N&L, Immediate Past Moderator, Chairperson, Nominations Committee
- Tony Newell - OM N&L
- Barbara Rafuse - L MAR
- Donald Wachenschwanz - OM M&O
- Norma Soble - L BQ
- Stephen Mabee - OM TOR
- Walter Sowa - L HAM
- Jordan Thompson - L LON
- Ted Alexander - L LON
- David Woodall - OM LON
- Jim Jackson - L MNWO
- Jim Balfour - OM SK
- Kathy Suteau - L ANW
- Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier - L ANW
- Michelle Slater - OM BC

- Lorna Pawis - L ANC
- Dong-Chun Seo - OM ANW, Member at Large
- Maggie McLeod - OM HAM, Member at Large
- Susan Tough - OM MNWO, Member at Large
- Wanda West - L M&O, Ethnic Ministries Constituencies
- George Takashima - LM ANW, Ethnic Ministries Constituencies
- Marion Best - L BC, Central Committee of the World Council of Churches Representative
- Kent Ward - OM TOR, Chairperson of Business Table
- Doug Einarson - L MNWO, Chairperson, Permanent Committee on Finance

Judicial Committee

- Frank Van Veen - OM LON, chairperson
- Charles W. Brown - L LON
- Philip Cline - OM HAM
- Bruce Faurschou - OM MNWO
- Dennis Johnson - L SK
- Charles Knight - L M&O
- Carolyn McBean - OM SK
- Dale Morrison - OM SK
- Gordon Nodwell - OM TOR

General Council Agenda and Planning Committee

- Debra Bowman - OM BC, Chairperson
- Deborah Hoekstra - OM ANW
- Hiraku Iwai - OM SK
- Martha Martin - DM MAR
- Kathy McMillan - L MNWO
- Jennifer Power - OM MAR
- Floyd Steinhauer - L ANC
- David Sparks - OM MNWO
- Barb Van Norman - L LON
- Jackie Wardell - L MNWO

General Council Youth Forum Design Team

- Tressa Brotsky - L BC
- Andrea Buttars - L HAM
- Sharon Buttrey - L TOR
- Karen Bridges - L ANW
- Sarah Chapman - L MAR
- Ben Koots - L ANW
- Grace Kim - L LON
- Keltie Muirhead - L MAR
- Sandra Nourse - L SK
- Michael Shewburg - L LON

General Secretary, General Council Supervision Committee

- Glen Bailey - L M&O
- Walter Sowa - L HAM
- Jim Jackson - L MNWO
- Louise Rogers - L ANW
- Mardi Tindal - L HAM

Archives and History Committee

- Jim Lewis - L TOR, Chairperson
- Beverly Anderson-Levine - L M&O
- Jane Bowe-McCarthy - L ANW
- Judith Colwell - L MAR
- Diane Haglund - L MNWO & ANC
- Michael Owen - L HAM
- Alison Piercey - L N&L
- Holly Schick - L SK
- Bob Stewart - L BC (deceased)

Audit Committee

- Barbara Caldwell - L BQ
- Debora Harrold - L HAM
- Ian McPherson - L TOR

Manual Committee

- Roland (Bud) Harper - OM SK (deceased)

Moderator's Advisory Committee

- John Lougheed - OM HAM, Chairperson
- Christine Williams - L M&O
- Marilyn Legge - L TOR
- Sang Chul Lee - OM TOR
- Susan Tough - OM MNWO

Theology and Faith Committee

- Michael Bourgeois - L TOR, Chairperson
- Susanne Abbuhl - OM BQ
- Alvin Dixon - L ANC
- Scott Douglas - L MNWO
- Jennifer Janzen-Ball - OM TOR
- Catherine MacLean - OM ANW
- John Moses - OM BQ
- Debra Schweyer - DM MNWO

Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel

- John Burton - OM TOR
- Roslyn Campbell - OM ANW

- Richard Chambers - L HAM
- Anne Duncan - DM MNWO
- Don Gillies - OM TOR
- Annette Hoare - L MAR
- Bill Rodgers - L MTU
- Beth Rutherford - OM MNWO
- Glen Stuart - L TOR
- Sharon Willis-Whitwell - OM LON

Faithfully Submitted,
Marion Pardy, Chairperson
Nominations Committee

Nominations to Committees of the General Council

The Nominations Committee proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Appoint the following people to these committees with the stated terms:

Executive of the General Council

Moderator

- To be elected

Immediate Past Moderator

- Peter Short - OM MAR (2009)

General Secretary of the General Council

- To be appointed

Conference Representatives

(As elected by Conferences)

- Scott Parsons - OM N&L (2009)
- Fannie Hudson - L N&L (2009)
- Mary-Beth Moriarity - OM MAR (2009)
- Shirley Cleave - L MAR (2012)
- Lynn Boothroyd - L M&O (2009)
- Brian Cornelius - OM M&O (2012)
- Paul Reed - OM BQ (2009)
- Bruce Hutchinson - L BQ (2012)
- Paul Stott - L TOR (2009)
- Barbara White - OM TOR (2012)
- Heather Leffler - OM HAM (2009)
- Lewis Coffman - L HAM (2012)
- Charles (Chuck) Scott - L LON (2009)
- Sharon Willis-Whitwell - OM LON (2012)
- Dorothy Hemingway - L MTU (2009)
- Cindy Désilets - OM MTU (2012)
- David Giuliano - OM MNWO (2009)

- Betty Kelly - L MNWO (2012)
- Dwaine Dornan - L SK (2009)
- Linsell Hurd - OM SK (2012)
- Donald Koots - OM ANW (2009)
- Louise Rogers - L ANW (2012)
- Marion Carr - L BC (2009)
- Foster Freed - OM BC (2012)
- Tarance Whiteye - L ANC (2009)
- Allan Sinclair - OM ANC (2012)

Chairpersons of Permanent Committees (2009)

- Jim Blanchard - L MAR, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
- Diane Dwarka - L MNWO, Programs for Mission and Ministry
- Donald Hunter - L TOR, Finance
- Martha ter Kuile - OM M&O, Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes

Members at Large (2009)

- Leah Halliday - L ANW, under 30
- Allan Seal - L ANW, under 30
- Sheryl Johnson - L MNWO
- Ted Kostecki - SA LON

Francophone Constituency (2009)

- Anne-Marie Carmoy - L M&O
- Stéphane Vermette - OM BQ

Ethnic Ministries Constituency (2009)

- Emmanuel Ofori - OM HAM
- To be appointed

Representative to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (2009)

- Carmen Lansdowne - L BC

GCE Agenda, Planning and Business Committee, Chairperson of the Business Table (2009)

- Debra Bowman - OM BC

Interim Sub-Executive: August – November 2006

- To be elected - Moderator
- Peter Short - OM Mar, Past Moderator
- To be appointed - General Secretary, General Council
- Scott Parsons - OM N&L
- Paul Reed - OM BQ
- Heather Leffler - OM HAM
- Charles (Chuck) Scott - L LON
- Cindy Désilets - OM MTU
- Dwaine Dornan - L SK

- Allan Sinclair - OM ANC
- Anne-Marie Carmoy - L M&O, Francophone Constituencies
- To be named - Ethnic Ministries Constituencies
- Debra Bowman - OM BC , Chairperson of the Business Table

Archives and History Committee to the 40th General Council 2009

- Peter Douglas - OM MNWO, Chairperson
- Bruce Kearley - OM N&L
- Twila Buttimer - L MAR
- Margaret Gosselin - L M&O
- Nora Barber - L BQ
- Elizabeth Lundy - L TOR
- Robert Stevenson - L HAM
- Eva Archibald - L LON
- Gailand MacQueen - OM MTU
- Patricia L. Wotton - OM MNWO
- Marvin Mackie - L SK
- Sheila Johnston - L ANW
- Donna Runnells - L BC
- Maureen Scott Kawbe - LM ANC
- Nancy Christie - Academic Community Representative
- Anne Urbancic - Academic Community Representative
- Ian Fraser - Chairperson of Archives Management Committee (staff resource)
- To be appointed - General Secretary, General Council (staff resource)
- Sharon Larade - General Council Archivist (staff resource)

Audit Committee to the 40th General Council 2009

- Edward Hooey - L TOR, Chairperson
- Sandro Colasacco - L BC
- Stewart Hudson - L MAR
- Janet Stockton - L TOR
- K. John Wallace - L MTU
- To be appointed - General Secretary, General Council

General Council Agenda and Planning Chairperson: December 2009

- Michelle Slater - OM BC

Judicial Committee

(As appointed by Conferences)

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Hector Swain - OM (2009)
- J. Derek Green - L (2012)
- Donald Lockhart - L (2012)
- Patricia Ritchie - OM (2012)

Maritime

- Beverly Brazier - OM (2009)
- David Hewitt - DM (2009)
- Norman Carruthers - L (2012)
- Maggie Coffin-Prowse - L (2015)

Montreal and Ottawa

- Angela Bailey - OM (2009)
- Doreen Moffat - OM (2009)
- Helen Barkley - L (2015)

Bay of Quinte

- Terrence Deline - OM (2009)
- Douglas Mann - L (2009)
- Mary Dunbar - L (2012)

Toronto

- Allan Austin - L (2009)
- J. Malcolm Finlay - OM (2009)
- Gwyn Griffith - L (2009)

Hamilton

- Ian Gordon - L (2012)
- Margaret Bain - OM (2015)
- Deborah Deavu - DM (2015)
- Murray Lapp - L (2015)

London

- Sheila Duffin - L (2009)
- Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa - OM (2009)
- Scott Campbell - L (2015)

Manitou

- Calvin Ferrier - L (2009)
- Bruce MacLeod Thomson - OM (2009)

Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

- Glenna Beauchamp - OM (2015)
- Jeff Cook - OM (2015)
- Charles Huband - L (2015)
- Kirk Windsor - L (2015)

Saskatchewan

- Kevin Fenwick - L (2009)
- Sharon Hurd - L (2009)
- Don Laing - OM (2009)

- Laura Sundberg - OM (2012)

Alberta and NorthWest

- Evelyn Buckley - L (2009)
- Don Koots - OM (2009)
- Robert Shnell - L (2009)
- Elizabeth Brown - OM (2012)

British Columbia

- Sharon Copeman - OM (2009)
- Graeme Keirstead - L (2009)
- Cheryl Vickers-Adams - L (2009)
- Gary Gaudin - OM (2012)

All Native Circle

- Connie Dieter-Buffalo - L (2009)
- Norma Lickers - L (2009)
- Stan McKay - OM (2009)
- Bernice Saulteaux - OM (2009)

Manual Committee: December 2009

- John Young - OM BQ, chairperson
- Gail A. C. Christy - OM M&O
- Michael Hare - OM BC
- Alan MacLean - L MAR

Theology and Faith Committee to the 40th General Council 2009

- Harry Disher - OM LON
- Janet Gear - L BC
- Norm Laird - OM ANW
- Jeong-Woo Lee - OM TOR
- Barry Morris - OM BC
- Arlyce Schiebout - OM M&O

Code:

L = Lay
SA = Staff Associate
LM = Lay Pastoral Minister
DM = Diaconal Minister
OM = Ordained Minister

Nominations Committee Members:

Marion Pardy - Chairperson
Scott Parsons (N&L)
Mary-Beth Moriarity (MAR)
Lynn Boothroyd (M&O)

Norma Soble (BQ)
Paul Stott (TOR)
David Woodall (LON)
Heather Leffler (HAM)
Dorothy Hemingway (MTU)
Jim Jackson (MNWO)
Dwaine Dornan (SK)
Don Koots (ANW)
Marion Carr (BC)
Tarance Whiteye (ANC)
Terry Beaumont (staff)
Diane Bosman (staff)

GS 34 - Designated Lay Ministry / Congregational Designated Ministry (Red)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
Financial Implications: No new financial implications
Staffing implications: No additional staffing implications
Source of Funding: None

Whereas the 37th General Council 2000:

1. established the category of Designated Lay Ministry;
2. recognized Congregational Accountable Ministry; and
3. authorized a Remit to approve the new term of Designated Lay Ministry;

And whereas the Remit was approved, and was enacted by the 38th General Council 2003;

And whereas the Task Group mandated to assist the Executive of the General Council with implementation of the policy has raised concerns with the policy, and has proposed certain changes to it in order to respond more effectively to the needs of the church for paid accountable lay ministry;

And whereas such changes to policy may only be made by decision of the General Council;

And whereas the Sub-Executive of the General Council has directed the General Secretary, General Council to submit the proposed changes to this 39th General Council 2006 for its consideration:

Therefore the General Secretary, General Council proposes

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Approve the policy that:

1. There be two streams of paid accountable lay ministry in the United Church:

- (i) Designated Lay Ministers who are accountable to a Presbytery and recognized by the Conference; and
 - (ii) Congregational Designated Ministers who are accountable to a Pastoral Charge and recognized by the Presbytery.
2. Presbyteries shall approve all paid accountable ministry positions by either:
- (i) Declaring a vacancy that may be filled by a member of the Order of Ministry or a Designated Lay Minister; or
 - (ii) Approving a Congregational Designated Ministry position to be filled by someone appropriately qualified according to guidelines approved by the Executive of the General Council.

And that *The Manual* be revised to reflect this policy.

GS 35 - Remits authorized by 38th General Council 2003 (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

Whereas the following Remits were authorized by the 38th General Council 2003:

- Remit 1 – Frequency of Conference Meetings
- Remit 2 – Categorization of Remits
- Remit 3 – Membership of Settlement Committee
- Remit 4 – Number of Presbytery Representatives
- Remit 5 – General Council Structuring Remit;

And whereas by the designated date, out of 92 Presbyteries:

- 65 voted in favour of Remit 1
- 67 voted in favour of Remit 2
- 41 voted in favour of Remit 3
- 56 voted in favour of Remit 4
- 79 voted in favour of Remit 5;

And whereas a majority of the Presbyteries must vote in favour of the Remit in order for the rule to become a permanent law.

Therefore the General Secretary proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That:

1. Remit Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5 be enacted, effective upon the release of the Record of Proceedings of this 39th General Council 2006; and
2. *The Manual* be changed to reflect the enactment.

GS 36 - Moderator as Presiding Officer of the General Council (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

Whereas 8.5 of the Basis of Union provides that the presiding officer of the General Council shall be the chief executive officer of the Church:

[The General Council]

8.5 Its regular meeting shall be held every third year, except that the General Council or its Executive shall have the power, in circumstances that it deems exceptional, to defer the date of the regular meeting to the fourth year or to advance the date of the regular meeting to the second year. Its presiding officer shall be the chief executive officer of the Church, and for the term of office may be relieved of pastoral or other duties.

And whereas it is the Moderator who serves as the presiding officer of the General Council, while the General Secretary, General Council who serves as the chief executive officer of the Church;

And whereas the Executive of the General Council recommends to the 39th General Council 2006 that the Basis of Union be amended to name the Moderator as the presiding officer of the General Council.

Therefore the General Secretary proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. amend 8.5 of the Basis of Union by deleting the term “chief executive officer” and substituting the term “Moderator”; and
2. authorize a remit to test the will of the church with respect to this amendment.

GS 37 - Powers of the Executive of the General Council (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

Whereas the powers of the Executive of the General Council are limited to the specific matters listed under Section 524 of *The Manual*;

And whereas these limited powers were granted to the Executive of the General Council during the time when the General Council met on a biennial rather than triennial basis;

And whereas the 37th General Council approved the re-organization of the General Council offices, which structure now includes permanent committees that report to the Executive of the General Council rather than Divisions that report to the General Council;

And whereas, in light of these changes, it would be timely to undertake a review of the powers of the Executive of the General Council;

Therefore the General Secretary proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Authorize the General Secretary to appoint a task group:

1. to undertake a review of the powers of the Executive of the General Council; and
2. to report to the 40th General Council (2009) with recommendations as to any revisions to the powers of the Executive of the General Council that the task group may consider appropriate.

GS 38 - Committees of the General Council (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

Whereas the Judicial Committee, Audit Committee, Committee on Theology and Faith, Committee on Archives and History, and the Manual Committee are committees that serve the General Council, with varying compositions, mandates and powers;

And whereas the 37th General Council approved the re-organization of the General Council offices, which structure now includes permanent committees that report to the Executive of the General Council rather than Divisions that report to the General Council;

And whereas it would be timely to undertake a review of the composition, mandates and powers of each of the Judicial Committee, Audit Committee, Committee on Theology and Faith, Committee on Archives and History, and the Manual Committee to ensure that the work of these committees is carried out in the most effective way possible within the reorganized structure;

Therefore the General Secretary proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006 authorize the General Secretary to appoint a task group:

1. to undertake a review of the composition, mandate and powers of each of the Judicial Committee, Audit Committee, Committee on Theology and Faith, Committee on Archives and History, and the Manual Committee; and
2. to report to the 40th General Council 2009 with recommendations as to any revisions to the composition, mandate and powers of each of these Committees that the task group may consider appropriate.

GS 39 - Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures (Green)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

Whereas the 36th General Council 1997 authorized the Executive of the General Council, upon recommendation of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, to revise the policy and procedures related to Sexual Abuse (Sexual Harassment, Pastoral Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault) and Child Abuse from time to time between meetings of the General Council.

And whereas the Executive of the General Council adopted the Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures to be effective June 30, 2007 and directed the General Secretary to make the required changes to *The Manual*.

Therefore the General Secretary proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Make the required changes to *The Manual* as follows:

001 Definitions

Add definitions of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, pastoral sexual misconduct and sexual assault,

Define sexual abuse to include sexual harassment, pastoral sexual misconduct and sexual assault.

072(a) Delete the final sentence of this section which is the provision that only the person experiencing the sexual abuse may make a complaint.

072(b) Delete the clause which prohibits a Court from making a complaint of sexual abuse.

That the Manual Committee be requested to include, to the extent possible, all policy related to sexual abuse in the same place in *The Manual*.

And any other provisions as may be necessary as a result of the adoption of the Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures.

ANW 1 - Commissioning to the Diaconal Ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care (Red)

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference with concurrence
Source: Foothills Presbytery and Yellowhead Presbytery
Financial Implications: None

Background

In referring to diaconal ministry, we note a growing use of the term “commissioned minister”, and of “commissioning” without the addition of “to diaconal ministry”. These terms may seem an efficient use of words, as parallel in form to “ordained minister” and “ordaining”. But they do not speak of the history and the passion for diaconal ministry: in The United Church of Canada, biblically, and in the larger tradition of the church. The approved wording (at the 1980 and 1982 General Councils) was “commissioned to the diaconal ministry of education, service and pastoral care”. (As reflected in the Basis of Union, Section 001)

Proposal

Whereas in Section 001 (Bylaws) “a diaconal minister means a member of the Order of Ministry who has been commissioned to the diaconal ministry of education, service and pastoral care ...”; and

Whereas neither *The Manual* nor the Conference Celebration of Ministry Services consistently reflect that wording:

We therefore propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006 approve:

That all relevant sections of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada be changed to match the wording found in Section 001 of *The Manual*.

ANW 2 - Self Insurance (Blue)

(Defined to be an arrangement by which The United Church of Canada establishes a separate fund called a “segregated fund” from levies paid by Pastoral Charges to The United Church of Canada for the purpose of funding claims.)

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference with concurrence
Source: Red Deer Presbytery with concurrence
 Olds United Church
Financial Implications: To be determined by an independent and comprehensive Feasibility Study
Source of Funding: To be determined by an independent and comprehensive Feasibility Study

Staffing Implications: To be determined by an independent and comprehensive Feasibility Study

Whereas The United Church of Canada is the legal owner of the 3677 United Church properties in Canada, together with other properties including the Naramata Centre, manses, camps, educational facilities, etc;

Whereas The United Church of Canada established a precedent for the collective insurance of properties at its 30th General Council 1984 by encouraging all congregations to participate in The General Insurance Plan for The United Church of Canada, and currently, only 1200 congregations participate in the plan;

Whereas the purpose of insurance is to spread the risk among many properties and The United Church of Canada has a broad base over which to spread the risk that is involved in meeting its risk management responsibilities;

Whereas the cost of insurance premiums has increased by 16% in 2002 and subsequently a further 40% in some areas;

Whereas some congregations have opted to reduce insurance coverage and increase deductibles to reduce premiums;

Whereas other Canadian professional and religious organizations have been able to significantly reduce insurance costs by choosing to be “Self-Insured”;

Whereas under a Self-Insurance arrangement, all the various insuring facilitators underwriting the risks of all of the United Churches in Canada and of all other properties owned by The United Church of Canada, would be replaced with a single Segregated Fund in the name of and administered by The United Church of Canada to fund all appropriate claims previously insured by the various insuring companies. Such fund would be established by redirecting the insurance premiums currently paid by local church congregations (a total of approximately \$8.5 million annually) together with premiums paid by the General Council Office for other church properties, to such fund by way of a levy for a sufficient period of time to provide adequate capitalization. After such fund is adequately capitalized, the cost to individual congregations and to the General Council Office would be significantly reduced; and

Whereas Feasibility Studies are provided by consulting/auditing firms such as, Deloitte & Touche and Cap Gemini Ernst & Young Canada Inc. and other firms:

Olds United Church through hereby proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Direct its General Secretary to request of the Auditor of The United Church of Canada, or other firm as such auditor may recommend, to complete an independent and comprehensive feasibility study on a timely basis to determine the risk, financial, funding, staffing and insurance issues of

Self-Insurance and to report the results of such study to the General Secretary for such action as the General Secretary considers appropriate in the interest of the Pastoral Charge and the General Council Office.

References

1. Olds United Church Marsh Plan premium history:
 - 2001 - \$2,107.00
 - 2002 - \$2,741.00
 - 2003 - \$3,583.00
2. Marsh Brochure, dated 2004/12/10
3. The Observer, February 2004
4. Self Insuring Entities:
 - All lawyers in Ontario - 416-598-5800
 - All Doctors in Canada - 1-800-267-6522
 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints USA - 1-800-777-3622

Background

Self-Insurance for The United Church of Canada? Is this an idea whose time has come? The Theme of the 80th Meeting of the Alberta and Northwest Conference is “A Question of Leadership”. President Wayne Flewelling has praised the leadership throughout the Conference and calls for continued and increased leadership in all areas of church service.

Another way of describing leadership is “thinking outside the box”. Such was the challenge for a specially commissioned committee of Olds United Church which was asked to consider better ways to spend insurance dollars.

The short answer to their “thinking outside the box” is a request of the 39th General Council 2006 to initiate a timely, independent feasibility study to establish a self insurance facility for The United Church of Canada. We ask for your support.

Why?

1. Collectively the 3,677 United Church Congregations spend more than \$8.5 million annually to insure our properties.
2. Many Congregations are either under-insured or carry no insurance at all because it has become too expensive.
3. Insurance premiums, paid as levies to a central United Church of Canada pool, within three years, could yield a \$25 million fund which we expect would ensure that all Congregations are protected against losses.
4. As this pool is invested and grows, in short order a multi-million dollar new revenue basket will be available to The United Church of Canada, including all of its Congregations, to put to work as God guides us.

In “A Heart-To-Heart With George” (*Observer*, March 2006), Moderator Rt. Rev. Peter Short suggests, “instead of instructing the country on what to become, perhaps we are being moved by the Spirit to become something ourselves. We can no longer expect Canada to listen when we tell it how to behave and what to believe in. We can do something better. We can become in

ourselves what we long for the country to be ... If the effort bears fruit, The United Church of Canada will be respected not for what we say but for what we are.”

It is within this spirit that we propose this “out-of-the-box” initiative. Thank you for your support

Joe Regush, Official Board Chairperson, Olds United Church, April 3, 2006

ANW 3 - Rethinking the Order of Ministry (Red)

Origin:	Alberta and Northwest Conference with concurrence
Source:	Red Deer Presbytery
Financial Implications:	Current task groups working on Designated Lay Ministry may be able to accommodate this added work. If not, costs for a new task group may be incurred
Source of Funding:	MEPS budget?
Staffing Implications:	MEPS staff?

Whereas there is currently a shortage of active members of the Order of Ministry, particularly in isolated areas, depriving many congregations of sacramental ministry and trained pastoral leadership; and

Whereas in our post-Christendom age, the church will need to find creative ways to sustain small, isolated or financially impoverished congregations; and

Whereas other denominations make provision for “non-stipendiary” and “tentmaking” ordered ministries; and

Whereas current church theology and policy regarding the order of ministry focuses on vocational questions (employment status and the intent to serve the church full-time and life-long); and

Whereas many lay pastoral ministers do see their ministries as vocational ministries, even if the church does not; and

Whereas the focus on ordered ministry as exclusively vocational ministry may discourage some in isolated congregations who may wish to serve the church in a non-stipendiary fashion from pursuing theological education and ordered status;

Whereas the process of ordering ministry consists of the methods by which the courts of the church recognize and affirm God’s call to ministry and train, covenant with and hold accountable those called; and

Whereas the church needs to engage in a process of recognizing, affirming, training, covenanting with and holding accountable those leaders which play formative and representative roles in the faith community in order to ensure high standards of ministry;

Whereas the process of ordination and commissioning differs from the process of designating a Lay Pastoral Minister, Staff Associate or other category of Designated Lay Minister primarily in the type and extent of training provided; and

Whereas Staff Associates, Lay Pastoral Ministers, and other Designated Lay Ministries are already considered Order of Ministry for the purpose of balancing lay/ordered representation in courts of the church; and

Therefore be it resolved that Red Deer Presbytery propose, through the Alberta and Northwest Conference

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Affirm that the distinctiveness of the Order of Ministry lies not only in the vocational nature of the ministry but also in the process by which the church orders (recognizes, trains, covenants with and holds accountable) persons called to specific forms of leadership in the church;
2. Affirm that the church orders those in formative and/or representative roles (e.g. sacramental and pastoral leadership) because of its responsibility to ensure that high standards of ministry are maintained by those in such roles;
3. Commission a task force (either existing or new) to:
 - a. Consider establishing a third category of the order of ministry to include Lay Pastoral Ministers, Designated Lay Ministers and others who exercise formative or representative roles in congregations but have not been ordained or commissioned, and address the policy issues involved;
 - b. Develop policies and procedures by which Presbyteries and/or Conferences could order persons for volunteer or part-time leadership in congregations and communities which are unable to support full-time ministry, and address the policy implications for settlement, pensions, etc.;
 - c. Develop policies about what formative and/or representative roles may be done by lay persons and which should be done by ordered persons (e.g. presiding at communion, preparation for and presiding at baptism, regular preaching, etc.);
 - d. Consult with ecumenical partners about the theological and partnership issues raised, especially for shared ministries;
 - e. Report with recommendations to the 40th General Council 2009.

ANW 4 - Achieving Equity Between Lay and Ordered Past Presidents, and Lay Past Presidents and Past Moderators (Green)

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference
Financial Implications: None
Source of Funding: Conference Meeting Budget
Staffing Implications: None

Whereas: Past Presidents are seen as elders and people of wisdom within the Church and should be retained in an official capacity within the polity of the Church; and

Whereas: The United Church of Canada values the principle of equity amongst those who serve the Church; and

Whereas: Section 310 of *The Manual* outlines who qualifies for Presbytery Membership; and

Whereas: Section 310 (a) of *The Manual* provides for Presbytery Membership for all Order of Ministry personnel, including those retired; and

Whereas: Section 310 (b) x of *The Manual* provides for Presbytery Membership for Lay Past Moderators:

Therefore be it resolved that Alberta and Northwest Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That Section 310 (b) of *The Manual* be amended to add a sub-section xii, “who are Past Presidents of Conference who reside within the jurisdiction of a Presbytery within the Conference they served as President”.

ANW 5 - A Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry (Red)

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference with concurrence
Original Source: Red Deer Presbytery
Financial Implications: Some costs associated with disseminating the Code, training events
Source of Funding: Existing funding for YAYA ministries
Staffing Implications: Existing National & Conference YAYA Staff

Whereas the church has engaged in a process of developing ethical standards for ministry personnel; and

Whereas volunteers, congregationally accountable youth workers, and ministry personnel working with youth face specific ethical challenges related to working with minors; and

Whereas youth leaders and those responsible for their oversight have expressed a desire for clear standards of ethics to guide youth ministries; and

Whereas a Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry has been developed and thoroughly revised in consultation with youth leaders and the National Consultation on Youth Ministry Training (November 2004); and

Whereas the national working group on Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice has been kept informed about this process and asked for input;

Therefore be it resolved that Red Deer Presbytery, through the Alberta and Northwest Conference, propose

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Adopt the attached Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry and Commentary as a standard guide for education, training, screening and accountability of those involved in youth ministry, instruct the appropriate General Council Unit to provide the resources and support to help youth ministries and those involved in youth ministry training engage the Code on a regular basis, and revise it periodically to respond to emerging needs.

Note: The Code of Ethics and Commentary are copyrighted by the writing team as a temporary mechanism in order to prevent alteration. General Council may adapt them as part of the process of making them policy.

Background

Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry The United Church of Canada

Preamble

This Code of Ethics and the accompanying commentary provide a standard for people involved in youth ministry leadership within The United Church of Canada. It may be used as a guide for education, training, screening, and accountability for paid staff, volunteers, and those responsible for oversight of youth ministry.

Youth ministry is the process by which God, working through the faith community, immerses youth in God's Story and vision for creation. It includes all of the ways the church and its leaders encourage youth to participate in Christian practices of faith in action. The hope of Youth Ministry is that youth will embrace a lifelong commitment to the way of Jesus and make a spirit filled difference in the world.

1. Faithful to the Call

- a. As a person called into ministry with youth, I serve God in a role that demands my competent practice.
 - i. Seeking to be a responsible person, I will be aware of my own gifts and abilities recognize the limits of my competence and work within those limits.

- ii. Seeking to be a humble person, I will learn from others, seek feedback about my work, and participate in educational and training programs to develop my knowledge and skills relating to youth ministry.
- b. The ministry I undertake with youth will require much from me. To continue to offer effective ministry I will need to attend to my own health - mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
 - i) Seeking to be a wise and self-aware person, I will strive for balance in my use of time, money, and personal energy to care for myself and others.
- c. My ministry within the church also takes place within a wider society to which I am accountable and within which I am a decision-shaping participant.
 - i) Seeking to be an obedient and courageous person, I will comply with the legal obligations related to my ministry even when such actions conflict with my wishes or the wishes of those with whom I serve.
 - ii) Seeking to be an obedient and courageous person, I will work with others to effect legal or social change that moves toward God's vision of justice.

2. Ministry in Community

- a. As a leader within The United Church of Canada, I serve a diverse community of faith, bound together by common convictions and traditions.
 - i) Seeking to be a loyal person, I will respond and contribute to this community of faith and to the wider work and purpose of God.
 - ii) Seeking to be a collaborative person, I will work with volunteers and staff in ways that are respectful, reconciling, and assertive.
- b. I am a steward of a ministry which belongs to God, Christ, and the Church.
 - i) Seeking to be an accountable person, I will work under the oversight and discipline of The United Church of Canada and in harmony with its statements of theology and polity.
- c. I am in communion with a diverse group of people engaged in diverse youth ministries across The United Church of Canada.
 - i) Seeking to be a respectful person, I will support colleagues in youth ministry.
 - ii) Seeking to be a principled person, I will encourage colleagues to exercise their leadership in harmony with this code and with statements of theology and polity of The United Church of Canada.

3. Stewardship of Power

- a. Youth leadership involves positions of authority that give moral, spiritual, and social power in relation to young people. I am entrusted with that power by the faith community, youth, and their families.
 - i) Seeking to be a good steward, I will neither neglect nor abuse the power entrusted to me.
 - ii) Seeking to be a just person, I will create through my ministry a safe environment where all God's people, regardless of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, faith

- expression or family background, are welcomed and equipped to share their gifts and their experiences.
- iii) Seeking to be a trustworthy person, I will respect the confidentiality of personal information shared with me, respecting as well the necessity of selectively disclosing confidential information when absolutely necessary to protect the well being of a person in my care or when required by law.
 - iv) Seeking to be a person of integrity, I will develop boundaries that are sensitive to how power might influence the relationship between myself and those in my charge.
 - v) Seeking to be an honourable person, I will not engage in romantic relationships or sexual behaviour with those in my care.

Commitment

As a person seeking to be a faithful disciple of Jesus, I am called to a standard of character and practice that reflects that discipleship. I commit myself to this code of ethical standards and recognize that God's challenging call and limitless grace is always present in my ministry.

As a sign of my intent to uphold this code and my willingness to be held accountable to it, I affix my signature here.

Date: _____

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Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Commentary

(words or phrases in italics are taken directly from the code)

Preamble

While much of this code and commentary applies to ministry with both youth and young adults, the focus here is on ministry with youth because of the extra legal and moral responsibilities that come from working with minors.

For a statement of the United Church of Canada's vision for youth ministry, see the Vision for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, adopted by the 36th General Council 1997. See *Record of Proceedings*, pp 599ff.

Education, Training, Screening and Accountability –This code is not an official policy statement of the United Church of Canada. Individuals, committees and groups with responsibility for implementation and oversight of youth ministry can use this code as a basis for deepening their understanding and for dialogue with others about ethical standards for youth ministry. Where this code has been agreed to by a paid or volunteer youth leader, it can serve as a basis for performance review. Where it has been included as part of the job description or terms of call, or covenanting service of a paid youth leader, then it should serve as a basis for performance review and disciplinary action when necessary. Discipline of youth leaders, on the basis of this code or otherwise, must be done in accordance with other policies and procedures of

the United Church of Canada. (e.g. policies set out in the United Church policy on Sexual Abuse must be followed in regard to violations of 3.a.v.)

The Format of the Code

Each of the major sections of the code begins with a descriptive statement about youth ministry, and is followed by clauses that emphasize qualities of character and behavioural commitments that, by God's grace, demonstrate those qualities.

1. Faithful to the Call

1. Call

Each Christian is responding to a call to reflect Jesus' teachings and the ongoing Christian story in all our actions. Individuals involved in youth ministry have also experienced and responded to a specific call to be in relationship with young people on behalf of the United Church. The ethical practice of youth ministry involves being faithful to both of these types of call.

1.a.i. Limits to Competence

Each person practices with a set of knowledge and skills (competencies) that are shaped by a combination of natural ability, education, training and life experience. Appropriate and careful use of these competencies is a critical aspect of successful youth ministry. Conversely, the attempt to practice competencies not held by the individual and that normally require specialized training is unethical and dangerous to the leader and/or participants.

For example, providing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, leading whitewater rafting, or offering therapeutic counselling without the appropriate training or certification could lead to serious harm and violates ethical practice.

Competencies can be developed in a setting in which appropriate supervision or teaming ensures that necessary skills are present and risks minimized.

When youth ministry leaders encounter a situation which is beyond their competence to respond, they should seek out agencies and resources within their church and community that can provide assistance or referral.

1.a.ii. – Development in Knowledge and Skills

The specific skills and knowledge needed by any leader will be dependent on the role and responsibility that person carries. Competencies named by the National Consultation on Youth Ministry Training (2004) are appended for information. This list of competencies will need to be adapted for specific leadership positions. It may be of particular use in developing job descriptions or identifying areas for continuing education and personal growth.

1.c. Decision-shaping participant

As members of communities that extend beyond the church, leaders participate in the wider society in numerous ways, from voting in elections, to consumption choices, to daily interactions with other members of the community. Through such participation, leaders can play an active role in establishing the culture, priorities and direction of the society.

1.c.i & 1.c.ii Obedient and courageous – These two qualities of character have been combined in both clauses in this section to claim that both upholding and challenging laws requires obedience and courage. We are called to be obedient in relation to both the laws of our community and the greater Christian Story. We are called to be courageous both in risking conflict with those we care about and in challenging unjust authority.

1.c.i. Legal Obligations

Leaders should be aware that they are in a position of trust and may be held legally liable for failure to uphold that trust.

Certain laws also have a direct impact on youth ministry. Youth Ministry leaders must be aware of and comply with the obligations set out in those laws. Laws that govern work with children and youth are in provincial jurisdiction, and will vary depending on where a ministry is located. Most Provinces have legislation regarding reporting child abuse, privacy of information, screening of leaders, liability and Duty of Care, food safety, driver safety, etc. Information about provincial legislation and regulation is readily accessible through websites or your elected representative.

1.c.ii. God's vision of justice

Responding to both the call to discipleship and the call to youth ministry involves an engagement with the world as it is and in how the world will be. Such interest and engagement must be guided by God's vision of justice – a vision, articulated by Jesus and the prophets, that humans engage with each other and with creation in a spirit of humility, forgiveness/reconciliation, mutuality, respect, and love.

God's vision of justice must inform all aspects of youth ministry, from the interactions with individual youth, to the behavioural norms of groups that are gathered, to the content of the programming itself.

Working towards God's vision of justice is not simply an element of youth ministry, however. It is a practice of Christian life. As mentors to the youth in their care, leaders should strive to model justice making in their daily living, bringing their concerns about unjust laws or social structures to the wider church community and acting courageously to make change.

2. Ministry in Community

2.a. common convictions

The United Church of Canada is a diverse community of people bound together by significant theological beliefs. These beliefs or convictions have developed over time through the faithful leading of the Spirit in our community. Convictions include historic statements as well as current statements of faith, polity, and action. The General Council of The United Church of Canada continually engages in decision making about real and pressing realities of our world. This process is a complex, time-consuming and challenging one that seeks to ensure that our convictions are meaningful, relevant, faithful to God and faithful to our traditions.

Persons in leadership must be in essential agreement with the Doctrine section of the Basis of Union. Strict adherence to doctrine is not a requirement for membership or ministry within The

United Church of Canada. Every person retains the right to thoughtful dissent, but as a leader must also exercise her or his ministry with respect for the process and decisions of the General Council.

2.a. traditions

The United Church of Canada came into being by Act of Parliament in 1925, officially joining three partners: the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Methodist Church in Canada, and The Congregationalist Churches of Canada. (The Evangelical United Brethren and The UCC formed a new union in 1968). Through these founding churches, we are connected to the origins of the Protestant tradition which began in the 16th century. This heritage informs our practice today as expressed in our approach to worship, education, mission, justice, governance, and decision making.

A result of the coming together of these particular traditions within The UCC is our bias toward living our faith, ministry and mission within a conciliar system. A conciliar system is built on the interrelationship of groups of people – councils- exercising accountability and authority within the church. Decision-making is exercised by committees and clusters of people charged with particular responsibility and authority. In some other denominations authority would be exercised by an individual (e.g. the Bishop). Participation in these *councils* is a right and a responsibility of leadership within The UCC. Leaders within The UCC enter into a covenant to exercise their ministry under the discipline of the councils of the Church.

Our traditions of accountability, organizational structure, and decision making in the conciliar system are found in the section of The Basis of Union called Polity, and are substantially expanded in the Bylaws of the Church. These documents are found together in *The Manual of The United Church of Canada*.

2.b.i. oversight and discipline

All church employees and volunteers are accountable to a governing body which has the responsibility of giving direction and oversight to the ministry, and holding its employees and volunteers accountable. The nature and context of the ministry will determine the group responsible for discipline and oversight, (Congregational board or council, Presbytery, etc.). A leader may work under the direction of another member of the team, or work closely with a committee who are responsible for the youth ministry, however, these groups are most likely *not* the court of accountability for employment. For youth leaders in congregationally accountable ministries (CAM), this will be the session, board, or council of the congregation. For youth ministers in Staff Associate Ministries, Designated Lay Ministries (DLM), or Ordered Ministries, this will normally be the presbytery. For Conference and General Council staff this will normally be the General Council. For youth leaders in camp settings it may be the Camp Board or the Presbytery.

2.b.i. Oversight and discipline include actions related to terms of employment such as: hiring, contract and salary standards, performance review, disciplinary action as a result of ineffective or inappropriate behaviour, termination of employment, standing as an ordained or diaconal minister, staff associate or designated lay minister, and eligibility for further employment in the church.

2.b.i. & 2.c.ii. *theology*

The theology of the United Church is articulated in formal statements of faith such as the church, such as the Doctrine section of the Basis of Union and A New Creed. The church has also acknowledged the historic statements of the ecumenical church, including the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Our theology is tested and restated whenever the church enters into intentional study of particular issues in our current social, political, and organizational context (e.g. *Mending the World*, 1997; *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil*, 2000). Theological conviction in our community is discerned in the interplay between scripture, tradition, reason, and experience (a framework of authority drawn from our Methodist roots and developed in UCC history). For the United Church and its members theology is not only a set of statements; living theology is a practice of continual discernment of God's will within a community faithful to Christ's call.

2.b.i. & 2.c.ii. *polity*

The polity of the United Church includes all the policies and procedures for accountability, organizational structure, and decision making which are followed in the United Church, as set out in the *Manual* and other church documents.

3. Stewardship of Power**3. *Stewardship***

A central Christian conviction is that everything we have is given to us in trust for the common good. We are stewards (or managers), not owners of what we have been given, and we are accountable to God and each other for the way we use what we are given.

3. *Power*

Whether a youth leader is volunteer or paid, lay or order of ministry, the role of leader brings with it power and influence. Others have power too, but the power of the leader is unique and distinct from the power of others in the community. That power comes from the position of leadership, and it also comes from personal qualities like age, knowledge, experience and charisma. This power can be used subtly or overtly. The leader may not be conscious of his or her power, but it is still an active part of all relationships, and the leader needs to develop self-awareness and sensitivity to the different ways power influences relationships.

3.a. *moral power*

Leaders have the ability to influence what is considered right and wrong within the youth ministry context. This influence happens both through how they model moral behaviour, and the explicit standards they set for the group. For example, one leader might encourage open discussion while another might discourage talking about difficult issues. Leaders can encourage or discourage social or service opportunities. They can also tolerate or set limits on inappropriate behaviour like visible displays of affection, ridicule and foul language.

3.a. *spiritual power*

Leaders have the ability to influence what is considered sacred, holy and godly. Leaders both model and teach spirituality. For example, leaders can help youth see the presence of God in a homeless person, or in a neighbourhood woodlot. They can train youth in spiritual practices and

help them to see God's presence in all of life. They can also distort the sacred by emphasizing fear or prejudicial attitudes.

3.a. social power

Leaders have the ability to influence the membership and status of people within the ministry. For example, leaders can both model and shape the way in which youth are welcomed and given the ability to contribute. They can tolerate or challenge the formation of cliques and social hierarchies.

3.a.i. neither neglect nor abuse

Good stewardship means to exercise the authority of leadership in a way that is faithful to the goals of the youth ministry and the wider community of faith.

Leaders neglect power by failing to claim the power of leadership in order to make sure that the goals of the youth ministry are met. They can also neglect power by attempting to share power inappropriately or by assuming that relationships are mutual and equal when there is a power differential. For example: youth leaders can neglect their power by failing to set or hold youth and other leaders to standards of behaviour, failing to adequately prepare for youth activities, failing to share relevant information and resources, assuming that others will do tasks that are part of the responsibility of the leader, expecting others to do tasks for which they have not been adequately trained, or tolerating inappropriate behaviour.

Leaders abuse power by using the power of leadership in ways that violate respect for other people or the goals of the ministry. For example: youth leaders abuse power by failing to encourage the leadership of others, by failing to consult other youth and leaders, by assuming relationships are mutual and equal when there is a power differential, by seeking their own gain at the expense of the ministry, by using language or actions that degrade another person or by words or behaviour which enhance their own self-esteem at the expense of others.

3.a.ii. safe environment

Concern for the safety of participants in youth ministry is grounded in our biblical faith which speaks regularly about God's defence of the vulnerable. Safety has physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions.

Physical dimensions of safety include making sure that hazards in meeting spaces are minimized, and transportation is done in a way that minimizes risk. It also includes careful screening of leaders using the resources and guidelines provided by the church. (See for example, *Faithful Footsteps: Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in the United Church of Canada: A Handbook*.) In very rare situations, it may involve using the minimum level of physical restraint necessary to prevent harm.

Emotional safety will often require vigilance and sustained attention, because our culture regularly tolerates abusive language and behaviour. Youth ministry in the church needs to model an alternative to the culture of tolerance for degrading language and behaviour. Youth leaders have a serious responsibility to use their power to protect people who may be hurt in this way. Degrading jokes, for example, are very common among youth, and those saying them may or

may not be aware of how threatening or hurtful they can be. They may focus on height, weight, or other physical attributes, personal habits, personality, and many other attributes. When degrading language or behaviour focuses on attributes that are associated with groups that experience discrimination in other spheres are particularly threatening to those at whom they are directed. *Gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, faith expression and family background*, are examples of attributes that may raise particular issues of safety. Youth leaders should involve their youth in setting and enforcing clear standards of behaviour that discourage all types of degrading language or behaviour.

Issues of spiritual safety are raised when spiritual power is used in a manipulative or coercive way. Spiritual safety is violated, for example, when youth are required to participate in liturgical actions or to make a profession of faith, when sacred space or process is used to encourage participants to divulge information of a personal nature, or when honest questions of faith are ridiculed or suppressed.

3.a.iii. confidentiality

When youth or family members place their trust in a leader by sharing personal information, the leader is under the most serious obligation to hold that information in confidence. Sharing personal information about another without permission undermines the trust relationship and may seriously impair future ministry. If information is shared in a context in which it is not clear whether the youth wishes it to be confidential, it is best to ask the youth about their wishes. In such cases, it is usually best to err on the side of keeping the confidence.

When a leader is concerned about a case that is beyond his or her expertise or experience, the leader can consult with colleagues or professionals, without divulging names or identifying information.

The situations in which protecting the well being of a person in the leader's care will require sharing confidential information are fairly limited and are often legally defined. Child abuse, the threat of suicide or immediate serious threats to a person's life or health are situations in which leaders must act to ensure that appropriate authorities are informed. In such cases, the leader should, if possible, encourage the at-risk person to report the danger himself or herself, and offer to accompany her or him, in order to maintain trust in the relationship. If that fails then the youth leader has the responsibility to report his or her knowledge to the appropriate authorities.

3.a.iv. boundaries

Boundaries are limits that we place on behaviour and relationships in order to maintain our health and responsibilities. It is very important that leaders observe clear limits on the types of relationships that are appropriate between people whose relationship is characterized by an imbalance of power. For example, leaders should not look to the youth in their care for emotional support, friendship or pastoral care.

Boundaries can be confused when leaders play other roles in the lives of youth outside the ministry context (e.g. as a parent or teacher). In such cases, it would be advisable to discuss relational and role boundaries with the participant and the leader's supervisor.

3.a.v. romantic relationships or sexual behaviour

Relationships between leaders and youth are sometimes confused by feelings of romantic or sexual attraction. The power imbalance between leader and participant means that intimate relationships between youth and leaders are always wrong. Leaders have the responsibility to resist their own attraction to youth in their care. Leaders also have the responsibility to resist romantic or sexual advances from youth. A leader should not participate in an intimate relationship with a participant until after the leadership relationship has ended and *at least* six months of complete separation from the youth ministry context has passed. Even then the leader should be extremely cautious about the ways in which persisting power dynamics influence the relationship. A similar power imbalance exists between leaders and their supervisors, and as a result, similar boundaries are important for the protection of leaders.

United Church policy on these issues may be found in the document, *Sexual Abuse (Sexual Harassment, Pastoral Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault) and Child Abuse, Official Policy and Procedures Document of the United Church of Canada*. (1992, revised 1997, 2000) – The bibliography in this document lists books, pamphlets, videos and articles on issues of boundaries, power, and safety and sexual abuse.

Commitment

Participants are asked to sign this document as a sign of their commitment to exercise their ministry in accordance with its statements of character and behaviour. Further to this personal commitment, the signature indicates an acceptance that the church community will use this code as a benchmark against which the leader's practice of youth ministry will be examined.

Background

This code and commentary emerged out of two workshops on Ethics in Youth Ministry that were held as part of the Alberta and Northwest Conference Youth Ministry Training Program (November, 2001) and the Children and Youth Ministry Institute at Naramata Centre (October, 2002). Discussion among participants and leaders in those two events identified issues and began to develop wording for items in the code. A writing team consisting of Allison Rennie, Martin Settle and Ross Smillie then wrote a first draft of the code and commentary. Many individuals provided helpful comments and a further draft was thoroughly reviewed by the National Consultation on Youth Ministry Training in October 2004, which led to the current form of the code and commentary. In addition to offering specific feedback on the language and content of the code, the latter group strongly endorsed the need for such a code, enthusiastically recommended its circulation in youth ministry circles, and urged it to be endorsed by General Council. It is currently in the hands of the Working Group on Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards. Many people have had a hand in contributing to this code or offering valuable feedback, and the writing team would like to express its appreciation to them all.

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ANW 6 - Concerning Farm Income (Blue)

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference with concurrence

Source: South Alberta Presbytery

Whereas many United Churches are close to the people of the family farm, and

Whereas the United Church is concerned about the stresses, frustrations, experiences of hopelessness and discouragements among the farming people, and

Whereas the family farm is much more than a “business enterprise”, and

Whereas to make ends meet, many farm families require a second job off the farm, and

Whereas the required fee (\$500) to access the Federal Income Stabilization Program, with its complexity, may prove a deterrent to access the program, and

Whereas the Income Stabilization Program does not have long term characteristics, and

Whereas Canadians pay comparatively low food prices for products coming from farms, leaving farm produce underpriced, with farmers having no power to set produce prices, and

Whereas farm subsidies allow Canadian taxpayers a means of subsidizing the farmer producer, and allow a more level income field in the light of other countries’ subsidies, and

Whereas costs of farming continue to rise faster than farm income, (Examples: estimated losses per acre in 2006 – spring wheat – \$70; CPS wheat – \$79; malt barley – \$55; feed barley – \$56 and Argentine canola – \$62. Source: *The Prairie Post*, April 7, 2006, quoting an independent report by an economist from the University of Calgary.), and

Whereas more farmers are leaving their farms because of the difficulty of making ends meet, (Examples: Farm population in Canada in 1961, was 2,128,327 and in 2001, farm population was 727,125: Source – *Stats Canada*; in 2003, grain and oilseed farms’ average operating revenue was \$138,173 and average operating expenses were \$111,751 equalling a net income of \$26,422: Source- *Stats Canada*), and

Whereas the selling of family farms impacts local communities in multiple ways and creates new problems with relocation in other communities, and

Whereas government assistance is often on an “ad hoc” basis, and

Whereas farmers, to resolve income dilemmas, are pursuing alternative and new agricultural products, and are pursuing new cooperatives and partnerships, and learning that consumers welcome new specialty products;

Therefore be it resolved that South Alberta Presbytery, through Alberta and Northwest Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Meet with the Federal Agriculture Minister, requesting:

1. that a long term and reorganized Income Stabilization Program be established, and be as user-friendly as possible, and
2. that efforts be made to seek new markets for agricultural products, and the farmer be able to share in the profit and fair-market value, and
3. that the tax be removed from farm diesel fuel, and
4. that governments do more to assist farmers with updated information regarding available grains/seeds and other farm products, and
5. that governments do more to promote improved insurance premiums and benefits, and
6. that governments support farmers' collective efforts to speak with a united voice, and
7. that governments provide more well-informed staff to assist farmers with loan management, and
8. that governments find ways to support "the environmental farm plan" which is producer-driven, bank-favoured, and enhances farmers' sense of security, and
9. that governments do more to assist farmers who are handicapped by subsidized imports, and
10. that governments encourage industry to work with farmers for value added products: e.g. ethanol, pasta

ANW 7 - A Health Policy Framework for Public Health Care (Blue)

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference

Whereas the Government of Alberta has, on many occasions over the past ten years, proposed changes to the health system that proposed private solutions that had no basis in evidence from here or elsewhere,

Whereas most experts conclude that health systems that allow physicians to provide services to private patients while also working in the public system do not save money or reduce waiting lists in the public system,

Whereas all evidence points to the conclusion that expanding private insurance will reduce access and choice for most persons due to longer waits in the public system , inability to afford premiums or denial of coverage based on pre-existing conditions,

Whereas there are concrete examples of solutions, in the public system, to problems such as wait times and access to services,

Whereas a number of such solutions are being piloted in Alberta,

Whereas the Government of Alberta, in its policies and its programs, continues to ignore the importance of social, economic and spiritual dimensions of health and illness,

Whereas it has been well established that countries that focus on broad determinants of health – poverty (especially in families with children), poor education, lack of employment, lack of affordable housing, environmental problems – have better health status in their populations,

Whereas there are policy directions proposed in the Health Policy Framework document released by the Government of Alberta in February 2006 that will, if implemented, strengthen the public system, and

Whereas the Government of Alberta has not proposed any policies to deal with the rapidly increasing costs of drugs,

Therefore the Lamont Health Care Centre Advisory Committee, through Alberta and Northwest Conference, proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Seek assurances from the Government of Canada that it will:

1. take action to enforce all provisions of the Canada Health Act, and
2. act now to implement the recommendations of the Romanow Commission in order to help deal with the high cost of prescription drugs.

ANW 8 - Creation of a National List of Approved Qualified Trained Educational Supervisors (Red)

Origin:	Alberta and Northwest Conference with concurrence
Financial Implications:	None
Source of Funding:	None
Staffing Implications:	Ten hours of national staff person's time

Whereas: a list of approved qualified trained Educational Supervisors is only kept at the Conference level of each Conference and that ordered ministers or lay people with this

qualification may move from Conference to Conference but have no official certificate from training courses or letters recognizing that they are approved.

Whereas: It is an Educational Supervisor's responsibility to assist an Intern Supply, a Lay Pastoral Minister-In-Training, or a Student Intern who is seeking admission to the Order of Ministry, to reflect on and to learn from the experience of the practice of ministry.

Whereas: The Educational Supervisor is recognized as an important guide in the education of the Intern Supply, a Lay Pastoral Minister-In-Training, or a Student Intern who is seeking admission to the Order of Ministry,

Whereas: The Educational Supervisor is expected to prepare written evaluations of the Intern Supply, a Lay Pastoral Minister-In-Training, or a Student Intern and is expected to have insight into call to ministry, personal character, motives, doctrinal beliefs, and general fitness for ministry of the supervisee based on their internship.

Whereas: The United Church of Canada is responsible for the training, approving and continued monitoring of the Educational Supervisors for the overall well being, care and growth of supervisees, pastoral charges and ministry personnel.

Therefore be it resolved that Alberta and Northwest Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That a National List of qualified and approved Educational Supervisors be established and that this list be updated regularly.

ANW 9 - Review of Property Sale Procedures (Blue)

Origin:	Alberta and Northwest Conference with concurrence
Source:	St. Paul Presbytery
Financial Implications:	Cost of producing the resource
Source of Funding:	Possible recovery by sale of said resource
Staffing Implications:	Review time at Conference and General Council levels

Whereas the sale of property, especially manses, involves families in dreams, hopes and expectations; and

Whereas finances of those families and the Pastoral Charge may be adversely affected by undue delay; and

Whereas the procedures for sale of property in The United Church of Canada are not well understood; and

Whereas the information outlining those procedures must be gleaned from the Trusts of Model Deed, numerous sections of *The Manual*, and the *Handbook For Congregational Boards of Trustees*; and

Whereas every Presbytery and Conference has different established interpretations of the preceding, and different patterns for doing the work; and

Whereas there have been occasions when, through misunderstanding of procedure or missed time lines, proposed sales of property have been jeopardized;

Therefore be it resolved that St. Paul Presbytery propose, through Alberta and Northwest Conference

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Review the procedures for sale of property in The United Church of Canada, with the following ends in view:

1. A resource be prepared bringing together all the necessary source materials for the sale of property.
2. The development of a standard procedure for sale of property across the church.
3. Identify time lines (vis à vis title transfer) that Congregations can work with in their communications with purchasers and financial institutions; said time lines not to exceed twenty business days.

ANW 10 - Accountable Ministry (Red)

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference
with non-concurrence and recommendations

Source: South Alberta Presbytery

Whereas the 38th General Council 2003 lowered the number of hours per week of employment from 14 to 8 as the threshold for congregational employees to be considered eligible for order of ministry salary and benefits as well as obligations such as discernment and conference interviews (i.e. Presbytery accountable ministry); and

Whereas this change has affected many congregational youth workers; and

Whereas this change has often required a major increase in hourly reimbursement to youth workers; and

Whereas this implies a significant negative impact on many Congregations' finances; and

Whereas this has meant a reduction of hours and income for many youth workers with reduced staffing and youth ministry for many Congregations needing youth ministry; and

Whereas this sudden and significant increase in such youth worker reimbursement creates a huge discrepancy with other congregational employees such as secretary, organist, choir leaders, and custodians, whose salary and benefits are not addressed by any United Church minimums; and

Whereas the requirements for discernment is not realistic for many youth workers because of their short time in the position; and

Whereas the need to hold youth workers accountable to United Church theology and practice can be accomplished in other more effective and flexible ways:

Therefore be it resolved that South Alberta Presbytery, through Alberta and Northwest Conference, propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Re-establish the requirement that 14 hours per week of Congregation employment be the threshold for inclusion in Presbytery accountable ministry, with order of ministry benefits and obligations, as it applies to those doing youth related ministry;
2. Offer a more flexible approach to supervision of youth ministry workers, including:
 - a. simpler Conference interview that does not include a discernment process;
 - b. the requirement that congregations seeking to employ a youth worker for more than 5 hours per week consult with Presbytery, as that job description is defined and the search is conducted (thus giving Presbyteries some opportunity to guide and advise youth ministries); and
 - c. a set of guidelines for Congregations seeking to employ a youth worker; and.
3. Seek ways to assist and encourage Congregations seeking to establish or maintain a congregational youth worker position.

Recommendation

In transmitting this Proposal, Alberta and Northwest Conference recommends to the 39th General Council 2006 that debate and decision on items 2 and 3 be held separately from debate and decision on item #1 for the following reasons:

- Items 2 and 3 represent specific issues, namely the identification, selection, supervision and support of congregational youth ministry workers, which are separate from the issue of threshold hours for inclusion as paid accountable ministry raised in item #1;
- By separately debating items 2 and 3, it becomes possible to make a decision about items 2 and 3 which is different from the decision made regarding item #1; and
- The 80th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference would have entertained a motion to debate and decide items 2 and 3 separately from item #1, had it been able to do so.

ANW 11 - Let's Make Child Poverty History (Blue)

Origin:	Alberta and Northwest Conference
Financial Implications:	Discussion and letter writing and requesting the attention of the Federal Minister or planning an attention-getting March on Parliament Hill
Staffing Implications:	None
Source of Funding:	None

Whereas in 1989, the House of Commons unanimously voted to “seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000”;

Whereas one child out of every six in Canada still lives in poverty;

Whereas forty percent of off-reserve Aboriginal children live in poverty;

Whereas one in every four Aboriginal children lives in poor housing conditions;

Whereas children (0-14 years) comprise 33% of Canada’s Aboriginal population, compared to 19% of the non-Aboriginal population;

Whereas Canada lags behind other rich countries and ranks 19th out of 26 Organizations for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in a global survey; and

Whereas Canada has 14.9% children living below the National Poverty Line and Denmark 2.4% and Czech Republic 6.8%:

Therefore be it resolved that Alberta and Northwest Conference United Church Women proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Through the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit (JGER):

1. follow up Campaign 2000 with a letter writing and education program focused on raising awareness and garnering government support of the Campaign 2000 objectives, and
2. Petition the Government of Canada to make a long-term commitment to increasing Child Tax Benefits to \$4,900.00 per child.

Background

Information taken from CAMPAIGN 2000 (www.campaign2000.ca)

CAMPAIGN 2000 is a non-partisan, cross-Canada network of over 90 national, provincial and community partners and organizations committed to working together to end child and family poverty in Canada.

2005 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada:

1. “Sixteen years ago the House of Commons unanimously resolved to ‘seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadians by the year 2000’. Yet, more than 1.2 million children – one child out of every six in Canada – still lives in poverty”.
2. Child Poverty is a special concern for governments and communities. No one can ignore the evidence from the multitude of studies that have documented the dreadful effects of poverty on children – Canada’s high rate of Child Poverty is shocking for a country ranked among the wealthiest in the world. Canada ranks bronze on childhood poverty with a rate almost six times that of Denmark.” The Conference Board of Canada, 2005.
3. Number of children living in poverty has risen by 20% since 1989 in Canada.
4. Food Bank use – 41% of Food Bank users in 2004 were children.
5. Child Poverty rates for Aboriginal, immigrant and children in visible minority groups are more than double the average for all children; Child Poverty rates among children with disabilities are 27.7%. These people experience increasing inequality which erodes social cohesion, increases insecurity and reduces public health and costs the public health system more money.
6. “Children who experience long periods of poverty between birth and age 5 or in their early teenage years are more likely to commit crime.” Jarjoura G, et al (2002) Growing Up Poor.
7. Federal Budget surpluses of up to \$40 billion are forecast for the next three years. Why can’t the Federal Government invest public resources in programs that reduce inequality instead of general tax cuts the benefit the wealthiest Canadians?

ANW 12 - Rescind General Council Executive’s Implementation of the Sabbatical Policy (Red)

Origin:	Alberta and Northwest Conference with non-concurrence
Source:	St. Paul Presbytery
Financial Implications:	None
Staffing Implication:	Review time at General Council level

Whereas God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3), and the Hebrew people were commanded to observe the Sabbath Day (Exodus 21:8-11) and God declared to Moses that the land must rest in the seventh year and that a community-renewing year of jubilee should be celebrated in the fiftieth year (Leviticus 25), and Jesus, during his ministry, often took time for renewal, going away to pray and reflect in silence and meditation ‘on mountaintops and by lakesides’; and

Whereas a sabbatical policy, more fully discussed and supported, could renew the spirit and practice of paid accountable ministry, benefit healthy long term pastoral relationships, encourage the ministry of laypersons who offer liturgical and pastoral leadership, and strengthen the whole Body of Christ; and

Whereas the introduction of a sabbatical, as part of the employment remuneration package for paid accountable ministry, would be perceived, in the absence of adequate consultation with pastoral charges, as a change in the terms of call or appointment, breaking the covenantal agreement currently in place and necessitating a Needs Assessment prior to any implementation; and

Whereas justice is currently expressed in the continuing education policy of our church (Rowntree Leaning Fund), through the review of applications and the expectation of shared funding between applicants (lay and ordered) and the structures of the church (Pastoral Charge and Conference); and

Whereas Pastoral Charges currently financially self-sufficient could feel disempowered should the costs of the sabbatical alter their ability to manage without financial assistance; and

Whereas the regular pastoral oversight visit of Presbytery would provide opportunity for Presbytery to affirm or question the health of the pastoral relationship and the possibility that the pastoral relationship would be strengthened by a sabbatical; and

Whereas policies (re: funding and provision of educational resources) to further develop and sustain lay worship and pastoral leadership will increase support to lay people who will be offering extra leadership; and

Whereas a sabbatical policy, where clearer emphasis is placed on the role of the Pastoral Charge's Ministry and Personnel Committee in working with the paid accountable minister to arrive at goals and other specific factors (such as timing) surrounding the proposed sabbatical, would express greater flexibility and justice; and

Whereas further consultation with the wider church will result in a sabbatical policy that encourages the church rather than dividing the church;

Therefore be it resolved that St. Paul Presbytery, through Alberta and Northwest Conference, propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006 or its Executive rescind Motion 2005-10-28-308; and

That a new paid sabbatical policy including a degree of financial participation from paid accountable ministry and in consultation with Pastoral Charges and ministry personnel come before this General Council.

ANW 13 - Support for the Eight Millennium Development Goals Emanating from the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 (Blue)

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference with concurrence

Source: Calgary Presbytery

Whereas all U.N. Member States (including Canada) at the Millennium summit held in September 2000 agreed on eight development goals; and

Whereas the Secretary-General of the U.N., Kofi Annan, is expressing an urgent need for renewed commitment by political leaders in pursuing some of these goals; and

Whereas all of these goals are considered attainable by the U.N. Member States;

Therefore be it resolved the Ministry of Local and Global Outreach, through Calgary Presbytery, and Alberta and Northwest Conference, propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Encourage the Government of Canada to recommit to and actively pursue the attainment of the eight Millennium Goals by the years stated.

Background: (see www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
Target for 2015: Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger.
2. Achieve Universal Primary Education
Target for 2015: Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
3. Promote Gender Equality And Empower Women
Targets for 2005 and 2015: Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.
4. Reduce Child Mortality
Target for 2015: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
5. Improve Maternal Health
Target for 2015: Reduce by three quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.
6. Combat HIV / Aids, Malaria and Other Diseases
Target for 2015: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability
 - Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources
 - By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water.

- By 2020, achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
8. Develop A Global Partnership For Development
- Develop further an open trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction nationally and internationally.
 - Address the least developed countries' special needs, and the special needs of landlocked and small island developing states.
 - Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems
 - Develop decent and productive work for youth
 - In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
 - In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.

BQ 1 - The Meaning of Ministry (Red)

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

Whereas The United Church of Canada has historically recognized an “Ordered Ministry” which includes the ordained and diaconal ministry; and

Whereas the United Church has historically stressed the importance of thorough theological education for ministry leadership in the ordained and diaconal orders; and

Whereas the current needs of the church to be served through the ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care have been driven more by practical needs than by theological discernment which has led to the development of a stream of ministry called lay pastoral ministry; and

Whereas the sense of isolation, lack of support and concerns about identity of those who are in ordered ministry has been heightened by recent trends in ministry vocations in the United Church; and

Whereas there has not been a formal national study and discussion of ministry vocations since 1980;

We the members of Bay of Quinte Conference propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Engage the whole church in a time of discernment concerning the meaning of ministry in The United Church of Canada and

That the discernment would give attention to the following issues:

- a theology of call and vocation
- the theology of ordered ministry
- the theology of lay pastoral ministry
- the theology of lay ministry
- the ecumenical implications

BQ 2 - Repayment of Moving Expenses (Red)

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

Whereas section 036(n) of *The Manual 2004* states that “When the Presbytery approves a request for a change in the pastoral relationship initiated by the minister before the end of the third year, the Presbytery shall require that the moving expenses to that Pastoral Charge be reimbursed by the minister to the parties who paid them on a pro rata basis unless the Presbytery can justify the waiving of this requirement. This requirement shall include the newly commissioned/ordained and called/settled;” and

Whereas the cost to the United Church from the M&S fund for moving of commissionands and ordinands in 2004 was \$121,392.58 and in 2005 was \$134,984.49; and

Whereas the cost of moving a member of the order of ministry who is not a commissionand/ordinand can be quite significant to a pastoral charge; and

Whereas all ministry personnel are aware of the requirements of section 036(n) when they are called/settled;

Therefore, the Bay of Quinte Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

State that prior to waiving the repayment of the moving expenses of an ordinand/commissionand, the Presbytery must consult with the appropriate General Council Unit, and that prior to waiving the moving expenses of a member of the order of ministry who is not an ordinand/commissionand, the Presbytery must consult with the Pastoral Charge and that *The Manual* section 036(n) be amended to reflect this change.

BQ 3 - Requirements for a Police Records Check (Red)

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference with concurrence
Source: Renfrew Presbytery

Whereas a Police Records Check is considered valid for three years in a continuous pastoral relationship; and

Whereas Retired Members of the Order of Ministry frequently provide short term, bridging, ministry for Pastoral Charges at the time of a change in pastoral relations, short term disability, etc.; and

Whereas the current policy regarding Appointments by the Presbyteries discriminates against Retired Members of the Order of Ministry who are required to submit a current Police Records Check with each application for a new Appointment because a “current police records check” is defined as “completed in the last six months” (MEPS 433 AP);

Whereas policy relating to Police Records Checks has already been changed to permit Interim Ministry Personnel to use a Police Records Check for up to three years from the date of issue;

Therefore, be it resolved that Renfrew Presbytery requests:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

To adopt a policy that permits Retired Ministry Personnel to use a Police Records Check for up to three years from the date of issue when applying for Appointment within the Presbytery of which they are a member.

BQ 4 - National United Church Archives (Blue)

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference
Financial Implications: Unknown
Staffing Implications: None
Source of Funding: None

Whereas Section 460 of *The Manual* (2004) mandates that every Conference must arrange for the preservation of the historically significant records of the Conference; and

Whereas they are also mandated to arrange for the gathering of archival records into the Conference archives, both directly from church bodies and individuals and through Presbytery Archives Committees within the Conference; and

Whereas *The Manual* requires that congregations ceasing to exist (334(f) and 270(e) and congregations disbanding (269 (c) forward their records to the Conference Archives; and

Whereas there are presently eleven (11) archival repositories across the Conferences in a variety of facilities and with varying budget and personnel support; and

Whereas the United Church Archives Network collectively forms Canada's largest religious archives; and

Whereas the Central Archives houses the National records (textual, architectural, cartographic, photographic, audio, visual, electronic) of The United Church of Canada and its antecedent denominations (Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Evangelical United Brethren), as well as the five central Ontario Conferences of the United Church (Bay of Quinte, Toronto, Hamilton, London and Manitou) as well as various collections of personal papers of individuals associated with the United Church and its antecedent denominations; and

Whereas the Central Archives' Library contains a unique collection of published material (textual, photographic, audio visual) which complements the archival holdings; and

Whereas the costs of maintaining even a minimal professional level of service has been difficult across the Conferences; and

Whereas the cost of maintaining Archival records in the Central Archives for the five Ontario Conferences has doubled in 2006 with more increases in sight; and

Whereas in many places archival spaces is limited; and

Whereas archival collections will continue to grow with the closure and amalgamation of congregations and through the regular deposit of Conference and General Council records; and

Whereas the gathering of Archival records by the Conferences is for the benefit of The United Church of Canada as a whole; and

Whereas research of United Church records would be greatly enhanced by the specialized knowledge of professional Church archivists if records were preserved in one place

Therefore, be it resolved that Bay of Quinte Conference:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Investigate the feasibility of establishing a national United Church Archives which would house all Archival records related to The United Church of Canada, and

That work be undertaken to digitally store these records in a database and

To make them available through the internet where appropriate.

BQ 5 - Use of the Manse by Ministry Personnel on Disability (Red)

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

Whereas we are called to be fair and equitable in our employment policies and practices; and

Whereas section 037(b)ii lacks clarity in terms of costs related to the use of the manse once Restorative Care is in place; and

Whereas the definition of Total and Permanent Disability as found in section 001 of *The Manual* (2004) is unhelpful in terms of how it relates to our present group insurance plan; and

Whereas a Pastoral Charge may be unduly burdened by the requirement of paying moving costs to have the ministry personnel vacate the manse; and

Whereas the payment of moving costs to vacate the manse causes an inequity between those having a manse and those paying a housing allowance

Therefore be it resolved that the Bay of Quinte Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

To undertake a review of the policy related to the use of manse and housing allowance for Ministry Personnel on disability.

BC 1 - 363 Review Process - Resolution of Conflicts (Red)

Origin: British Columbia Conference with concurrence

Source: Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery with concurrence
Powell River United Church

Purpose and intent of this proposal: Referring to the Principles Section in The United Church of Canada *Manual* discussion on Resolution of Conflicts (Section 065)

Whereas Church discipline is a legitimate tool of good governance the exercise of that discipline is fraught with challenges.

Whereas this is partially the result of that discipline arising from complex and often grave conflict within a congregation and partially the result of the great difficulty inherent in trying to understand an issue from the outside.

Whereas lack of experience on the part of the review panel and even more a lack of training, exposes them to considerable personal anguish and possibly legal risk and the congregation in

question to possible approaches that will deepen rather than heal conflict, it is prudent and necessary to ensure that when a 363 or 333 is implemented there are trained personnel available to carry it through.

Therefore the Official Board of Powell River United Church proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Develop a training programme for Presbytery persons engaged in such a review and have on staff an employee or volunteer versed with understanding and experience to aid them in the process of carrying out a review.

BC 2 - Inclusion of Spiritual Direction in Benefit Package (Red)

Origin: British Columbia Conference

Whereas British Columbia Conference has named Effective Leadership and Healthy Congregations as current priorities;

Whereas healthy, effective religious systems are strongly influenced by the spiritual health of their leaders;

Whereas spiritual care is a key aspect of spiritual health and is therefore essential to both effective leadership and healthy congregations;

Whereas our current benefit package contains resources to provide for the health of the body and the mind, but not the spirit;

Therefore British Columbia Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Include Spiritual Direction, or such resources, as part of the compensation package for ministry personnel.

BC 3 - Appendix IV Corporations/Societies Supervised by Congregations and Presbyteries as well as by Conferences (Blue)

Origin: British Columbia Conference with concurrence

Source: Victoria Presbytery

The ‘Report and Recommendations to Revise Appendix IV of *The Manual*’ recommends that Congregations and Presbyteries no longer be able to have primary supervision of Societies and Corporations within their jurisdiction. Victoria Presbytery wishes to retain the current option of Congregations and Presbyteries being supervisory courts for corporations and societies.

Whereas some Conferences cover large geographic areas; and

Whereas presbyteries and Congregations have much closer relationships with local ministries established as societies and corporations; and

Whereas some United Church societies and corporations have property tax advantages because of their current relationship with presbyteries and congregations that may not continue under the proposed supervisory relationships with Conference;

Therefore Victoria Presbytery proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Retain the current option for Presbyteries and Congregations to be supervisory courts for societies and corporations engaged in ministries within their bounds.

BC 4 - Combining sections 333 and 363 of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada (Red)

Origin: British Columbia Conference with concurrence

Source: Westminster Presbytery

Purpose and intent of this proposal: To make better use of time, energy and resources in handling sensitive issues.

Whereas section 333 of the United Church *Manual* pertains specifically to the Oversight of Pastoral Charges and section 363 of the United Church *Manual* pertains specifically to the Oversight of Ministry Personnel;

Whereas both sections 333 and 363 require that in “its exercise of care and oversight, the Presbytery shall act within the spirit and regulations to be found in sections 065-071, 333 and 363;”

Whereas section 333 requires “in its exercise of discipline, the Presbytery shall act within the provisions of section 072 to 077 and paragraph 363 (d) i” [the discipline of the pastoral charge]; and section 363 requires “in its exercise of discipline, the Presbytery shall act within the provisions of section 072 to 077, section 314 [procedures about the Membership of a Member of the Order of Ministry on the Roll of Presbytery] and subsections 363 (d) [discipline of both pastoral charge and ministry personnel], 363 (f) [possible removal from the roll of Presbytery and Conference and placing on Discontinued Service List], 363 (g) [suspension] and 364 (c) [Criminal Offence];”

Whereas it is almost impossible to speak about or review the state of the pastoral charge without discussing the pastoral relationship nor discuss and review the pastoral relationship without discussing the state of the pastoral charge;

Whereas according to *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada discipline of either the pastoral charge or the ministry personnel may arise from a 363 review and only discipline of the pastoral charge may arise from a 333 review;

Whereas in practice discipline of both pastoral charge and ministry personnel has arisen out of reviews conducted under both sections of *The Manual*;

Whereas conducting a 333 review followed by a 363 review is neither a good economy of energy, time and resources or just treatment of ministry personnel and pastoral charges;

Therefore Westminster Presbytery proposes:

To the 39th General Council 2006:

That Sections 333 and 363 of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada be combined into one section of *The Manual* which would result in a better economy of time, energy, and resources as well as fair and just treatment of all concerned.

BC 5 - Retirement Policy for Pension Qualification (Red)

Origin: British Columbia Conference with concurrence and comments
Source: Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery

Purpose: This proposal addresses the lengthy period of service required of ministry personnel prior to their qualifying for full pension and requests that General Council shorten that period.

Whereas, according to the Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada, ministry staff in the United Church at present “may retire with an unreduced pension if (they) attain at least age 60 and have at least 35 years of credited service in the plan”; and

Whereas other Canadian employers now grant full pension to employees whose age and years of pensionable service combine to a figure smaller and more humane than that demanded by the United Church – typically 85 to 90; and

Whereas The United Church of Canada seeks justice and mercy – certainly in its employment policies as elsewhere – and is bound therefore to treat its employees equitably and with an aim to ensuring their quality of life both before and after retirement; and

Whereas the health of The United Church of Canada pastoral charges is not enhanced by their being served by ministers who continue to work not because of passion but because of economic necessity,

Therefore Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

With all due alacrity, revise the retirement policy of the Pension Plan with the result that ministry personnel may retire with an unreduced pension if the combination of their age and service is 80.

Comments:

The Conference General Meeting agreed to add a note to this proposal suggesting:

- that the reduction in the combination of age and service could be gradually implemented;
- that the combination of age and service might not necessarily be 80 but should be a reduced number from what is current policy.

BC 6 - Decision-making and Administrative Processes of The United Church of Canada (Green)

Origin: British Columbia Conference with concurrence

Source: Kootenay Presbytery

Whereas the current four court structure of the United Church, while serving us well in the first 80 years, is cumbersome and challenged by diminishing financial and personnel resources, by too many administrative levels, and by many difference governance models; and

Whereas at least one General Council has met since the remit to shift to a council model of administration failed, and yet the reasons behind the remit remain sound; and

Whereas some Conference/Districts and Presbyteries are attempting different decision-making and governance models and others are attempting different ways of facilitating ministry, there is no consistency and the financial resources are often absent; and

Whereas other models than Bourinot, such as consensus, allow for greater involvement, less polarized discussion, and a greater ownership of the decision; and

Whereas we are all called to be the church, to be the body of Christ as Paul named it, where some are ears and some are eyes and all have a part to play in the decision-making and governance of our church; and

Whereas some presbyteries feel disenfranchised because of size and distances from Conference and General Council offices;

Therefore Kootenay Presbytery proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Strike a task group to consider the process by which The United Church of Canada is governed and decisions are made, such process to include considerations of, but not be limited to, the use of Bourinot, consensus, All Native Circle Conference models, the four court structure, governance models, resources, and staffing, and report back to the 40th General Council 2009 with recommendations.

HAM 1 - Reducing Child Poverty (Blue)

Origin: Hamilton Conference with concurrence and recommendations
Source: Erie Presbytery with concurrence and recommendations
Courtland United Church

Rationale: It is our belief that certain business practices are contributing to the expansion of child poverty within Canada.

Whereas the hiring of part time employees eliminates said employees from benefit packages; and

Whereas the limited number of hours keeps these employees well below the poverty line; and

Whereas the practice of altering part time schedules eliminates workers from pursuing an additional position to meet family needs; and

Whereas Christians are called “to do justice” and “to love kindness” (Micah 6:8b); and

Whereas the Canadian Federal Government in 1989 pledged to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000.

Therefore the Official Board of the South West Norfolk Pastoral Charge, through Erie Presbytery and Hamilton Conference, proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Encourage the Canadian Federal and/or Provincial governments to enact legislation designed to help reduce child poverty; namely,

1. That resembles a full time to part time employment ratio.
2. That requires employers of part time employees to establish regular employment schedules.
3. That sets a higher minimum wage for part time employees to compensate for reduced hours.
4. That requires employers of part time employees to offer social assistance programs in lieu of benefits.
5. That set limits for the number of part time hours worked before a full time position must be created.

Presbytery Action and Recommendations:

Erie Presbytery Concurrence – January 25, 2006

I feel that setting a higher minimum wage for part time employees to compensate for reduced hours is setting a dangerous precedent. We are recommending that we set up at least 2 classes of citizens.

I believe it would be more beneficial for special consideration in the way of tax considerations to be a method of dealing with lower compensation.

I believe we would be creating more injustices by this action than problem solving.

Conference Action and Recommendations:

Hamilton Conference Concurrence – May 27, 2006

Recommendations:

1. The Conference was unhappy with the wording of this proposal and felt strongly that work needs to be done by the appropriate General Council units regarding the issue of the reduction of child poverty. Therefore the proposal is being transmitted with concurrence.

HAM 2 - A Proposal to Reduce Costs of Information Transfer, in Paper Form, and Improve Efficiency of Information Transfer within the United Church (Blue)

Origin:	Hamilton Conference with concurrence and recommendations
Source:	Bruce Presbytery with concurrence Tobermory United Church Council
Financial Implications:	Considerable saving in duplicating and distribution costs – amount to be determined.
Staffing Implications:	Reduced staff time spent on preparation and distribution and handling of information in paper format.
Source of funding:	None

Rationale: Reduced costs and environmental impact of information transfer in paper format.

Whereas it is necessary to transfer a great deal of information from General Council to Conferences, Presbyteries, and Pastoral Charges and from Conferences to Presbyteries and Pastoral Charges and from Presbyteries to Pastoral Charges.

Whereas the said transfer of such information, in paper form, incurs high costs for printing, collating, envelope handling, mailing, and recipient handling.

Whereas the said transfer of information, in paper form, is inherently slow and inefficient and often ineffective as it frequently involves the paper passing through several hands before it gets to the final intended recipient.

Whereas the production and transfer of information, in paper form, is damaging to the environment and contributes to the release of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere and is therefore in conflict with the United Church of Canada New Creed phrase, “to live in respect in Creation”.

Whereas the use of paper based information transfer results in increased and unnecessary waste disposal that incurs costs and damages the environment.

Whereas the savings from dramatic reduction in the amount of information transfer, in paper format, could be directed to more productive church stewardship.

Therefore:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Form an ad hoc committee, consisting of representatives from the four levels of the church courts, for the purpose of developing policy and procedure that will dramatically reduce the amount of material, in paper form, that is used for information transfer between the church courts and between church courts and church members.

Presbytery Action and Recommendations:

Bruce Presbytery Concurrence – April 18, 2006

Conference Action and Recommendations:

Hamilton Conference Concurrence – May 26/06

Recommendations:

1. That in general any information distributed electronically ought to be available on paper for those who require it.
2. That the church use non-proprietary formats (unalterable formats) for all information that is likely to be historically significant.

HAM 3 - Mandatory Training in Racial Justice for all United Church Ministry Personnel (Red)

Origin: Hamilton Conference with concurrence and recommendation

Source: Hamilton Presbytery
Ryerson United Church

Financial Implications: The United Church of Canada will supply funding costs

Staffing Implications: General Council Minister for Racial Justice; General Council Committee for Personnel and Employment Policies; Conference staff to implement training/education through conference or presbytery workshops.

Source of Funding: General Council funding through Conferences.

Whereas the 37th General Council 2000 affirmed the racial justice policy, *That All May Be One*, calling on the church to act justly within its own structures, court, policies, and practice, especially by:

- reviewing the candidacy, settlement and post-settlement processes for clergy to ensure that they are supportive and non discriminatory;
- developing and publicizing the availability of policies and procedures to address complaints and conflicts with respect to racism;
- helping people to become aware of and support others in accessing church services and processes when rights are violated by acts of racism;

The policy, *That All May Be One*, lists a Statement of Beliefs and refers to Galatians 3:26-28. This theological basis is the foundation for this proposal.

Whereas the Journey of Black Peoples in The United Church of Canada Consultation of April 2005 identified the need for anti-racism training in the church.

Whereas how to address sexual harassment training is already required for all ministry personnel.

Therefore be it resolved:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Direct the Permanent Committee for Personnel and Employment Policies and Services, in conjunction with the office of the General Council Minister for Racial Justice, to develop and implement mandatory training in racial justice for all ministry personnel.

Session/Board/Council Action and Recommendations:

Presbytery Action and Recommendations:

Hamilton Presbytery Concurrence – May 2, 2006

Conference Action and Recommendations:

Hamilton Conference Concurrence – May 27, 2006

Recommendations:

1. That those required to take mandatory training in racial justice ought to include judicatory staff, training centre staff and all those in leadership roles within The United Church of Canada as well as ministry personnel as suggested in the proposal.

HAM 4 - National Aboriginal Consultations (Green)

Origin: Hamilton Conference

Financial Implications: Annual funding of approximately \$75,000 in each of the first three years, with ongoing funding of at least this amount, to be negotiated with the Consultation in a process culturally-based in First Nation values.

Staffing Implications: General Council Coordinator of Aboriginal Ministries would, at least initially, provide support for the planning. Eventually the Consultation would establish its own Planning Committee and Leading Elders.

Source of funding: None

Whereas The United Church of Canada's Apology to the Aboriginal people in 1986 in Sudbury, Ontario offered by then-Moderator Robert Smith states:

...“We tried to make you be like us
And in so doing
We helped destroy the vision
That made you what you were”... and

Whereas now, twenty years after the Apology, it is time to move beyond the words of the Apology, and

Whereas we have not provided or supported a regular process by which the Aboriginal voice can be formed and then communicated to the United Church except through existing structures, which too often use procedures which are inconsistent with First nation cultural ways,

Therefore be it resolved that Hamilton Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Fund a regular Aboriginal Consultation in which the First Nation members of our Church can meet and address issues in a manner consistent with cultural patterns, and that these Consultations occur every three years, at a time other than when General Council is in session;

And be it further resolved that General Council, through the Executive of the General Council, develop a process by which there can be an ongoing dialogue between the members of the Aboriginal Consultation and the General Council, such process to be developed in collaboration with representatives of the Aboriginal Community;

And be it further resolved that this funding be provided in equal annual instalments to provide for Circles to plan the Consultations and to ensure that culturally appropriate follow-up Circles can gather.

LON 1 - Recognition of Spouses of Overseas Personnel (Red)

Origin: London Conference with concurrence

Source: Essex Presbytery with concurrence
St. Paul's Pastoral Charge

Whereas through the history of The United Church of Canada, spouses of Missionaries, now called Overseas Personnel, endured hardship and served Christ in the work of the church in an unrecognized and unpaid capacity. One used her work as an artist to illustrate many printed articles and pamphlets. Another worked as a supervisor nurse in a church managed hospital in China. Another managed a home for unwanted babies in Hong Kong. Many others offered their time and talent in the work of the church. They were unpaid and unrecognized by The United Church of Canada for their work in Christ's name, and

Whereas in the life of The United Church of Canada there are many spouses of ministry personnel who gave up careers, gave of their time and talents, who were regarded by many as 'unpaid ministers', and

Whereas there are now spouses of ministry personnel, overseas personnel who give of their time and talent and they are unpaid and unrecognized,

Therefore St. Paul's United Church through Essex Presbytery and London Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That The United Church of Canada suitably recognize, honour and pay tribute to those unrecognized and unpaid spouses of ministry and overseas personnel who have served and are serving Christ in the work of the church.

LON 2 - Statement of Faith (Commons)

Origin: London Conference with non-concurrence

Source: Lambton Presbytery
London Road West United Church with concurrence

Whereas a statement of faith identifies who we are and what we believe as a church, and

Whereas a statement of faith must be understood and be defensible by all members of the denomination,

Therefore London Road West United Church through Lambton Presbytery and London Conference proposes:

That before the 39th General Council 2006:

approves the draft statement of faith as presented, it be approved, in writing, by the majority of pastoral charges within The United Church of Canada.

LON 3 - Amendment to Section 363 of *The Manual* (Red)

Origin: London Conference with concurrence

Source: Essex Presbytery

BACKGROUND

The Manual Section 363(c) Initiation of Review states:

When there is a question regarding:

1. the effectiveness of Ministry Personnel;
2. the failure of Ministry Personnel to maintain the peace and welfare of the church; or

3. a Ministry Personnel who refuses to recognize the authority of the Presbytery; the case may be brought before the Presbytery for its consideration, by: the Presbytery itself; another of the Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to the Pastoral Charge; the Pastoral Charge Supervisor; the Session; the Official Board or Church Board or Church Council; or a Proposal properly transmitted with concurrence or non-concurrence through the Official Board or Church Council to the Presbytery and signed by ten persons in full membership of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation. The Presbytery shall initiate a review of the situation.

Whereas we are a church that professes justice and fairness for all, and

Whereas this section does not allow for a perception of justice and fairness to the Ministry Personnel involved, and

Whereas it is unreasonably presumed that Ministry Personnel owns the control of the peace and welfare of a congregation as cited in ii above, and

Whereas this section of the act allows for 10 persons in a congregation to lodge a formal complaint against Ministry Personnel, and

Whereas this section of the act presumes that 10 persons are representative of the entire congregation, and

Whereas there is no process to ensure that these individuals are required to seek local conciliatory avenues of resolution which are available to them through Section 244(c) (i) before taking such a step, and

Whereas there is no detailed process for handling differences between Ministry Personnel and the congregation, and

Whereas there is no evidence available to ensure that Ministry Personnel have been given an opportunity to take corrective action or explain their side of the situation,

Therefore Essex Presbytery through London Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. that “signed by ten persons in full membership of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation” read “signed by a minimum of 10 persons or 30% of the persons in full membership, whichever is the greater of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation”, and
2. that 363(c) (ii) “the failure of Ministry Personnel to maintain the peace and welfare of the church;” be removed from section 363, and
3. that when 363 (i) is being applied, the Ministry Personnel Committee provide evidence that shows the steps taken to ensure that justice and fairness has been employed prior to

submitting the request for investigation to Presbytery. This evidence should contain the following information.

- i. specific details as to 1) how the Ministry Personnel is considered to be ineffective;
- ii. the minutes of the meeting of the Session, the Official Board, Church Board or Church Council outlining those in attendance, those indicating regrets, those not in attendance, be attached to the case;
- iii. evidence that the issues that Ministry Personnel have been charged with, have been conveyed to the Ministry Personnel, 1) verbally, and 2) written, prior to being brought to the Official Board, Church Board or Church Council when no corrective action was taken by the Ministry Personnel;
- iv. any written responses from Ministry Personnel be attached to the case being forwarded to the Official Board or Church Board or Church Council;
- v. information received as a result of i, ii, iii, and iv, above, including the minutes of the meeting of the Session, the Official Board, Church Board or Church Council outlining those in attendance, those indicating regrets, and those that did not attend, be attached to the case being forwarded to Presbytery;
- vi. any written responses from Ministry Personnel be attached to the case.

LON 4 - Water: A Gift for All (Blue)

Origin:	London Conference
Financial Implications:	Perhaps increase funding to water projects in developing countries
Staffing Implications:	None
Source of Funding:	Existing funding for overseas projects

Whereas water is a gift – part of God’s Creation, and

Whereas water is essential to human life, and

Whereas in many countries, people purchase soft drinks rather than water because of the high cost of water, and

Whereas multi-national corporations remove water from developing countries and try to sell it back to the people, and

Whereas it takes as much energy to produce one small plastic bottle of water as it does to provide water for an average North American home for a week, and

Whereas many pastoral charges have not engaged in a study of water issues,

Therefore London Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. That The United Church of Canada Water Mission Study be extended for an additional two years;
2. That The United Church of Canada continue, with KAIROS, to pressure the Federal Government to ensure equal access to clean water for all;
3. That The United Church of Canada discourage the purchase of bottled water starting within its courts and congregations where possible;
4. That The United Church of Canada support projects for the construction of communally owned water treatment facilities and pipelines in developing countries.

LON 5 - A Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry (Red)

Origin:	London Conference
Financial Implications:	some costs associated with disseminating the Code, training events
Staffing Implications:	existing funding for Youth and Young Adult ministries
Source of Funding:	existing National and Conference YAYA ministries staff

Whereas the church has engaged in a process of developing ethical standards for ministry personnel, and

Whereas volunteers, congregationally accountable youth workers and ministry personnel working with youth face specific ethical challenges related to working with minors, and

Whereas youth leaders and those responsible for their oversight have expressed a desire for clear standards of ethics to guide youth ministries, and

Whereas a Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry has been developed and thoroughly revised in consultation with youth leaders and the National Consultation on Youth Ministry Training (November 2004), and

Whereas the national working group on Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice has been kept informed about this process and asked for input,

Therefore the Division of Mission in Canada through London Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That a Code of Ethics be developed for Youth Ministry using as a resource the Code of Ethics and commentary that was developed at the National Consultation on Youth Ministry Training (November 2004).

LON 6 - Violence as a National Issue (Blue)

Origin:	London Conference
Financial Implications:	None
Staffing Implications:	Some staff time to work with Conferences and Committees on Racial Justice or Church In Society issues
Source of Funding:	None

Rationale:

The New Creed of the United Church uses the phrase “seek justice and resist evil”. In the book of Deuteronomy, God says “I have set before you today life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, that you and your descendants may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:19) From St. John’s to Victoria, in the cities and the country, violence is a fact of life; it affects us all, every day. Violence affects the whole of the United Church, from coast to coast, in all the Conferences. Most of the deaths from violence are young people; many in Toronto are black, but in other parts of the country they are Asian or Aboriginal Canadian. The Conferences and the national office must not only speak out, but also take an active role in repudiating violence and facilitating constructive dialogue wherever possible. As a national church, we are called to speak to whatever issues prevent life or blessing; we are called to eliminate those things which bring about death and curse; we are called to endeavour to promote justice and peace; we are called to stand with those who are discriminated against within our society, to name racism and bigotry. Violence cannot be written off as simply a black issue, or a native issue, or a gang issue; the violence is an outcome of racism, repression, economic disparity, anger, unemployment, punitive government policies. A just and well-balanced society cannot exist so long as these remain.

Whereas this is the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence, and

Whereas incidents of violence, and particularly gun-related violence are escalating in our nation, particularly in urban settings, and

Whereas these acts of violence affect Canadians from coast to coast, and

Whereas violence of individuals towards each other can be seen as symptomatic of larger systemic problems such as poverty, racism, minimal or nonexistent support systems, for youth and for families, as well as elimination of social programs, and

Whereas racism has many faces and many manifestations, and

Whereas a just and well-balanced society cannot exist without both justice and peace for all its members,

Therefore London Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. That violence in any form, but particularly issues related to gun violence, be recognized as a national concern of The United Church of Canada;

2. That The United Church of Canada make public statements on the issues of violence, particularly gun violence, advocating that all levels of government make systemic changes to address the root causes of the violence,
3. That national staff time be dedicated to seek out ways to forge further connections with communities in Canada which are marginalized and the various coalitions and networks working to end this discrimination and marginalization, and
4. That further education programmes be developed and promoted within The United Church of Canada to advance an understanding of the many faces of violence in our rural, urban and suburban centres across the country.

LON 7 - Settlement for Candidates (Red)

Origin: London Conference

Whereas The United Church of Canada has the Order of Ministry comprising Diaconal and Ordained ministries, and

Whereas we ordain people to word, sacrament and pastoral care and commission people to education, service and pastoral care, and

Whereas the ministries within the Order of Ministry has its own unique gifts, training, expectations and calling, and

Whereas a person cannot be Commissioned or Ordained to the Order of Ministry in The United Church of Canada without going through the Transfer and Settlement process, and

Whereas people are called to Social Ministry,

Therefore London Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That a process be established by which the church will actively seek sites for settlement throughout the church that meet the needs of all candidates for the Order of Ministry, Diaconal and Ordained (whether that be congregational ministry or other Presbytery recognized community agencies/institutions) so that those who offer their gifts and calling to the church may be settled.

LON 8 - A Mutual Property Insurance System (Blue)

Origin:	London Conference with non-concurrence
Source:	Middlesex Presbytery with concurrence Centennial United Church
Financial Implications:	Unknown
Staffing Implications:	Unknown
Source of Funding:	Unknown

Whereas most church buildings and manses, as well as some properties which house outreach ministries, are owned by The United Church of Canada and held in trust for local use, and

Whereas property insurance costs have increased dramatically, without any indication that churches are making more, or more expensive, claims, and

Whereas these increased costs are cutting into congregations' and outreach ministries' ability to continue their ministries (the two quotes Centennial Church received for insurance in 2003 averaged 10% of the congregation's annual receipts), and

Whereas various school boards, municipalities and associations of car dealerships have found mutual insurance to be cost effective,

Therefore Centennial United Church through Middlesex Presbytery and London Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Set up a mutual property insurance system for all buildings held in trust for The United Church of Canada.

LON 9 - Marriage Policy and the Independence of the Clergy (Green)

Origin:	London Conference with concurrence
Source:	Huron-Perth Presbytery St. Mary's Pastoral Charge

Whereas rulings based on the current text of *The Manual* (2001 & 2004) have supported the idea that congregations, through their Session or equivalent, have the sole right to define marriage policy – which then must be followed by Ministry Personnel in covenant relationship with that congregation, and

Whereas Ministry Personnel are Commissioned, Ordained, or Designated by action of Conference, making them responsible not only to a congregation, but to The United Church of Canada, and

Whereas the license to officiate at weddings is issued by the Province at the request of Conference, who takes into account the training and background of the individual to be licensed, and

Whereas Ministry Personnel in covenantal relationship with a congregation are under the oversight of the Presbytery, not the congregation (Basis of Union 6.4.16), and

Whereas it is important to balance Ministry Personnel's responsibilities as both leader and guest within a congregational community with their ministries as defined by the wider church (Education, Service and Pastoral Care or Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care),

Therefore Huron-Perth Presbytery through London Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. That Ministry Personnel be given the right of conscience to accept, as well as to decline, to officiate, off of congregational property, at any marriage considered legal by the requisite federal and provincial authorities, and
2. That the General Council authorize any remits and/or changes to *The Manual* necessary to enable this proposal.

MNWO 1 - Conciliar Church (Red)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference

Whereas two different personnel policies exist in The United Church of Canada, and;

Whereas the Pastoral Relations system guarantees checks and balances in relation to decisions regarding employment but the Human Resources Personnel Policy system vests authority in individual supervisors from staff rather than in elected bodies;

Therefore, we propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. seek means to bring the General Council Human Resources policies into line with practices appropriate to a conciliar church and ensure that the rights of and protections for all employees are at least equivalent in the General Council Human Resources system to what is provided for the in *The Manual* and Pastoral Relations system;
2. establish a Task Group to bring the Human Resources policies of the church into consistency with the Pastoral Relations processes of The United Church of Canada.

MNWO 2 - Accessibility of Policies (Red)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference

Whereas the present Human Resources personnel system in the church raises questions of fair treatment, imbalance of power, and lack of consultative processes, and;

Whereas current access to documents related to the General Council Personnel Policies are only available by request or on-line by a password to staff members, and;

Whereas a stated goal of the General Council reconfiguration of staff responsibilities was to strengthen regional relations;

Therefore, we propose

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. enable all interested people of the church to become knowledgeable about personnel policies thereby maintaining appropriate accountability and ensuring transparency in the work of the church by placing all governing policies on-line and readily accessible to any individual or committee in the church;
2. and, in the continued effort to strengthen regional relations and maintain accountability, make the job descriptions of all senior leadership positions within General Council and Conferences readily available on-line and accessible to any individual or committee in the church.

MNWO 3 – Supervision (Red)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference

Whereas in a national church understandings of the meaning of supervision vary considerably across the country, and;

Whereas the role of all Conference staff (including the Executive Secretary) is to support the work of elected leaders in enabling the well-being of the church within the conference, and;

Whereas the accountability of Conference staff is appropriately to the bodies they serve;

Therefore, we propose

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. add to the Human Resources Policies a definition of “supervisor,” a statement of purpose for supervisors of program staff, and a statement regarding role functions of a supervisor, and

clarify the relationship of Executive Secretaries and Conference Staff Committees with regard to the supervision of Conference staff members,

2. change the General Council Staff Policies so that the responsibility and accountability to search for, appoint, supervise and terminate the ministers of Conference Program Staff be vested in Conference Executive, normally through Search Committees and Staff Committees. The Conference Executive will consult with the appropriate General Council Human Resources body/bodies prior to decision-making in these matters.
3. clarify a process for how conflict between supervisors and supervisees in the Human Resources system is to be resolved in a clear, just and reasonable manner (for example, through steps taken by Staff Committees, or through a process such as the Alternate Dispute Resolution process outlined in *The Manual*, or by an ombudsperson).

MNWO 4 - General Council Minister, Regional Relations (Red)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference

Whereas under the current structure of the General Council staffing arrangements, the General Council Minister, Regional Relations, oversees the work of the regions of the church and acts as a liaison between the regions of the church and the General Council offices as well as supervising the Executive Secretaries of the Conference, and;

Whereas it is important for the Executive Secretary to maintain connections with and some accountability to the General Council as well as in the Conference;

Whereas this has potential to create a situation where the General Council Minister, Regional Relations, has to choose whether to ally her/himself with the Executive Secretary of a particular conference on any given issues or to consider the needs and input of Conference Committees and other members of Conference staff, and;

Whereas this structure also leaves Conference Committees and other members of Conference staff with no advocate at the General Council level when the Executive Secretary reports directly to and is supervised by the General Council Minister, Regional Relations, and;

Whereas, rather than being supervised by one individual, the General Secretary of General Council is supervised by a Supervision Team composed of three members of the Executive of the General Council, one member chosen by the General Secretary and one other member;

Therefore, we propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Designate a team composed of at least two elected members of their respective Conferences and one representative of the Executive of the General Council, using a model similar to the Supervision Committee of the General Secretary of General Council, to supervise each Executive Secretary, and that the General Council Minister, Regional Relations, serve as a resource to the staff committees without participating in their decision-making.

MNWO 5 - Right of conscience to officiate when off congregational property (Green)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference with concurrence

Source: Cambrian Presbytery

Whereas rulings based on the current text of *The Manual* (2001 & 2004) have supported the idea that congregations, through their session or its equivalent, have the sole right to define marriage policy – which then must be followed by ministry personnel in covenantal relationship with that congregation; and

Whereas by tradition and Ruling of the General Secretary, ministers have the right of conscience to refuse to marry individuals, even in opposition to a decision of the session or its equivalent; and

Whereas ministry personnel are Commissioned, Ordained, or Recognized by Action of the Conference, making them responsible not only to a Congregation, but to The United Church of Canada; and

Whereas the license to officiate at weddings is issued by a province at the request of the Conference, who takes into account the training and background of the individual to be licensed; and

Whereas ministry personnel in covenantal relationship with a congregation are under the oversight of the presbytery, not the congregation (Basis of Union 6.4.16); and

Whereas it is important to balance ministry personnel's responsibilities as leaders and guests within congregational communities with their ministries as defined by the wider church (Education, Service and Pastoral Care or Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care);

Therefore, we propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. That ministry personnel be given the right of conscience to officiate off congregational property at any marriage considered legitimate by the General Council and legal by the requisite federal and provincial authorities; and

2. That the 39th General Council 2006 authorize any remits and/or changes to *The Manual* necessary to enable this proposal.

MNWO 6 - Creation of a Department of Peace (Blue)

Origin:	Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference with concurrence
Source:	Winnipeg Presbytery with concurrence Immanuel United Church
Financial Implications:	None
Source of Funding:	None
Staffing Implications:	Representation to Government of Canada

Whereas we believe that broad human concern has been well expressed by Senator Douglas Roche when he said,

“The very agonies of war and the dark night of suffering that has lasted for centuries are awakening civilization to a new understanding: the people of the earth have a sacred right to peace” (the Human Right to Peace);

and

Whereas our understanding of this sacred right comes from Jesus Christ, who stood in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets, and who called us to be peacemakers; and

Whereas we recognize that the crises facing humanity are spiritual in nature as well as social, economic and environmental (ecosystems crises arouse the spectre of violent conflicts); and

Whereas nearly one-third of Canadians have said that Canada’s peacefulness and peacekeeping is our greatest contribution to the world (Environics Research Group 2004 Survey of Canadian values); and

Whereas the federal government spends approximately 16 billion dollars annually on international peace and security through its departments and aid agencies; and

Whereas Canada’s responsibility for engaging in global concerns for peace involve several ministries including Foreign Affairs, Defence, International Trade, Public Safety and Canadian International Development Association; and

Whereas these arrangements result in fragmentation, lack of focus, rivalries and inertia, rather than well established strategies, and give peace concerns a low priority and only peripheral attention; and

Whereas human security, that is, freedom of all people from violence, oppression and war, is needed, the focus of the federal government appears to be on terrorism and national security; and

Whereas the UN in September, 2005, accepted Canada's proposal for the "responsibility to protect" principle, i.e., protection of individuals within each nation, rather than protection of the nation itself; and

Whereas there are working groups promoting departments of peace in Great Britain, the United States and six other countries, including our own, where the Canadian working group has included leading citizens and has done substantial study; and

Whereas this proposal has been initiated by a study group who over thirty years has tried to understand the significant social issues of our time in the light of Christian faith and have taken action in response to some of them;

Therefore, we propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Petition the Government of Canada to create a Department of Peace with:

1. The intention of infusing all departments and agencies of the federal government with an ethic of peace and identifying the basic causes of conflict and to develop strategies and programs that will encourage a more caring society;
2. An over-riding mandate to re-invigorate Canada's role as a global peace builder through the promotion of the non-violent resolution of conflict, human rights, and the security of persons and their communities, socio-economic justice and democratic participation in government;
3. The expectation of involving civil society and its voluntary organizations, as well as its own staff and other federal government departments;
4. A minister who would have human and financial resources appropriate for a full department.

MNWO 7 - Endorsement of the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth (Blue)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference with concurrence
Source: Winnipeg Presbytery with concurrence
Augustine United Church

Whereas physical violence against children is not consistent with the teachings of Jesus who, in Matthew 19:14, tells the disciples to:

"Let the children come unto me, and do not hinder them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven",

and relates the Parable of the Prodigal Son with the father's loving behaviour toward his son exemplifying God's love for humankind (Luke 15: 11-32); and

Whereas other churches and religious organizations (including the United Methodist Church in the United States, the United Reformed Church in the U.K. and the Churches Network for Nonviolence) have supported statements encouraging church members to adopt discipline methods that do not include corporal punishment; and

Whereas many church leaders, world-wide, support the work of churches to end the violence against children, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu who says,

“Children can be disciplined without violence that instils fear and misery. Violence begets violence and we will reap a whirlwind. May God give us grace to love our children as [God] loves them and may their trust in us lead them to trust in [God] (Churches Network for Nonviolence, 2006);

and,

Whereas research now available shows there is no clear evidence of any benefit for the children from the use of physical punishment; and

Whereas there is strong evidence that physical punishment places children at risk for physical injury, poorer mental health, impaired relationships with parents, weaker internalization of moral values, antisocial behaviour, poorer adult adjustment and tolerance of violence in adulthood; and

Whereas few parents believe that physical punishment is effective, most believe it is unnecessary and harmful, and a majority think the most common outcome is parental guilt or regret; and

Whereas parents are more likely to use physical punishment if they approve of it, experienced it themselves as children, feel anger in response to their children's behaviour, are subject to depression, or are burdened by particular forms of stress; and

Whereas the International Committee on the Rights of the Child, the treaty body that monitors nations' implementation of the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child “has stressed that corporal punishment of children is incompatible with the Convention”; and

Whereas over two hundred Canadian organizations including the Canadian Paediatric Society and the Canadian Psychological Association have endorsed the Joint Statement;

Therefore, the Winnipeg Presbytery through the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- Endorse the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth prepared for the Coalition on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth by J.E. Durant and R. Ensom, with the knowledge that endorsement of the statement signifies confidence in its review of

research on physical punishment and conclusions drawn from the review, and support of its recommendations; and

- Commend the Statement to congregations for study.

MNWO 8 - Current model of recruiting volunteers for General Council Volunteer Structure (Green)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference with concurrence
Source: Selkirk Presbytery

Overview

This proposal addresses a concern that the current model of recruiting volunteers for the General Council volunteer structure is not serving the church well, and it calls for adaptation to enhance the models effectiveness.

Whereas “we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophesy in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the compassionate, in cheerfulness” (Romans 12:4-8), and all are needed for the building up of the body; and

Whereas the United Church has a high commitment to a conciliar and broadly-based representational system of decision making that depends on active involvement of volunteers in the General Council structure; and

Whereas the recruitment of volunteers is essential for the operation of the General Council structure; and

Whereas the United Church has proclaimed a commitment to: balance voices, perspectives, and interests while proactively seeking to address inequities; and to intentional struggle with historic patterns of exclusion; and

Whereas the process of appointing volunteers to serve in the General Council structure (Opportunities to Serve) has changed from a nominations process to an application process, and this is a significant change in the culture of volunteer recruitment and service; and

Whereas this shift in culture has not been well integrated into this Church at the presbytery or congregational levels; and

Whereas the United Church has stated a desire to “seek a comprehensive approach to recruiting, selecting, supporting, and recognizing those who are elected or appointed to serve as members of councils, committees, or groups”; and

Whereas there are a concerning number of vacancies in the structure currently;

Therefore, we propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Examine the Opportunities to Serve process, and develop and implement ways to educate the church about the process of appointment through application, so that more volunteers can be identified and recruited; and
2. Adapt the current model to increase flexibility for church constituencies and General Council committees to assist in the recruitment of individuals, which might include developing a hybrid approach that allows for some nomination and direct recruitment, especially in seeking specific representation (such as gender, stream of ministry, region, age), and in situations where applications have not been forthcoming.

MNWO 9 - Interim Ministry Requirements (Red)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference with concurrence
Source: Assiniboine Presbytery

Whereas the United Church has committed itself to Interim Ministry in those situations where it is deemed appropriate; and,

Whereas the General Council has instituted regulations regarding Interim Ministry; and, Presbyteries and Conferences have had an opportunity to implement these regulations; and,

Whereas the experience of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario is that the requirement of re-designation following each Interim Ministry position is unwieldy; and,

Whereas the requirement that interviews/evaluation of Interim ministers take place at the end of an Interim makes it impossible to designate individuals in order for them to be available to seek positions in a timely manner; and,

Whereas Interim Ministers, because of Presbytery’s presence on the Transition Team, are under closer than normal scrutiny;

Therefore we propose

That 39th General Council 2006:

Review and reconsider the requirements for Interim Ministry as described in the *United Church Manual*, and develop a process for Interim Ministers to maintain designation following each interim ministry appointment;

and

That effective evaluation tools be developed to assist pastoral charges, presbyteries, and conferences in their responsibility to evaluate those practicing Interim Ministry.

MTU 1 - Special Funding for Experimental Ministries (Blue)

Origin: Manitou Conference
Financial Implications: Unknown
Staffing Implications: None
Source of Funding: Mission and Service Fund

Whereas the face of The United Church of Canada is changing because of changing demographics and

Whereas many churches in our country are facing financial constraints that are affecting the ability to maintain current ministry levels and

Whereas The United Church of Canada does not have a mechanism to fund ministries that do not fall within the guidelines for Mission Support Grants and

Whereas the Presbyterian Church of Canada has mechanisms to fund experimental ministries such as the Regional Ministry of Temiskaming Presbytery that has a regional minister ministering to four Pastoral Charges and provides the bulk of the funding.

Therefore Manitou Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Make funds available from the Mission and Service Fund to support churches or church groupings that desire to experiment with models that could sustain ministry in areas that are at risk and which presently are unable to access Mission Support Funding because of restrictive guidelines placed on that fund.

MTU 2 - Presbytery Status of Retired Lay Ministers (Green)

Origin: Manitou Conference

Whereas the 38th General Council 2003 approved a remit that caused the membership of lay people in lay ministries to revert to their home congregations upon retirement; and

Whereas these same Lay Ministers provide important, and in many cases crucial leadership to the presbyteries in which they served, and

Whereas a number of Presbyteries, especially in northern and more remote areas of the country, are expected to fulfill their mandate while having a number of congregations who rely solely on lay pastoral ministers, student and candidate supplies, and staff associates to provide the necessary leadership, and

Whereas this decision of General Council has now removed a number of people from the opportunity to continue leadership within our own presbytery of Sudbury unless they are elected as lay members at large or as a lay representative from a congregation (which, in turn, would limit the length of term that they could serve and also disenfranchise other lay leaders),

Therefore Manitou Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Authorize a remit on section 365.1 (e) of *The Manual* allowing lay pastoral ministers and staff associates to remain members of Presbytery upon retirement if so desired by both the retired lay pastoral minister or staff associate and the Presbytery.

MTU 3 - The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Green)

Origin: Manitou Conference

Manitou Conference proposes

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples as the guiding principles in The United Church of Canada's ongoing work of establishing right relationship with First Nations people;

And that the RCAP recommendations form the basis of our public witness and prophetic voice.

MTU 4 - Changing the definition of Quorum (Green)

Origin: Manitou Conference

Whereas the present *Manual* Definition of “Quorum” states “in any meeting of a Presbytery, a Conference, or the General Council, not less than one-fifth (1/5) of those entitled to vote, of whom at least one-third (1/3) shall be members of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training, or Staff Associates, and at least one-third (1/3) shall be lay persons except those appointed as Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training, or Staff Associates” and

Whereas we believe strongly in the ministry of all people, and

Whereas changes in membership of presbyteries has significantly skewed the Ministers/Staff Associates and Lay ratio, and

Whereas more and more small pastoral charges are without any paid accountable Ministers, and Ministry Personnel, and

Whereas the present Quorum requirements intended to ensure balance between paid accountable ministers and laity are now more problematic than helpful, and

Whereas many smaller presbyteries find themselves unable to meet the present quorum requirements on a regular basis, and

Whereas new alternative forms of providing ministry in small pastoral charges could further impact the reduction of Ordered Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training or Staff Associates,

Therefore Manitou Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That the definition of a Quorum in the Basis of Union be changed through the Remit process as follows:

1. Delete the words “a Presbytery” from Definitions Section 001 “Quorum” of *The Manual* P.43.
2. Add a separate subsection titled “Definition of Quorum for Presbytery” which shall read as follows:
 - “The quorum for a meeting of a Presbytery shall be: not less than one third (1/3) of the members of the settled, retained, or appointed Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training, or Staff Associates on the roll of Presbytery, and
 - not less than one third (1/3) of the lay members on the roll of Presbytery.”

MAR 1 - Inclusion of ‘mail-in ballot’ process in *Manual* (Green)**Origin:** Maritime Conference with concurrence**Original Source:** Valley Presbytery**Financial Implications:** None

Whereas The United Church of Canada has adopted and used the conciliar system of governance since 1925; and,

Whereas the conciliar system seeks to draw the members of a court into a body with life and integrity, to hear the concerns and seek the wisdom of its members and to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and,

Whereas *The Manual* is clear on the inadmissibility of proxy votes (App III, 7d) yet remains silent on the use of mail-in ballots; and,

Whereas the silence of *The Manual* on mail-in ballots has allowed well-intentioned courts to use mail-in ballots for a variety of purposes; and,

Whereas it is the opinion of Valley Presbytery that mail-in ballots challenges our understanding of the nature of a conciliar system of discernment and governance;

Valley Presbytery, through the Maritime Conference, proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Approve that guidelines for the use of mail-in ballots must be included in *The Manual*.

MAR 2 - Timing for Presbytery Appointments and Settlement of Ordered Ministry (Green)**Origin:** Maritime Conference with concurrence and recommendation**Financial Implication:** None

Whereas The United Church of Canada, has appointed an “Ordained Ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care and a Diaconal Ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care, and calls men and women to these ministries; and that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain or commission them to the work of ministry”; [*Basis of Union, 2:17*] and,

Whereas The United Church of Canada continues to place high value on the preparation of men and women for ordained and diaconal ministry, supporting the theological colleges which prepare candidates for these ministries; [*Basis of Union, 14.4*] and,

Whereas “The policy of the Church shall be that, as far as reasonably possible, every Pastoral Charge shall have a pastorate without interruption, and that, as far as reasonably possible, every effective member of the Order of Ministry shall have a Pastoral Charge”; [*Basis of Union 9.2, Bylaws 041*] and,

Whereas the women and men who are to be ordained or commissioned must be transferred and settled and there must be sufficient Pastoral Charges which are requesting settlement to meet the needs of those seeking settlement; [*Basis of Union 9.9, Bylaws 713, 443*] and,

Whereas, due to a shortage of ordinands and commissionands in the past many years, The United Church of Canada has established a variety of lay ministries, called by various names through the years, to which men or women may be appointed: “Where circumstances indicate, the Presbytery shall have the authority, when not declaring a Vacancy or when acting to meet an unfilled Vacancy, to appoint for a specified term one of the following: a Lay Pastoral Minister, Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training, or Staff Associate; a Candidate Supply, Intern Supply, or Student Supply; a Diaconal Supply or Ordained Supply; or a retired or other United Supply”; [*Manual Bylaws, 041 (b)*] and,

Whereas, due on one hand to the shortage of ordinands and commissionands, and due on the other hand to economic and demographic pressures, some Pastoral Charges which for years have been ideal settlement sites, being anxious to ensure continuing ministerial leadership, have sought, before the annual meeting of the Transfer and Settlement Committees, and in lieu of making a request for settlement, a Presbytery appointment to their Pastoral Charge thereby reducing the pool of possible settlement places for the ordinands and commissionands;

Therefore be it resolved:

That the Bylaw Section 041 of *The Manual* of The United Church be amended to declare that any new appointments by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge be made following the rise of Settlement Committee to ensure that “as far as reasonably possible, every Pastoral Charge shall have a pastorate without interruption, and that, as far as reasonably possible, every effective member of the Order of Ministry shall have a Pastoral Charge.” [*Basis of Union 9.2, Bylaws 041*]

Recommendation: Annual Meeting of Maritime Conference recommended that the Proposal be adopted with one addition: that after the phrase “...any new appointments...” the words ‘which would extend beyond June 30’ be inserted. The Annual Meeting did not to deny the Presbytery the right to make short term appointments during the Pastoral Year.

That the Bylaw Section 041 of *The Manual* of The United Church be amended to declare that any new appointments which would extend beyond June 30 by a Presbytery to a Pastoral Charge be made following the rise of Settlement Committee to ensure that “as far as reasonably possible, every Pastoral Charge shall have a pastorate without interruption, and that, as far as reasonably possible, every effective member of the Order of Ministry shall have a Pastoral Charge.” [*Basis of Union 9.2, Bylaws 041*]

M&O 1 - Water: Life Before Profit (Blue)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference

Purpose of the Proposal: to ensure General Council continues to petition the Federal Government on water issues and support KAIROS' efforts to achieve clean water for all now and in the future. Amos 5: 24

Whereas we believe that water is a sacred gift that connects us all,

Whereas water is being turned in to a commodity where private companies are taking control, depriving access to those who cannot pay, and local ecosystems are being threatened.

Therefore Justice Global and Ecumenical Relations/Global Partnerships (World Outreach) Montreal and Ottawa Conference proposes:

That 39th General Council 2006:

Continue to request the Canadian Government to ensure access to clean water for all by:

1. Supporting access to publicly or cooperatively controlled water services that have genuine community participation.
2. Opposing measures in federal, bilateral and multilateral agreements and policies that promote privatization of water services.
3. Protecting and preserving natural sources of water.

and that General Council provide resources to KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives) to ensure that this work is carried out.

M&O 1 - L'eau: la Vie avant le profit

Origine: Synode Montréal et Ottawa

But de la proposition: s'assurer que le Conseil général continue d'adresser des pétitions au gouvernement fédéral sur les questions touchant l'eau, et d'aider KAIROS dans ses efforts pour que toute personne ait accès à de l'eau propre, maintenant et à l'avenir.
Amos 5,24

Attendu que: nous avons la conviction que l'eau est un don sacré qui nous relie tous et toutes ;

Attendu que: l'eau est considérée comme une marchandise là où les compagnies privées ont le contrôle: les personnes qui ne peuvent pas la payer ne peuvent y avoir accès, et les écosystèmes locaux sont menacés ;

Il est résolu que le JGER / les Partenariats Mondiaux (mission mondiale) du Synode Montréal et Ottawa proposent:

Que le Conseil Général continue de demander au Gouvernement Canadien de faire en sorte que toute personne ait accès à de l'eau propre:

1. En favorisant l'accès à des services publics ou coopératifs d'approvisionnement en eau auxquels la communauté est vraiment participante ;
2. En s'opposant aux mesures prescrites par les ententes et les politiques fédérales, bilatérales et multilatérales qui favorisent la privatisation de l'approvisionnement en eau ;
3. En protégeant et en préservant les sources naturelles d'eau.

Ils proposent en outre que le Conseil Général fournisse à KAIROS (Initiatives Canadiennes Ecuméniques pour la Justice) des ressources pour faire en sorte que ce travail se fasse.

M&O 2 - Support for Church Suppers in Ontario (Blue)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence

Source: Seaway Valley Presbytery

Purpose and intent of proposal: General Council to be a prophetic voice in requesting an exemption in the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act to allow Churches and other not-for-profit groups to continue to serve meals to the public for fundraising purposes.

Statement of the reasons, conditions, and theological commitments leading to the proposal

Whereas it is a long-standing tradition in rural Ontario for churches and other organizations to raise funds by holding suppers that feature home-cooked food and home-baking that are served to the general public; and,

Whereas these suppers provide a venue for people in the community to gather to share a nutritious meal at a reasonable cost; and,

Whereas the funds raised enable the host groups to continue to provide a wide range of other services to their communities; and,

Whereas the groups offering these meals are not-for-profit; and,

Whereas provincial legislation requiring food served at public events to be prepared on-site in approved kitchen facilities places an impossible burden on small groups of volunteers who cannot afford to rebuild or upgrade facilities to commercial standards, or to undertake to prepare all the food on site; and,

Whereas regulation 562 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act already recognizes this by providing an exemption allowing churches, service clubs and fraternal organizations to prepare and serve meals for members and personally invited guests at special events; and,

Whereas the church has a Biblical injunction from the prophet Jeremiah to "...seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:7) {Understanding "city" in a broad sense, i.e., community, village, town}

Whereas the sharing of a meal (even for fundraising purposes) can be an instance of reconciliation, community building, and a witness to the inclusivity of Christ, as St. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 10: 23-31: "'All things are lawful,' but not all things are beneficial. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. {24} Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other. {25} Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, {26} for 'the earth and its fullness are the Lord's.' {27} If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. {28} But if someone says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience – {29} I mean the other's conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else's conscience? {30} If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks? {31} So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. {32} Give no offence to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, {33} just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved."

Whereas it is these events and meals offered by the various non-profit groups that form a key component of the social infrastructure of a community, particularly in rural areas.

Therefore, Seaway Valley Presbytery proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend section 2 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (RRO 1990) to permit churches, service clubs and fraternal organization to serve home-cooked food at public events for fund-raising purposes.
2. Seek broad-base support from other stakeholders (i.e., other denominations, faith groups, service clubs, fraternal organizations) in petitioning the Ontario Legislature for this change.
3. Provide education and information to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as to the plight of volunteer organizations such as churches, service clubs and fraternal organizations.
4. Provide a prophetic voice as to what Ontario society might become if churches, et al., were to cease to function in the communities they serve.

M&O 3 - References to Diaconal Ministry (Red)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence
Source: Ottawa Presbytery

Preamble:

I am one of many diaconal ministers concerned about the present lack of clarity in the usage of wording to describe diaconal ministry. Thus, I am submitting this recommendation as a proposal to Ottawa Presbytery to be forwarded to the further church courts. Similar proposals will be submitted to other Presbyteries throughout the country.

History and background:

Using the 2004 *Manual*. The Basis of Union –11.3. The preamble to the questions to be asked in the service to ordain or commission or receive persons to the Order of Ministry... “In order that the ministry of the whole Church may be fulfilled, God has given the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, and the diaconal ministry of Education, Service and Pastoral Care,...”

In the By-Laws –under definitions –001 “Diaconal Minister” –”means a member of the Order of Ministry who has been commissioned to the diaconal ministry of education, service and pastoral care, and includes those who were formerly designated or set apart as deaconesses or certified churchmen”.

We note a growing use of the term “commissioned ministers” by several courts of the church. We agree that to use the term “commissioning” or “commissioned minister” may seem an efficient use of words. It does, however, omit the history and the passion of diaconal ministry, not only in the United Church, but both biblically and in the tradition of the church internationally. We are diaconal ministers in diaconal ministry and would appreciate these terms being used consistently in all spheres of the life of the church.

We therefore (recommend) propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That all references to diaconal ministry throughout *The Manual* match the definition as described in section 001.

That all services of ordination and commissioning use the wording of Basis of Union – 11.3, question #2 along with *Manual* section 001.

Further, when referring to diaconal ministry, that the terms “commissioned” and “commissioning” always be followed by the term “in” or “to diaconal ministry”.

M&O 4 - Augmentation of Tax Credit for Charitable Donations (Blue)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence

Source: Montreal Presbytery with concurrence
St. Lambert United Church

Purpose and Intent of Proposal: On the premise that all Canadians would give more to charitable organizations if they had more to give we propose that the Tax Credit for Charitable Donations be increased.

Statement of the reasons, conditions and theological commitments leading to the proposal

Whereas we are instructed by the Holy Scriptures in Acts 20:35 that “In all things I gave you an example, that so labouring you ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Whereas governments across Canada have made numerous cutbacks over the years to the health and social services and it has been the numerous charitable organizations, including the many churches, which have often picked up the slack, and

Whereas a tax credit of 45% is given for donations to the main political parties, and

Whereas a flat tax credit of 45% for all donations is more advantageous to charitable organizations, and

Whereas the Canadian Government has eliminated the annual deficit and should be congratulated for being the only member of the G8 to have so many consecutive years of surpluses, and

Whereas the tax credit has actually declined from 1998 to the level shown below; 2005: Credit for first \$200.00 at 15% and for over \$200.00 at 29% while the maximum credit was 75% of net income except for deceased who were allowed 100% of net income.;

Therefore, the congregation of St. Lambert United Church propose that the Montreal Presbytery submit to the Montreal and Ottawa Conference for presentation to the General Council in August the recommendation:

That the Government of Canada offer an improved credit for charitable donations by Canadians starting with the next Federal Budget.

Further to this, that the following propositions be adopted:

- A 45% credit for all donations with an increase of the overall limit for the donation as a percentage of net revenue from 75% to 80%

Insofar as the Quebec Government is concerned for those members of The United Church of Canada living in Quebec, we propose the following:

- The Government of Quebec must raise the credit to 45% to a maximum of 80% of the net revenue.

- Furthermore, the Government of Quebec must not group non-refundable tax credits for charitable donations with other credits.

M&O 4 - Augmentation des crédits d'impôts pour dons de charité

Origine: Synode Montréal et Ottawa Approuvé en accord
Soumis par: le Consistoire de Montréal en accord
Église Unie Saint-Lambert

But et intention de la proposition :

Basé sur le principe que tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes donneraient davantage aux organismes de charité s'ils en avaient plus à donner, nous proposons que les crédits d'impôts pour dons de charité soient augmentés.

Raisons, circonstances et engagements théologiques sous-jacents à la proposition :

Attendu que dans Actes 20,35 les Saintes Écritures nous apprennent ceci: «Je vous ai montré en tout qu'il faut travailler ainsi pour venir en aide aux pauvres, en nous souvenant des paroles que le Seigneur Jésus lui-même a dites: 'Il y a plus de bonheur à donner qu'à recevoir.'; et

Attendu que les gouvernements à travers le Canada ont fait de nombreuses coupures aux services sociaux et de santé au fil des ans, et que ce sont les oeuvres de bienfaisance, comprenant les nombreuses Églises, qui ont pris la relève; et

Attendu qu'un crédit d'impôt de 45% est alloué pour les dons aux principaux partis politiques; et

Attendu qu'un crédit d'impôt uniforme de 45% pour tout don est plus avantageux pour les oeuvres de bienfaisance; et

Attendu que le gouvernement canadien a éliminé le déficit annuel et devrait être félicité pour être le seul membre du G8 à avoir tant d'années consécutives de surplus; et

Attendu que le crédit d'impôt a en fait baissé depuis 1998 au niveau suivant: 2005: crédit de 15% pour le premier 200\$ et de 29% pour les montants excédant 200\$, alors que le crédit maximum était de 75% du revenu net sauf pour les successions pour lesquelles était accordé 100% du revenu net;

En conséquence, nous, de la paroisse de l'Église Unie Saint-Lambert, proposons que le Consistoire de Montréal soumette au Synode Montréal & Ottawa au mois de mai pour présentation au Conseil général la recommandation

Que le gouvernement du Canada offre un crédit amélioré pour les dons de charité des Canadiens et Canadiennes, débutant au prochain budget fédéral.

De plus, nous suggérons que les prochaines propositions soient adoptées :

- Un crédit de 45% pour tout don avec une augmentation de la limite maximum des dons portant le pourcentage du revenu net de 75% à 80%

Là où le gouvernement du Québec est concerné pour les membres de l'Église Unie du Canada habitant au Québec, nous proposons ce qui suit :

- Le gouvernement du Québec doit augmenter le crédit d'impôt jusqu'à 45% et augmenter le maximum à 80% du revenu net.
- De plus, le gouvernement du Québec ne doit plus grouper le crédit d'impôt non remboursable pour les dons de charité avec d'autres crédits.

M&O 5 - Implementing The Refugee Appeal Division (Blue)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence

Source: Montreal Presbytery

Description: The object of this proposal is to ask The United Church of Canada to remind the Canadian Government that the Section of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2002) concerning the establishment of a Refugee Appeal Division has not yet been implemented and to urge immediate action to complete the intent of this duly passed legislation.

A Concise Statement of the Reasons, Conditions and Theological Commitments:

Whereas Canada has committed to uphold the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees by signing the 1951 U.N. Convention on Refugees and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and

Whereas the Federal Government has indicated it has no present intention of implementing the appeal provision approved by Parliament in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2002) despite international recognition of the right to an appeal for refugee claimants and despite the promise in 2002 by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to the Canadian Council for Refugees that the appeal would be implemented within a year; and

Whereas, as a result, the present refugee determination system, while in many ways admirable, has the major flaw of an inability to correct errors because of the present inadequate components that include:

1. reliance on the finding of a single decision maker from the Immigration and Refugee Board rather than the previous hearing before two Board members, and the fact that the political process of naming Board members is not based solely on their ability to make good refugee determinations, and
2. exploitation of a significant number of claimants by incompetent and unscrupulous consultants or lawyers and inadequacy of legal aid coverage in many parts of Canada, and
3. inadequacy of other recourses in the absence of an appeal on the merits of the case, and

Whereas, given that even the best decision-makers may err in passing judgment and such errors may result in potential risk to life, and

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, as well as many Canadians, have urged the Canadian government to implement the appeal process, and

Whereas, as Christians we are committed to seek justice, to welcome the stranger, and to offer loving support to the poor and friendless;

Therefore, the Montreal Presbytery through Montreal & Ottawa Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006 of The United Church of Canada

Urge the Government of Canada to implement the Refugee Appeal Division of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act immediately.

and further; that:

1. KAIROS, in partnership with the Canadian Council for Refugees, Amnesty International and other refugee advocacy and human rights groups, be encouraged to continue their dedicated work in educating and informing our churches and members of the public about this issue and the need for action, and
2. Pastoral charges, Presbyteries and Conferences be asked to support the efforts of these bodies through prayer, education and actions on behalf of refugees.

M&O 6 - Mining Criteria for Canadian Companies in other countries (Blue)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence

Source: Montreal Presbytery

Purpose of Proposal: To assure that Mining Companies registered in Canada, that are engaged in mining development in other countries, will be required to adhere to the same principles on Human Rights, Security and Respect of the Environment enforced in mining within Canada.

Whereas Canada accounts for approximately 60 per cent of the overall investment in mining-related activities worldwide; and

Whereas Canadian registered companies engaged in mining development in other countries have no obligation to adhere to laws or ethical standards governing mining within Canada and can choose on a voluntary basis to follow the Voluntary Principles on Human Rights and Security; and

Whereas Canadians expect that companies operating on Canadian soil will do so in a manner that respects both the environment and the rights of workers and their communities and we can expect no less of Canadian companies that operate overseas; and

Whereas a great proportion of the mining interests of Canadian companies overseas are located on lands of Indigenous peoples and they are the most affected by the dangerous contamination of their water and destruction of their land, requiring that particular attention be taken so that the standards adopted include Indigenous rights laws; and

Whereas a report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in July 2005 expresses concern that Canada does not yet have laws to ensure that Canadian mining companies overseas conform with human rights standards and calls on the government to ensure that these companies conduct their activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner; and

Whereas our Statement of Faith call us to be the church engaged in the world as we “seek justice and resist evil”

Therefore, we propose that the Montreal & Ottawa Conference propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

To urge the Government of Canada to take immediate action by

- developing a Code of Conduct for Canadian Corporations equivalent to that which regulates mining in Canada and that is based on international humanitarian rights laws and environmental standards, with particular attention to the rights of Indigenous peoples
- passing legislation that would require all companies to abide by this code as a condition for maintaining their registration in Canada for government financial support and other services
- putting in place an independent monitoring and investigative body that can receive and investigate complaints of violations against the code, using the same mechanisms in place for monitoring mining practices in Canada.

M&O 7 - Implementing Kyoto (Blue)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence

Source: Montreal Presbytery

Purpose and Intent of Proposal: Acting on this proposal will strengthen the resolve of congregations and other communities “to live with respect in creation”.

Statement of the reasons, conditions and theological commitments leading to the proposal

Whereas the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it; the world and those who live in it. (Psalm 24:1); and

Whereas in the Spirit, we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28); and

Whereas The United Church of Canada and others successfully campaigned to have the Government of Canada join more than 170 other countries and ratify the Kyoto Protocol; and

Whereas the United States of America has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol; and

Whereas the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations unit of General Council has proposed methods by which congregations and other communities can make their buildings more energy efficient; and

Therefore the Montreal Presbytery through Montreal & Ottawa Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- Request presbyteries to urge ministries within their boundaries to take responsibility to make their buildings more energy efficient by conducting an energy audit of their buildings, and preparing and implementing a plan based on the audit;
- Campaign with others to have the Government of Canada take actions to meet its commitments to implement the Kyoto Protocol; highlighting the need for public transportation as one priority.
- Campaign with others to have the Government of Canada urge the Government of the United States of America to participate with the international community in helping solve the problems of climate change by joining the Kyoto Protocol;

And further, that The United Church of Canada: use its relations with its ecumenical and interfaith partners to join in the campaign to encourage Governments including those of the United States and Canada to participate with international commitments to implement the Kyoto protocol.

M&O 7 - Mise en application du Protocole de Kyoto

Origine: Synode Montréal et Ottawa en accord

Source: Consistoire de Montréal

But et intention de la proposition :

Cette proposition vise à affermir la détermination des paroisses et des autres communautés «à vivre avec respect dans la création».

Raisons, circonstances et engagements théologiques sous-jacents à la proposition :

Attendu que : «C'est au Seigneur qu'appartient le monde avec tout ce qu'il contient, la terre avec ceux qui l'habitent.» (Psaume 24,1) ; et

Attendu que : «En lui nous avons la vie, nous pouvons nous mouvoir et nous sommes.» (Actes 17,28) ; et

Attendu que : L'Église Unie du Canada s'est associée à d'autres avec succès pour faire campagne afin que le gouvernement du Canada se joigne à 170 pays pour ratifier le Protocole de Kyoto ; et

Attendu que : Les États-Unis d'Amérique n'ont pas ratifié le Protocole de Kyoto ; et

Attendu que : L'Unité Justice et relations globales et oecuméniques du Conseil général a proposé des méthodes par lesquelles les paroisses et autres communautés peuvent rendre leurs bâtiments économes d'énergie;

En conséquence, le Consistoire de Montréal propose

Que le Conseil général:

1. Demande aux consistoires d'insister auprès des ministères sur leur territoire afin qu'ils assument la responsabilité de rendre leurs bâtiments plus économes d'énergie en faisant une vérification de l'usage de l'énergie dans leurs bâtiments, et en préparant et mettant en place un plan d'économie de l'énergie basé sur cette étude ;
2. Fasse campagne avec d'autres participants pour que le gouvernement du Canada prenne les actions nécessaires pour s'acquitter de ses obligations pour la mise en application du Protocole de Kyoto; et qu'il souligne comme priorité le besoin de transport en commun;
3. Fasse campagne avec d'autres participants pour que le gouvernement du Canada presse le gouvernement des États-Unis d'Amérique d'aider la communauté internationale à résoudre les problèmes des changements climatiques en se joignant au Protocole de Kyoto;

De plus, que l'Église Unie du Canada invite ses partenaires oecuméniques et interreligieux à se joindre à la campagne visant à encourager tous les gouvernements, incluant ceux des États-Unis et du Canada, à participer aux engagements internationaux pour la mise en application du Protocole de Kyoto.

M&O 8 - Accountability for the Canada-Central America Four Free Trade Agreement (CA4FTA) (Blue)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence

Source: Montreal Presbytery

Purpose of Proposal: To assure that the Canadian public is informed of any international trade negotiations being undertaken, that there be opportunity for full debate and disclosure of the contents and consequences of such agreements, that we respond to our church partners' requests that we exercise our responsibility for global relationships and the care of creation.

Whereas it is our democratic right and responsibility to be informed of actions that will affect peoples' lives, the environment and Human Rights; and

Whereas the Americas Policy Group, a working group of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, has been monitoring the negotiations of the Canada-Central America Four Free

Trade Agreement (CA4FTA) between Canada and Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala; and

Whereas there are widespread concerns regarding the content of the agreement and its consequences for democracy and the social and economic well-being of those who will be affected by the CA4FTA; and

Whereas there has been no public or parliamentary debate on the agreement, the Canadian government has refused to release the text of the agreement for public scrutiny and intends to complete the negotiations in the near future; and WHEREAS a fair agreement can be a tool to ease the grinding poverty of the majority and address the needs of the most vulnerable of the Central American people;

Whereas our church partners in Central America are asking for our involvement in holding our government accountable for trade agreements that will address the needs of their people in striving for a life with health and dignity:

Therefore, we propose that the Montreal & Ottawa Conference propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Request that the Canadian government:

- Release the full text of the CA4FTA while it is still being negotiated and at least three months before the agreement is ratified, and ensure that its Central American counterparts do the same;
- Establish an independent human rights impact assessment of the proposed agreement before proceeding with negotiations;
- Ensure Canadian public and parliamentary debate of the CA4FTA prior to Cabinet ratification.

M&O 9 - Resources and strategies to challenge homophobia in the Church (Blue)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence

Source: Montreal Presbytery
Rosedale Queen Mary United Church

Whereas The United Church of Canada has made great strides in terms of equality and celebration of diversity. However there are further steps to take to realize the principles that lie behind this progress.

Whereas the reality of homophobia in the Church is a barrier to authentic relationships with one another and with God. This is wounding and creates an atmosphere of fear and mistrust.

Therefore, we ask:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

To assist the Church in the creation of resources for the purpose of:

- recognizing homophobia
- changing our behaviour and establishing just relationships

Within the range of resources provided, we request that attention be given to strategies for intervention and support on behalf of those who are caught in situations of homophobic abuse.

M&O 9 - Ressources et stratégies pour faire échec à l'homophobie dans l'Église

Origine: Synode Montréal et Ottawa en accord

Source: Consistoire Montréal
L'Église Unie Rosedale Queen-Mary

Attendu que: l'Église Unie du Canada a fait de grand pas en termes d'égalité et de célébration de la diversité, mais qu'il reste toutefois encore d'autres étapes à franchir pour réaliser les principes derrière ce progrès ; et

Attendu que : l'homophobie dans l'Église empêche les relations authentiques entre les personnes et avec Dieu, et que cette réalité blessante crée une atmosphère de crainte et de méfiance.

En conséquence, nous demandons

Que le Conseil général de l'Église Unie du Canada assiste l'Église dans la création de ressources permettant :

- de reconnaître l'homophobie ;
- de changer notre comportement et d'établir des relations justes.

Dans la gamme de ressources à créer, nous demandons qu'une attention spéciale soit apportée aux stratégies d'intervention et de soutien pour les personnes victimes de situations d'abus homophobique.

M&O 10 - Official French version of *The Manual of The United Church of Canada* (Green)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with concurrence

Source: Laurentien Presbytery

To ensure that all French-speaking members of The United Church of Canada receive an official French version of *The Manual*.

Whereas The United Church of Canada aims to spread the message of the Gospel to everyone in the country regardless of their language or ethnic origin;

Whereas the work undertaken by the Unit of Ministries in French (UMiF) will lead to a restructuring and to greater visibility for our Church among French-speaking communities across the country;

Whereas *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada is an indispensable tool for sound management practices at every level of the Church;

We, the Laurentien Presbytery, therefore propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Prepare an official translation of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada over the next three years and ensure that this French manual be updated following each General Council.

Further, that the most recently printed English version of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada remain the official version in the event of a discrepancy with the French version.

M&O 10 - Version française officielle du *Manuel* de l'Église Unie du Canada

Origine: Synode Montréal et Ottawa en accord

Source: Consistoire Laurentien

Cette proposition vise à offrir une version française officielle du *Manuel* à tous les francophones de l'Église Unie du Canada.

Attendu que l'Église Unie du Canada vise à diffuser le message de l'Évangile à toutes les personnes au pays, peu importe leur langue ou leur origine ethnique;

Attendu que le travail entrepris par l'Unité des Ministères en Français (UMiF) se traduira par le redéploiement et l'augmentation de la visibilité de notre Église en milieu francophone partout au pays;

Attendu que le *Manuel* de l'Église Unie du Canada est un outil indispensable à la bonne gestion de chaque pallier de l'Église;

Nous, Consistoire Laurentien, proposons

Que le Conseil Général de l'Église Unie du Canada procède à une traduction officielle du *Manuel* de l'Église Unie du Canada au cours du prochain triennat et voie à sa mise à jour en français par la suite à chaque Conseil Général.

De plus, que la plus récente version anglaise imprimée du *Manuel* de l'Église Unie du Canada demeure la version de référence en cas de divergence avec la version française.

M&O 11 - Additional consultation prior to final adoption of The United Church of Canada's Statement of Faith (Commons)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with non-concurrence

Source: Laurentien Presbytery

To ensure that congregations are consulted further regarding The United Church of Canada's proposed Statement of Faith.

Whereas The United Church of Canada's Statement of Faith must reflect the evolution of the United Church and its current beliefs;

Whereas the document presented for congregational discussion does not accurately reflect the current theology of the United Church, specifically because its content and underlying theological approach differ from those of The United Church of Canada's Creed;

Whereas this document should employ language that is meaningful to contemporary men and women but fails to do so, being based rather on notions and wordings intended for those already familiar with traditional Church concepts;

Whereas this Statement could potentially serve no useful purpose if its wording and theology are not meaningful to members of congregations and to those who would join our Church;

Whereas the General Council must adopt the final version of this Statement of Faith at its current session;

We, the Laurentien Presbytery, therefore propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- not adopt the final version of the Statement of Faith until after the current wording has been revised to better reflect the commonly shared theology of the United Church,

- extend the period for congregational consultation, and that it delay final adoption of the Statement until the 40th General Council 2009.

M&O 11 - Consultation supplémentaire avant l'adoption définitive de la Déclaration de foi de l'Église Unie du Canada

Origine: Synode Montréal et Ottawa en désaccord

Source: Consistoire Laurentien

Consultation supplémentaire des paroisses sur la formulation proposée de la Déclaration de foi de l'Église Unie.

Attendu que le document sur la Déclaration de foi de l'Église Unie du Canada doit refléter l'évolution de l'Église Unie et ses croyances actuelles;

Attendu que le document présenté à la discussion dans les paroisses reflétait mal la théologie actuelle de l'Église Unie notamment en différant dans son contenu et son approche théologique sous-jacente à ceux du Credo de l'Église Unie du Canada;

Attendu que le document devrait utiliser un langage qui soit significatif pour les hommes et les femmes d'aujourd'hui, ce qu'il ne fait pas en se servant de concepts et de formulations destinés à des personnes déjà acquises aux concepts traditionnels des Églises;

Attendu qu'il y a danger que cette Déclaration reste lettre morte si elle ne rejoint pas dans sa formulation et sa théologie les membres de ses paroisses et ceux qui voudraient se joindre à notre Église;

Attendu que le Conseil Général doit adopter la version finale de cette Déclaration de foi à cette session;

Nous, Consistoire Laurentien, proposons, en conséquence,

Que le Conseil Général n'adopte la version définitive de la Déclaration de foi qu'après un examen de sa formulation actuelle afin qu'elle reflète davantage la théologie partagée à la base dans l'Église Unie, qu'il prévoie une étape supplémentaire de consultation des paroisses et que l'adoption définitive de cette Déclaration soit reportée au prochain Conseil général de 2009.

M&O 12 - Rules governing the sharing of a church building by two congregations (Green)

Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with non-concurrence

Source: Laurentien Presbytery

To amend *The Manual* to include rules governing the sharing of a church building by two congregations

Whereas changes at the local level of the United Church have led to instances where two or more congregations or missions share the same church building, as is currently the case in Quebec City and Montreal for two congregations of the Laurentien Presbytery, and as also occurs when new ethnic congregations are formed;

Whereas this type of situation is likely to occur more and more frequently, especially given the emergence of French-speaking, ethnic and aboriginal ministries fostered by long-established congregations;

Whereas *The Manual* does not stipulate any provisions governing relations between congregations involved in this type of sharing;

Whereas local congregations are the trustees of goods and buildings belonging to The United Church of Canada and, therefore, relations between congregations sharing the same building cannot be modelled on the rules and practices that commonly govern relations between landlords and tenants;

We, the Laurentien Presbytery, therefore propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Mandate its Executive to consult with presbyteries and congregations involved in the practice of sharing of church buildings and, following these consultations, to draft amendments to *The Manual* to be voted upon at the meeting of the 40th General Council 2009. The purpose of these amendments shall be to provide a frame of reference for partnerships that develop within the Church and express different facets of the mission common to the whole Church.

M&O 12 - Règles régissant le partage d'un bâtiment d'église par deux paroisses

Origine: Synode Montréal et Ottawa en désaccord

Source: Consistoire Laurentien

Amender le Manuel pour y inclure des règles régissant le partage d'un bâtiment d'église par deux paroisses.

Attendu que l'évolution de l'Église Unie sur le plan local fait qu'il arrive maintenant que deux ou plusieurs paroisses ou missions partagent le même bâtiment d'église, comme c'est le cas présentement à Québec et à Montréal pour deux paroisses du Consistoire Laurentien, et comme cela arrive aussi lors de la fondation de paroisses ethniques;

Attendu que ce genre de situation est susceptible de se reproduire de plus en plus fréquemment, notamment du fait du développement des ministères francophones, ethniques et autochtones à partir de paroisses depuis longtemps établies;

Attendu que le Manuel ne contient pas de dispositions régissant les relations entre les paroisses engagées dans ce genre de partage;

Attendu que les paroisses locales sont les fiduciaires des biens et bâtiments appartenant à l'Église Unie du Canada et que, par conséquent, les relations entre les paroisses partageant le même bâtiment ne peuvent se modeler sur les règles et pratiques qui régissent couramment les relations entre propriétaires et locataires;

Nous, Consistoire Laurentien, proposons, en conséquence,

Que le Conseil Général donne à son Exécutif le mandat de consulter les consistoires et paroisses où se pratique le partage de bâtiments d'église et d'assurer, à la suite de ces consultations, la rédaction d'amendements au Manuel à être soumis au vote lors de la réunion du Conseil Général de 2009. Le sens de ces amendements serait de donner un cadre de référence aux partenariats qui se développent dans l'Église et expriment les multiples visages de la mission qui est commune à une même Église.

N&L 1 - Violence as a General Council Issue (Blue)

Origin:	Newfoundland and Labrador Conference
Financial Implications:	None
Source of Funding:	None
Staffing Implications:	Some General Council Office time to work with Conferences and Committees on Racial Justice and Church in Society Issues.

Rationale: The New Creed of The United Church of Canada uses the phrase “seek justice and resist evil.” In the book of Deuteronomy, God says “I have set before you today life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, that you and your descendants may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:19) From St. John’s to Victoria, in the cities and the country, violence is a fact of life; it affects us all, every day. Violence affects the whole of The United Church of Canada, from coast to coast, in all the Conferences. Most of the deaths from violence are young people; many in Toronto are black, but in other parts of the country, they are Asian or Aboriginal Canadian. The Conferences and the General Council must not only speak out, but also take an active role in repudiating violence and facilitating constructive dialogue wherever possible. As The United Church of Canada, we are called to speak to whatever issues prevent life or blessing; we are called to eliminate those things which bring about death and curse; we are called to endeavour to promote justice and peace; we are called to stand with those who are discriminated against within our society, to name racism, hatred, and bigotry. Violence cannot be written off as simply a black issue, or a native issue, or a gang issue; the violence is an outcome of racism, repression, economic disparity, anger, unemployment, gender, sexual orientation discrimination, punitive government policies. A just and well-balanced society cannot exist so long as these remain.

Whereas we are mid-way in the World Council of Churches’ Decade to overcome violence,

Whereas incidents of violence, and particularly gun-related violence are escalating in our nation, particularly in urban settings,

Whereas these acts of violence affect Canadians from coast to coast,

Whereas violence to individuals towards each other can be seen as symptomatic of larger systemic problems such as poverty, racism, minimal or nonexistent support systems for youth and for families, as well as elimination of social programs,

Whereas racism has many faces and many manifestations,

Whereas a just and well-balanced society cannot exist without both justice and peace for all its members, and

Whereas The United Church of Canada already is on record as in support of the above efforts,

Therefore the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. That violence in any form, but particularly with issues related to gun violence, be highlighted as a national concern of The United Church of Canada;
2. Make public statements on the issues of violence, particularly gun violence, advocating that all levels of government make systemic changes to address the root causes of the violence,
3. That additional General Council Office Staff time be dedicated to seek out ways to forge further connections with communities in Canada which are marginalised and the various coalitions and networks working to end this discrimination and marginalisation, and
4. That further education programs be developed and promoted within The United Church of Canada to advance an understanding of the many faces of racism and hatred in our urban and suburban centres across the country, including with Black, Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian and Middle Eastern Peoples.

SK 1 - Quorum at a Meeting of Presbytery (Green)

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference with concurrence

Source: Twin Valleys Presbytery

Whereas “Quorum” (*The Manual*, 2004, section 001) in any meeting of a Presbytery means not less than one-fifth (1/5) of those entitled to vote, of whom at least one-third (1/3) shall be member of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training, or Staff Associates and at least one-third (1/3) shall be lay persons; and

Whereas we believe that the present definitions of quorum were put in place to ensure that lay people would have sufficient numbers to give them a strong voice in the courts of the church; and

Whereas in Twin Valleys Presbytery we presently have twenty-seven (27) ministry personnel (OM, DM, LM, LT) in active ministry, and sixty (60) lay members; and

Whereas we have the potential for at least ten (10) additional lay members; and

Whereas we presently have seven (7) Order of Ministry retired or retained on the roll; and

Whereas with full attendance of the sixty (60) presently named lay members and twenty-seven (27) active ministry personnel we would not have quorum as presently defined; and

Whereas with full attendance of all present and potential lay members and full attendance of all active and retired or retained ministry personnel we would barely have quorum as presently defined; and

Whereas we are not presently in a situation to exercise the option provided in *The Manual* (2004) section 304; and

Whereas we do not believe the situation in Twin Valleys Presbytery is unique or unusual;

Therefore Twin Valleys Presbytery through Saskatchewan Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That the definition of Quorum for a Presbytery meeting (*The Manual*, 2004, Section 001) is unsatisfactory and should be revised to require one quarter (1/4) ministry personnel and one-third (1/3) lay members.

SK 2 - Alternative to Presbytery Audit (Green)

Origin:	Saskatchewan Conference
Original Source:	Division of Finance & Administration
Financial Implications:	Potential Savings for Presbyteries
Staffing Implications:	None
Source of Funding:	None

Whereas *The Manual* section 167 requires a congregation or Pastoral Charge to have its financial records, especially its receipts & expenditures, either audited or subject to a review engagement; and

Whereas *The Manual* section 384 (b) v. requires Presbytery accounts to be audited; and

Whereas “audit” is or has become a specific and well defined term in the Accounting profession; and

Whereas, compared to most Presbyteries, the accounts of a congregation are often more complex, including payroll for staff, management of trust funds as well as handling cash and donations;

Therefore the Saskatchewan Conference Division of Finance & Administration through Saskatchewan Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That *The Manual* be revised to include the option “subject to review engagement” for the Presbytery Finance Committee annual report of financial accounts to Presbytery.

SK 3 - Freedom of Conscience for Ministry Personnel regarding Same-Sex Marriage (Green)

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

Whereas The United Church of Canada expects all of its members to conduct their ministry with honesty and integrity; and

Whereas pastoral relationships are of a collegial nature, with ministry persons and the pastoral charges where they serve mutually accountable to each other and the whole church; and

Whereas accountability does not entail control by one party over the conscience of the other; and

Whereas a ruling by the General Secretary of the General Council in September 2003 prevents ministry personnel from officiating at marriages not permitted by the marriage policy, or approved by decisions of the session of the congregation or equivalent governing body where they serve; and

Whereas a ruling by the General Secretary of the General Council in September 2000 allows ministry personnel who, by reason of conscience object to officiating at a same-sex covenanting or blessing service to be excused from such responsibility even if called for by the marriage policy or approved by decisions of the session of the congregation or equivalent governing body where they serve; and

Whereas the September 2003 ruling contains no similar provision to accommodate ministry personnel who, by reason of conscience, feel compelled to make themselves available to officiate at same-sex marriages even if not permitted by the marriage policy or approved by decisions of the session or the congregation where they serve; and

Whereas a double standard is thereby created in which ministry personnel who object to officiating at same-sex marriages, covenanting or blessing services are permitted to follow their conscience while ministry personnel who feel compelled to make themselves available to officiate at such services are not permitted to follow theirs; and

Whereas a dangerous precedent is established by the September 2003 ruling in which the policies or procedures of one party to a pastoral relationship are allowed to circumscribe the conscience of the other; and

Whereas ministry personnel are needlessly required to choose between following their conscience and jeopardizing their pastoral relationship and/or vocational prospects; and

Whereas tensions are thus needlessly introduced into pastoral relationships, to the detriment of the parties involved and the whole church;

The Division of Ministry Personnel and Education through Saskatchewan Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Establish policies that protect the freedom of conscience of ministry personnel with regard to their availability to officiate at same-sex marriages, covenanting or blessing services.

SK 4 - Consistency in Same-Sex Marriage Policy (Green)

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference with concurrence

Source: Wascana Presbytery

Whereas The United Church of Canada is a faith community that seeks justice for all, recognizes sexuality as a gift of God, and recognizes the presence of God in all covenanted relationships; and

Whereas The United Church of Canada has committed itself repeatedly to the principles of justice, compassion and inclusion for all; and

Whereas the 38th General Council 2003 called on the Government of Canada to ensure equal access to marriage for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples; and

Whereas Bill C-38, enacted by Parliament in 2005 following a series of court decisions identifying equal access to marriage as a Charter right, provided equal access to marriage for same-sex and opposite-sex couples in the civil sphere; and

Whereas access to marriage in the religious sphere is determined in the United Church by the local session or equivalent governing body of the congregation; and

Whereas relatively few congregations currently provide equal access to marriage for same-sex and opposite-sex couples; and

Whereas many same-sex couples are thereby denied access to marriage at the congregation of their choice; and

Whereas if access to marriage was regularly denied to couples based on some other identifying characteristic such as race or age, such a practice would be considered discriminatory and such a situation intolerable in the United Church, and the authority of the local session regarding marriage would be superseded by the legitimate interests of the whole church for justice in the conduct of ministry wherever it is offered; and

Whereas pursuant to the adoption of the Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality statement by the 32nd General Council 1988 the General Secretary of the General Council ruled that any conference or presbytery, in carrying out its responsibilities in the candidacy and ordination/commissioning processes, would be *ultra vires* (that is, exceeding its powers) in excluding persons from consideration because of their sexual orientation [which ruling was upheld by the 33rd General Council 1990]; and

Whereas this ruling affirmed the principle that no governing body such as a presbytery, pastoral charge or congregation has unlimited authority to make decisions that contradict the established policies of the General Council or that violate the church's commitment to the principles of justice and equality; and

Whereas the public witness of the United Church is compromised by the widespread contradiction between General Council policy and local practice;

Therefore Wascana Presbytery through Saskatchewan Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Declare that no persons may be denied access to marriage by any congregation of the United Church because of their sexual orientation and/or their status as a same-sex couple.

SK 5 - Salary Parity for Ministry Positions in the General Council Office (Red)

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

Whereas God calls us to be good stewards and to share resources in an equitable way within the community (Acts 2:32-35, 44-45), and

Whereas The United Church of Canada believes that God calls people into paid accountable ministry with the church, a ministry of service for which adequate but not excessive remuneration is required; and

Whereas, the Compensation Models Project Steering Group names the following principles as underlying their work on Ministry Compensation:

- justice, fairness, equity, sustainability and the unity of faith and ministry; and

Whereas, “there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” (1st Corinthians 12: 4 - 7); and

Whereas the current General Council Staff Salary System has increased the gap between the salaries paid to General Council Program staff and General Council Ministers.

The Saskatchewan Conference Division of Ministry Personnel and Education through Saskatchewan Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

To adhere to the principles of justice, fairness, equity, sustainability and the unity of faith and ministry by implementing a plan for salary parity for persons in ministry positions within the General Council Office Salary System (categories 7 to 15) by removing the gap between the salaries paid to General Council Program staff, General Council Ministers, the Senior Leadership team, the General Council Secretary, and the Moderator and taking into account regional differences through living allowances separate from the salary scale.

SK 6 - Designation for Interim Ministers (Red)

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

Whereas since its inception in 1992, Interim Ministry has developed as a special ministry within The United Church of Canada as defined in *The Manual*, section 465.1; and

Whereas application and experience of this ministry has proven its value, and

Whereas the due process for Interim Ministry in all its stages has developed and been defined in a lengthy handbook, and

Whereas time and experience are suggesting that changes and adjustments are needed with the processes of Interim Ministry, especially pertaining to the requirement of yearly designation for Interim Ministers; and

The Interim Ministry Committee through Saskatchewan Conference proposes

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Revise section 465.1 of *The Manual* to reflect:

- a) That Initial Designation be required prior to the first interim, and re-designation be required at the end of the first interim.
- b) That designation to Interim Ministry be regarded as valid for five years from the date of the end of the last active Interim Ministry, unless designation has been removed by action of the Interim Ministry Committee. (For greater clarity a re-designation interview will be required every five years for all interims, active or not active.)
- c) That whenever an Interim Ministry is completed or concludes, as an essential part of the reporting process, an exit interview be conducted with the outgoing interim by the presbytery pastoral relations committee in which the interim ministry took place and by the Conference Interim Ministry Committee. Such interview is for re-designation only at the end of a five year period.
- d) That the Conference Interim Ministry Committee and presbytery will continue to have oversight responsibilities for an Interim Minister.

TOR 1 - Admission Requirements for Ethnic Ministers (Green)

Origin:	Toronto Conference with concurrence
Source:	Toronto West Presbytery
Financial Implications:	None
Staffing Implications:	Staff time to revised information
Source of Funding:	None

Where as the number of Ethnic United Church congregations and sizes of ethnic congregations have remained stagnant for about fifteen years; and

Whereas the Presbyterian Church in Canada has fostered significant growth in its ethnic congregations especially with respect to Korean congregations; and

Whereas we seek to serve our ethnic ministries and people, we need to give them the freedom and resources to grow and serve; and

Whereas our United Church of Canada will be greatly enriched by a more vibrant multi-cultural identity:

Therefore be it resolved that Toronto West Presbytery proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- That The United Church of Canada re-examine its restrictive educational and language requirements for ethnic ministers transferring to The United Church of Canada, in light of the creative policies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and
- That The United Church of Canada look to creative responses to its polity with regard to ethnic ministries as we have responded to the needs of our First Nations' congregations, e.g. All Native Circle Conference.

TOR 2 - Call for a Canadian Energy Security Strategy that Meets the Interests of All Canadians (Blue)

Origin:	Toronto Conference
Financial Implications:	Minimal to the church
Staffing Implications:	Time to write letters
Source of Funding:	General Council budget

Whereas we are instructed to be responsible stewards over God's earth;

Whereas the United States has rapidly increased oil imports from Canada, facilitated by the proportional sharing clause on energy in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA);

Whereas expanding exports to the United States has put Canadian energy at risk, such that Canada has less than a ten-year proven supply of both conventional oil and natural gas;

Whereas despite having the second largest proven petroleum reserves in the world, Canada is already compelled to import nearly 50% of oil for domestic needs;

Whereas since the National Energy Program was dismantled and the National Energy Board stripped of its mandate and powers, there has been no made-in-Canada energy policy;

Whereas: the development of a truly national energy policy would require federal-provincial partnerships;

Whereas because of NAFTA, under the proportional sharing clause, Canada is locked into exporting the same proportion of our total supply to the U.S. as was exported in the three previous years regardless of future shortages; and

Whereas under NAFTA, Canada is not allowed to put a higher price on oil and gas it exports to the United States than is provided for Canadians,

Therefore be it proposed:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Call upon the Government of Canada to:

- Emulate Mexico by obtaining the same exemption from NAFTA's proportional sharing clause, or, failing that, withdrawing completely from NAFTA;
- Call upon the federal government to develop a new Canadian Energy Security Strategy in partnership with the provinces;
- Initiate, with the provinces, a national strategy and timetable for reducing dependence on fossil fuels, conserving our remaining supplies of oil and natural gas, and massively increasing investment in renewable energy alternatives such as solar and wind power;
- Conduct a public review of energy price-setting practices with a view to restoring the capacity of our governments to regulate energy prices, and
- Restore the previous practice of maintaining a 25-year supply of oil and gas reserves to meet domestic needs.

TOR 3 - A call for the Restoration of Corporate Contribution to Canadian Society (Blue)

Origin: Toronto Conference
Financial Implications: Minimal to the church
Staffing Implications: Time to write letters
Source of Funding: General Council budget

Whereas the share of federal revenues from corporate income taxes has been reduced by at least 50% in the last 50 years due to tax loopholes and reductions in corporate taxes, with the vast majority of corporations paying no tax as documented in the United States;

Whereas the overwhelming tax burden is now on workers whose share of the economic prosperity is both decreasing and becoming more and more insecure;

Whereas the resulting lack of government funding for social welfare, education and medical care is damaging the fabric of our communities and our society;

Whereas corporations are demonstrating increasing social irresponsibility, with an estimated 30% of the profits from corporations retained while the percentage of earned money used for reinvestment in either infrastructure, research or projects is at the lowest percentage ever recorded;

Therefore be it proposed:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Call for a revised Canadian taxation policy that will require that corporations return their fair share of profits back into Canadian society.

References: CCPA Monitor's "Tax Havens, loopholes let corporations pay little or no taxes" by Bruno Gurtner Oct. 2004 and CCPA Monitor's "Canadian income radically redistributed to corporations" by Jim Stanford Jan. 2005

TOR 4 - Changes to Article 363 of the United Church Manual (Red)

Origin: Toronto Conference with concurrence

Source: M. J. Perry

Whereas The United Church of Canada has historically represented a strong Social Gospel; and

Whereas The United Church of Canada has historically advocated for justice and equity in all areas:

Be it resolved

That changes which reflect the following principles of justice will be enacted to Article 363 and any other related articles within *The Manual*:

- All people being interviewed by a review committee will be interviewed in an equitable manner; and
- The accused and/or the accused's representative will be present for all interviews by a review committee; and
- The accused and/or the accused's representative will be given the opportunity to ask questions of all people being interviewed by a review committee; and

- The review committee will disclose to the accused and/or the accused representative all discussions, all documents and notes pertaining to the review, prior to the judicatory body receiving a final report.”

TOR 5 - Gun Registry in Canada (Blue)

Origin:	Toronto Conference
Financial Implications:	Minimal to the church
Staffing Implications:	Time to write letters
Source of Funding:	General Council budget

Whereas the Church in Society Committee of Toronto Conference, The United Church of Canada, meeting March 1, 2006, approved a motion *expressing its approval of the Canadian Government policy of gun registration and urges that its implementation be continued*;

Whereas the present Government has expressed its intention to eliminate the gun registration legislation, (i.e. the Firearms Act passed in 1995 establishing a program for licensing all owners of firearms in Canada, as well as a registration program for firearms);

Whereas there has been an increase in gun violence in Canada, especially in urban centres;

Whereas, according to a statement by former Justice Minister Martin Cauchon, gun registry promotes responsible gun use, gives a record of where guns are located, what kinds of firearms there are, and who owns them;

Whereas, according to a statement by the Canadian Association of the Chiefs of Police, gun registry is key to reducing the misuse of guns and makes it easier for police to track illegal guns, and makes gun owners more accountable;

Therefore be it proposed:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Express its full support of the Canadian Gun Registry Program, and urge the continued implementation of said program;

And that copies of this Proposal be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Honourable Vic Toews, and the acting leader of the opposition, Mr. Bill Graham.

TOR 6 - Gun Violence as a National Issue (Blue)

Origin:	Toronto Conference with concurrence and comment
Source:	Toronto West Presbytery
Financial Implications:	Budget for staffing and development/promotion of an education program
Staffing Implications:	Staff time as required to work with the related organizations
Source of Funding:	General Council budget

Whereas there have been escalating incidents of gun violence in our nation, notably in large urban settings; and

Whereas acts of violence have disproportionately impacted marginalized communities such as Black Youth and First Nations communities, etc; and

Whereas gun violence is best understood as a symptom of larger systemic problems such as poverty, racism, racialization of poverty, lack of support systems for youth, and the elimination of social and recreational programs; and

Whereas as a faith community we are called to bring about justice and peace (beating swords into ploughshares) and recognize that without justice there is no peace; and

Whereas as a faith community we are called to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized; and

Whereas the Coalition of African Canadian Community Organizations (a coalition which was formed in 2005 in response to the escalating incidents of gun violence) is seeking “to advance an understanding of anti-Black Racism and the exclusion faced by African Canadians in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of Canadian society”.

Therefore be it resolved that Toronto West Presbytery through Toronto Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- Recognize this as a national concern and make public statements on the issues of gun violence, advocating that all levels of government make systemic changes to address the root causes of the violence, and
- That national staff time be dedicated to seek out ways to stand in solidarity with oppressed communities in Canada and the various coalitions and networks working to end this oppression; and
- That an education program be developed and promoted within the church to advance an understanding of anti-Black Racism and the exclusion faced by African Canadians in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of Canadian society.

Comment: Parts 1 and 2 go together; part 3 to be considered separately as a response to the request of the Coalition of African Canadian Community Organizations.

TOR 7 - Pathways to Peace in the Holy Land (Blue)

Origin:	Toronto Conference with concurrence
Source:	Toronto South Presbytery
Financial Implications:	Staff and volunteer time related to communications
Staffing Implications:	Staff time to assemble, choose and distribute resources
Source of Funding:	General Council budget

Whereas the Gospels show that Christ wanted “peacemaking” to be a characteristic of those who followed him (Matthew 5:9), and record his anguish when Jerusalem had not learned the things that make for peace (Luke 19:42); and

Whereas the Israel/Palestine issue remains an important and enduring moral-political-humanitarian-ecumenical fulcrum both in the Middle East and the world, and failure to satisfactorily address this impasse makes peace illusive; and

Whereas we, as Christians, have both a responsibility and a shared need to get this problem solved in a just, humane and lasting way; and

Whereas the World Council of Churches has proposed a week for International Church Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel (ICAPPI) March 12-19, 2006 with the hope that this will become an annual event:

Be it proposed that Toronto Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Support and participate in the World Council of Churches’ proposed week for International Church Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel focusing on the Holy Land and provide educational material and worship resources.

TOR 8 - Protection of Canadian Sovereignty over its Energy and Environment (Blue)

Origin:	Toronto Conference with non-concurrence and recommendations
Financial Implications:	Minimal to the church
Staffing Implications:	Time to write letters
Source of Funding:	General Council budget

Whereas we are instructed to be responsible stewards over God’s earth;

Whereas the fast depletion of Canadian oil and gas reserves is encouraging development of the Athabasca tar sands;

Whereas 67% of Canadian oil and 57% of Canadian gas reserves are given to the United States;

Whereas Canada already imports half of its own energy and has only an estimated 10 years' supply remaining;

Whereas under the proportional sharing clause of NAFTA, Canada is locked into exporting the same proportion of our total supply to the US as was exported in the three previous years regardless of future shortages;

Whereas dwindling conventional gas will be needed to fuel the tar sands extraction, and a significant amount of Canada's freshwater will be depleted to extract and process the oil;

Whereas the Athabasca tar sands are expected to become the largest single source of Canadian greenhouse gas emissions by 2010, raising them to levels far above the 60-80% reduction in such emissions that scientists say is required to stabilize the climate, and 44% more than Canada is permitted under the Kyoto protocol;

Therefore be it proposed:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Call on both the federal and provincial governments to:

- Immediately impose a moratorium on further expansion of the tar sands development until a public inquiry is conducted and completes its report on the social and environmental impacts of this mega-energy project and its implications for Canada's national energy security;
- Rescind their direct subsidies to the oil industry's involvement in the tar sands, and replace the minimal royalty rate with a more realistic rate; and
- Ask for copies of this Proposal, if approved, to be forwarded to the Prime Minister and the leaders of the Opposition, as well as to the press.

Recommendations: that the General Council emphasize stewardship of creation and that it identify additional resource material.

TOR 9 - Sovereign control of Canadian Electricity (Blue)

Origin:	Toronto Conference
Financial Implications:	Minimal to the church
Staffing Implications:	Time to write letters
Source of Funding:	General Council budget

Whereas God calls us to be stewards of our country's resources:

Whereas the United States is demanding that any Canadian province that exports electricity to the U.S. must adopt its new integrated system of providing electricity;

Whereas the planned "Regional Transmission Organization" will be set up as a private company and no utility will have a voice in its governance structures or its operations (despite continued ownership of assets by that utility);

Whereas the result of the integrated system will put Canadians at a disadvantage to purchase Canadian electricity, disallowing social objectives of equality, low costs, regional development and conservation;

Whereas NAFTA permits both trading and investment without instituting standard market designs.

Therefore be it proposed:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- use the protection of NAFTA to allow public utilities and provincial governments to maintain integrated utilities in the public sector;
- encourage greater integration of the Canadian electricity sector;
- ensure that all transmission systems be owned and operated by public entities;
- ensure that Canadian public entities do not surrender any part of these systems to foreign-controlled organizations (such as the Regional Transmission Organizations);
- prohibit private exports of electricity and private power trading;
- develop a strong regulatory role in electricity-related environmental issues that includes:
 - a national electricity conservation program;
 - a provincial assessment of all private power projects for their systemic impact;
 - the establishment of an institute for environmentally responsible energy development.

TOR 10 - Task Group regarding educational requirements for Ethnic Ministers (Green)

Origin: Toronto Conference with concurrence
Source: Toronto West Presbytery
Financial Implications: Funding for the task group
Staffing Implications: Staffing for the task group
Source of Funding: General Council budget

Whereas there are thousands of Portuguese, Polish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Hindi, Chinese and Koreans, to name some, who make up our Canadian multi-cultural mosaic; and

Whereas the population of our country is growing in its cultural and ethnic diversity; and

Whereas the make up of our Church does not reflect this diversity; and

Whereas our ministry to a large number of communities where English is not spoken or not spoken easily is inadequate; and

Whereas many pastoral charges are declining while huge ethnic communities go un-served; and

Whereas our lack of adequate response to this growing need conveys the message to immigrants that they are not worthy of our attention or ministry; and

Whereas Jesus ministered to various ethnic people such as the Syrophenician woman, the Samaritan woman and the Roman officer; and

Whereas The United Church of Canada's history and ethos was built on inclusivity, compassion and justice:

Therefore be it resolved that Toronto West Presbytery proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That a task group be formed to investigate and recommend an action plan to the 40th General Council 2009 on:

- Seminary training for clergy whose first language is not English and who wish to transfer to The United Church of Canada in their own language;
- Summer intensive programs taught in languages other than English to equip clergy from other countries to minister in their mother tongues to communities in Canada;
- Scholarships to students who are fluent in other languages who wish to enter the ministry;
- Ordination not only to pastoral charges but also to ethnic communities not being served;
- Offering a home to ethnic communities in existing pastoral charges, and paid for through M&S, Presbyteries or Conferences (much as we currently do for other denominations through rental agreements);
- Utilizing our United Church of Canada mutuality in mission program to bring clergy from partner denominations to serve in particular ethnic communities in Canada;

- Utilizing returning overseas personnel who are fluent in a culture and language other than English to minister to those ethnic communities within Canada;
- Finding ways to partner with congregations of other ethnic origins to begin to plant churches in Canada.

TOR 11 - Water as a Human Right (Blue)

Origin:	Toronto Conference
Financial Implications:	Minimal to the church
Staffing Implications:	Time to write letters
Source of Funding:	General Council budget

Whereas The United Church of Canada recognizes water as God’s sacred gift for all beings, and

Whereas the United Nations has declared 2005-2015 the decade of Water, calling the human right to water indispensable for life, human dignity, and the prerequisite for realizing other humans rights;

Whereas ecumenical partners are calling on states to recognize and observe their obligations regarding water as a human right;

Whereas commercial water interests are pushing for the privatization of water management, thus removing water from the public commons;

Whereas pressure to export Canadian fresh water to the United States is being exerted, putting Canadian control and access to fresh water at risk:

Be it proposed:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Firmly call upon our federal government to declare water as a human right, support municipalities in keeping water in public control, and resist any attempts by the United States to increase exports of Canadian fresh water under the energy proportional sharing provisions of NAFTA.

TOR 12 - Encouragement Concerning Spiritual Formation (Blue)

Origin:	Toronto Conference with concurrence with comments
Source:	York Presbytery with concurrence Trinity United Church
Financial Implications:	Minimal to None
Source of Funds:	General Council Budget
Staffing Implications:	Minimal time to communicate this proposal's encouragement to the courts of the church by normal methods of communication.

Whereas our Moderator, the Right Reverend Peter Short, has been encouraging the renewing of spiritual formation within the membership of United Church of Canada and whereas the Moderator has asked the 39th General Council 2006 to prayerfully discern God's purpose for the United Church into its next generation;

Whereas the Christian Church has historically looked to the canonical Christian scriptures for its witness to Christ and discerning its purpose for mission;

And, whereas the scriptures exhort us to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" as we encourage one another in faith (Colossians 3:16);

Be it resolved therefore, that York Presbytery through the Toronto Conference proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

To encourage our membership (clergy and lay) and adherents of The United Church of Canada to re-acquaint ourselves with the primary written source of our faith by making a commitment to personally and prayerfully read through the entire New Testament once a year over the next three years, opening ourselves to the Spirit of God to speak to us afresh through the written witness to Christ as to how we might live out Christ's message in our lives today.

Motion from the Conference Executive:

...that Proposal to General Council be forwarded with the following comment: Conference affirms that the Christian scriptures consist of both Old and New Testaments, and that in encouraging the reading of scripture, we would affirm that both testaments affirm the saving work of God in Christ. Conference affirms that reading scripture in community with the aid of scholarly resources provides significant opportunities for learning, faith formation, and spiritual growth.

NEW 1 - Awakening a Sleeping Giant: A Transformative Vision for Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the Third Generation of The United Church of Canada

Origin: New Business, 39th General Council 2006

Ryan McNally, Conference of Manitoba and Northwest Ontario

Margaret Sawyer, Toronto Conference

“We have the resources [in The United Church of Canada] that we need.” – Right Rev. Dr. Peter Short, Aug. 13, 2006 (Moderator, 39th General Council 2006)

Whereas we have been called in this place and in this time to discern the future direction of The United Church of Canada for its third generation; and

Whereas the youth and young adult movement in The United Church of Canada is growing in community and a group of commissioners to the 39th General Council 2006, 30 years and under, have engaged in meaningful dialogue over the life of this meeting; and

Whereas we believe the youth and young adult movement in The United Church of Canada would benefit from a spiritual leader at the national level; and

Whereas we feel called as members of the Church to reach out to our youth and young adults whether they be pursuing a secondary or post-secondary education, starting a career, beginning a family, or working in another vocation; and

Whereas The United Church of Canada has an opportunity to be a leader in youth and young adult ministry; and

Whereas The United Church of Canada recognizes that God’s call is not dependent upon age and also recognizes the call of leadership in youth and young adults and further trusts the call to leadership in these people; and

Whereas youth and young adults are engaged in both paid and unpaid ministry at all levels of The United Church of Canada; and

Whereas approximately 20% of the people within the bounds of this court are 14 – 30 years of age and that this presence should be taken as a sign of commitment to The United Church of Canada and to this work; and

Whereas we recognize that good and faithful work is being done within and without of The United Church of Canada and we strive to work with our partners in a positive manner and there is a desire amongst the youth and young adult leaders within the church to connect, build, and sustain relationships with others across the country.

Therefore, it is proposed that the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Set aside resources for the creation and maintenance of a national youth and young adult network.

2. Set aside resources to fund youth and young adult ministries at the pastoral charge and presbytery levels over the next three years and investigate the creation of a national retreat for youth and young adults engaged in the Church to be held on the year in which neither KAIROS nor General Council are held.
3. Investigate the possibility of creating an elected position for a spiritual leader for youth and young adults and that the results of this investigation be reported to the General Council Executive no later than the fall executive meeting of 2008, so that the first election may take place at the 40th General Council 2009.

NEW 2 - Pharmaceutical Laws in Canada

Origin: New Business 39th General Council 2006
Richard Hollingsworth, Bay of Quinte Conference

Whereas the International AIDS Conference is meeting in Canada from August 13-19, 2006;

Whereas The United Church of Canada has a delegation of 10 people attending the International AIDS Conference;

Whereas in 2004 the United Church through the HIV/AIDS Beads of Hope campaign, together with other civil society organizations, called for, and the Canadian government passed, legislation to enable the export of less expensive drugs to countries without pharmaceutical production capacities;

Whereas it has been identified that the Canadian legislation needs to be amended as no drug exports have been enable to countries in need under the current legislation;

Therefore be it resolved:

That the 39th General Council 2006 call on the federal government to amend Canada's pharmaceutical laws to remove disincentives for exporting less expensive medicines to countries without pharmaceutical production capabilities.

NEW 3 - Opening Day at the 40th General Council 2009

Origin: New Business 39th General Council 2006,
Bonnie Fraser, Maritime Conference
Robin McGauley, London Conference

Therefore be it resolved:

That the 39th General Council 2006

Direct the General Council Agenda and Planning Committee of the 40th General Council 2009 to reserve the first full day of the gathering for ceremony, business and learning as practiced and lead by the First Nations brothers and sisters in the All Native Circle.

NEW 4 - First Nations Representation to Emerging Spirit Project

Origin: New Business 39th General Council 2006
Lindsay Sword, Leading Elder, All Native Circle Conference and
Barry Rieder, Toronto Conference

In light of the concerns raised at the 39th General Council 2006,

Therefore be it resolved:

That the 39th General Council 2006

1. Act out the circle and cross and;
2. Appoint a First Nations person(s) in some type of advisory capacity to the Emerging Spirit Project and
3. That the All Native Circle Conference name this person(s)

NEW 5 - Intercultural Protocols

Origin: New Business 39th General Council 2006,
Jim Angus, British Columbia Conference and
John Burton, British Columbia Conference

Whereas the work of the church has been deeply impacted by the pain statements heard as racist, stereotyping, patriarchal, offensive and hurtful.

Whereas our desire is to be an intercultural church so that we can learn from one another and be sensitive to the diversity of our body

Therefore be it resolved:

That the 39th General Council 2006

Direct the Executive of the General Council to initiate a process involving broad consultation to develop protocols to address misunderstandings and conflict arising out of the multiple cultures present in The United Church of Canada.

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MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC) ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT (Commons)

Origin: John Lougheed, Chair

It is a pleasure to give an account of the 38th Moderator's work and ministry as it draws to a close at the 39th General Council 2006. According to the MAC Terms of Reference, ours has been the privilege to "advise and support the incumbent Moderator and to assist [them] to fulfill [their] term of office most effectively."

The Moderator may serve as our best reporter and correspondent – see for example the letter Peter Short wrote to the 1st Moderator George Pidgeon published in the March 2006 issue of *The Observer*. This is one of nearly 20 articles – several of them award winning – that signals the remarkable partnership that has developed between the magazine and the incumbent Moderator. The culmination has been the release of "Outside Eden: Essays of encouragement" by Peter Short, published by *The United Church Observer*. Our appreciation is extended to Editor Muriel Duncan and her colleagues, especially for Muriel's tenure of 'interpreting the Church to itself', as Writer, Editor and Publisher for a remarkable total of 32 years! May her retirement be as blessed.

Over the course of his term, the Moderator has visited all thirteen Conferences, made three overseas trips on behalf of the Church – to the Middle East, Southern Africa, and most recently to Brazil for the World Council of Churches – and met with many across the landscape of the United Church, notably with close to 1,000 Ministry Personnel to explore what depletes and energizes their callings. Amidst the considerable demands of the role, the Moderator has responded to situations ranging from, for example, the B.C. Forest Fires in August 2003 and South Asia Tsunami in December 2004, to the Residential Schools Agreement, and Equal Marriage issue.

The Moderator's Strategic Framework has sought to focus his time on "Equipping and Encouraging Spiritual Leaders in the United Church." The Arnprior Assembly in November 2005 grew into the 'centre piece' of this guiding task and vision. At Arnprior the Moderator convened the Assembly to take counsel together about "What ministry will God require of us in the next generation of The United Church of Canada?"

It is also important to note some changes in the process to be used by the 39th General Council 2006 in Thunder Bay. The major projects initiated by the 38th General Council 2003 and its Executive, including the Studies of Isolation in Ministry and Compensation, will be woven together using the thematic form of the 39th General Council 2006 Report Books. Collective discernment will be given a high priority on the Agenda for the 39th General Council 2006. MAC commends, therefore, the video/DVD invitation from the Moderator, distributed to all Conferences and Presbyteries and available on the United Church website (www.united-church.ca) to encourage and guide the candidacy of 39th General Council 2006 Commissioners who are committed to the discernment process.

Alongside our thanks to the Moderator for his vision, passion and stamina, and the privilege to serve with him, we want to acknowledge the faithful accompaniment of his partner Sue, their

family and friends, and the Congregation of Wilmot United Church in Fredericton throughout Peter's ministry as Moderator. We also offer our gratitude to Jim Sinclair for his keen eye and pastoral heart as General Secretary, and every blessing in his upcoming retirement. Robin Chen and her staff colleagues including Mary Frances Denis have been absolutely indispensable to the smooth functioning of an Office that tracks and pursues as many as 150 invitations and other items on its 'docket' at any one time! Throughout the term, we have also deeply appreciated the work of Pat Thompson with respect to both the Strategic Framework and the planning for the Arnprior Assembly.

As the Moderator's Advisory Committee completes its work, our final tasks have included reviewing the Moderator's Strategic Framework that has guided our advisory role, handing along recommendations for the Terms of Reference for this Committee and the budget of the Office of the Moderator, and offering assistance to the new Advisory Committee of the soon to be elected 39th Moderator.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of my MAC colleagues:

Peter Short
Jim Sinclair
Sang Chul Lee
Marilyn Legge
Susan Tough (served from 2003-2005)
Christine Williams

John Lougheed, Chair

MODERATOR'S REPORT TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL (Commons)

Origin: Peter Short, Moderator

May 17, 2006

Sisters and brothers in Christ, may God's grace and peace be with you in the presence and power of the spirit.

The time has come for an accounting of my work as the 38th Moderator of The United Church of Canada. This comes to you with my conviction that the Office of Moderator belongs to the church, the church belongs to the gospel and the gospel belongs to God. Serving this Office of the church has been a responsibility and a privilege beyond adequate description. I am humbled by how little I have been able to contribute when I think of the great need and challenge of these days in the church and in the world. At the same time I am deeply grateful to have been given the opportunity to represent the church that I love and to meet so many wonderful and faithful servants of the gospel in Canada and in other parts of the world.

There is much to tell you. In this workbook you will find the report to the Council on behalf of the Executive of the General Council. It chronicles the milestones, reports, decisions, and policies arrived at by the Executive. Here I will note only that we have begun work on developing more effective communication between the Moderator and the commissioners of the General Council. This means that in the years between Councils commissioners can expect to be informed, consulted and involved to a much greater extent than has been the case in the past. So your work as a commissioner will carry on until the 40th General Council 2009.

Swifter than a weaver's shuttle my days have passed. – The Book of Job

Three years have gone like a spark that flies upward. What have I done? What have I left undone? What account can I give of my stewardship of the mysteries of grace and of the spiritual health of the church?

I might respond to such questions, at least in a preliminary way, by means of a list. Often our strongest teachings are passed on in lists:

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy... Honour your father and mother... You shall not kill...

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven... Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted... Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth...

Many of our hymns are lists:

God of the sparrow, God of the whale, God of the swirling stars...

Lists pay attention to the particular, thereby saving one from wandering about aimlessly in the universal. This is why shopping with a list is a good idea. Our faith in God through Jesus Christ is a particular faith born in relationship with a particular person. This particularity may be in part why we are list makers, just like Paul: *Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, take account of these things.*

Here is a list:

- visit the 13 Conferences of the church telling the stories of our people and offering spiritual encouragement.
- visit overseas partners in the Middle East, Africa and South America, and receive visitors from partner churches in countries like China, Cuba, Kenya and Australia.
- write pastoral letters to the church, articles for the *Observer*, opinion pieces for the *Globe and Mail*.
- offer retreats for leaders in ministry.
- help get the struggles of Presbyteries on the national agenda.
- give addresses at convocations, Public Policy Forums and denominational events such as Worship Matters.
- visit the House of Commons to help represent the church's work on the Beads of Hope Campaign and the Same Gender Marriage legislation.

- preside at meetings of the Executive of the General Council
- “entertain” in mafia costume during the kitchen party at the meeting of West District, Newfoundland.
- participate in talks with the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.
- write letters and make phone calls to people in congregations across the country.
- host the Arnprior Assembly on ministry in The United Church of Canada.
- listen carefully to the lament and the joy of the people of The United Church of Canada.
- get called just about everything from a Modulator, to a jackass, to a gift to the church.

But there are things not captured in a list.

There are the moments when the church knows itself to be at an important juncture in history, the kind of moment when a crowded room falls silent: the vote to approve the Comprehensive Settlement for Survivors of Indian Residential Schools, the first grant for mission by The United Church of Canada Foundation, the apology to women (former deaconesses) who were affected by the disjoining rule. We have these moments to remember.

I have been given a name – Shining Rock Chief – by First Nations people of the church, and an eagle feather and a blanket. I remember very well that summer afternoon at the Aboriginal Consultation in Sudbury. I remember stones being mortared one by one into the commemorative cairn that is still not complete – another silent moment. These are memories carefully stored and treasured. They are a source of strength in the midst of adversity.

Through the 3 years I have received more than I gave. At the end I am filled with gratitude – gratitude to God, to those who so generously sustained me and to this United Church of ours. I had no idea that our church is as complex and as magnificent and as hurting and as faithful as it is. I had no idea, and even after all the travels I’ve still caught only a glimpse of who we are in God’s sight. As one woman in St. Catharines said, “*No one could ever travel all the back roads of The United Church of Canada.*” Agreed, but it has been a profound blessing to try.

What have I done? In the end, that’s a mystery every bit as much as the full and true identity of the United Church is a mystery. God only knows. Whatever it is, I suspect it won’t be captured in a list. I hope I have contributed to the encouragement of the church. Encouragement is important to us – no, it’s critical to us – because while the church is many generations old, it is only one generation deep. Since faith is never something we possess but always something we enact, we need all the encouragement we can get to keep enacting life.

There were times during the last 3 years, difficult times, when I felt in harmony with a colleague who wrote, “*It’s hard not to take the string of failures personally – but I tried taking my marbles and going home, and found they aren’t mine.*” Inspired by him, I kept on going because, well because in spite of the tattered dreams it’s still God’s world and I have no other world to live in. So many of our leaders in ministry know what this is like.

Now, on the eve of the 39th General Council 2006 and in anticipation of the election of the 39th Moderator, I feel a certain resonance with the words of another colleague in ministry: “*In the*

time that remains, I shall lean on my people for their strength, work, plan, live, and play among them, and then leave the meaning, the value and the rest of it to God.”

When I started leading retreats for people in ministry I had the idea that at each gathering I would offer a little encouragement to begin with and then move on to a lot of analysis of how ministry is these days. I thought maybe we could find solutions that would address the complexities, the workload, the feelings of failure, isolation and disillusionment. But the more I spent time with ministers the more I realized how much the encouragement meant to them. By the end I was doing only a little analysis and a whole lot of encouragement. Always they thanked me for it in a way that would break your heart – as if it were a thing so rare and precious to them. I think about that a lot.

The 37 retreats I offered were held in the following locations:

Alberta and Northwest: *Camrose, Taber, Calgary.*
Bay of Quinte: *Peterborough, Kingston, Arnprior*
British Columbia: *Qualicum, Naramata.*
Hamilton: *Five Oaks, Waterloo, Hamilton, St. Catharines*
London: *Woodstock, Union, Chatham, Petrolia, Mitchell, Sault Ste. Marie*
Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario: *Oakbank, Stonewall*
Manitou: *Powassan, Cochrane, Timmins*
Maritime: *St. Margaret's Bay, Liverpool, Bible Hill*
Montreal and Ottawa: *Cornwall, Granby*
Newfoundland and Labrador: *Grand Falls-Windsor*
Saskatchewan: *Saskatoon, Melfort, Moose Jaw*
Toronto: *Crieff Hills, Islington, Brampton, Toronto South, Holland Centre*

These retreats varied in duration from a couple of hours to a couple of days. Some gatherings were small – 5 people in Melfort. Some were large – 75 people in Calgary and in Waterloo. Close to 1,000 people in the church's ministry accepted the invitation.

At the retreats we did a lot of singing. We would sit in a circle and I would invite each person to choose a hymn that spoke to them, or *for* them, about what it meant to be in ministry. Each one would say what ministry meant to them and then read a favourite verse of his or her chosen hymn. Then the circle of colleagues in ministry would sing it to them. We never used piano or other accompaniment – always just voices. I encouraged each person to remember the sound of their friends in ministry singing to them and to remember their reason for being in this demanding and wondrous work. It was a way of remembering why we're here and that we are not alone.

We told stories of precious times and of hard times. We thought about the deep rhythms of life, of breathing out and breathing in, of how God sometimes asks us to let go of what we're clinging to in order to receive what life has in store – something God alone can see. We told again the story of the sower going out to sow seeds: how some seeds fell on hard, dry ground, some among rocks, some in shallow soil and some in good ground for growing. We remembered that not everything you set out to do in life succeeds.

And, yes, we talked about Presbytery – how overwhelmed it is by regulations and how impossible it is to find enough willing souls to accomplish all the work expected. We talked about our disappointment that Presbytery did not have the capacity to be the strong, nurturing “home” that it would like to be. One minister in Toronto said, *“Presbytery used to be our common identity. We went there to be affirmed in who we were. Now our identity has collapsed into ourselves.”* We talked about how much time Presbytery spends on regulations and processes and how little on faith, worship or mission. A minister in Sault Ste. Marie remarked, *“When we are healthy we will be in conflict again but the conflict will be about things that are close to our hearts.”* Conversations like these were repeated all across the country. I took them to the Executive of the General Council in order to put on the table the trying situation in which many Presbyteries find themselves.

It wasn't all lament and tears. In the retreats there was much laughter too.

Here are 3 other things I found:

1. Our leaders are profoundly committed to their vocation as ministers of the gospel. I encountered none who said, “I put in my eight hours a day then go home and forget about it.” They work long hours in situations that are often difficult, complex and disappointing. They love what they do and they put their hearts and their dreams into the work.
2. At the same time, there seems to be little common understanding of what it means to sign on for ministry in The United Church of Canada. When I asked them to say what the work is, ministers rarely spoke of a role or mandate conferred upon them by the United Church. They spoke from an interior universe of meaning as if ministry were a personal thing growing entirely out of their own psychology and spirituality (*“Now our identity has collapsed into ourselves”*). The exception to this phenomenon came from diaconal ministers who often spoke from a purpose rooted in fidelity to a particular community, its values and visions.
3. There is much misunderstanding and mistrust between and among the various categories of ministry in the church. Ordained ministers feel undermined by Lay Pastoral ministers. Diaconal ministers feel displaced by staff associates. Lay Pastoral Ministers feel their learning is disdained by ordered ministers. Staff Associates feel their ministry is not valued when they have to go to Presbytery every year for approval. Each stream of ministry feels it is being pushed to the margin. There is much frustration and sometimes bitterness. This situation, although it is known to all people in ministry, remains largely unseen in the church because there is no adequate forum for discussion and resolution of these issues.

Hearing again and again this dissonance in the ministry of the church, I decided to ask the Executive of the General Council for permission to host the Arnprior Assembly on ministry in The United Church of Canada. In my proposal to the GCE in April, 2005 I said the following:

For four days in early November 2005, I would like to invite one hundred people drawn from the five streams of ministry in The United Church of Canada (diaconal, ordained, lay pastoral, staff associate and other lay ministries) to come home with me to the town of Arnprior in Eastern Ontario, a place where we can be in the presence of the spirit of Jesus Christ who has summoned us into ministry, a place where we can:

- listen to each other with humility and grace

- speak about what is common to our vocations and unifies us
- imagine how we might encourage and equip one another for mission and ministry

The Arnprior Assembly on ministry will be a 'one time only' event and is envisioned as:

- a source of information, insight and counsel for my report to General Council 39
- an initiative that complements and contributes to the ongoing work of General Council committees and task groups focussed on ministry
- a catalyst for more conversation about the third generation of the United Church's mission and ministry
- a dialogue crafted to get under the divisions that are detracting from efforts to achieve focus in ministry today.

...The proposal is not a way to create new policies or legislation for ministry. What is proposed here is an opportunity to listen to God, to one another and to the voices of this age. What is proposed here may, in Gods providence, become a catalyst and a generative event in the unfolding story of ministry in The United Church of Canada...

The Arnprior Assembly gathered a body of people who reflect the various streams of ministry in The United Church of Canada. In the end 120 people were there. It offered them the opportunity for dialogue at a level that would take them beneath the differences in their categories to the place where they could search and listen together for the ministry God will require of the church in its third generation. It demonstrated that, categories of ministry notwithstanding, our leadership has a deep commitment to the gospel of Christ, a great heart for ministry, and is perfectly capable of fruitful dialogue about things that matter.

The Assembly planted 120 outcomes in the church. By outcomes I mean people whose lives and ministries were changed by a deep encounter with a question that is important to us all: *What ministry will God require of the United Church in its third generation?*

The conversation continues in various ways. An online community was developed by General Council Staff. An open letter from the Moderator to the church set out some encouragements and guidelines in order to help any group that might want to undertake the dialogue in its own setting. Assembly participants have made presentations and dialogues have been hosted in educational facilities, presbyteries and congregations in different parts of the country. Although it is impossible to reproduce the experience of the Assembly, nor to quantify its outcomes, it appears to be having the generative effect in the church that we had hoped it might.

It is important to remember that the work of the Assembly, along with the retreats, has taken place in the larger context of important work being undertaken by the General Council on behalf of ministry personnel. This work includes, for example, the Compensation Study, the Isolation in Ministry Study, the Report on Ethics and Standards of Practice, reviews of the 333 and 363 processes along with training for facilitators, policy on Sabbatical Leave and initiatives in Continuing Education. This comprehensive approach has been ongoing for several years and represents the effort of many elected and staff people who care deeply about equipping our leaders for the vocation of ministry. These initiatives have resulted in proposals for action by this Council.

My work with ministry leadership has led me to conclude that the challenges facing ministers are not primarily the result of mistakes or inadequacies by individual people. In general our leaders are carefully selected, well trained and deeply committed to the work. Rather, the difficulties ministers experience indicate a deeper challenge facing the whole church and its gospel of Christ in contemporary society.

What we are encountering is not just a technical challenge that can be met by the technical response of devising ever more detailed and comprehensive regulations. This is a spiritual challenge, one that is calling us to expand the freedom of the church to live its gospel in a changed and changing social context.

The General Council must not fall prey to the attractive notion that it can “fix” what oppresses the church by producing more legislation. One person wrote from Saskatchewan: *“Would you please hold small rural congregations in your prayers. We are at our rope’s end, and still there are forms and forms and bureaucracy... WE are OVER organized!!! and so do not allow any time for the Spirit to work or to discern the Spirit working among us... I see the frustrations with the congregations as they struggle to work through Joint Needs Assessment, and on, and on, and on, knowing that they are NOT going to attract any ministry personnel to these small towns for part time ministry.”*

One can feel the frustration in these words. This person is not alone. I have received dozens of similar communications. Somehow they know that our salvation will not appear by regulation.

On the other hand, the same day as that message arrived I received a letter from another person asking for my *“prayers and consideration in the re-examination of the present Discernment Process for Inquirers to the Ministry of The United Church of Canada.”* This person was hoping we could add more provisions to a system that she felt had not served an inquirer well. I have received dozens of letters like that one, too.

These heartfelt communications indicate a predicament: our processes are at once overbearing and inadequate. They are too much and not enough.

Of course, the General Council must fulfill its important obligation to ensure that the church has adequate and effective regulations, processes and policies in place. But that will take us only part of the way. The journey is longer than policies and processes can foresee. Beyond what we can legislate, the General Council must address the essential question of the purpose of the church in a changing social and spiritual context. Responding to the essential question is how we set our feet on the road to freedom – freedom to live our gospel. We must find a way to be free again:

free to know that mission is not measured by expansion and that capacity is measured not by the extent of our resources but by the will to give ourselves to a clear purpose

free to let go of the need to win in order get into the right crisis and to stay there until the life we are living becomes a victory in Christ

free from the faintheartedness that afflicts us when we look for salvation solely in our own wits, resources and strength

free to acknowledge that we do not understand and can no longer give a comprehensive account of the world we live in

free from the tyranny of the present, accepting our own history not as benighted and irrelevant but as a fellow traveller with much to teach us;

free to recognize tomorrow as a time of scaffoldless hope

free from oppression by institutional need and from the control of experts.

free to speak our own word and to give our own life in communion with the life that has been given for us.

free at last

This is what Jesus taught us – freedom and love – but the love descends into sentimentality without the freedom.

Extensive research from the Emerging Spirit project indicates that people in the 30 to 45 age group understand the church to be arrogant, judgemental and not interested in listening. God help us. I think we can do something about that. We have to – not to save our skin but to live again in the way of the one who is humble, forgiving, listening and free.

May the freedom and the love of Christ sustain us in life, accompany us in death and lead us in life that is yet to be. As a commissioner to this General Council you will be asked in the company of the whole Council to take account of these things.

I want to say thank you to my colleague Robin Chen who has given grace and hospitality a voice on my behalf. Thank you to John Loughheed and the members of the Moderator's Advisory Committee without whom I would have been lost in the plethora of demands, expectations, requests and hopes. Thank you to Jim Sinclair for being a partner in ministry and to the staff of the General Council Office for making so many things possible, for wise counsel and spirited commitment to our work. Thank you to the people of The United Church of Canada for the trust you have placed in me and for this wonderful opportunity to make a contribution.

May the grace of Christ attend you, the love of God surround you and the Holy Spirit keep you, now and always.

RAPPORT DU MODÉRATEUR AU CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL**Origine:** Peter Short, modérateur

Le 17 mai 2006

Sœurs et frères en Christ, que la paix et la grâce de Dieu soient avec vous par la présence et la puissance de l'Esprit.

Le temps est venu de vous rendre compte de mon travail comme 38^e modérateur de l'Église Unie du Canada. Je vous fais parvenir ce rapport avec la conviction que le bureau du modérateur appartient à l'Église, l'Église appartient à l'Évangile, et l'Évangile appartient à Dieu. Occuper ces fonctions dans l'Église a représenté pour moi une responsabilité et un privilège auxquels les mots ne peuvent rendre justice. C'est une leçon d'humilité que d'avoir pu accomplir si peu, si je pense aux immenses besoins de notre Église et du monde, et au défi d'y répondre ces temps-ci. En même temps, je suis profondément reconnaissant d'avoir eu la chance de représenter cette Église que j'affectionne et de rencontrer tant de merveilleux et fidèles serviteurs et servantes de l'Évangile au Canada et ailleurs dans le monde.

J'ai beaucoup à vous dire. Dans ce cahier vous trouverez le rapport que l'Exécutif présente au Conseil général. Il dresse la liste des étapes importantes, des rapports, des décisions et des politiques qui sont parvenues à l'Exécutif. Je me contenterai de noter ici que nous avons commencé à travailler à rendre la communication plus efficace entre le modérateur et les délégués-es au Conseil général. Cela signifie qu'entre les assemblées du Conseil général, les délégués-es peuvent s'attendre à recevoir de l'information, être consultés-es et impliqués-es beaucoup plus qu'auparavant. Votre travail comme délégués-es se poursuivra donc jusqu'au 40^e Conseil général en 2009.

Ma vie aura passé plus vite que la navette d'un tisserand. – Livre de Job

Ces trois années ont passé comme une étincelle qui monte dans le ciel. Qu'est-ce que j'ai réalisé? Qu'est-ce que je n'ai pas accompli? Que puis-je dire de mon intendance des mystères de grâce de l'Église et de sa santé spirituelle?

Je pourrais répondre à ces questions, dans un premier temps du moins, par une liste. Il arrive souvent que nos enseignements les plus signifiants soient transmis au moyen de listes:

N'oublie jamais de me consacrer le jour du sabbat... Respecte ton père et ta mère... Tu ne commettras pas de meurtre...

*Heureux ceux qui se savent pauvres en eux-mêmes, car le Royaume des cieux est à eux...
Heureux ceux qui sont dans la tristesse, car Dieu les consolera... Heureux ceux qui sont doux,
car ils recevront la terre...*

Plusieurs de nos chants sont des listes:

C'est lui qui nous donne le printemps joyeux, les fruits de l'automne, l'été radieux...

Les listes sont spécifiques et, de ce fait, nous empêchent de nous égarer dans les généralités. D'où vient la bonne idée de faire une liste d'emplètes. Notre foi en Dieu à travers Jésus-Christ est une histoire de foi particulière née de la relation avec un être particulier. C'est peut-être en partie pourquoi nous avons tendance à faire des listes, tout comme Paul: *Enfin, frères, portez toute votre attention sur ce qui est bon et digne de louange: sur tout ce qui est vrai, respectable, juste, pur, agréable et honorable.*

Voici donc une liste:

- Visite des 13 synodes de l'Église pour raconter les récits de nos membres et offrir un soutien spirituel.
- Visite de nos partenaires du Moyen Orient, d'Afrique et d'Amérique du Sud, et accueil de visiteurs de nos Églises partenaires dans les pays comme la Chine, Cuba, le Kenya et l'Australie.
- Rédaction de lettres pastorales à l'Église, d'articles pour l'*Observer*, et d'articles d'opinion pour le *Globe and Mail*.
- Animation de retraites pour les leaders dans le ministère.
- Effort pour mettre les difficultés des consistoires à l'ordre du jour de l'Église au niveau national.
- Discours prononcés lors de remises de diplômes, de forums de politiques publiques et d'événements d'Église comme *Worship Matters*.
- Visite de la Chambre des communes pour parler du travail de l'Église dans le cadre de la campagne des Perles d'espérance et de la législation sur le mariage entre conjoints de même sexe.
- Présidence des assemblées de l'Exécutif du Conseil général.
- «Divertissement» en costume de mafieux lors de la réunion de cuisine de l'assemblée du District ouest, à Terre-Neuve.
- Participation aux discussions entre le ministre des Affaires indiennes et du Nord canadien et le Grand chef de l'Assemblée des Premières Nations.
- Rédaction de lettres et appels téléphoniques aux paroisses partout au pays.
- Organisation de l'Assemblée d'Arnprior sur le ministère dans l'Église Unie du Canada.
- Écoute attentive des plaintes et des joies des membres de l'Église Unie du Canada.
- Être appelé de tous les noms possibles: de '*modulateur de fréquence*', en passant par '*imbécile*', jusqu'à '*cadeau du ciel*'.

Mais il y a des choses qu'on ne peut mettre sur une liste.

Il y a ces moments où l'Église a le sentiment d'être à un point tournant important dans son histoire, le genre de moment où le silence complet se fait dans une salle comble. Par exemple, au moment du vote pour approuver l'accord de règlement relatif aux pensionnats indiens, lors de la première subvention à la mission de la Fondation de l'Église Unie du Canada, et lors de l'excuse faite aux femmes (les anciennes diaconesses) touchées par la règle de fin d'association. Nous devons nous rappeler ces moments.

Les autochtones de l'Église m'ont donné un nom – *Shining Rock Chief* (le Chef Rocher-Ardent) – ainsi qu'une plume d'aigle et une couverture. Je me rappelle clairement l'après-midi d'été qui a suivi la Consultation autochtone à Sudbury. Je me rappelle ces pierres cimentées une à une pour

édifier le cairn commémoratif qui n'est pas encore complété d'ailleurs – un autre moment de silence. Voilà des souvenirs que je garde précieusement dans ma mémoire. Elles me sont une ressource de courage dans l'adversité.

Pendant ces 3 années, j'ai reçu plus que je n'ai donné. Arrivé à la fin, je déborde de gratitude – envers Dieu, envers ceux et celles qui m'ont si généreusement soutenu, et envers notre Église Unie. Je ne savais pas du tout que notre Église était à ce point complexe, magnifique, souffrante et fidèle. Je n'en avais aucune idée. Et, même après l'avoir si largement parcourue, je n'ai fait qu'entrevoir ce que nous sommes aux yeux de Dieu. Comme le disait une femme de St. Catharines: *«Personne ne pourra jamais parcourir toutes les petites routes de campagne de l'Église Unie du Canada»*. D'accord, mais ça a été une vraie bénédiction que d'essayer.

Qu'est-ce que j'ai fait? En définitive, cela demeure un mystère tout autant que la pleine et véritable identité de l'Église Unie du Canada est un mystère. Dieu seul le sait. Quoi qu'il en soit, je suppose qu'on ne pourrait pas en faire la liste. J'espère avoir contribué à encourager l'Église. Pour nous, l'encouragement est important – non, pour nous il est crucial – parce que si l'Église a plusieurs générations d'âge, l'encouragement ne s'adresse qu'à la génération présente. Puisque la foi est quelque chose que nous ne possédons jamais mais plutôt quelque chose que nous mettons en actes, nous avons besoin de tout l'encouragement possible pour continuer de vivre la vie.

Au cours de ces 3 dernières années, il y a eu des temps difficiles, des temps où je ressentais les choses comme ce collègue qui a écrit: *«Il est difficile de ne pas prendre une suite d'échecs trop à cœur – j'ai pourtant essayé de reprendre mes billes et de rentrer à la maison. Mais je me suis rendu compte que ce n'étaient pas les miennes»*. Ce collègue m'a inspiré et j'ai continué. Eh bien, j'ai continué parce qu'en dépit des rêves brisés, le monde appartient toujours à Dieu et je ne peux pas aller vivre ailleurs. Beaucoup de nos leaders dans le ministère savent de quoi je parle.

Maintenant, à la veille du 39^e Conseil général de 2006, et dans l'attente de l'élection d'un nouveau modérateur ou d'une nouvelle modératrice, les mots de cet autre collègue trouvent leur écho en moi: *«Pour le temps qui me reste, je vais m'appuyer sur le courage des miens, je vais travailler, faire des projets, vivre et jouer avec eux et elles, et confier à Dieu le sens et la valeur des choses, et tout le reste.»*

Lorsque j'ai commencé à animer des retraites pour les personnes qui exercent le ministère, je me suis dit que je commencerais chaque rencontre par un peu d'encouragement et que je poursuivrais ensuite avec une profonde analyse du ministère de nos jours. J'ai pensé que nous pourrions trouver des solutions à la complexité du ministère, à la charge de travail, au sentiment d'échec, d'isolement et de désillusion. Mais plus je passais du temps avec les ministres, plus je constatais à quel point l'encouragement était important pour eux et elles. Finalement, les dernières retraites que j'ai animées ne comportaient que peu d'analyse mais beaucoup d'encouragement. Ces personnes venaient toujours me remercier avec des mots à vous briser le cœur – comme si, pour elles, c'était là une chose extrêmement rare et précieuse. Je repense souvent à cela.

J'ai offert 37 retraites aux endroits suivants:

Alberta et Territoires du Nord-Ouest: *Camrose, Taber, Calgary*

Bay of Quinte: *Peterborough, Kingston, Arnprior*
 Colombie-Britannique: *Qualicum, Naramata*
 Hamilton: *Five Oaks, Waterloo, Hamilton, St. Catharines*
 London: *Woodstock, Union, Chatam, Petrolia, Mitchell, Sault-Ste-Marie*
 Manitoba et nord-ouest de l'Ontario: *Oakbank, Stonewall*
 Manitou: *Powassan, Cochrane, Timmins*
 Maritimes: *St. Margaret's Bay, Liverpool, Bible Hill*
 Montréal et Ottawa : *Cornwall, Granby*
 Terre-Neuve et Labrador : *Grand Falls – Windsor*
 Saskatchewan : *Saskatoon, Melfort, Moose Jaw*
 Toronto : *Crieff Hills, Islington, Brampton, Toronto South, Holland Centre*

Ces retraites ont varié en durée: de quelques heures à quelques jours. Certains groupes étaient restreints – 5 personnes à Melfort. D'autres étaient imposants – 75 personnes à Calgary et à Waterloo. Près de 1 000 personnes engagées dans le ministère de l'Église ont répondu à l'invitation.

Pendant ces retraites nous avons beaucoup chanté. Nous nous asseyions en cercle et j'invitais chaque personne à choisir un chant qui lui parlait, ou qui parlait *en son nom*, de ce que signifiait exercer le ministère. Chaque personne faisait part de sa vision du ministère et lisait son couplet de chant favori. Ensuite, le cercle des collègues lui chantait ce couplet. Nous n'avons jamais utilisé de piano ou d'autre instrument pour nous accompagner – toujours nos voix seules. J'ai encouragé chaque personne à se rappeler le son des voix de ses amis-es ministres pendant le chant qui lui était destiné, et de se souvenir de ce qui la gardait fidèle à ce travail exigeant et merveilleux. C'était une façon de garder en mémoire de ce qui nous rassemblait et de ne pas oublier que nous ne sommes pas seuls.

Nous nous sommes raconté des moments mémorables et des moments difficiles. Nous avons réfléchi au souffle, d'inspiration et d'expiration, qui rythme la vie en profondeur. Nous avons pensé à la manière dont Dieu nous demande d'abandonner ce à quoi nous tenons pour que nous recevions ce que la vie nous réserve – et que Dieu seul peut voir. Nous nous sommes raconté de nouveau le récit du semeur qui sort pour aller semer: comment certaines graines tombent sur le sol dur et sec, certaines parmi les cailloux, certaines dans la terre peu profonde et certaines dans la bonne terre qui leur permettra de croître. Nous nous sommes rappelé que tout ce que l'on entreprend dans la vie n'est pas nécessairement couronné de succès.

Et, oui, nous avons parlé du consistoire – des règlements les écrasent et de la tâche impossible qui consiste à trouver suffisamment de personnes de bonne volonté pour faire tout le travail. Nous avons partagé notre désappointement que le consistoire n'ait pas la capacité d'être le «chez soi» fort et nourrissant qu'il souhaiterait être. Un pasteur de Toronto a dit: «*Le consistoire a déjà été notre identité commune. Nous y allions pour être confirmés dans ce que nous étions. Maintenant, notre identité s'est recroquevillée à l'intérieur de nous-mêmes.*» Nous avons parlé du temps que le consistoire accorde aux règlements et aux processus, comparé au temps qu'il accorde à la foi, à la prière et à la mission. Un ministre de Sault Ste-Marie a fait la remarque suivante: «*Quand nous serons en bonne santé, nous continuerons d'entrer en conflit mais nos différends concerneront les choses qui nous tiennent à cœur.*» Ce genre de conversation s'est

répétée à travers tout le pays. Je les ai apportées à l'Exécutif du Conseil général de manière à mettre sur la table la situation éprouvante dans laquelle se trouvent de nombreux consistoires.

Les retraites n'ont pas été que des plaintes et des larmes. Nous avons beaucoup ri également.

Voici 3 autres conclusions auxquelles je suis arrivé:

1. Nos leaders sont profondément engagés-es dans leur vocation comme ministres de l'Évangile. Je n'en ai rencontré aucun, aucune, qui m'ait dit: «*Je travaille mes huit heures par jour et ensuite je rentre à la maison et je pense à autre chose.*» Ils travaillent de longues heures dans des situations souvent difficiles, complexes et décevantes. Ils aiment énormément leur travail et y mettent tout leur cœur et leurs rêves.
2. En même temps, il semble y avoir peu de compréhension commune de ce que signifie l'engagement au ministère dans l'Église Unie du Canada. Lorsque je leur demandais en quoi consistait leur travail, les ministres m'ont rarement parlé d'un rôle ou d'un mandat qui leur était conféré par l'Église Unie. Ils me parlaient de l'univers intérieur de leur vocation comme si le ministère était une réalité personnelle qui se développait entièrement à partir de leurs propres psychologie et spiritualité («*Maintenant, notre identité s'est recroquevillée à l'intérieur de nous-mêmes*»). L'exception à ce phénomène venait des diacres qui parlaient souvent d'un but enraciné dans la fidélité à une communauté en particulier, à ses valeurs et à ses rêves.
3. Il existe un fossé d'incompréhension et de méfiance entre les membres des diverses catégories de ministère dans l'Église. Les pasteurs-es ordonnés-es se sentent diminués-es par les pasteurs-es laïques. Les diacres se voient supplantés-es par les adjoints-es au personnel. Les pasteurs-es laïques ont le sentiment que les pasteurs-es ordonnés-es méprisent leur formation. Et, parce que le consistoire doit reconduire chaque année le ministère des adjoints-es au personnel, ceux/celles-ci croient que leur ministère n'est pas apprécié à sa juste valeur. Tous les ministres se sentent marginalisés. On perçoit beaucoup de frustration et parfois même de l'amertume. Bien que tous les ministres y sont sensibles, cette situation demeure largement méconnue dans l'Église parce qu'il n'y a pas de forum pour que ces problèmes soient discutés et résolus.

Ayant entendu cette voix dissonante au sujet du ministère dans l'Église, j'ai décidé de demander à l'Exécutif du Conseil général la permission de tenir l'Assemblée d'Arnprior sur la question du ministère dans l'Église Unie du Canada. Dans ma proposition à l'Exécutif du CG en avril 2005, on pouvait lire ceci :

Pour une période de quatre jours au début de novembre 2005, j'aimerais inviter cent personnes représentatives des divers courants de ministère dans l'Église Unie du Canada (diacres, pasteurs-es, pasteurs-es laïques, adjoints-es au personnel et autres ministres laïques) à se rassembler avec moi dans la ville d'Arnprior, dans l'est de l'Ontario, où nous pourrions, en présence de l'esprit de Jésus-Christ qui nous a appelés-es au ministère:

- nous écouter les uns, les unes, les autres avec humilité et bienveillance;
- parler de ce que nos vocations ont en commun et de ce qui nous unit;

- imaginer ce que nous pouvons faire pour nous encourager et nous outiller mutuellement pour la mission et le ministère.

L'Assemblée d'Arnprior sur le ministère dans l'Église Unie du Canada sera un «événement unique» qu'il faut considérer comme:

- une source d'information, d'idées et de conseils pour mon rapport au 39e Conseil général;
- une initiative permettant de compléter le travail des comités et des groupes de travail du Conseil général sur le ministère et d'y contribuer;
- un catalyseur pour générer plus de discussions sur la mission et le ministère de la troisième génération de l'Église Unie;
- un dialogue permettant de contourner les divisions qui nous empêchent de garder le cap sur nos tentatives de convergence au sujet du ministère aujourd'hui...

... Cette proposition n'a pas pour but de créer de nouvelles politiques ou une nouvelle législation pour le ministère. Ce qui vous est offert ici, c'est la chance de vous mettre à l'écoute de Dieu, des uns et des autres, et des voix de notre époque. Ce qui vous est offert ici peut devenir, grâce à Dieu, un catalyseur et un événement créateur dans le déroulement de l'histoire du ministère de l'Église Unie du Canada...

L'Assemblée d'Arnprior a réuni un groupe de personnes qui reflétaient les divers courants du ministère dans l'Église Unie du Canada. En fin de compte, 120 personnes y étaient présentes. Cet événement leur a offert la chance d'échanger à un niveau leur permettant de dialoguer en marge de leurs catégories ministérielles. Il leur a permis de se trouver ensemble dans un lieu de recherche et d'écoute de ce que Dieu attend de l'Église en ce qui concerne le ministère dans sa troisième génération. Il a démontré qu'au-delà de leurs catégories ministérielles, nos leaders sont sincèrement engagés-es pour l'Évangile du Christ, le ministère leur tient à cœur, et ils sont parfaitement capables d'un dialogue fructueux sur les questions essentielles.

Cette Assemblée a placé 120 'témoins' à travers l'Église. J'entends par témoins des personnes qui ont été transformées par leur travail sur une question d'importance pour nous tous: *Quel ministère Dieu attend-il de l'Église Unie dans sa troisième génération?*

Cette conversation se poursuit de diverses manières. Le personnel du Conseil général a créé un forum d'échange en ligne. Le modérateur a écrit une lettre ouverte à l'Église pour encourager, orienter et aider tout groupe de personnes voulant engager ce type de dialogue dans son propre milieu. Les participants et participantes à l'Assemblée ont fait des présentations et ont organisé des discussions dans des centres de formation, et au niveau des consistoires et des paroisses dans différentes parties du pays. Bien qu'il soit impossible de reproduire l'expérience de l'Assemblée ou d'en quantifier les résultats, elle semble avoir dans l'Église l'effet générateur que nous espérons.

Il est important de nous rappeler que, tout comme les retraites, le travail accompli par l'Assemblée se situe dans le contexte plus large de l'énorme travail entrepris par le Conseil général pour le personnel ministériel. Par exemple, l'étude sur les modèles de rémunération, l'étude sur l'isolement dans le ministère, le Rapport sur la déontologie et les critères de pratique,

la révision des processus 333 et 363 de même que la formation des animateurs-trices, la politique sur les congés sabbatiques et les initiatives en matière de formation permanente. Cette démarche exhaustive qui se poursuit depuis plusieurs années est l'aboutissement des efforts de nombreux membres du personnel et membres élus qui ont à cœur d'outiller nos leaders pour la vocation du ministère. Plusieurs propositions présentées à ce Conseil général sont directement reliées à ces initiatives.

Mon travail avec les personnes qui exercent le ministère m'ont amené à comprendre que les difficultés auxquelles sont confrontés-es les ministres ne sont pas principalement dues à leurs erreurs et leur incompétence comme individus. D'une manière générale, nos leaders sont soigneusement sélectionnés-es, bien formés-es et profondément impliqués-es dans leur travail. Les difficultés qu'ils et elles rencontrent indiquent plutôt que l'Église tout entière et l'Évangile du Christ qu'elle proclame font face à un problème plus sérieux encore dans la société contemporaine.

Ce que nous rencontrons n'est pas qu'un problème technique pouvant être résolu par la solution technique qui consiste à créer des règlements encore plus détaillés et complexes. C'est un problème spirituel, un de ceux qui nous appelle à donner à l'Église la liberté qui lui faut pour vivre son Évangile dans un contexte social qui a changé et qui continue à changer.

Le Conseil général ne doit pas tomber dans le piège attrayant de croire qu'il peut 'régler' le problème qui opprime l'Église en produisant une législation encore plus élaborée. Une personne de Saskatchewan écrivait : *« S'il vous plaît, gardez les petites paroisses rurales dans vos prières. Nous sommes au bout de notre rouleau, et il y a toujours plus de formulaires et de bureaucratie... Nous sommes organisés À OUTRANCE!!! et il ne nous reste plus de temps pour laisser l'Esprit travailler parmi nous, ou même discerner son travail parmi nous... Je suis témoin des frustrations des paroissiens qui travaillent à l'évaluation des besoins, etc, etc, etc, sachant qu'ils n'attireront JAMAIS aucun personnel ministériel dans une si petite localité pour un temps partiel. »*

La frustration est palpable dans ces lignes. Cette personne n'est pas seule dans son cas. J'ai reçu des dizaines de messages semblables. Pour une raison ou une autre, ces personnes savent que la réglementation ne nous apportera pas le salut.

Par contre, le jour même où j'ai reçu ce message, j'ai aussi reçu une lettre d'une autre personne me demandant *« mes prières et ma réflexion pour le réexamen du processus actuel de discernement pour les postulants-es au ministère de l'Église Unie du Canada »*. Cette personne souhaitait que de nouvelles mesures soient ajoutées à ce système qui selon elle avait desservi un postulant. J'ai également reçu des dizaines de lettres du genre.

Ces messages sincères sont symptomatiques d'une situation difficile : nos processus sont d'emblée autoritaires et inadéquats. Ils en font à la fois trop et pas assez.

Bien sûr, le Conseil général doit remplir l'obligation primordiale de faire en sorte que l'Église dispose de règlements adéquats et efficaces, de processus et de politiques bien en place. Mais cela ne nous mènera qu'à moitié chemin. Le voyage est plus long que ce que les politiques et les

processus nous permettent d'estimer. Au-delà de ce qu'il peut prévoir, le Conseil général doit répondre à la question essentielle qui se pose, celle de la pertinence de l'Église dans le contexte social et spirituel changeant dans lequel nous vivons. Répondre à cette question essentielle c'est déjà faire un pas sur la route de la liberté – la liberté de vivre notre Évangile. Nous devons trouver le moyen d'être libres de nouveau :

Libres de comprendre que la mission ne se mesure pas à la croissance de l'Église et que notre aptitude à la mener ne se mesure pas à l'ampleur de nos ressources, mais à notre volonté de nous donner un but clair.

Libres d'abandonner notre besoin d'être gagnants pour investir notre énergie dans la crise qu'il faut solutionner et continuer d'y travailler jusqu'à ce que notre vie devienne une victoire en Christ.

Libres de la peur qui nous hante lorsque nous ne comptons que sur notre intelligence, nos ressources et notre force pour notre salut.

Libres de reconnaître que nous ne comprenons plus le monde dans lequel nous vivons et que nous ne pouvons pas non plus l'expliquer complètement.

Libres de la tyrannie du présent, en acceptant notre propre histoire non comme un élément anodin et non pertinent, mais comme un voyageur qui nous accompagne et nous apprend beaucoup de choses.

Libres de reconnaître demain comme un temps d'espérance et non d'illusion.

Libres de l'oppression du besoin de l'institution et du contrôle des experts.

Libres d'offrir notre propre parole et de donner notre propre vie en communion avec la vie qui nous a été donnée.

Libre enfin.

C'est ce que Jésus nous a enseigné – la liberté et l'amour – mais, sans liberté, l'amour dégénère en sentimentalité.

Une recherche approfondie dans le cadre du projet *Emerging Spirit* (l'Émergence de l'Esprit) indique que les personnes ayant entre 30 et 45 ans estiment que l'Église fait preuve d'arrogance, est portée à juger, et n'est pas intéressée à écouter. Dieu, viens-nous en aide. Je pense que nous pouvons y remédier. Nous devons y remédier – pas pour sauver notre peau mais pour vivre de nouveau dans les pas de celui qui s'est montré humble, indulgent, attentif et libre.

Que la liberté et l'amour du Christ nous soutiennent dans la vie, nous accompagnent dans la mort et nous conduisent dans la vie à venir. En tant que délégué-e à ce Conseil général, il vous sera demandé de tenir compte de tout cela dans vos délibérations.

Je veux dire merci à ma collègue Robin Chen qui s'est faite la voix de la bienveillance et de l'accueil en mon nom. Merci à John Loughheed et aux membres du comité de soutien du modérateur sans qui je me serais perdu dans cette pléthore d'exigences, d'attentes, de demandes et d'espoirs. Merci à Jim Sinclair d'avoir été mon partenaire dans le ministère et merci au personnel du bureau du Conseil général pour avoir rendu tant de choses possibles, pour avoir offert leurs conseils et s'être donnés courageusement à la tâche. Et merci aux membres de l'Église Unie du Canada pour la confiance qu'ils m'ont accordée et pour la chance merveilleuse qu'ils m'ont offerte d'apporter ma collaboration.

Que la grâce du Christ vous assiste, que l'amour de Dieu vous entoure et que le Saint-Esprit vous garde, maintenant et toujours.

Peter Short, modérateur

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY (Commons)

Origin: Jim Sinclair, General Secretary, General Council

Introduction

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ whose ministry gives us and others meaning and strength.

I have always admired the late guru of city planning, Jane Jacobs. She died this past April at 90 years of age. Her influence has changed how cities work. I believe her example is worth noting at this point in the life of The United Church of Canada as we contemplate what Moderator Peter Short has called "our third generation".

Ms. Jacob's exclamation that, "I think I'm living in a marvellous age when great change is occurring" has a sustaining flavour for me as I think of faithfulness, and stewardship, in our denomination in the coming years. She had great confidence in what she called "the foot people". These were citizens who created patterns that were organic, faithful to what human communities required to be healthy and whole. In many instances these developments were radically different from what the so-called "experts" advocated; they felt the foot people were old-fashioned, selfish, "stick-in-the muds" standing in the way of progress. On the other hand, Jane Jacobs saw these same foot people and their experience as corroboration of her best instincts and observations.

For our church to adapt to the evolving life around us will take an amazing collaboration of "foot people" with their sense of history and experience in the faith, and of others who yearn for something better, for God's purpose to be realized. Every member – every part – of the Body of Christ will be required to offer their gifts and commitment. If people are not present in the necessary conversations and actions about the next generation, we'll all be poorer because of it.

I have no doubt this shared effort can happen, and will happen. As I explained to the Executive of the General Council at its meeting this past April, I have been inspired and strengthened by this familiar passage from Deuteronomy, with its assurances of God's faithfulness to all of creation:

Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" Neither is it beyond the sea that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we hear it and observe it?" No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe. (30: 11-14, NRSV)

I write this as I come to the end of my four years of service to the church in the role of General Secretary. Now past the denomination's age of retirement, I enter a new chapter of sharing Christ's ministry with considerable excitement and anticipation. Looking back over 40 years of ministry I believe The United Church of Canada has reached another significant point of opportunity.

A number of measures to respond to what future faithfulness requires of us have been undertaken since our last General Council (the 38th, meeting in Wolfville, Nova Scotia in August 2003). You will find reference to them throughout this workbook. In addition, a number of crucial decisions designed to help the church in the coming years are placed before you for your consideration.

Notable Developments

During the period between the 38th General Council (Wolfville 2003) and the 39th General Council (Thunder Bay 2006) many significant decisions were taken by the Executive of the General Council or its Sub-Executive. They can be found in the Executive of the General Council Accountability Report in this workbook. Among these actions were some that are highlighted here for their significance.

Disjoining Rule: At an earlier time in the history of The United Church of Canada, our denomination adopted the so-called "Disjoining Rule." Many deaconesses of that era were forced to give up their work, because under that rule if they married they could not continue in the employ of the church. The unfairness of this policy, which ended in 1957, was acknowledged in a Service of Apology at the April 2006 meeting of the Executive of the General Council. At that special worship service (which is now available for use by Conferences, as appropriate) an apology was extended to those affected by this history, and was acknowledged on behalf of that group by one of its members.

Governance: A major development over the past triennium has been in the area of governance. Significant clarification has happened in how work flows from the Executive of the General Council to the four Permanent Committees and to staff, and back. This represents one of the most important differences between the present design and the former division structure. Levels of responsibility and accountability have been identified more clearly. As we continue to work at this, fostering more active relationships between elected persons and staff is something we wish to encourage.

Native Ministries: During the past three years a Coordinator of Native Ministries (Laverne Jacobs) was appointed to ensure collaboration among the many pieces of work in the church that address native matters. The highlight of that effort was last summer's National Consultation on Native Ministries held at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. From that gathering a number of initiatives have flowed.

Preparations for 39th General Council (Thunder Bay, 2006): Led by an active and conscientious Agenda and Planning team, these arrangements have involved the Executive of the General Council itself in different ways over the past three years. Guidelines and principles as to the shape and nature of the Council were developed, including the commitment to a thoughtful discernment process to lead us into thinking about the church in the 21st Century. A lively Local Arrangements group in Thunder Bay has provided an important confidence to the Executive of the General Council and all others involved in the planning work.

Continuing Role of Commissioners: A plan to keep Commissioners to the 39th General Council 2006 aware of their responsibility as continuing Commissioners until the meeting of the next General Council in Kamloops in 2009 has been formulated. That plan involves a number of measures to keep Commissioners informed of the work of its Executive of the General Council and involved in the decisions that flow from their work in Thunder Bay. This represents another new development in encouraging the best gifts and wisdom of the elected elders from across the church.

Pandemic Planning: As Canada determines how it will address the threat of a pandemic within the population, its faith communities are playing an important role. Work is progressing in our Support to Local Ministries Unit to muster the church's resources, local and otherwise, in the event they are needed.

Ministry-Based Education Program for Ordination: This program was approved to begin at the United Theological College in Montreal in 2006. The Ministry-Based Ordination Program (MBOP) at the United Theological College (UTC) in Montreal received its first intake of students in May 2006. The MBOP Implement Committee has been closely monitoring and supporting the development of this program. It has given bi-annual reports to the Education for Church Leadership Coordinating Committee, Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry and the Executive of the General Council. Recruitment is underway for the 2007 intake of students.

Presbyteries/ Districts: During the triennium, the Moderator led the Executive into an important discussion about the challenges being experienced by Presbyteries/Districts in carrying out their functions. A seemingly ever-expanding regulatory role, pastoral relations "loads," a perceived inconsistency in application of policy, volunteer fatigue... the list was considerable. That discussion continues to serve as a reference point for all levels of the church as it seeks to provide appropriate and adequate support to the dedicated front-line people supporting our local congregations, outreach ministries, as well as those providing pastoral leadership to them. One tangible development was a revised review process (and trained consultants) for 363 reviews that relate to difficulties in the pastoral relationship.

Public Policy: As part of its public witness, the United Church has had important conversations with governments at different levels over the past three years. For example, all four parties in the House of Commons actively supported the Beads of Hope campaign. That 2004 HIV/AIDS education and advocacy project was widely endorsed by members across the church. The results of its work – thanks to the funds raised and programs available – continues to meet an ongoing need.

In conjunction with church partners, including KAIROS, a number of representations to parliamentarians took place around equal-marriage legislation, economic justice & development issues, housing concerns, the Kyoto Accord, nuclear waste management issues and, most recently, water policy.

Our public statements take various forms. Rooted in our commitment to social justice and prophetic witness they are carefully considered as to content and timing. They elicit varying responses. One message, referring to the fact The United Church of Canada issued a statement about the kidnapped Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) members in Iraq last winter and initiated statements from other churches through KAIROS and the Canadian Council of Churches, was from Doug Prichard, co-director of CPT. He stated, “The initial accusations by the kidnapers that our men were spies were clearly refuted by statements such as these. We believe that these statements kept our men alive for several months and were instrumental in the release of three of them. They also helped build bridges of understanding and mutual support between Christians and Muslims.”

Residential School Settlement: In November 2005 a tentative settlement was reached in the ongoing Residential School situation. As of June 2006 we are still waiting for the final papers to be signed.

The United Church has long supported a holistic and comprehensive resolution to the harm created by the Indian Residential School system, including recognition of the tragic impacts related to loss of language and culture and separation from families and communities. This means that our church has sought a resolution approach voiced by Native groups themselves, that included both financial compensation and healing responses for former students, as well as educational strategies for non-Aboriginal Canadians. This agreement reflects that commitment.

In financial terms, the United Church has agreed to its share of a proportional formula worked out with all the church entities. Our obligation is approximately \$6.9 million, most of which has already been contributed in settlements. Additional financial commitments to healing initiatives will be at our direction and discretion. This agreement will bring an end to the class action lawsuits. We will continue to have a church representative present at any hearings held in the Independent Assessment Process. The United Church will also participate in the truth and reconciliation proceedings, nationally and locally, and continue to support community-based healing initiatives.

We regard this important step as an early one in a long journey. The legal aspects of this sad story are receding, allowing us now to focus more intently on the church’s moral responsibility

to foster healing for the national community, including survivors, and to encourage efforts across the whole church at developing “right relations” in the future. In a poignant letter to the Moderator about the 1986 Apology made by the United Church to Native peoples this past Spring Verna McKay stated her concern that “much of what has been happening has not touched ‘the grass roots’ of our church – either Aboriginal or non Aboriginal.” She raises the cogent question, “How can we encourage United Church congregations across this country to put this on their agendas so that we can become a church on a journey toward reconciliation and right relationships?” Living into that question is a critical aspect of our next generation.

Union initiative: During the past triennium a group of five clergy/members of The United Church of Canada commenced a union organizing drive between November 2004 and November 2005. This effort with the Canadian Auto Workers attracted considerable media attention. Later, the organizers reported at the end of the year they had not achieved the numbers required to ask the Labour Relations Board to order a vote. Subsequently this group has again undertaken a similar campaign. In our response to the clergy of the church, I stated my view that, given our present form of governance in which people in paid accountable ministry make up 50% of the voting membership of Presbytery, Conference and General Council, a union “would not be a good fit.” Some efforts to address issues of clergy salary, benefits, health and wholeness, including the Compensation Study and The Isolation in Ministry, pre-date this unionizing initiative and are now before this General Council for decision.

Programs for Mission and Ministry

Many program developments have occurred since the last General Council. Among the more prominent are:

Beads of Hope: Please note the reference to this ministry to the HIV/AIDS work of the church in the section above on Public Policy.

Identity Resources: This General Council will receive a full report about a major Emerging Spirit initiative about lifting to awareness The United Church of Canada’s distinctiveness. In addition to that, a unique and appealing series of brochures outlining the church’s identity in many ways is now available to the church.

More Voices: This music supplement, a joint project of the church and Wood Lakes Press, has already engendered considerable interest and excitement with the release of the “sampler” this Spring. The book itself is scheduled for publication early in 2007. A CD will include choirs from across Canada singing hymns in the book. In 2008 a resource to project hymns will be available.

Same Sex Marriage: At the direction of the past General Council in Wolfville (2006) , approaches about this matter were made to the government. In addition to that work, education and policy work of congregations has required considerable support from our program people.

Statement of Faith: Extensive work by dozens of congregations and thousands of church members on the Statement of Faith requested by previous General Councils has now happened. Our consideration at this summer’s Council of “The Song of Faith” is the culmination of this church-wide conversation.

Resources for Mission and Ministry

Archives: A Management Group has now been established for the National Archives which the church shares with Victoria University in Toronto, and which also serves the central Conferences. An interim agreement has been reached with the university to pay down a debt which has accumulated in recent years. A necessary revised funding formula was put in place effective 1 April 2006. This will have an impact on the Conferences which are served from the Victoria site. Work also continues in order to address space issues. In addition to concerns about this one site, there are additional matters related to the church's several other archives operations across the country. The Archives Network is now completing recommendations for future consideration by the Executive of the General Council regarding the work of that group.

Reserve Policy: The Permanent Committee on Finance has led the Executive into a new and more unified policy protocol for use of United Church reserves.

Future accommodation for the General Council Office: The lease on the present General Council Office extends to 2015. Well before then, planning for future accommodation beyond that date must be underway. Part of that process is being clear about the role of the General Council Office itself, and thus the size of the staff complement. A Task Group to guide this process will begin its work by the end of this year.

Regional Relations

As demographic changes occur in our Conferences, sometimes with drastic effect, important questions have been raised about what is the appropriate staff complement to support the ministry of Jesus Christ faithfully and effectively in those bodies. In some conferences a significantly reduced base for assessment and a General Council Operating Grant which doesn't "stretch" as far as it once did are important concerns.

The amount of the Grant to Conferences is set by our budget, approved by the G.C.E. (This is the size of the pie: approximately \$4.3 million in 2006) The allocation of those grants has long been made in accordance with a formula which has been in place for many years. (This is the way we divide the pie.) The Conferences receive different percentages of the total amount. Historically, there is no written record for the principles behind this formula. The Executive of the General Council has, in recent years, adjusted the total size of the grant to reflect cost of living and step increases in salaries.

As a result of these factors, the Executive of the General Council has authorized a Task Group on The General Council Grant to Conferences, its terms of reference have been approved, and its members will be determined at the Executive of the General Council in November 2006. In the meantime a set of principles is being drafted for the consideration at that same Executive meeting. They will guide the 2008 budgeting process as it relates to the Conference grants, and later the reconsidered grant policy will take effect.

Racial Justice / Gender Justice

The 37th General Council 2000 adopted an anti-racism policy that stated in its preamble four areas of work necessary for the church to move toward becoming an anti-racist institution:

“participate fully, organize for diversity, act justly, speak to the world.” The establishment of the position of General Council Minister: Racial Justice followed as the church moved toward creating a more racially just church. Since the 38th General Council 2003, this position has experienced some changes. Omega Bula, the first General Council Minister: Racial Justice, moved to the position of Executive Minister: Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations. Subsequently, the Executive of General Council approved the addition of gender justice to the portfolio and Wenh-In Ng joined us as interim General Council Minister: Racial Justice and Gender Justice. In December 2005 Kim Uyede-Kai was appointed to this newly-configured position and joined the Senior Leadership Team.

Racial justice work has focused on identifying and building the networks and resources that the church and its leaders need in order to effectively animate the four areas of the anti-racism policy. As members of the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network, the United Church participated in the development of a racial justice week worship pilot resource. An employment systems review was conducted of the United Church’s 1994 Employment Equity Policy to ensure that the United Church’s employment policies and practices did not pose systemic and other barriers. It is being developed with wide consultation among General Council Office and Conference staff. A booklet on ending racial harassment to create a healthy workplace was developed and distributed to General Council Office and Conference staff. Permanent committees and unit-wide committees as well as unit staff groupings are participating in anti-racism education sessions. Respectful and appropriate support for Aboriginal voices and leadership is one of the key priorities for the portfolio.

The focus and priority of the work of gender justice is being developed as the new advisory committee shapes its vision.

Planning and Processes

Nominations: The work of Committee Members Services and the Nominations protocols has been another significant achievement of the past three years. There has been affirmation for this process from across the church, and interest from some Conferences in using something similar in their own work.

Strategic Planning: In the absence of articulated key goals by the General Council itself (something the Thunder Bay gathering will help to rectify), in consultation with the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes and the Executive of the General Council, I have acted on the following management goals: (1) initiatives to strengthen church in carrying out their role, (2) initiatives to support those serving in ministry leadership roles, (3) measures to develop more effective funding for the work of the church, (4) to communicate a United Church identity, and (5) efforts to strengthen our racial justice and gender justice work. Following the 39th General Council (Thunder Bay, 2006) a planning process by the Executive of the General Council will move towards developing a full strategic plan for the United Church no later than June 2007.

Remits

Several questions that would change The Basis of Union were placed before 38th General Council (Wolfville, 2003). That Council authorized remits about these questions to test the will

of the church. Those remits were circulated and the results to be reported to the 39th General Council (Thunder Bay, 2006) are as follows:

We heard back from 82 Presbyteries.

Remit # 1 - Frequency of Conference Meetings. The purpose of this remit was to test the will of the church as to whether the conferences should be granted permission to experiment with alternatives to annual or biennial meetings...

Yes - 65

No - 17

Remit # 2 - Categorization of Remits: After outlining a series of different categories of possible changes to the Basis of Union (#1 “wording or editorial changes,” # 2: “significant but not denomination-shaping,” and # 3, “substantive changes that affect who we are as a denomination,” the question was: Do you agree that the discretion of the General Council to include Pastoral Charges in the consideration of a remit should be limited to remits given the designation of Category # 3 by the General Council

Yes - 67

No - 15

Remit # 3 - Membership of Settlement Committee: The question was: Do you agree that the Presbytery should be entitled to appoint to the Settlement Committee one (1) member who is Ministry Personnel rather than one (1) member of the Order of Ministry, in addition to (1) lay member...

Yes - 41

No - 40 1 n/a

Remit # 4 - Number of Presbytery Representatives: The question was: Do you agree that each congregation should be entitled to representation in the Presbytery on the basis of one (1) representative per one hundred (100) resident members rather than the current basis of one (1) representative per two hundred and fifty (250) resident members...

Yes - 56

No - 26

Remit # 5 - References to General Council Divisions: The 37th General Council (Toronto 2000) approved the re-organization of the General Council Office, including the governance structure, such that the General Council Divisions no longer exist. The remit question was: Do you agree that the Basis of Union should be amended to reflect the policy adopted by the 37th General Council...

Yes - 79

No - 3

Rulings and Opinions

(“R” indicates a Ruling, “O” indicates an Opinion)

One of the responsibilities of the General Secretary is “to make rulings on questions of jurisdiction or interpretation with respect to all matters of the polity, procedures, and practice of

the United Church. During the past triennium the following rulings and opinions have been issued. Copies of such actions are sent to the principals involved and are filed with all Conference Offices.

03-001-0 March 12, 2003

- The Pastoral Relationship – 041
- The Church Board – 200
- Oversight of Pastoral Charges – 330, 334, 337
- Appointment of Ministry Personnel; Candidates – 341
- Oversight of the Pastoral Relationship – 350, 351

When reconstituting a Congregation, Presbytery/District must consult with Congregation but Congregation's agreement to reconstitution is not required. In new governance structure for Congregation, exact structure is flexible as long as all functions that *The Manual* requires of a governing body are included and will be performed. Presbytery/District may appoint Ministry Personnel to a Pastoral Charge where Ministry Personnel's responsibilities will be limited to ministering to one Congregation within that Pastoral Charge.

03-001-R May 12, 2003

Presbytery/District members are expected to participate in life and work of Presbytery/District through attendance at meetings and participation in committee work, as they are able. Presbytery/District may not establish absolute rule on minimum requirements for attendance and committee participation of members.

03-002-0 May 14, 2003

- Organization, Moderator – 510

General Council may give financial assistance to Congregation whose minister has been elected moderator if the pastoral relationship continues and Congregation incurs costs to cover absence.

03-003-O June 6, 2003

- Oversight of Pastoral Charges – 333
- The Powers of the General Council – 505 (b)

Where the Chair of a Ministry and Personnel Committee receives a letter of concern about the minister, the Chair would normally put the letter before the Committee for consideration around appropriate action. Some circumstances may require immediate action on the part of the Chair to communicate the letter to Presbytery/District.

03-004-O September 4, 2003

- Oversight of Ministry Personnel – 363(d) vi

Where a minister is under suspension as a result of a review under Section 363, the suspension extends to all roles that the minister performs in the church for the duration of the suspension period.

03-005-O September 9, 2003

- Oversight of Ministry Personnel – 363(d)vi

A minister under suspension as a result of a review under Section 363 is entitled to minimum salary and benefits for the duration of the suspension (to a maximum of six months). That

includes continuing education allowance and book allowance, as these are benefits forming part of the minister's compensation.

03-006-O September 12, 2003

The Order of Ministry – 031 (o)

Resolution of Conflicts – 076, 077

Presbytery/District Decision not to continue an individual's process of admission from another denomination may be appealed.

03-007-O September 16, 2003

Resolution of Conflicts – 076, 077

Where Presbytery/District has terminated admission process for individual serving in an appointment, Presbytery/District must still follow procedures for terminating individual's appointment since individual is no longer eligible for it. Effective date of termination of appointment is up to Presbytery/District. Both minister and Pastoral Charge have standing to appeal.

03-002-R September 26, 2003

The Session, Duties and Powers – 153

Where minister is in a pastoral relationship with a Congregation, minister must always comply with that Congregation's policies in all marriages conducted by the minister.

03-003-R October 17, 2003

The Committee of Stewards, Organization – 170

Treasurer must be satisfied that s/he has adequate information in order to complete Treasurer's certificate on Congregation's annual tax return. Official Board decides how much information about individual donors may be made available to Treasurer.

03-004-R November 2, 2003

Re: action by 38th General Council 2003 not to take action requested in Petition 48 to develop and produce Voices United companion. General Council office is already implementing a plan to produce Voices United companion. That work may continue in spite of no action on Petition 48. There is no inconsistency here because the General Council office plan for a Voices United companion is different than the one outlined in Petition 48.

03-008-O December 8, 2003

Remuneration of Ministry Personnel – 037

Where minister is under a disability and is moving from short term to long term disability, minister's position should be held open for minister's possible return for 2 years, which is guideline only. Longer or shorter period may be appropriate depending on circumstances. Minister has right to occupy manse for as long as pastoral relationship continues.

03-005-R December 9, 2003

Resolution of Conflicts, Appeals – 076

An Appeal Committee that has not yet been discharged by the appointing court has power to make an award of costs even after it has released its Decision on the Appeal and the time period for appealing the Decision has expired.

03-006-R December 15, 2003

The Pastoral Relationship, Joint Needs Assessment Committee – 52(c)
Joint Needs Assessment Committee decides whether any information gathered by it should remain confidential; presumption is against confidentiality because Official Board needs adequate information to make informed decision on JNAC's report.

04-001-R March 4, 2004

Definitions, Congregational Accountable Ministry – 001
If a ministry position meets definition of "Congregational Accountable Ministry", person appointed to the position is a Congregational Accountable Minister. If ministry position does not meet that definition, person appointed to the position is required to meet the criteria for Designated Lay Ministers. Note: this ruling was made in anticipation of the implementation of new Designated Lay Ministry policy. The Executive of the General Council suspended implementation of that policy and this ruling has no effect for the duration of the suspension.

04-001-O March 22, 2004

Organization – 373
A District has the same power as a Presbytery to appoint and act by an Executive and Sub-Executive.

04-002-O March 29, 2004

The Order of Ministry – 022
Session has no power to waive requirement that Inquirer have been a member in a United Church congregation for at least 24 months.

04-003-O April 6, 2004

The Order of Ministry – 029
Transfer Committee – 713
For ministers ordained to further study, Transfer Committee (TC) determines whether there is sufficient evidence that minister has completed further study. TC may only take action to transfer minister when further study has been completed. If minister requests deferral of transfer, TC decides whether to grant request. Minister must fulfil obligations for transfer and settlement.

04-004-O April 15, 2004

The Order of Ministry – 031
Conference only admits applicant after assurance of call, settlement, or appointment. Position may begin either before or after applicant is received but position must extend for some period of time after reception.

04-005-O May 3, 2004

Congregational Property – 267, 270

Presbytery makes Decision as to disposition of proceeds from sale of congregational property, based on proposal from Congregation. No restriction that proceeds must be applied towards organizations within the United Church. Only restriction is that proceeds can't be used for purpose inconsistent with United Church policy.

04-002-R May 19, 2004

Congregational Property – 268

Oversight of Pastoral Charges – 334

In an amalgamation, Presbytery/District may reconfigure three Congregations into two. Presbytery/District has power to attach whatever conditions it considers appropriate regarding the assumption of congregational liabilities. Portions of liability assumed by amalgamated Congregations do not have to be equal.

04-006-O May 20, 2004

Resolution of Conflicts, Appeals – 076

The Conference, Duties and Powers – 424

Other Suggested Conference Standing Committees – 462

Conference has power to order Education and Students Committee to conduct third final interview of Candidate. Presbytery has no standing to appeal Decision of Conference around Candidate. Only Candidate has status to appeal as “person directly affected” (but only re: process).

04-007-O May 27, 2004

Other Suggested Conference Standing Committees – 462

Conference may empower Conference Executive to take action on recommendation from Education and Students Committee. Executive may take this action before Transfer Committee acts on transfer application. Transfer Committee may only consider applications at Committee's annual meeting, and only if names had been provided to Committee by April 1 in year of ordination. Executive may establish a Commission to conduct ordination service.

04-003-R June 10, 2004

Church Membership – 012

Membership in another denomination does not necessarily make an individual ineligible for membership in the United Church but it is one of the factors that the Session considers in determining whether the individual may be admitted to membership in the United Church.

04-008-O June 11, 2004

Appendix IV

United Church related camps must comply with United Church Sexual Abuse Policy as part of United Church Camping Standards accreditation process. Camp may also have its own policy in addition to United Church Sexual Abuse Policy.

04-009-O July 19, 2004

Other Suggested Conference Standing Committees, Interim Ministry Committee – 465.1

Conference Executive makes Decision about individual's eligibility as Interim Minister both before and after first appointment. After second and subsequent appointments, Interim Ministry Committee makes Decision.

04-010-O August 17, 2004

The Pastoral Relationship – 046.1, 049

Where Pastoral Charge seeks reduction of Ministry Personnel positions for financial reasons, or where Congregations amalgamate, the process for a change in pastoral relations must be followed including joint needs assessment and Pastoral Charge's request for a change in pastoral relations without cause.

04-004-R September 7, 2004

The Order of Ministry – 022

Membership in another denomination is not an absolute bar to being a Candidate in the United Church but it raises many serious issues for Presbytery/District to explore in determining the individual's suitability for ministry in the United Church.

04-011-O November 18, 2004

Organization – 370, 371

Candidate or Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training may serve as member or Chair of a committee or as presiding officer of Court that has jurisdiction over that person's candidacy or educational status. Must be attentive to conflict of interest concerns.

04-012-O December 10, 2004

Definitions, "Quorum" – 001

Quorum requirements in Section 001 of the by-laws apply to meetings of the Court(s) of a Pastoral Charge or Congregation.

05-001-O January 12, 2005

Interview Board – 457, 458

One committee may perform functions of both Conference Interview Board and Conference Education and Students Committee provided the committee is attentive to conflict of interest concerns.

05-002-O January 17, 2005

Basis of Union – 9.4.1, 9.6.2

Settlement Committee may settle a member of the Order of Ministry to two half-time positions in two different Pastoral Charges.

05-003-O February 2, 2005

Oversight of Ministry Personnel – 363

Since Presbytery/District has oversight of members of the Order of Ministry on its roll, it may take appropriate action in response to any concerns it has about members. Presbytery/District determines appropriate course of action.

05-004-O February 16, 2005

The Session, Duties and Powers – 153

Conference determines who may administer Sacraments, within prescribed range of Ministry Personnel. Session has oversight of administration of Sacraments, including how and when they are to be administered.

05-005-O February 17, 2005

Other Suggested Conference Standing Committees – 462

Program of Study for Candidates for Ordination – 727

Conference (not its Education and Students Committee) has power to waive requirement of one year theological studies in United Church theological school. Approval of “appropriate General Council working unit” is required, which means approval must be given by Unit Leader as an administrative matter.

05-006-O March 17, 2005

The Pastoral Relationship – 052(d), 053.1(a)

Procedures by the Presbytery – 058(a)

The Official Board, Duties and Powers – 184(g)

Pastoral Charge (not Official Board) has authority to decide to request appointment of an Interim Minister.

Official Board (not Pastoral Charge) has authority to approve Interim Ministry Committee’s recommendation for appointment of particular individual as Interim Minister, and to forward approved recommendation on to Presbytery for consideration.

05-001-R June 6, 2005

Voting on a single motion must take place at one meeting and not over a series of meetings.

In order to allow maximum participation in a vote, mail ballot may be used if authorized by the body holding the vote.

05-007-O June 16, 2005

Interim Ministry Committee – 461.1(b)

In making recommendation for designation of applicant as Interim Minister, Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee’s scope of inquiry may vary. Consideration may be given to whether applicant is in good standing or applicant is suitable for Interim Ministry. Practice varies among Conferences; either approach is correct.

05-008-O July 26, 2005

Procedures within the Pastoral Charge – 050, 050.1

Oversight of Pastoral Charges – 330

Presbytery has authority to order assessment of needs of a Mission and to determine process to be followed. Process should follow mandated process for needs assessment for Pastoral Charges, modified as necessary for Missions.

05-009-O July 26, 2005

Each Presbytery may discern best practice for holding covenanting services within that Presbytery. Any covenanting service that acknowledges and holds up all parties to the covenant is acceptable.

05-010-O September 12, 2005

Definitions, “Lay Pastoral Minister”, “Staff Associate” – 001

The Presbytery, Membership – 310(b), 314

The Conference, Membership – 410

Neither Presbytery nor Conference has discretion to retain names of retired Lay Pastoral Ministers (LPMs) or retired Staff Associates on roll.

Retired LPMs and retired Staff Associates may serve as lay Presbytery members under another category e.g. members at large.

05-011-O September 21, 2005

Basis of Union – 8.0 – 8.5

Term of General Council Commissioners extends from convening of regular meeting of General Council to convening of next regular meeting of General Council.

05-002-R October 27, 2005

Basis of Union – 8.3

The Executive of the General Council – 521, 522

Chair of each Permanent Committee is equivalent to “Chairperson or alternate of each General Council Division”. Chairs of Permanent Committees are Commissioners to General Council.

General Council Ministers are not equivalent to “General Council Secretaries”. General Council Ministers are not Commissioners to General Council.

05-012-O November 23, 2005

Basis of Union – 9.7

The Pastoral Relationship – 041

The Conference, Duties and Powers – 425

Presbytery may – but is not required – to wait until rise of Settlement Committee before filling Vacancies and other needs by appointment.

06-001-R January 19, 2006

Remuneration of Ministry Personnel – 036

Presbytery must require Pastoral Charge to allocate equivalent amounts for housing allowance to different Ministry Personnel in same Pastoral Charge.

06-002-R March 9, 2006

Organization, Duties of Moderator – 511

Moderator’s budget may include provision for reasonable costs incurred by Moderator’s partner to limit of 10% of monies allocated for travel in Moderator’s budget.

06-003-R April 8, 2006

Duties and Powers, General – 322

Presbytery Executive may consist entirely of lay persons.

“Lay persons” means lay members of the United Church i.e., members who are not ordered members.

06-004-R April 24, 2006

Basis of Union – 5.8.1, 8.6.2

Congregation may require signed membership covenant as a condition of membership if all three conditions are met:

1. Content of covenant must be consistent with 8.6.2 (no terms of admission to full membership to be prescribed other than as laid out in New Testament).
2. Covenant requirement must not exceed “a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to him”.
3. Very requirement of signing membership covenant must be consistent with terms of admission to full membership as laid out in New Testament.

06-005-R May 5, 2006

Basis of Union – 9.7

The Pastoral Relationship – 041

The Conference, Duties and Powers – 425

Presbytery may – but is not required – to wait until rise of Settlement Committee before filling Vacancies and other needs by appointment.

06-001-O May 15, 2006

Oversight of Pastoral Charges – 333, 337

Under 333 (review of state of Pastoral Charge), Presbytery may recommend that disciplinary action be taken by congregational governing body with respect to members of Congregation. Under 337 (where, in Presbytery’s opinion, functioning of Pastoral Charge is ineffectual or Pastoral Charge asks Presbytery to take action on its behalf) Presbytery may take disciplinary action directly with respect to members of Congregation.

06-006-R May 15, 2006

The Pastoral Relationship, Joint Needs Assessment Committee - 052

Ministry Personnel called or appointed in any capacity (including Interim Minister) to a Pastoral Charge is not eligible to serve on the Joint Needs Assessment Committee for that Pastoral Charge.

06-007-R May 17, 2006

Church Membership – 012, 015

A person is a “member in good standing” of a Congregation if:

1. admitted to full membership in accordance with 012 (a) and (b);
2. his/her name has not been removed by action of Congregation’s governing body under 015; and
3. not under discipline of Congregation’s governing body.

06-008-R June 26, 2006

Definitions, “Corresponding Member”, “Ex officio membership” – 001

General Matters – 004

Ministry Personnel – 123

The Official Board – 182.1(a), 183(b)

The Church Board – 201(a), 202(b)

The Church Council – 218(a), 219(b)

Other Organizational Matters – 275

The presence of the settled minister or one of the other persons named in 123 is required for quorum purposes at a meeting of the Executive of the Official Board, Church Board or Council.

The United Church of Canada Foundation / Fondation de l'Église Unie du Canada

Among the many options for making special gifts to the Church is our own Foundation. It gathered momentum during the past four years since its formal establishment. The investment program the Foundation offers to congregations and other institutions wanting to invest their own endowments has already attracted \$1.5 million in deposits, while the Foundation's own endowments have grown past \$620,000. By August 2006, The United Church of Canada Foundation will have facilitated gifts of over \$150,000 to congregations and United Church projects through the means of flow-through funds. Donors to such funds designate the beneficiaries they intend. They channel the gift through the Foundation either to preserve their anonymity or to use appreciated securities conveniently. Grants from Foundation endowments will begin in 2007 with a public call for applications early that year.

Staff Matters

Staff Leaders Group: The General Secretary is required to gather regularly the General Council Ministers and “the lead staff of the General Council working units within the United Church for the purpose of coordination and coordination.” The present pattern we are following is to do this twice a year, gathering the General Council Ministers, the Executive Ministers/Officers of the Units, the Coordinator of Native Ministries, the Speaker of the All Native Circle Conference and the Conference Executive Secretaries.

Staff Council: At the end of 2005 a Staff Council was established in Church House, with staff-designated representatives from all the units as members. The decision of the 37th General Council (Toronto, 2000) to redesign the General Council Office, and the subsequent, substantial and continuing changes in our governance structure as we moved from the division system continues to require careful attention to impacts on staff. I am very grateful to my colleagues in Church House, and their representatives, for their cooperation and collaboration as we address delicate concerns together.

Appreciations

The following staff, appointed directly by the Executive or the Sub-Executive of the General Council, have left their positions during the period 2003 to 2006. We are grateful for their significant contribution to the work of The United Church of Canada.

- Anne Miller from the position of Interim Speaker, All Native Circle Conference. Anne passed away in 2005 after a long illness
- K. Virginia Coleman from the position of Executive Secretary, the Conference of Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario
- Elsie Manley-Casimir retired from the position of Executive Minister, Financial Stewardship
- Stan McKay from the position of Interim Speaker, All Native Circle Conference.
- Brian Cornelius from the position of Interim Executive Secretary, Montreal & Ottawa Conference
- Gary Magarrell from the position of Interim Executive Minister, Financial Stewardship

- David Iverson from the position of General Council Officer, Residential Schools
- Victoria Obedkoff from the position of General Council Minister, Planning Processes
- Bonnie Greene from the position of Executive Minister, Support to Local Ministries
- Jean Ward from the position of Interim Executive Minister, Support to Local Ministries
- Christopher Ferguson from the position of Executive Minister, Justice Global & Ecumenical Relations
- John Badertscher from the position of Interim Executive Secretary, the Conference of Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario.
- Juliet Huntly from the position of Executive Minister, Resource Production & Distribution
- Peter Tebbutt from the position of Executive Officer, Information Technology Services
- Brian Thorpe from the position of Senior Advisor, Residential Schools
- Peter Scott, retiring from the position of Executive Secretary, London Conference
- Richard Choe from the position of Executive Minister, Ethnic Ministries
- Steven Chambers from the position of Executive Minister, Faith Formation & Education

The following staff have been appointed by the Executive or Sub-Executive of the General Council. We have welcomed them to their new responsibilities and are thankful for the gifts and dedication they bring to our life together.

- William Kunder into the position of Executive Secretary, Manitou Conference
- James Scott into the position of General Council Officer, Residential Schools
- Cecile Fausak into the position of Liaison Minister, Residential Schools
- Cheryl Jourdain into the position of Speaker, All Native Circle Conference
- Pierre Goldberger into the position of Executive Minister, Ministries in French
- H. Harry Oussoren into the position of Executive Minister, Support to Local Ministries
- William Steadman into the position of Executive Minister, Financial Stewardship Services
- Daniel Benson into the position of Executive Minister, Resource Production & Distribution
- Bruce Faurschou into the position of Executive Secretary, the Conference of Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario
- Rosemary Lambie into the position of Executive Secretary, Montreal & Ottawa Conference
- Vanda Orsini into the position of Executive Officer, Information Technology Services
- David Woodall into the position of Executive Secretary, London Conference

These individuals, appointed by the Executive or Sub-Executive of the General Council, have moved from one role within the General Council system to another. They have brought a wealth of experience and commitment to their new responsibilities.

- Bruce Gregersen from Inter-faith Dialogue Secretary/Area Secretary South Asia & Pacific Islands to General Council Minister, Programs for Mission & Ministry
- Janet McDonald from Manager, Elected & Appointed Member Services to General Council Minister, Planning Processes
- Omega Bula from General Council Minister, Racial Justice to Executive Minister, Justice Global & Ecumenical Relations
- Kim Uyede-Kai from Program Officer, Program & Resource Development Ethnic Ministries to General Council Minister, Racial Justice & Gender Justice

My Personal Thanks

As I mentioned above, I will be moving into retirement as my successor assumes the role of General Secretary. It has been an honour and privilege to serve the church in this capacity and I sincerely thank all those persons across the country who have generously offered wise counsel to me and personal care for me during my term of office.

In the Autumn I'll return to the North country. Manitou Conference entrusted me to the General Council Office on a temporary basis in 2002, I am grateful for colleagues and members there for their constant encouragement. My home congregation, St. Andrew's in North Bay, Ontario, remained "a well of living water" throughout this period, as did the Wednesday morning chapel community at Church House.

Did I have fun in the office? And I do mean "fun." Yes. It often puzzled people when I told them how much I loved my work. I can only say that the professional contribution of staff colleagues, the way challenges – sometimes complicated and debilitating ones – were addressed respectfully and with a dedication that reflected a profound commitment to the faith we share, sustained me over and over again. The Monday Messages I sent out (often on Wednesday, and not always regularly!) and various travels provided dozens of connections and conversations with people in every corner of the country.

I don't even know how to begin to thank my colleagues. What a privilege to share these years with Moderators Marion Pardy and Peter Short. The patience, understanding, faithful and effective service of Church House and Conference staff groups is something I will never forget. My fellow Senior Leadership Team members were always there for me, and for the rest of the church. A special thank you to my Supervision Team: Walter Sowa (Hamilton Conference), Glen Bailey (Montreal & Ottawa Conference), Jim Jackson (Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario), Louise Rogers (Alberta Conference) and earlier, Maggie McLeod of Hamilton Conference. Their expertise and willing guidance went well beyond anything I had a right to expect.

Daily I was supported, rallied, enlightened and "lightened" by the professional gifts and joyful manner of the Administrative Assistants in the Offices of the Moderator and The General Secretary: Terry Beaumont, Robin Chen, Sarah Cooper, Merjean Enriquez, Susan Fortner, Alison Jordan and always hovering there, Joan MacGillivray. They are part of a larger staff complement that is a blessing to our church.

No one has "carried" me more than Donna, my beloved partner of the past 40 years, Her wisdom and joy, and love, have added depths of meaning to these past years, and kept me linked with our wonderful – and patient – family and friends.

Respectfully submitted

Jim Sinclair

General Secretary, General Council

The General Secretary is a member of the Senior Leadership Team which also includes the Moderator, Peter Short, and General Council Ministers, Kim Uyede-Kai (Racial Justice and

Gender Justice), Ian Fraser (Resources for Mission and Ministry), Bruce Gregersen (Programs for Mission and Ministry), Carol Hancock (Regional Relations) and Janet McDonald (Planning Processes).

RAPPORT D'IMPUTABILITÉ DU SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL

Provenance: Secrétaire général du Conseil général

Introduction

Salutations au nom de Jésus-Christ dont le ministère est source de sens et de puissance pour nous et pour les autres.

Je suis un admirateur de longue date de feu Jane Jacobs, une gourou de la planification urbaine, décédée en avril dernier à l'âge de 90 ans. Par sa contribution, elle a transformé le mode de gestion des villes. Je crois que son exemple est digne de mention à cette étape de l'histoire de l'Église Unie du Canada où, comme le disait le modérateur Peter Short, nous contemplons « notre troisième génération ».

Madame Jacobs affirmait : « Je me sens vivre à une époque merveilleuse lorsque de grandes transformations se produisent. » Voilà une considération pleine de sens, particulièrement si je pense aux défis de fidélité et d'intendance qui se présenteront à notre église au cours des prochaines années. Madame Jacobs avait une grande confiance aux « gens de la base », aux citoyens qui créaient des réseaux vivants et fidèles aux besoins des communautés humaines pour leur santé et leur intégrité. Dans bien des cas, les développements étaient substantiellement différents de ce que les « experts » recommandaient. Ces derniers trouvaient les gens de la base rétrogrades, égoïstes, faisant obstruction au progrès. Jane Jacobs, quant à elle, voyait dans leur expérience une confirmation de ses meilleures intuitions et de ses observations.

Pour que notre église s'adapte à l'évolution de la vie autour de nous, une formidable collaboration des « gens de la base » est requise; pour que le dessein de Dieu se réalise, nous avons besoin de leur sens de l'histoire et de leur expérience de la foi, et aussi besoin de tous ceux et celles qui aspirent à quelque chose de mieux. Chaque membre, chaque partie du Corps du Christ devra donc dédier à cette tâche ses dons et son engagement. Si les gens ne sont pas impliqués activement dans les nécessaires discussions à faire et les actions à entreprendre autour de la prochaine génération, nous en serons tous appauvris.

Je ne doute pas que nous pouvons et allons faire ce travail. Comme je l'ai expliqué à l'Exécutif du Conseil général lors de la réunion d'avril dernier, j'ai été inspiré et fortifié par ce passage familial du livre du Deutéronome qui nous assure de la fidélité divine envers toute la création : « *Oui, ce commandement que je te donne aujourd'hui n'est pas trop difficile pour toi, il n'est pas hors d'atteinte. Il n'est pas au ciel; on dirait alors : < Qui va, pour nous, monter au ciel nous le chercher, et nous le faire entendre pour que nous le mettions en pratique? > Il n'est pas non plus au-delà des mers; on dirait alors : < Qui va, pour nous, passer outre-mer nous le chercher, et nous le faire entendre pour que nous le mettions en pratique? > Oui, la parole est toute proche de toi, elle est dans ta bouche et dans ton coeur, pour que tu la mettes en pratique. >* »

J'écris ceci au moment où je termine mes quatre années au service de l'église en qualité de Secrétaire général. Ayant dépassé l'âge statutaire de la retraite pour notre confession, j'entame avec enthousiasme et fébrilité un nouveau chapitre de participation au ministère du Christ. Un regard retrospectif sur plus de 40 années de ministère m'amène à croire que l'Église Unie du Canada se trouve maintenant à une nouvelle étape, riche en possibilités.

Depuis notre dernier Conseil général (le 38^e tenu à Wolfville, Nouvelle-Écosse en août 2003), plusieurs mesures ont été prises afin de vivre dans la fidélité ce que l'avenir nous réserve. Des références y sont faites tout au long de ce cahier des rapports. En plus, vous retrouvez des propositions de première importance, conçues pour aider l'Église dans les années à venir, et sur lesquelles vous aurez à prendre des décisions.

Développements significatifs

Entre le 38^e Conseil général (Wolfville, 2003) et le 39^e Conseil général (Thunder Bay, 2006), l'Exécutif ou son sous-Exécutif ont pris plusieurs décisions significatives. Vous les retrouverez dans le rapport d'imputabilité de l'Exécutif du Conseil général de ce cahier des rapports. En voici quelques-unes particulièrement significatives.

Règle de fin d'association Dans son histoire passée, l'Église Unie du Canada avait adopté un règlement dit « règle de fin d'association. » À cette époque, plusieurs diaconesses avaient dû abandonner leur ministère, la règle ne permettant pas aux femmes qui se mariaient de poursuivre leur emploi dans l'église. Cette pratique inéquitable fut abolie en 1957; toutefois c'est lors de la réunion de l'Exécutif du Conseil général d'avril 2006 qu'une « Célébration d'excuses » reconnut officiellement la chose. Lors de ce culte spécial (disponible pour les Synodes où la chose est pertinente), des excuses furent présentées aux personnes touchées par cette situation, et elles furent reçues en leurs noms par une représentante du groupe des diaconesses.

Gouvernement Un développement majeur des trois dernières années s'est produit dans le secteur de la direction de l'église. Des clarifications significatives sur la circulation du travail entre l'Exécutif du Conseil général et les quatre Comités permanents et leur personnel ont été faites. C'est là une des principales différences dans la structure actuelle avec l'ancien fonctionnement en divisions. Les niveaux de responsabilité et d'imputabilité ont été identifiés plus clairement. C'est un travail qui se poursuit, et nous encourageons des relations et des interactions croissantes entre les personnes élues et le personnel.

Ministères autochtones Pendant les trois dernières années un coordonateur aux ministères autochtones (Laverne Jacobs) a eu la tâche de voir à la collaboration entre tous les secteurs de l'église qui sont impliqués dans des sujets concernant les autochtones. Le fait saillant de ce labour a été la Consulation nationale sur les ministères autochtones qui s'est déroulée l'été dernier à la Laurentian University de Sudbury, Ontario. Plusieurs nouvelles initiatives en ont résulté.

Préparation du 39^e Conseil général (Thunder Bay, 2006) Sous la conduite d'une équipe du programme et de la planification, les préparatifs ont impliqué l'Exécutif lui-même de différentes façons au cours des trois dernières années. Des directives et principes de fonctionnement quant à la forme et à la nature du Conseil ont été formulées, incluant un processus minutieux de discernement afin de guider nos réflexions sur l'église au 21^e siècle. L'énergie du Comité local

de préparation, à Thunder Bay, a stimulé la confiance de l'Exécutif et tous ceux et celles impliqués dans le travail de planification.

Poursuite du travail des délégué-e-s Un plan a été élaboré afin que les délégué-e-s à ce 39^e Conseil général de 2006 connaissent bien leur responsabilité de poursuivre leur travail jusqu'à la prochaine assemblée du Conseil général à Kelowna en 2009. Ce plan comprend plusieurs mesures pour que les délégué-e-s soient informés de façon continue du travail de l'Exécutif du conseil général et qu'ils soient également impliqués dans les décisions issues de leur travail à Thunder Bay. Voilà un autre développement pour promouvoir les dons et la sagesse des anciens élus à travers toute l'église.

Planification pour faire face à une pandémie Alors que le Canada étudie comment il ferait face à la menace d'une pandémie au sein de la population, les communautés de foi ont un rôle important à jouer. Le travail se poursuit au sein de notre Unité de soutien aux ministères locaux pour rassembler les ressources de l'église, locale et autre, en cas de besoin.

Formation pastorale dans le contexte du ministère Approuvé en 2006 et offert par le Séminaire Uni de Montréal, ce programme a débuté et accueilli ses premiers étudiants en mai de la même année. Un comité d'implantation suit avec attention cette démarche et en soutient le développement; il a fourni des rapports bi-annuels au Comité de coordination de la formation du leadership ecclésial, au Comité permanent des Programmes pour la mission et le ministère ainsi qu'à l'Exécutif du Conseil général. Le recrutement pour l'année 2007 se déroule présentement.

Consistoires / Districts Au cours des derniers trois ans, le Modérateur a suscité une importante discussion dans l'Exécutif au sujet des défis qui confrontent les consistoires / districts dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions. Du rôle de régulateur en constante croissance à la lourdeur des dossiers de relations pastorales, de la perception du manque de cohérence dans l'application des politiques à l'épuisement des bénévoles, la liste en est considérable. Cet échange au sein de l'Exécutif constitue dorénavant une référence pour tous les paliers de l'église afin de pourvoir un soutien pertinent et approprié aux personnes dédiées en première ligne dans nos paroisses, ministères de contact, ainsi qu'à ceux et celles qui leur offrent un leadership pastoral. Un développement concret a été la révision du processus 363 concernant les difficultés dans la relation pastorale, ainsi que la formation de consultants pour son application.

Politique publique Dans le cadre de son témoignage public, l'Église Unie a tenu d'importantes conversations avec différents niveaux de gouvernements au cours des trois dernières années. À titre d'exemple, les quatre partis de la Chambre des communes ont soutenu activement la campagne des Perles d'espérance. En 2004, ce projet d'éducation et de défense des droits concernant le VIH/SIDA a reçu un large appui à travers l'église. Les résultats de cette intervention, grâce aux sommes d'argent rassemblées ainsi qu'aux programmes disponibles, continuent de répondre à des besoins qui perdurent.

En collaboration avec d'autres partenaires ecclésiaux, incluant KAIROS, plusieurs rencontres avec des parlementaires se sont tenues autour de questions comme la loi commune concernant le mariage, la justice économique et les enjeux du développement, les préoccupations à propos du

logement, l'accord de Kyoto, la gestion des déchets nucléaires et, plus récemment, la politique concernant l'eau.

Nos déclarations publiques ont pris diverses formes. Enracinées dans notre engagement pour la justice sociale et un témoignage prophétique, elles sont stratégiquement préparées tant dans le contenu que par le moment de la présentation. Elles suscitent des réponses variées. Par exemple, dans le cas de la déclaration de l'Église Unie du Canada au sujet du kidnapping en Iraq des membres du *Christian Peacemaker Team* l'hiver dernier, déclaration qui a incité d'autres églises à faire de même via KAIROS et le Conseil canadien des Églises, Doug Prichard, co-directeur du *CPT* a déclaré : « Les accusations initiales des kidnappeurs, à l'effet que nos gens étaient des espions, ont été catégoriquement réfutées grâce à de telles déclarations. Nous croyons que ces déclarations ont permis de garder nos gens en vie pendant tous ces mois et qu'elles ont été déterminantes pour la libération de trois d'entre eux. Elles ont aussi contribué à bâtir des ponts de compréhension et de soutien mutuel entre chrétiens et musulmans. »

Règlement de la question des pensionnats autochtones En novembre 2005 une entente provisoire a été conclue dans le dossier des pensionnats autochtones. En date de juin 2006, nous attendions que les derniers documents soient signés.

L'Église Unie a travaillé depuis longtemps pour un règlement sensible et complet du tort causé par ce système de pensionnats, y compris la reconnaissance des effets tragiques de la perte de la langue et de la culture d'origine, et la séparation des familles et des communautés. Cela signifie que notre église a recherché une résolution provenant des groupes autochtones eux-mêmes, qui inclut à la fois une compensation financière et un soutien au processus de guérison des anciens élèves, ainsi qu'une stratégie d'éducation des non-autochtones canadiens. Le règlement obtenu reflète cela.

En termes financiers, l'Église Unie a consenti à faire sa part selon une formule proportionnelle établie par les administrations ecclésiales. Nous avons un engagement d'environ 6,9 \$ millions, qui ont en bonne partie déjà été versés lors d'ententes. Un engagement financier supplémentaire pour des initiatives en vue de la guérison est à notre discrétion. Cette entente va mettre fin au recours collectif. Nous continuerons à déléguer un représentant ecclésial à toute audience lors du processus indépendant d'évaluation. L'Église Unie participera aussi aux débats de vérité et de réconciliation, aux niveaux local et national, et continuera de soutenir les initiatives de guérison issues de la base, dans les communautés.

Cette importante étape n'est que le tout premier pas sur une longue route. Les aspects légaux de cette triste histoire se résorbent, nous pouvons maintenant nous concentrer sur la responsabilité morale de l'église à favoriser la guérison dans la communauté nationale, incluant les survivants, et à encourager toute l'église à s'efforcer de développer des « relations justes » pour l'avenir. Au printemps, dans une émouvante lettre adressée au modérateur au sujet des excuses faites par l'Église Unie en 1986 aux peuples autochtones, Verna McKay a exprimé sa préoccupation de ce que « beaucoup de ce qui s'est passé n'a pas filtré à la base de notre église, autochtone ou non-autochtone. » Elle soulève la question qui en découle : « Comment pouvons-nous inciter les paroisses de l'Église Unie de tout le pays à mettre cela au programme afin que nous devenions

une église en route vers la réconciliation et les relations justes? » Vivre dans la conscience de cette question sera un enjeu crucial pour notre prochaine génération.

Initiative de syndicalisation Pendant les dernières années un groupe de cinq pasteurs, membres de l'Église Unie du Canada, a entamé une campagne de syndicalisation entre les mois de novembre 2004 et novembre 2005. Ce travail, amorcé avec les Travailleurs unis de l'automobile, a attiré une attention considérable de la part des médias. Plus tard, les organisateurs ont déclaré ne pas avoir obtenu en fin d'année le nombre requis pour demander au Conseil des relations de travail la tenue d'un vote. Par la suite, ce groupe a repris une campagne semblable. Dans notre réponse aux pasteurs de l'église, j'ai partagé mon point de vue : compte tenu de notre forme actuelle de gouvernement où les personnes qui occupent des ministères rémunérés imputables composent 50% des membres votants des Consistoires, des Synodes et du Conseil général, un syndicat ne convient pas à notre contexte. De plus, bien avant cette tentative de syndicalisation, des efforts ont été faits pour répondre aux enjeux que constituent le salaire pastoral, les bénéfiques, la santé globale, incluant une étude sur des modèles de rémunération ainsi qu'une étude sur l'isolement. Ces études seront considérées par ce Conseil général pour une prise de décision.

Programmes pour la mission et le ministère

Bien des développements sont survenus dans les programmes depuis le dernier Conseil général. Parmi les principaux sont :

Les Perles d'espérance: Veuillez vous référer à la section précédente, Politique publique, au sujet de ce ministère de l'église sur la question du VIH/SIDA.

Des ressources sur notre identité: Ce Conseil général va recevoir un rapport complet au sujet de l'initiative *Emerging Spirit* qui vise à promouvoir le caractère distinctif de l'Église Unie du Canada. S'ajoutent à cela des séries de dépliants inédits et accrocheurs qui esquissent notre identité comme église, et qui sont déjà disponibles.

More Voices: Ce projet, conjoint avec Wood Lake Press, d'un complément musical a suscité beaucoup d'intérêt et d'enthousiasme lors de la parution d'un « cahier d'échantillons » le printemps dernier. Le livre même devrait être disponible au début de 2007. Un disque compact d'hymnes extraits du recueil et interprétés par des chorales de tout le Canada sera disponible. En 2008, une ressource pour la projection des hymnes sera aussi disponible.

Mariage de même sexe: Selon les décisions du Conseil général antérieur à Wolfville (2006) des représentations ont été faites auprès du gouvernement. En plus de cela, un travail d'éducation dans les paroisses et d'application des politiques sur ce sujet a demandé beaucoup de soutien de la part des travailleurs dans le programme.

Déclaration de foi: À la demande des Conseils généraux précédant, un travail considérable de la part de douzaine de paroisses et de milliers de membres a été accompli. Notre étude, au Conseil de cet été, du « Chant de la foi » est l'aboutissement de cette conversation tenue à la grandeur de l'église.

Ressources pour la mission et le ministère

Les archives Afin de voir aux archives nationales, un groupe de gestion a été constitué; en plus de l'église, il offre aussi ses services à la Victoria University de Toronto, ainsi qu'aux Synodes du centre du pays. Une entente provisoire, pour payer une dette accumulée au cours des années passées, a été conclue avec l'université. Une formule révisée de participation aux dépenses a été mise en place le 1er avril 2006. Cela aura des retombées pour les Synodes qui utilisent les services du site Victoria. Le travail en ce qui concerne les besoins d'espace se poursuit. En plus de ce site, les autres lieux d'archives de l'église à travers le pays apportent aussi leur lot de problèmes. Le Réseau des archives termine présentement ses recommandations pour le prochain Exécutif du Conseil général en ce qui concerne son travail.

Politique de réserve Le comité permanent sur les finances a guidé l'Exécutif à travers un nouveau protocole plus unifié concernant la politique d'utilisation des réserves de l'Église Unie.

Aménagement futur des bureaux du Conseil général: Le bail des bureaux actuels du Conseil général va jusqu'en 2015. Il faudra que, bien avant l'échéance, s'amorce une planification à propos du futur aménagement. Une partie de ce processus sera de clarifier le rôle même des bureaux du Conseil général, et donc l'ampleur du personnel requis. Un groupe de travail sera mis sur pied d'ici la fin de l'année pour encadrer ce processus.

Relations régionales

Au moment où des changements démographiques se produisent dans nos Synodes, parfois avec des conséquences majeures, des questions importantes ont été soulevées, à propos du niveau de personnel nécessaire pour soutenir le ministère de Jésus-Christ avec fidélité et efficacité dans ces instances. Dans plusieurs Synodes, une baisse substantielle des contributions à la base, jumelée au manque « d'élasticité » des subventions d'opération en provenance du Conseil général, occasionnent de sérieuses préoccupations.

Le montant de subvention aux Synodes est déterminé dans notre budget approuvé par l'Exécutif du Conseil général : une « tarte » d'environ 4,3\$ millions à partager en 2006. L'allocation des montants se fait toujours selon une formule de répartition qui date de plusieurs années. Il n'y a toutefois aucune trace écrite, aucune archive, des principes qui fondent une telle formule. Au cours des dernières années, l'Exécutif du Conseil général a ajusté le montant global de subventions pour tenir compte de la hausse du coût de la vie et des salaires.

Pour toutes ces raisons, l'Exécutif a mis sur pied le Groupe de travail du Conseil général sur les subventions aux Synodes, dont les lignes directrices ont déjà été approuvées et dont les membres seront choisis lors de la séance de l'Exécutif du mois de novembre 2006. En attendant, un projet de principes opérationnels est en rédaction et sera étudié aussi lors de cette même séance de l'Exécutif. Ces principes serviront dans un premier temps de guide pour déterminer les subventions aux Synodes dans le budget 2008; par la suite la politique d'octroi révisée sera mise en application.

Justice raciale / Justice pour les femmes et les hommes

Le 37^e Conseil général 2000 a adopté une politique contre le racisme dont le préambule identifie quatre zones à travailler pour que l'église devienne une institution contre le racisme : « participer pleinement, se structurer pour la diversité, agir avec justice, parler au monde. » Le poste de Ministre du Conseil général – Justice raciale, fut créé pour guider l'église vers plus de justice en ce domaine. Depuis le 38^e Conseil général 2003, le poste a connu quelques changements : Omega Bula, la première Ministre du Conseil général – Justice raciale occupe maintenant la fonction de Ministre exécutif – Justice, relations mondiales et œcuméniques. Par la suite, l'Exécutif du Conseil général a approuvé l'ajout du volet Justice pour les femmes et les hommes, et Wenh-In Ng a occupé par interim le poste de Ministre du Conseil général – Justice raciale et Justice pour les femmes et les hommes. Au mois de décembre 2005, Kim Uyede-Kai a été nommée à cette position remaniée et s'est jointe à l'équipe de direction principale.

Le travail sur la justice raciale s'est concentré sur l'identification et la construction de réseaux et ressources dont l'église et ses leaders ont besoin pour œuvrer de manière concrète dans les quatre zones de la politique contre le racisme. En tant que membre du Réseau œcuménique canadien contre le racisme, l'Église Unie a participé à la conception d'un projet pilote de culte pour la semaine de la justice raciale. Une révision du protocole d'emploi de la politique d'équité d'emploi de l'Église Unie de 1994 a été faite, afin de s'assurer que les politiques et les pratiques de l'Église Unie dans ce domaine ne constituaient pas de barrières, structurelles ou autres. Le travail s'effectue en consultation avec les bureaux du Conseil général et des Synodes. Un livret portant sur le harcèlement racial et la constitution d'un milieu de travail sain a été conçu et distribué au personnel des bureaux du Conseil général et des Synodes. Des comités permanents, des comités dans les différentes unités ainsi que des regroupements de personnel participent à des sessions d'éducation pour contrer le racisme. Une des priorités centrales est le soutien respectueux et approprié à la parole et au leadership autochtone.

L'orientation et les priorités de travail sur la justice pour les femmes et les hommes sont en développement, soutenu par un nouveau comité consultatif qui porte la « vision ».

Planification et processus

Nominations: Le travail accompli par le comité de services aux membres et les protocoles de nomination ont été une belle réalisation au cours des trois dernières années. La justesse de ce processus a été confirmée par plusieurs secteurs de l'église, et certains Synodes envisagent d'aller dans la même direction pour leur travail.

Planification stratégique: Compte tenu de l'absence d'objectifs principaux du Conseil général (ce que l'assemblée de Thunder Bay va aider à corriger), en consultation avec le comité permanent de gouvernement, du budget et des processus de planification, ainsi qu'avec l'Exécutif du Conseil général, je me suis concentré sur la gestion sur les objectifs suivants : (1) des initiatives pour renforcer les paroisses dans la réalisation de leur rôle; (2) des initiatives pour soutenir les personnes qui servent comme leaders dans le ministère; (3) des mesures pour développer un financement plus adéquat pour le travail de l'église; (4) diffuser dans nos communications l'identité de l'Église Unie et (5) des efforts pour consolider notre travail dans les domaines de la justice raciale et la justice pour les femmes et les hommes. À la suite du 39^e

Conseil général (Thunder Bay, 2006) l'Exécutif du Conseil général amorcera un processus de planification afin d'en arriver à un plan stratégique pour l'Église Unie au plus tard en Juin 2007.

Renvois

Plusieurs questions susceptibles d'altérer les Principes d'union ont été présentées au 38^e Conseil général (Wolfville, 2003). Cette assemblée a donc autorisé des renvois sur ces questions afin de sonder la volonté de l'église. Ces renvois ont été diffusés et les résultats à remettre au 39^e Conseil général (Thunder Bay, 2006) sont les suivants :

Nous avons reçu des réponses de 82 Consistoires.

Renvoi # 1 – Fréquence des assemblées du Synode. L'objectif était de clarifier la volonté de l'église d'accepter que les Synodes puissent essayer des formules alternatives aux assemblées annuelles ou bi-annuelles...

Pour – 65

Contre – 17

Renvoi # 2 – Catégoriser les renvois. Les catégories suggérées étaient : « # 1. changements éditoriaux ou de mots; # 2. changements significatifs qui n'altèrent pas notre confession; # 3. changements majeurs qui altèrent notre identité comme confession. » La question posée était « Acceptez-vous que le Conseil général ne transmette les renvois aux charges pastorales uniquement lorsque ceux-ci concernent la catégorie # 3 ? »

Pour – 67

Contre – 15

Renvoi # 3 – Composition du comité de placement. La question était :

« Acceptez-vous que le Consistoire délègue au comité de placement un (1) membre du personnel ministériel plutôt qu'un (1) membre pasteur ou diacre, en plus d'un membre laïc? »

Pour – 41

Contre – 40 (1 n/a)

Renvoi # 4 – Nombres de représentants au Consistoire. La question était :

« Acceptez-vous que chaque paroisse ait droit à une représentation au Consistoire sur la base de un-e (1) délégué-e par cent (100) membres résidants plutôt que la formule actuelle d'un-e (1) délégué-e par deux cent cinquante (250) membres résidants? »

Pour – 56

Contre – 26

Renvoi # 5 – Références aux Divisions du Conseil général. Le 37^e Conseil général (Toronto 2000) a approuvé la réorganisation des bureaux du Conseil général, incluant la structure de gouvernement ce qui a fait disparaître les Divisions du Conseil général. La question était « Acceptez-vous d'amender les Principes d'union pour refléter la politique adoptée par le 37^e Conseil général? »

Pour – 79

Contre – 3

Décisions

Une des responsabilités du secrétaire général est de « rendre des décisions sur des questions de juridiction ou d'interprétation en ce qui a trait aux politiques, procédures et pratiques de l'Église Unie. » Pendant les trois dernières années, les décisions suivantes ont été rendues.

La Fondation de l'Église Unie du Canada / The United Church of Canada Foundation

Parmi les nombreuses options pour faire des dons spéciaux à l'église, notre propre Fondation a pris de l'essor depuis sa constitution il y a quatre ans. Le programme d'investissement, que la Fondation propose aux paroisses et autres institutions qui souhaitent y investir leurs propres dotations, a généré à ce jour 1,5\$ million en dépôt, alors que la dotation en propre de la Fondation s'élève maintenant à plus de 620 000\$. Au mois d'août 2006, la Fondation de l'Église Unie du Canada aura permis des dons de plus de 150 000\$ à des paroisses et d'autres projets de l'Église Unie par l'intermédiaire d'un fonds de transfert. Les donateurs, dans ce fonds, désignent leurs bénéficiaires, puis font transiter leur don via la Fondation pour préserver leur anonymat ou utiliser ainsi de manière commode des montants déjà placés. Des bourses en provenance des dotations de la Fondation seront disponibles en 2007, l'annonce pour les demandes en sera faite en début d'année.

À propos du personnel

Groupe des leaders du personnel: Il est de la responsabilité du secrétaire général de réunir régulièrement les Ministres du Conseil général et les directeurs majeurs des unités de travail du Conseil général de l'Église Unie pour assurer la coordination. Actuellement, il y a deux rencontres par année qui rassemblent les Ministres du Conseil général, les Ministres exécutifs / responsables d'unités, le coordonnateur des ministères autochtones, le porte-parole du Synode autochtone et les secrétaires exécutifs des Synodes.

Conseil du personnel: À la fin de 2005, un conseil du personnel des bureaux de l'église a été constitué de membres désignés par le personnel même de toutes les unités. La décision du 37^e Conseil général (Toronto, 2000) de redéfinir les bureaux du Conseil général, avec les changements majeurs dans le mode de gouvernement que cela implique dans la transition du système des divisions, continue d'exiger une grande vigilance quant à l'impact sur le personnel. Je suis très reconnaissant à tous mes collègues des bureaux de l'Église Unie, ainsi qu'à leurs représentants-es, pour leur coopération et leur collaboration alors qu'ensemble nous travaillons sur des questions souvent délicates.

Appréciations

Les membres du personnel suivants, nommés par l'Exécutif du Conseil général ou le sous-Exécutif, ont quitté leur poste pendant la période 2003 à 2006. Nous sommes reconnaissants de leur contribution significative au travail de l'Église Unie du Canada.

- Anne Miller, du poste de secrétaire exécutif par interim du Synode autochtone. Anne s'est éteinte en 2005 suite à une longue maladie;
- K. Virginia Coleman, du poste de secrétaire exécutif, Synode du Manitoba & du nord-ouest de l'Ontario;
- Elsie Manley-Casimir a pris sa retraite du poste de ministre exécutif, Finance et Intendance;
- Stan MacKay, du poste de secrétaire exécutif par interim, Synode autochtone;
- Brian Cornelius, du poste de secrétaire exécutif par interim, Synode Montréal & Ottawa;

- Gary Magarrell, du poste de ministre exécutif par interim, Finance et Intendance;
- David Iverson, du poste de responsable du dossier des pensionats autochtones du Conseil général;
- Victoria Obedkoff, du poste de ministre du Conseil général, Planification;
- Bonnie Greene, du poste de ministre exécutif, Soutien aux ministères locaux;
- Jean Ward, du poste de ministre exécutif par interim, Soutien aux ministères locaux;
- Christopher Ferguson, du poste de ministre exécutif, Justice, relations mondiales et œcuméniques;
- John Badertscher, du poste de secrétaire exécutif par interim, Synode du Manitoba & du nord-ouest de l'Ontario;
- Juliet Huntly, du poste de ministre exécutif, Production et distribution de ressources;
- Peter Tebbutt, du poste d'officier exécutif, Services techniques de l'information;
- Brian Thorpe, du poste de consultant senior, les pensionats autochtones;
- Peter Scott, a pris sa retraite du poste de secrétaire exécutif, London Conference;
- Richard Choe, du poste de ministre exécutif, Ministères ethniques;
- Steven Chambers, du poste de ministre exécutif, Foi, formation et éducation.

Les membres du personnel suivants ont été nommés par l'Exécutif du conseil général ou son sous-Exécutif. Nous les avons accueillis dans leurs nouvelles fonctions et nous sommes reconnaissants pour leurs dons et la consécration qu'ils apportent à notre vie commune.

- William Kunder, au poste de secrétaire exécutif, Synode Manitou;
- James Scott, au poste de responsable du dossier des pensionats autochtones du Conseil général;
- Cecile Fausak, au poste de responsable des liaisons pour le dossier des pensionats autochtones;
- Cheryl Jourdain, au poste de porte-parole, Synode autochtone;
- Pierre Goldberger, au poste de ministre exécutif, Ministères en français;
- Harry Oussoren, au poste de ministre exécutif, Soutien aux ministères locaux;
- William Steadman, au poste de ministre exécutif, Services des finances et de l'intendance;
- Daniel Benson, au poste de ministre exécutif, Production & distribution de ressources;
- Bruce Faurschou, au poste de secrétaire exécutif, Synode du Manitoba & du nord-ouest de l'Ontario;
- Rosemary Lambie, au poste de secrétaire exécutif, Synode Montréal & Ottawa;
- Vanda Orsini, au poste de responsable exécutif, Services techniques de l'information;
- David Woodall, au poste de secrétaire exécutif, Synode de London.

Les personnes suivantes, nommées par l'Exécutif du conseil général ou son sous-Exécutif, ont changé de fonction à l'intérieur de la structure du Conseil général. Elles apportent une richesse d'expérience et d'engagement dans leurs nouvelles responsabilités.

- Bruce Gregersen, du poste de secrétaire au dialogue inter-religieux / secteur du sud asiatique et des îles du Pacifique, au poste de ministre du Conseil général, Programmes pour la mission et le ministère;
- Janet McDonald, du poste de directeur, Service aux membres élus et nommés au poste de ministre du Conseil général, Planification;
- Omega Bula, du poste de ministre du Conseil général, Justice raciale, au poste de ministre exécutif, Justice, relations mondiales et œcuméniques;

- Kim Uyede-Kai, du poste de responsable des programmes, Programmes et développement des ressources des ministères ethniques, au poste de ministre du Conseil général, Justice raciale et justice pour les femmes et les hommes.

Mes remerciements personnels

Comme je l'ai mentionné plus haut, je vais débiter la retraite au moment où mon successeur assumera la fonction de secrétaire général. Ce fut un honneur et un privilège de servir l'église en cette fonction et je remercie sincèrement tous ces gens à travers le pays qui m'ont généreusement prodigué de sages conseils et ont pris soin de moi pendant la durée de mon mandat.

À l'automne, je retournerai dans le nord du pays. Le Synode Manitou m'avait confié au bureau du Conseil général de façon temporaire en 2002, et je suis reconnaissant envers mes collègues et les membres du Conseil général pour leur encouragement constant. Ma famille paroissiale, St. Andrew's de North Bay, Ontario, est demeurée « un puits d'eau vive » pendant toute cette période, comme le fut également la communauté du mercredi matin à la chapelle des bureaux de l'Église Unie.

Ai-je eu du plaisir dans cette fonction? Et je veux vraiment parler de plaisir. Oui. J'ai souvent étonné les gens quand je leur disais combien j'aimais mon travail. Je peux seulement dire que l'apport professionnel de mes collègues du personnel, la façon dont les défis – souvent compliqués et aliénants – étaient abordés avec respect et une profonde consécration, inspirés d'un engagement de foi mutuellement partagé, m'ont soutenu encore et encore. Mes messages du lundi (envoyés souvent le mercredi, et pas très régulièrement!) et les divers voyages m'ont fourni des douzaines d'occasions de contact et de conversation avec des gens de tous les coins du pays.

Je ne sais même pas par où commencer dans mes remerciements à mes collègues. Quel privilège d'avoir partagé ces années avec les modérateurs Marion Pardy et Peter Short. La patience, la compréhension, le service fidèle et efficace du personnel des bureaux de l'Église Unie et des Synodes est quelque chose que je n'oublierai jamais. Les autres membres de l'équipe de direction supérieure étaient toujours là pour moi, et pour le reste de l'église. Un remerciement particulier à mon équipe de supervision, Walter Sowa (Synode Hamilton), Glen Bailey (Synode Montréal & Ottawa), Jim Jackson (Synode du Manitoba and nord-ouest de l'Ontario), Louise Rogers (Synode de l'Alberta), et au début, Maggie McLeod du Synode de London. Leur compétence et leur direction bienveillante furent au-delà de tout ce que je pouvais être en droit d'attendre.

Chaque jour j'ai été soutenu, intégré, éclairé et illuminé par les dons professionnels et les manières joyeuses des assistants administratifs du bureau du modérateur et du secrétaire général : Terry Beaumont, Robin Chen, Sarah Cooper, Susan Fortner, Merjean Enriquez, Alison Jordan et, planant toujours au-dessus d'eux, Joan MacGillivray. Ils font parti d'une vaste équipe de personnel qui est une bénédiction pour notre église.

Personne ne m'a « porté » davantage que Donna, ma bien-aimée partenaire des 40 années passées. Sa sagesse et sa joie et son amour ont ajouté profondeur et sens à ces dernières années, et m'ont gardé connecté avec notre famille et nos ami-e-s, qui ont été formidables – et patients !

Respectueusement présenté,

Jim Sinclair
Secrétaire général, Conseil général

Le secrétaire général est un membre de l'équipe de direction supérieure qui comprend aussi le modérateur, Peter Short, et les ministres du Conseil général, Kim Uyede-Kai (Justice raciale et justice pour les femmes et les hommes), Ian Fraser (Ressources pour la mission et le ministère), Bruce Gregersen (Programmes pour la mission et le ministère), Carol Hancock (Relations régionales) et Janet MacDonald (Planification).

EXECUTIVE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)

Source: Executive of the General Council

The Statistics

During the triennium, 67 members of the Executive of the General Council – 43 voting members and 24 corresponding members – met face to face six times (five times in Toronto, once in Vancouver, BC) for 26 days. In addition, the thirteen members of the Sub-Executive of the General Council met by conference call twenty six times.

First WHO ...

Who is the Executive of the General Council?

There shall be an Executive of the General Council, which shall be composed as nearly as possible of an equal number of members of the Order of Ministry and lay members. The membership shall consist of 43 voting members:

- the Moderator, the immediate Past Moderator, and the General Secretary of the General Council;
- twenty-six (26) members, two (2) elected by each Conference, one (1) of whom shall be a lay person, to be elected for two (2) terms;
- the Chairpersons of each of the Permanent Committees of the Executive of the General Council;
- four (4) members at large, two (2) of whom are to be youth and young adult representatives, to be elected for two (2) terms;
- two (2) persons, one (1) of whom shall be a lay person, from the francophone constituency;
- two (2) persons, one (1) of whom shall be a lay person, from the ethnic ministries constituency;
- a representative to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches when a member of the United Church; and
- the Chairperson of the General Council Business Committee.

The God given gifts and skills of the following people have graced the Executive during this triennium:

Ted Alexander	Donald E. Koots	Allan C. Sinclair
Jim Balfour	Carmen Lansdowne	James H. Sinclair
Marion Best	Heather Elaine Leffler	Michelle Ann Slater
Lynn Boothroyd	Jennifer Llewellyn	Norma Soble
James Blanchard	Stephen J. Mabee	Walter Sowa
Marion Carr	Maggie McLeod	Paul Stott
Anne-Marie Carmoy,	Mary-Beth Moriarity	Kathy Suteau
Cynthia Joan Desilets	Tony Newell	George Masazo Takashima
Diane Dwarka	A. Marion Pardy	Martha Joan ter Kuile
Dwayne Dornan	Scott Monroe Parsons	Jordan Thompson
Douglas Einarson	Lorna Pawis	Susan Tough
Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier	Barbara Rafuse	Stéphane Vermette
David W. Giuliano	Paul N. Reed	Kent Edward Ward
Leah Halliday	Louise Rogers	Donald D. Wachenschwanz
Dorothy Hemingway	Charles Scott	Wanda West
Fannie Hudson	Allan Seal	Tarance Whiteye
Linsell A. Hurd	Dong-Chun Seo	Christine Williams
James Jackson	Peter B. Short	David J. Woodall

There are 24 corresponding members of the Executive of the General Council:

- the Chairperson of the General Council Committee on Theology and Faith;
- the Chairperson of the General Council Agenda and Planning Committee;
- an elected officer of the National United Church Women;
- the General Council Ministers;
- the Executive Secretaries of the Conferences and the Speaker of the All Native Circle Conference;
- the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of *The United Church Observer*;
- the Chief Archivist; and
- a global partner representative.
- Other persons may at any time be invited to be Corresponding Members of the Executive of the General Council when their expertise, wisdom, and input are required or desired by the Executive of the General Council.

The God given gifts and skills of the following people have faithfully supported the Executive during this triennium:

David W. Allen	Ian Fraser	Lynn I. Maki
John Badertscher	Bruce G. Faurschou	Reta Manuel
William G. Bartlett	Catherine H. Gaw	Janet McDonald
Michael Bourgeois	Bruce E. Gregersen	Frederick W. Monteith
Debra Anne Bowman	Carol L. Hancock	Wenh-In Ng
Omega Bula	G. Douglas Goodwin	Vicky Obedkoff
Wendy Bulloch	William A. Kunder	Lois O'Neill
G. Robert Campbell	Cheryl Jourdain	W. Peter Scott
Ginny Coleman	Rosemary Lambie	Kim Uyede-Kai
Brian Cornelius	Sharon P. Larade	

Then WHAT ... they met and they met and they met ...**Six Meetings of the Executive of the General Council**

October 30 to November 3, 2003
 April 23 to 26, 2004
 October 29 to November 1, 2004
 April 21 to 25, 2005 (Vancouver, BC)
 October 28 to 31, 2005
 April 28 to May 1, 2006

Twenty Six Meetings of the Sub-Executive of the General Council

2003	2004	2005	2006
October 15	February 12	June 7	January 9
November 5	April 7	July 22	January 31
December 4	June 24	September 1	February 28
December 15	July 21	September 15	April 13
	August 26	November 21	May 8
	October 12	November 29	May 23
	November 12		June 5
	December 17		June 28

Much work was done by many people on behalf of the wider church. As we lived into the new governance structure, the four Permanent Committees worked on behalf of the Executive and Sub-Executive. It is with deep gratitude to the members of these committees who studied, imagined, deliberated and recommended policies and practices to the Executive of the General Council. Their work is evident in the Digest of Minutes – October 2003 to June 2006.

Over 500 people serving on about 100 committees and task groups worked on behalf of the General Council on specific and ongoing tasks. The Nominations Committee used practices of spiritual discernment to match the expressions of interest from people across Canada with the mandates of these committees and task groups. We are grateful for the stewardship of time and talent of these servants of the church.

Three major projects initiated by the Executive of the General Council bridge this and the next triennium. The evaluation of the Redesign of the General Council office and its governance is underway. An important task group on Funding the work of the Church has begun its work. This will be a foundation to the development of a strategic plan that will build on the purpose established by this General Council.

Mindful of the powers and duties of the Executive and Sub-Executive, the Digest of Minutes – October 2003 to June 2006 contains the actions from these 32 meetings. In addition, the Executive of the General Council brings 17 proposals to this General Council for its consideration. This work represents the passion and commitment of many faithful people to discern what God is calling the church to do and be. It is a blessing that members of the church offer themselves for this ministry of service on behalf the church in our local community, our Canada and the world. Thanks be to God.

**DIGEST OF MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND THE SUB-EXECUTIVE OF THE
GENERAL COUNCIL (Commons)**

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

October 15, 2003, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council established the borrowing limit for the Windsor Elms, United Church Senior Citizens' Home, located in Windsor, Nova Scotia, at \$300,000, said amount to be used for the financing of capital projects required in the home.

October 30–November 3, 2003, Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council began this first meeting of the triennium with a formation day to help members get to know one another with theological reflection, worship, and education. Throughout the meeting, the Executive took time for reflection, and also took time to determine how Executive members can keep themselves informed about life in the Conferences.

Presentations to the Executive of the General Council included exploring and understanding the finances of the United Church and how staff are organized in the General Council Office and regionally to carry out the mission of the church.

The Executive of the General Council approved the minutes of the Sub-Executive for July 29, 2003, and August 1, 2003. The Executive also received for information the minutes of the Sub-Executive for April 25–28, 2003; May 13, 2003; May 30, 2003; June 23, 2003; and October 15, 2003.

The following correspondence was received for information by the Executive: the resignation of the Interim General Council Office Personnel Minister, thanks and appreciation from The United Church of Canada Foundation, and the annual meeting of the Archives network from the Committee on Archives and History.

The Executive of the General Council heard accountability reports from the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry, the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes, and the Permanent Committee on Finance.

A covenanting service took place with the Executive of the General Council, Conference Executive Secretaries Fred Monteith and Bill Bartlett, and General Council Ministers Omega Bula, Ian Fraser, Bruce Gregersen, Carol Hancock, and Vicki Obedkoff.

The Executive of the General Council appointed Steve McDougall as Speaker of the All Native Circle Conference. Nominations to The United Church Observer Board of Directors were approved.

The Executive of the General Council expressed appreciation to departing staff, including Elsie Manley-Casimir and Bob Johnstone.

The report of the Residential Schools Steering Committee was presented to the Executive. The report included a reflection on the road to healing and the legacy of the Residential Schools.

The Executive heard the names of those who left bequests and other memorial gifts to the United Church.

The Executive heard a report from the Pension Administration Task Group. The Executive also heard and received the report entitled “Review of the Role of the Executive of the General Council as Administrator of the Pension Plan” and endorsed the four principles of the report, as follows:

- The administrator continues to be the Executive of the General Council.
- The role of the Executive of the General Council will focus on leadership and oversight, with technical details left to an expert delegate.
- The Executive of the General Council shall receive education with respect to issues and topics required for it to approve high-level and broad philosophies and objectives, and to discharge its oversight responsibilities.
- The operational aspects of the plan will be delegated to an expert body—a Pension Committee (the “committee”) that will replace the current Board of Trustees.

The Executive of the General Council heard and received the following reports with thanks and appreciation:

- Accountability Report of the Pension Trustees
- The Report on the World Council of Churches August–September 2003
- General Secretary’s Accountability Report and Senior Leadership Team
- Moderator’s Accountability Report and the Moderator’s Advisory Committee Report
- Report of the Implementation Team of the Women of The United Church of Canada
- The Weaving Project

An accountability report to General Council from the Executive of the General Council will be presented through the Moderator.

The resignation of Doug Einarson from the Board of Trustees of the Pension Plan was received with thanks.

The Executive of the General Council approved the Group Insurance Plan design changes for pensioners and active employees and Group Insurance Plan premium changes.

The following correspondence was received with referrals: Saskatchewan Conference (two), John Burton, The United Church of Canada Foundation, London Conference, Fort Massey United Church, Worship Consultation, Bob Wallace, Victoria University, and Betsy Anderson.

The Executive of the General Council approved a maximum of \$100,000 to be used in grants and a maximum of \$150,000 to be used to test the continuing education funding model. This will include funding for learning communities, with a second year of testing in 2005, an interim report in April 2005, and a final report in April 2006.

The Executive of the General Council delegated authority regarding relationships to educational institutions to the Faith Formation and Education Unit Committee, to act in accordance with established procedures. The Executive specified that final actions regarding appointments must be received by the Executive of the General Council, or its Sub-Executive, for information.

The Executive of the General Council asked the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes to propose policies relating to the delegation of authority by the Executive.

The Executive of the General Council made appointments of chairpersons and members to the following committees:

- Executive of the General Council Business Committee (chairperson)
- 39th General Council Planning Committee (chairperson)
- Permanent Committee on Ministry Employment and Personnel Services (member)
- Theology and Faith Committee (members)
- Racial Justice Advisory Group (members)

The Executive directed that the current Interim Sub-Executive continue its mandate until the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes completes its work on the role of the Sub-Executive, and is able to report to the Executive.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the report on unit-wide committees, advisory groups, and task groups.

The Executive of the General Council directed the General Secretary, General Council to ensure a broader base of participation in the working group addressing emergency protocols, and asked the Senior Leadership Team to continue to investigate the appropriate manner to fulfill the function of the Interim General Council Office Personnel Minister, with a report to the April 2004 meeting.

Our global partner, Dr. Molefe Tsele, gave his insights, including the difference that the United Church and Canada can make in becoming a voice of Christianity in North America.

The Executive of the General Council adopted, on an interim basis, the terms of reference of “a new system for the recruitment, selection, support, and recognition of elected and appointed members,” with some exceptions. The Executive asked the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes to review the nomination procedure and report back to the April 2006 meeting of the Executive.

The Executive of the General Council took no action on Resolutions 49, 57, 59, 68, and 76 of business referred from the 38th General Council 2003.

The Executive of the General Council approved changes to the following sections of The Manual: Sections 001, 022 (b) i; 026 (e) i; 047; 112; 343 (j) (k); 352 (a); 353; 427 (b) (c) (d); 465.1 (a); 505; 513 (e); 522 (e); and 524 (a) (d) (p). New sections were added as follows: 722.1, 099 and 722.1. Sections 230–242 were deleted and replaced with a new Section 242.

The Executive also approved the addition of the following:

- a definition of “designated lay minister” in Section 001 of the bylaws
- changes related to the change of the title to Women’s Ministries Network within pastoral charge or congregation
- the addition of the term “leading elders” to wherever “president of Conference” is found

The Executive approved the amendment of bylaw 001 (Definitions). A remit was issued regarding Section 6.2.5 of the Basis of Union.

The Executive of the General Council approved the audited financial statements for 2002 of The United Church of Canada and received the audited financial statements for the Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada. The Executive approved the reappointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as auditors for the accounts of the United Church and Pension Plan for 2003.

The Executive of the General Council affirmed and adopted the six principles from the document “Building toward Right Relations” to guide the United Church in its work to repair the harm done by the Residential Schools system, in building right relations with Aboriginal people, and in any negotiations with government with respect to resolving the legacy of Indian Residential Schools.

The Executive of the General Council received the document as a working document for information and received the Justice and Reconciliation Fund report, noting the lack of Aboriginal representation, and flagging concerns for future operations.

The Executive of the General Council authorized letters to the Government of Canada supporting the renewal of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and urging it to act on the recommendation calling for a public inquiry on Residential Schools.

The Executive of the General Council has asked the Residential Schools Steering Committee to establish a task group in consultation with the All Native Circle Conference, British Columbia Native Ministries, and Aboriginal communities not represented to bring a proposal for the process of truth telling to the April 2004 Executive meeting.

The Executive of the General Council endorsed the action taken by the Residential Schools Steering Committee on the Baxter Class Action in September 2003. The Executive directed that any further legal decisions and actions be guided by the six principles in the “Building toward Right Relations” document, and that any subsequent modification of the legal position only occur when in the interests of the survivors of Residential Schools, and with the approval of the Executive or Sub-Executive of the General Council. The Residential Schools Steering Committee was asked to develop a plan and strategy for communicating this action.

The Executive of the General Council made the following provisions:

- That the financing provision for the three-court structure be returned to The United Church of Canada Reserve Fund

- That the Permanent Committee on Finance review the necessity of continuing the freeze on the United Church Reserve Fund
- That the Compensation Model Project be funded from the United Church Reserve Fund at \$150,000 for 2004, 2005, and 2006
- That \$250,000 from the United Church Reserve Fund be released to finance the 2004 budget request for the Learning Fund

The Executive of the General Council adopted the 2004 budget and directed the Permanent Committee on Finance to complete the review of all trust and endowment funds, including the Morrison Bequest in particular, and to report back with recommended policy changes to the April 2004 meeting of the Executive.

The Executive of the General Council referred Petitions 121 and 123 to the 39th General Council 2006 for clarification, with background information provided by the Permanent Committee on Ministry Employment and Personnel Services.

The General Secretary, General Council ruled that the existing plan involving a joint venture with Wood Lake Books to produce a supplement to Voices United may proceed.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the signing power and seal document authorization.

The Executive of the General Council received for information the list of work assigned from the 38th General Council 2003.

The Executive heard an update and a presentation on The United Church Foundation and a report on St. Andrew's College.

The Executive of the General Council asked the General Secretary, General Council to ensure that the implications and recommendations from the report of the Implementation Team of the Women of The United Church of Canada be considered by the appropriate unit.

The Executive of the General Council revised the borrowing limit for the Windsor Elms, United Church Senior Citizens' Home, located in Windsor, Nova Scotia, establishing it at \$620,028, said amount to be used for the financing of capital projects required in the home.

The Executive of the General Council authorized its Sub-Executive to deal with the business placed before it by this meeting of the Executive and any emergent business that may arise prior to the April 2004 meeting of the Executive.

November 5, 2003, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed Dr. Tom Faulkner as President of St. Andrew's and St. Stephen's College for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2004.

December 4, 2003, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive approved a mortgage in the amount of \$85,000 for the Naramata Centre Society of The United Church of Canada, in Naramata, British Columbia, for capital projects—subject to receiving a written undertaking from Naramata Centre Society that it will bring its bylaws into compliance with the provisions of Appendix IV of The Manual 2001.

The Sub-Executive granted Victoria A. Fulcher a waiver of the requirement to return to theological college for six courses following the completion of her internship.

The Sub-Executive approved the sale of property owned by the Prairie Christian Training Centre known as Parcel B, Plan No. 101390172 Extension 46 as described on Certificate of Title 97R71427(1), description 46, Surface #120650970, for a total of \$50,000 paid by instalment ending April 30, 2006.

December 15, 2003, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive heard an update on St. Andrew's College and asked Jim Jackson, Barbara Rafuse, and Jim Sinclair to represent the Sub-Executive in a conference call with the Executive of the Board of St. Andrew's to listen and ensure the functioning of the board, including how the General Council can be most supportive. There will also be consultation with the President and Executive Secretary of Saskatchewan Conference, with a report back to the Sub-Executive regarding next steps.

The Sub-Executive authorized a loan from the United Church Mission and Service Operating Fund to St. Andrew's College on the following terms:

- Amount: \$120,000 advanced upon approval of this recommendation and acceptance of these terms by the Board of Trustees of St. Andrew's College
- Purpose: to replace funds previously drawn by the trustees from restricted funds of the college
- Term: six months from date of advancement
- Interest: 0% for the first three months, 3% per annum for the second three months
- Repayment schedule: full or partial payments at any time during the term of the loan
- Security: by funds either from the sale of college property or a mortgage to be taken on college property

The Sub-Executive adopted its minutes for October 15, 2003, November 5, 2003, and December 4, 2003, as circulated.

The Sub-Executive appointed Will Kunder to the position of Executive Secretary, Manitou Conference and Pierre Goldberger to the position of Executive Minister, French Ministries Unit, effective dates to be negotiated.

The Sub-Executive appointed Marion Parfy chair of the Nominations Committee.

The Sub-Executive approved the action of Toronto Conference authorizing the request of Fred Victor Centre to use \$150,000 of its assets to cover its share of development and construction

costs related to the property located at 1978 Lakeshore Boulevard West, Toronto, and that Fred Victor Centre's contribution be structured as a non-performing loan.

February 12, 2004, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive approved the transfer to the University of Winnipeg Foundation of all endowment funds now held by the University of Winnipeg.

The Sub-Executive authorized a search for the office of the Speaker of the All Native Circle Conference.

The Sub-Executive replaced the following sections to the bylaws:

- Section 343 concerning lay pastoral ministers-in-training and lay pastoral ministers
- Section 345 concerning staff associates
- Section 733 concerning the program of preparation for lay pastoral ministers

The Sub-Executive also amended the following sections of the bylaws:

- Section 128, subsection 341(b) and paragraph 389 (b) xi
- Sections 111, 142, and 182
- Sections 123, 144, 182.1, 201, and 218
- New Subsection 365.1(e)
- Subsections 427(b) and (d)

The Sub-Executive received an update from the Nominations Committee on its operational pattern, and made appointments to the following committees:

- Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
- Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry
- Judicial Committee
- Manual Committee
- Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel
- Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit Committee
- The United Church of Canada Foundation Board of Directors
- Theology and Faith Committee

Members of the Sub-Executive heard an interim report on St. Stephen's and St. Andrew's College and agreed to continue to "keep a watching brief" and to keep the members of this vital college community in their thoughts and prayers.

April 7, 2004, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive heard the report of the Nominations Committee of the General Council Executive and accepted the following two appointments: Executive of the General Council–Ethnic Ministry Representation, and Parliamentarian for the April 2004 meeting.

The Sub-Executive also approved the members of the Moderator's Advisory Committee, General Secretary's Supervision Committee, Faith Formation and Education Unit–Ministry Vocations Committee, and Faith Formation and Education Unit–Continuing Education Implementation Task Group.

The Sub-Executive heard the request from Earls Court Child and Family Centre and consented to the asset sale to West End Creche Child Care Centre.

The Sub-Executive appointed a conflict resolution facilitator for Complaint 2004-01 to contact the parties, conduct a preliminary diagnosis of the complaint, and report back to the Sub-Executive by May 31, 2004.

The Sub-Executive amended the bylaws related to discontinued service lists to reflect policies adopted by the Executive of the General Council.

The Sub-Executive heard the report from the General Secretary's Supervision Team.

April 23–26, 2004, Executive of the General Council

Throughout the Executive of the General Council (GCE) there were opportunities for worship, theological reflection, and worshipful song including theological reflection led by the Reverend Dr. Lesley Anderson, our global guest. Also Inez Penny and Fannie Hudson shared some insights on the trip to Zambia as part of the educational trip of the National United Church Women.

The Executive of the General Council approved the minutes of the Executive of the General Council held October 30–November 3, 2003. It also received, for information, the minutes of the Sub-Executive of General Council (GCSE) meetings held on November 5, 2003, December 4, 2003, December 15, 2003, February 12, 2004, and April 7, 2004.

The Executive of the General Council received and heard the following reports:

- Moderator's Report
- Report of the Moderator's Advisory Committee
- World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Meeting in Geneva, February 17–20, 2004
- Report of the Residential Schools Steering Committee
- Report of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
- Report of the General Secretary and General Council Ministers
- United Church of Canada Privacy Standards Policy
- The Board of Trustees of The United Church of Canada Plan Report
- Institutional Trustee and Trust Agreement for the Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada
- A New Pension Plan Governing Body
- Conference internal and/or cross-boundary experiments
- Interim Working Arrangement
- Final Report of the General Council Agenda and Planning Committee, 38th General Council, August 2003, Wolfville, Nova Scotia
- Report of the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry
- Report of the Permanent Committee on Finance
- Report of the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
- Report of the GCE Nominations Committee

The Executive of the General Council shared stories about the church across the country in the form of a Cross Church Checkup facilitated by Royal Orr in Berkeley Studios.

The Executive of the General Council spent some time on the emerging strategic directions for the General Council Office. Voting members of the Executive also had time to caucus on their own. The Senior Leadership Team, chairs of the permanent committees, and the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes agreed to meet to develop a common understanding of what a strategic plan is and to clarify the roles of the General Council, its Executive, the permanent committees, and the Senior Leadership Team in the strategic planning process.

The Executive of the General Council established a policy that all research and/or survey proposals be sent to a sub-group of the Survey and Research Capacity Working Group and vetted for compliance with generally accepted research methodologies before being distributed or used in the wider church.

The Executive of the General Council appointed the current interim Sub-Executive as its permanent Sub-Executive for the triennium 2003 to 2006.

The Executive of the General Council granted Testamur to candidates of the In Community Program for Ordination (ICPO) at the University of Winnipeg.

The Executive of the General Council referred work related to “delegated authority” to the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the “Working Document on Elected and Appointed Members of The United Church of Canada: Guiding Principles, Practices and Processes,” for immediate implementation by the Senior Leadership Team.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the mandates for the General Council Agenda and Planning Committee and the Executive of the General Council Agenda Planning and Business Committee.

The Executive of the General Council approved the document “A Proposal to Develop and Publish a Supplement to *Voices United*.”

The Executive of the General Council formally endorsed the document “What Does God Require of Us? A Declaration for Just Trade in the Service of an Economy of Life.”

Regarding the Institutional Trustee and Trust Agreement for the Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada, the Executive of the General Council took the following actions:

- accepted the resignation of the Board of Trustees
- terminated the Trust Agreement dated April 27, 2002
- appointed Royal Trust as institutional trustee for the assets of the Trust Fund, in addition to its role as custodian
- directed the Pension Board to negotiate the terms of the Trust Agreement with Royal Trust

- authorized and directed the proper officers of The United Church of Canada to execute the Trust agreement with Royal Trust

The Executive of the General Council also created the Pension Board, approving its Terms of Reference, and members of the board and their terms.

The Executive of the General Council adopted an interim budgeting process to continue until a strategic planning process is in place.

The Executive of the General Council referred the administrative policies regarding the United Church Reserve to the Permanent Committee on Finance and maintained the freeze on The United Church of Canada Reserve Fund with the exception of funding current commitments to the Residential School Fund, the Project Fund of the GCE, the Compensation Model Project, and strategic initiatives subject to the interim budgeting process or the action of the GCE.

The Executive of the General Council approved the administration policies for the Mission and Service Operating Fund and adopted the “Statement of Policies and Guidelines.”

The Executive of the General Council amended Section 167 of *The Manual*.

The Executive of the General Council adopted a policy for the administration of the Morrison Bequest and disbanded the Morrison Reference Committee with thanks for their diligent work.

The Executive of the General Council received correspondence from Sudbury Presbytery on declaring the cairn in Sudbury a National Historic Site of The United Church of Canada and referred this item to the General Secretary for action with the Executive’s commendation and support for the request. It also received correspondence from the Official Board of Bissell Memorial United Church on the action of General Council on same-sex marriages, with referral to the General Secretary for response. In reference to the correspondence from the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, the Executive of the General Council agreed not to change its policy regarding student participation in Lay Pastoral Ministry Training (LPMIT) events.

The directions taken by the Residential Schools Steering Committee in working toward an interim working arrangement with the Government of Canada were affirmed by the Executive of the General Council. They also approved in principle the development of an interim working arrangement with the Government of Canada with the priority of a broad healing agenda, and a response on the part of the church that addresses not only harm done to individuals but also harm done to families, communities, cultures, and nations, with the Sub-Executive authorized to make decisions in accord with the six principles from the document “Building Toward Right Relationships.”

The Executive of the General Council agreed to publish *The Manual, 2004*, without the new sections on Designated Lay Ministry, and to delay implementation of the Designated Lay Ministry program until after the 39th General Council 2006.

The Executive of the General Council discontinued the temporary role of Personnel Minister, and gave appreciation to John Burton for his work.

The Executive of the General Council referred to the Senior Leadership Team the question of the apology to the deaconesses and women clergy regarding denial by the church of the right to practise ministry if they married. The Executive directed the Senior Leadership Team to bring back a recommendation for action to the November 2004 meeting.

The Executive of the General Council consented to the property sale of the (former) Wesley United Church property in Calgary, Alberta.

The Executive of the General Council made appointments to the following committees:

- Audit Committee
- Task Group on Discipline of Ministry Personnel
- Education for Church Leadership Coordinating Committee
- Ministry Vocations Committee
- Permanent Committee on Finance
- Permanent Committee on Ministry Employment Policy and Services
- Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
- Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry
- GCE Agenda Planning and Business Committee

The Executive of the General Council took no action on the parameters for Conference internal and/or cross-boundary experiments, in order to enable the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes to have more time to consider the matter.

The Executive of the General Council adopted The United Church of Canada Privacy Standards Policy.

The Executive of the General Council approved an increase to the borrowing limit of Camp Fircom Society.

The Executive of the General Council did not waive the policy regarding student participation in Lay Pastoral Ministry Training events and affirmed that the LPMIT Planning Team may consider requests for exceptions.

The Executive of the General Council received the correspondence from Hamilton Conference on revenue generation strategies.

The Executive of the General Council authorized its Sub-Executive to deal with the business placed before it by this meeting and any emergent business that may arise prior to the next Executive.

June 24, 2004, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council adopted its minutes of April 7, 2004.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed Cheryl Jourdain to the position of Speaker, All Native Circle Conference.

The General Secretary gave a staffing update including a term appointment to begin planning for the 39th General Council 2006 and preparing for future meetings of the Executive of the General Council.

The Past Moderator, Marion Pardy, representing the church in Angola, brought greetings from the Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola.

July 21, 2004, Sub-Executive of the General Council

Marion Pardy, the Past Moderator, chaired the meeting and Ian Fraser was the Acting General Secretary.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council adopted its minutes for June 24, 2004.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council moved in camera and approved the placement of the positions of Moderator and General Secretary in Category 15 of the Job Categorization.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed delegates to the World Council of Churches 9th Assembly, February 2006. It also appointed members to the Voices United Supplement Development Task Group, the Permanent Committee on Finance, and the Designated Lay Ministry Task Group. The Sub-Executive appointed a Member at Large to the Executive of the General Council in the “under 30 years of age” category.

The Sub-Executive appointed John Burton as a Conflict Resolution Facilitator for the next phase of the process under the Dispute Resolution Policy for a complaint.

The Sub-Executive authorized an expenditure of up to \$25,000 from the GCE Project Fund for an employment equity study in the General Council and Conference offices.

The Sub-Executive received a resolution from London Conference on Iraq and referred it to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry.

August 26, 2004, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive adopted its minutes of July 21, 2004.

The Sub-Executive made appointments to the following committees and task groups:

- General Council Agenda and Planning Committee
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policy and Services
- To committees under the area of Faith Formation and Education (FFE)
- Ministry Vocations Committee
- Education for Church Leadership Coordinating Committee
- To committees under the area of Support to Local Ministries (SLM)
- Worship and Liturgy Task Group
- Evangelism, Transformation and Discipleship Advisory Committee

- Camp Sustainability Task Group
- Duty of Care Program Advisory Committee
- Global Partnership Advisory Committee (JGER)

The Sub-Executive approved an expenditure of up to \$15,000 from the General Council Project Fund to review the purpose and role of the United Church Health Services.

October 12, 2004, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive adopted its minutes of August 26, 2004.

The Sub-Executive appointed John Burton to continue as Conflict Resolution Facilitator for a final session in the alternate dispute resolution process for a complaint.

The Sub-Executive confirmed the current representatives, renewed the appointments, and appointed new representatives to the Board of Regents of Victoria University as representatives of The United Church of Canada.

October 29–November 1, 2004, Executive of the General Council

Throughout the meeting of the Executive of the General Council, the music team led in worship and worshipful song. Worship on Sunday included the naming the members of our church family who have left bequest gifts, annuity residues, and insurance proceeds to The United Church of Canada from May 2004 to October 2004, and the covenanting of the new members of the Executive.

The Executive of the General Council approved its minutes from April 23–26, 2004, and received for information the minutes of the Sub-Executive held June 24, 2004, July 21, 2004, August 26, 2004, and October 12, 2004.

As part of the procedural motions, the Executive received reports, and assigned reports and correspondence to sessional committees.

The General Secretary reviewed the declarations of interest guidelines and the proposal process used throughout the meeting.

The Executive of the General Council heard reports from the Moderator on his work to the whole church and from the General Secretary and the Senior Leadership Team on their work. The General Secretary talked about encouragement and practical applications, especially where the body of Christ has taken risks. He also talked about the exciting interaction that is happening between the Conferences and the General Council Office. The General Secretary also updated the Executive on the job categorization process.

The Executive of the General Council gave its consent to the sale of the (former) Wesley United Church property, with the proceeds made available through the Property and Church Development Society of Calgary Presbytery for use for new ministry developments.

The Executive of the General Council approved Lynn Boothroyd as the new nominee to *The United Church Observer* Board of Directors.

The Executive of the General Council approved the appointment of Omega Chilufya Bula as the Executive Minister, Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations (JGER) Unit.

The Executive of the General Council heard the following reports:

- World Council of Churches
- Permanent Committee on Finance Accountability Report
- Permanent Committee on Ministry Employment and Personnel Services Accountability Report
- Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes Accountability Report
- Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry Report (including information on Congregational Mission and Transformation and the Inviting Spirit Campaign)
- Nominations Committee Report
- Pension Board Report

The Executive of the General Council heard a presentation from the Residential Schools Steering Committee including the following: a film produced by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation; information on the roundtable discussions with representatives of the churches, Assembly of First Nations, other Aboriginal groups, and the Government of Canada; and information on the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation.

The Executive of the General Council heard the report of the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry including reports on the Gender Justice Advisory Committee relocation, camp accreditation, the re-mandating process of the Healing Fund Council, the Ministry-Based Ordination Program, and covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth (Accra Declaration). The appreciation of the Executive of the General Council was extended to all members who served on the Healing Fund Council from 1994 to 2004, including a presentation by the Moderator of certificates for the members of the Healing Fund Committee.

The Executive of the General Council looked at strategic planning through a process that included education and theological reflection.

The Moderator presented plaques to *The United Church Observer* to honour their 175th anniversary and to *Aujourd'hui Credo* to honour their 50th anniversary.

The Executive of the General Council welcomed the Reverend Dr. Lesley Anderson, our global partner from the Caribbean Conference of Churches.

The Executive of the General Council approved the new Audit Committee charter, received the audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2003, and appointed Deloitte & Touche LLP to perform the audit of the accounts of The United Church of Canada for the year ending December 31, 2004.

The Executive of the General Council lifted the freeze on the United Church Reserve Fund and directed the Permanent Committee on Finance to review the current policies of the United Church Reserve Fund, the Morrison Bequest, and the Mission and Service Operating Fund, with recommendations to be brought back to the Executive.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the 2005 Operating Budget.

The Executive of the General Council referred to the Permanent Committee on Governance, Budgeting and Planning Processes a request for direction on the purpose and/or necessity of referring direct reports to sessional committees.

The Executive of the General Council directed the General Secretary, General Council to

- initiate a compilation of existing policy statements of the General Council, the General Council Executive, and General Council Units

- identify policy gaps and/or inadequacies

- recommend a process to fill those gaps and/or inadequacies

and directed that the funding for this project come from the Project Fund of the Executive of the General Council to a maximum of \$25,000 in 2004.

The Executive of the General Council directed the Agenda and Planning Committee to develop a proposal on the criteria for determining the agenda priorities of the 39th General Council 2006, and to report back to the April 2005 meeting of Executive of the General Council.

The Executive of the General Council made an amendment to the Terms of Reference for Personnel Emergency Fund and Support and Advocacy Fund.

The Executive of the General Council approved the Group Insurance Plan design changes for active employees and the Group Insurance Plan premium changes.

The Executive of the General Council authorized the Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Permanent Committee to propose revisions to the Sexual Abuse Policy of the United Church, and that the amendments to the Sexual Abuse Policy that were approved by the Executive of the General Council in April 2003 be stayed until the Executive of the General Council has an opportunity to consider and take action on the recommendations for revision of the Sexual Abuse Policy.

The Executive of the General Council absolved British Columbia Conference of the pledge, made in November 1999, of \$500,000 to assist in the legal costs related to residential schools; affirmed the ongoing healing in British Columbia Conference; and directed the Residential Schools Steering Committee to invite the Conferences into a conversation in order to explore ways in which healing within their own boundaries may proceed.

The Executive of the General Council heard an overview and thumbnail sketch of the Elected and Appointed Member Services and the nominations process. This included information on the spiritual discernment used by the Nominations Committee in their decision-making to select church leadership.

The Executive of the General Council, through worship, information, and discussion, began an exploration to discern the presence of God.

The Executive of the General Council looked at resistance to change with an education journey toward becoming an anti-racist church.

The Executive of the General Council accepted the proposal of the United Theological College/Le Séminaire Uni and approved the United Theological College/Le Séminaire Uni as the site for the Ministry-Based Ordination Program, with details for the implementation at the spring and fall 2005 meetings of the Executive.

The Executive of the General Council referred the correspondence from the London Conference Settlement Committee; from Peter Wyatt, Principal of Emmanuel College; from Jean Stairs, Principal of Queen's Theological College; and from Ken MacQueen, Principal of Vancouver School of Theology, to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry for their consideration.

The Executive of the General Council approved the production of a print and Web-based Archives Toolkit for the church, and to communicate new practices regarding electronic records, privacy and personal information, with funding from the Project Fund of the Executive of the General Council. The request to increase the annual meeting and communication budget of the Committee on Archives and History to \$6,500 was referred to the General Secretary for consideration through the committee budget of the Offices of the Moderator and the General Secretary.

The correspondence from Maritime Conference related to the allocation of surplus monies toward the process of truth-telling and/or the United Church Healing Fund was referred to the General Secretary for consideration and recommendation.

The Executive of the General Council appointed members to the following committees and task groups:

- Executive of the General Council
- Pension Board
- General Secretary's Supervision Committee
- GCE Nominations Committee
- Committees under the area of Faith Formation and Education (FFE)
 - Canadian Forces Chaplaincy Committee
 - Support, Accreditation and Funding Committee
 - Education for Church Leadership Coordinating Committee
- Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee
- Committees under the area of Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations (JGER)
 - Representative to KAIROS Global Economic Justice Program Committee
 - Gender Justice and Partnership Monitoring Committee
 - Justice, Peace and Creation Advisory Committee
 - Representative to the Canadian Council of Churches

- Representative to the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism
- Representatives to the Roman Catholic–United Church Dialogue
- Committees under the area of Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS)
 - Compensation Models Steering Task Group
 - Isolation in Ministry Steering Task Group
- Committees under the area of Support to Local Ministries (SLM)
 - *Voices United* Supplement Development Task Group
 - Stewardship Development Editorial Committee
- Board of Directors, United Church of Canada Foundation/Fondation de l'Église Unie du Canada

The Executive of the General Council adopted a process for strategic planning.

The Executive of the General Council set a policy with respect to delegated authority and directed the General Secretary to ensure that *The Manual* Committee develops proposed revisions to the section on reconsideration of motions in Appendix 3 of *The Manual*.

In an omnibus motion, the Executive of the General Council approved the following:

- approved camp accreditation decisions reflected in the report of the Duty of Care Program Advisory Committee
- approved the mandate of the Gender Justice Advisory Committee and the relocation of the gender justice work and committee to the work of the General Council Minister, Racial Justice
- received the report of the re-mandating process of the Healing Fund Council, approved the recommendations contained in the report, and requested the General Secretary to proceed with the implementation of the recommendations
- endorsed the document “Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth,” and through the Permanent Committee on Programs for Ministry and Mission, endorsed the development of a process to engage the church in study and action
- received for information the correspondence from Bissell Memorial United Church
- determined that the resolution from the London Conference Annual Meeting is a petition to the General Council, and therefore took no action
- referred the following to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry:
 - for information, the request to identify camping as a top priority for increased funding
 - for action, the request to continue to urge the government to recognize same-sex marriage
 - for action, the request to explain and advocate the United Church’s position on same-sex marriage to government
 - concerns raised regarding genetically modified organisms
- directed that the General Secretary respond, indicating that the work on HIV/AIDS is ongoing
- endorsed a remembrance for Roland S. (Bud) Harper’s life and contributions
- directed no further action on the funding idea for theological schools
- directed that the General Secretary respond with the process for special appeals for a capital campaign
- referred the correspondence on timelines for budget setting to the Permanent Committee on Finance

The Executive of the General Council requested the General Secretary to review the job descriptions for the positions of the General Council Minister, Racial Justice, and the General Council Minister, Planning Processes, and bring the item back to the April 2005 Executive.

The Executive of the General Council referred all unfinished business to the Sub-Executive and authorized its Sub-Executive to deal with the business placed before it and any emergent business that may arise prior to the April 2005 meeting.

November 12, 2004, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive adopted its minutes for October 12, 2004.

The Sub-Executive heard an update and affirmed the media release related to the unionization initiative.

December 17, 2004, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive adopted its minutes for November 12, 2004.

The Sub-Executive authorized the sale of the Tomisato property in Tomisato, Japan, to the Tomisato United Church in Japan, and directed that the funds from the sale be placed in the trust account held to offset the maintenance costs of the other properties and to support United Church of Canada overseas personnel and mission needs in Japan.

The Sub-Executive appointed members to the following committees:

- GCE Nominations Committee
- Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
- Ministry Vocations Committee (FFE)
- Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee
- Global Partnerships Advisory Committee (JGER)

The Sub-Executive authorized that the Legal/Judicial Counsel and Executive Officer, Finance, of The United Church of Canada, acting jointly, could sell, and endorse for transfer to an account of The United Church of Canada, certificates representing stocks, bonds, or other securities registered in the name of the church.

The Sub-Executive directed the Permanent Committee on Governance, Budgeting and Planning Processes to give consideration to the issue of the shortage of members of the Executive of the General Council on committees related to the Executive of the General Council.

The Sub-Executive approved the admission of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Lachine, Quebec, as a congregation of The United Church of Canada.

The Sub-Executive approved the sale by Naramata Centre to the Naramata Seniors Housing Society of the property located at the corner of 4th Street and Gwendolyn Avenue in the community of Naramata, British Columbia.

The Sub-Executive heard a proposal and gave approval for the Executive of the General Council to meet in Vancouver for its April 2005 meeting with one extra day added to the scheduled time.

The Sub-Executive affirmed The United Church of Canada's continuing involvement in health care services in British Columbia through B.C. Conference and the United Church Health Services.

The Sub-Executive heard an update on unionization.

April 21-25, 2005, Executive of the General Council

The Moderator constituted the meeting of the Executive and thanked everyone for travelling to the meeting in Richmond, British Columbia. Worship took place throughout the meeting and was led by the Music Team – Cheryl Harding, Bruce Harding, and Julian Patison – with Ed Searcy and Lesley Anderson, our global partner from the Caribbean Conference of Churches leading in theological reflection. New members to the Executive were covenanted at one of the services. At another service the precious gifts in Memoriam were named.

The Executive received the correspondence addressed to them and approved the suggested actions.

The Executive heard and received the following reports:

- Moderator's Accountability Report
- Report of the Moderator's Advisory Committee
- Report of the World Council of Churches
- Report of the Residential Schools Steering Committee
- Report of the General Secretary and the General Council Ministers (SLT)
- Pension Board Accountability Report
- Report of the Committee on Archives and History
- Report of the Permanent Committee on Finance
- Report of the Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
- Report of the Agenda and Planning Committee, 39th General Council 2006
- Report of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
- Report of the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry including presentations on Aboriginal Ministries, Ministry-Based Ordination Program, and Genetically-Modified Food
- The Identity Project/Media Campaign (For Such A Time As This)
- Ministry in The United Church of Canada: The Moderator's Proposal
- Report of the Nominations Committee

The Executive of the General Council authorized the search process for the Conference Executive Secretaries for the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario and Montreal and Ottawa Conference to proceed.

The Executive of the General Council approved the sale by Prairie Christian Training Centre – Calling Lakes Centre of 30 feet of property to the adjoining landowner.

The Executive of the General Council certified persons authorized to affix the Seal of The United Church of Canada.

Throughout the meeting, the Executive heard reports on visits by members of the Executive and staff to global partners.

- Lorna Pawis and Jim Sinclair reported on their visit to the Church of North India, the Bishop of Calcutta, the islands of Andaman and Nicobar, and other areas in India where lives were lost in the tsunami.
- Carol Hancock reported on her visit to partners in ministry in China including representatives from the Chinese Christian Council and the Three Self Patriotic Movement.
- Bruce Gregersen reported on his trip to Jerusalem and the dedication of the Vad Vashem Holocaust History Museum.
- Wanda West reported on her visit to Mexico with the delegation from Kairos.
- The Moderator reported on his visit to Angola and South Africa and shared a small piece of his time in “Mother” Africa.

The Executive of the General Council was introduced to one discernment process of worshipful work which was tested at the meeting.

The Executive of the General Council approved the cancellation of the budgeted transfer for 2005 of one million dollars from the Reserve to the Residential Schools Fund with no further budget allocations in future years. This will be reviewed each year.

The Executive of the General Council approved the allocation of \$100,000 to the Capital Equipment fund for 2005.

The Executive of the General Council appointed members to the following committees and task groups or as representatives of the United Church.

- Executive of the General Council Member at Large under 30 years
- Financial Stewardship
- Bulletin Advisory Committee
- Gift Planning Committee
- Mission and Service Fund Committee
- Gender Justice Advisory Committee
- Pension Plan Advisory Committee
- Pension Plan Board
- General Secretary’s Supervision Committee
- Racial Justice Advisory Committee
- Sub-Executive of the General Council
- Residential Schools Committee
- Permanent Committee on Finance
- Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning & Budgeting Processes
- Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry
- Racial Justice Advisory Committee
- Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit
- Global Mission Personnel Receiving Subcommittee

- Justice Peace and Creation Advisory Committee
- Representative to the Anglican-United Church Dialogue
- Representative to the Reformed Lutheran Dialogue
- Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit
- Financial Assistance Committee
- Police Records Check Task Group
- Support to Local Ministries Unit
- Camp Sustainability Task Group
- Duty of Care Program Advisory Committee
- Mission Through Finance Advisory Committee

The Executive of the General Council received for information appointments to the following committees and task groups:

- Executive of the General Council – Conference Representatives
- General Council – Youth Forum Design Team
- General Council – Agenda and Planning Committee
- Faith Formation and Education Unit – Continuing Education Implementation Task Group

The Executive of the General Council joined members of B.C. Conference in a Vancouver Vision Day at the University of British Columbia and Vancouver School of Theology.

The Executive of the General Council approved a Statement of Beliefs and Guiding Principles for Plan Design of the United Church Pension Plan.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the principles and processes to guide the work of the Nominations Committee and Committee Member Services:

The Executive of the General Council supported the funding principles from the Permanent Committee on Finance which will be revised for final approval.

The Executive of the General Council approved the 2006 to 2008 budget assumptions and adopted the 2006 operating budget.

The Executive of the General Council advocated measures and changes to the current framework that the Government of Canada uses to approve, regulate, monitor, and label genetically modified foods and undertake actions to help ensure the development and dissemination of genetically modified varieties does not contribute to the growth of injustice, inequality, or poverty, the loss of biodiversity, or the erosion of the common good.

The Executive of the General Council heard a presentation on multicultural ministries and the separations within the United Church that included stories of diversity, quest, the need to belong, and the importance of a church that reflects our diversity.

The Executive of the General Council heard updates on the Compensation Models Project including stories from ministry personnel across the country. The Executive gave input and recommendations will come back to the November and April Executives with a report to the

39th General Council 2006. The Executive also heard an update on the Ministry Based Ordination Program.

The Executive of the General Council appointed A.H. Harry Oussoren as the Executive Minister, Support to Local Ministries Unit.

The Executive of the General Council received the correspondence before it and accepted the suggested actions.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the job description for the General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice, as modified and the job description for the General Council Minister, Planning Processes, with the addition of a preamble.

The Executive of the General Council authorized an immediate search for the General Council Minister, Racial and Gender Justice, and the General Council Minister, Planning Processes.

The Executive of the General Council directed the General Secretary to initiate the program titled For Such a Time as This on a revised 5 year schedule that includes a presentation to the 39th General Council 2006, and commit up to \$1 million in 2005 and up to \$2 million in 2006 from the Morrison Bequest for this program; and to refer the Decision regarding funding of the accompanying media campaign to 39th General Council 2006.

The Executive of the General Council accepted the Moderator's proposal to convene the Arnprior Assembly on Ministry from November 3 – 7, 2005 and to allocate up to \$175,000 to this initiative from either the Morrison Bequest or the UCC Reserve upon the recommendation of the Permanent Committee on Finance.

The Executive of the General Council approved the assumptions and criteria to guide the General Council Agenda and Planning Committee and that each Executive of the General Council review these items prior to the planning of the next General Council.

The Executive of the General Council directed the General Secretary to ensure adequate resolution to the matter of Status Indian employees working on reserves and their inclusion in the Canada Pension Plan, including funds made available for the employer costs and that a long term plan be developed to ensure adequate coverage.

The Executive of the General Council authorized a process for the establishment of a Task Group on Funding the Work of the Church and established the Evaluation Project Team Task Group.

June 7, 2005, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council heard an update on the vacancies and appointed people to the Selection Committees for the Executive Minister – Financial Stewardship; Executive Officer – Information Technology; General Council Minister – Planning Processes; and General Council Minister – Racial and Gender Justice.

July 22, 2005, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed Kim Uyede-Kai, General Council Minister, Racial and Gender Justice; Janet McDonald, General Council Minister, Planning Processes; and Steve Driz, Executive Officer, Information Technology Services.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council approved the amended mandate for the Task Group on Funding the Work of the Church.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed delegates of The United Church of Canada to the World Council of Churches 9th Assembly, February 2006 and members to the FFE/ECL Support, Accreditation and Funding Committee.

The Sub-Executive approved support for an English print edition and French language translation of the resource Archives and Recordkeeping: A How to Guide for Congregations and Conferences.

The Sub-Executive heard information on the expiration of the lease of the General Council Office in 2015.

The Sub-Executive appointed a member of the Executive to the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services.

September 1, 2005, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive appointed Bill Steadman, Executive Minister, Financial Stewardship.

The Sub-Executive approved the terms of reference for the Redesign Evaluation Task Group.

September 15, 2005, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed Bruce Fauschou, Conference Executive Secretary, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario and Rosemary Lambie, Conference Executive Secretary, Montreal and Ottawa Conference.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council gave administrative approval to the request to increase Windsor Elms', United Church Senior Citizens' Home total indebtedness.

Executive of the General Council, October 28 – 31, 2005

The Moderator constituted the meeting followed by approval for the procedural motions. The Minutes of the Executive of the General Council April 21 – 25, 2005 were approved and the minutes of the meetings of the Sub-Executive were received for information.

Throughout the Moderator offered prayers for others including for the life of Betty, Cindy Désilets' mother. New people were introduced including Dr. Reinerio Arce, our Global Partner, from the Evangelical Seminary of Theology, Matanzas, Cuba.

The Executive of the General Council received the reports in the workbook from the four Permanent Committees and the General Secretary. The Executive also received the Beads of Hope Evaluation Report.

Worship took place throughout the meeting of the Executive with a common theme of water. New members to the Executive of the General Council and new senior staff leaders were covenanted as part of one of the worship services. In another worship service the In Memoriam Gifts were acknowledged. Theological Reflection also took place throughout the meeting. Lloyd MacLean and Lynn Boothroyd led music throughout the meeting and during worship.

The Executive of the General Council heard reports from the Moderator and the General Secretary. They also heard the report from the World Council of Churches and honoured Marion Best for her work with both the Executive and the World Council of Churches. Other reports heard included the Nominations Committee; The United Church of Canada Foundation; Pension Board; Aboriginal Consultation; Emerging Spirit; Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes; Permanent Committee on Finance; Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry; Permanent Committee of Ministry and Employment Policies and Services; and the Statement of Faith from the Theology and Faith Committee.

The Executive of the General Council were introduced to the Performance Self Evaluation and had an opportunity to share with each other the hopes and expectations for the meeting as well as filling out the evaluation.

In the report on the Agenda and Planning Committee at the 39th General Council 2006, the Executive was introduced to the Kerygma Café and had opportunities throughout the meeting to work with this method of discernment.

The Executive of the General Council approved the Statement of Beliefs and Guiding Principles for Funding and Investment of the Pension Board.

The Executive of the General Council approved up to \$1,000,000 in support of funding The United Church of Canada Foundation for the period 2006 – 2008 and asked the Permanent Committee on Finance to work with the Foundation to establish financial benchmarks to measure progress in achieving the Foundation's goals. The Executive of the General Council also requested a report from the Foundation outlining their principles, criteria, and process for approval of grants.

The Executive of the General Council approved the employee memorandum for General Council employees from the Audit Committee and approved the financial statements of the Accounts of The United Church of Canada as at December 31, 2004.

The Executive of the General Council approved the 2006 Operating Budget with an additional \$65,000 to be found in expenses to balance the step increase for Conference Salary Grants and the All Native Circle Conference Salary Grants.

The Executive of the General Council referred the Fund Policy back to the Permanent Committee on Finance for clarification and to address concerns raised.

The Executive of the General Council approved the document “A service of Apology to United Church women affected by the disjoining rule” and to enact the service of Apology at its April 2006 meeting. Conferences were asked to identify women affected by the disjoining rule and to enact the Service of Apology within the next year. The Moderator was also invited to write to all women or their families indicating the General Council’s sincere regret over the policy and its implications.

The Executive of the General Council endorsed the directions of recommendations 1, 2 and 3, from the Report and Recommendations to Revise Appendix IV of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada. The Executive also approved the program for Dollar for Dollar Matching Forgiveness.

At an in camera session of the Executive of the General Council, the Executive authorized its Sub-Executive to approve a response to an application for certification of a union if required. The Executive also accepted the resignation of Jim Sinclair as General Secretary, General Council and invited Jim Sinclair to remain in the position on a contract basis until such time as a replacement can be appointed by the 39th General Council 2006 and assume the duties. The Executive authorized a search process for the position of General Secretary, General Council.

The Executive of the General Council reaffirmed the commitment of The United Church of Canada to support and encourage the continued existence of the State of Israel as a secure and safe homeland for all peoples residing there, recognizing its uniquely Jewish character. The Executive also lamented the failure to move forward in the creation of a Palestinian state and denounced the policies and actions of the Israeli government in the continued expansion of the illegal settlements; the transfer of Gaza settlers to settlements in the West Bank; and the continued construction of the Separation Wall within Palestinian territory restricting the development of a Palestinian State and significantly disrupting Palestinian life. The Executive also condemned the statement of the President of Iran calling for the destruction of Israel, all actions or policies that seek to deny the rightful and secure existence of the State of Israel, and in particular acts of violence aimed at Israeli citizens. The Executive also asked that the General Secretary forward to the 39th General Council 2006 the proposal on an “ethical investment policy in Israel and Palestine”.

The Executive of the General Council made a recommendation to the 39th General Council 2006 to modify Section 8.5 of the Basis of Union to remove “chief executive officer” and replace it with “Moderator”.

The Executive of the General Council adopted terms of reference for the Sub-Executive of the General Council and approved the revised mandate for the General Secretary Supervision Committee.

The Executive of the General Council received the report from the Nominations Committee, appointed a member at large of the Executive. The Executive also appointed members to the committees and task groups or as representative the United Church as follows:

- Redesign Evaluation Task Group
- Financial Assistance Committee (MEPS)
- Stewardship Studies Task Group (SLM)
- Education for Church Leadership Coordinating Committee (FFE)
- Ministry Vocations Committee (FFE)
- Global Partnership Advisory Committee – Africa (JGER)
- Representative to the World Methodist Council
- Representative to the Church Council on Justice & Corrections
- Ministry Vocations Committee (FFE)

The returning Board members of *The United Church Observer* for 2005-2006 were reported to the Executive of the General Council.

The Executive of the General Council adopted principles for cascading appointments of voting members of the Executive of the General Council; Committee Membership principles; and approved the membership of the Permanent Committees for the next triennium.

The Executive of the General Council approved amendments to Human Resources Policies for the following:

- Recruitment and Selection of the General Secretary, Human Resource Policy 1.9
- Maternity, Adoption and Parental Leave, Human Resource Policy 4.1
- Adoption Leave Policy for Pastoral Relations
- Sabbatical Policy for Ministry Personnel in Pastoral Relations

The Executive of the General Council approved the Group Insurance Plan design changes for Active Employees and approved the Group Insurance Plan premium changes.

The Executive of the General Council approved amending *The Manual* to include the vulnerable sector (Level 2) Police Records Check for all ministry personnel and prior to the initiation of any new pastoral relationship. The Executive also approved a minimum of two references to be interviewed prior to the initiation of a pastoral relationship. The number of vulnerable sector checks was reduced to a maximum of every six years for those in a continuous pastoral relationship. The Executive also directed the General Secretary to report to the April 2006 Executive on the current level of compliance with the Policy Records Check Policy and to investigate screening for internships and admission from other denominations.

The Executive of the General Council received the report *Called and Equipped: The Youth Ministry Training Consultation* and referred the report to the General Secretary to develop specific proposals for the April 2006 Executive.

The General Secretary acknowledged the work and contributions of Peter Scott. The Executive of the General Council authorized a search for the position of Conference Executive Secretary, London Conference.

The Executive of the General Council affirmed the principles and directions in the “Compensation Models Project Interim Report”.

The Executive of the General Council asked the General Secretary to review factors for determining travel reimbursement and defeated the motion to increase the travel reimbursement from 37 cents for 2006.

The Executive of the General Council referred the following items from the 38th General Council 2003 to the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC MEPS):

- Resolutions 68: Designated Lay Ministers Appointments
- Resolution 69: Congregational Accountable Ministers
- Resolution 70: Parish Nurse Designation (from the Simplifying Task Group);
- Petitions 49-82 (except Petition 70: Parish Nursing) (from Simplifying Task Group)

The Executive also referred the following to Task and Steering Groups of PC MEPS.

- Compensation Models Steering Group - Petitions 56, 93, 94, 95, 96
- Designated Lay Ministry Task Group - Petition 122, Resolutions 38 & 86, Report 7
- Interim Ministry Task Group - Petition 36
- Isolation in Ministry Steering Group - Report 1
- Lay Presidency at the Sacraments Task Group - Petitions 97, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107
- Sabbatical Task Group - Petition 131

The Executive of the General Council approved the meeting dates for the 39th General Council 2006 and the Executive of the General Council meeting dates for the next triennium.

The Executive of the General Council closed with worship after authorizing its Sub-Executive to deal with the business placed before it by this meeting of the Executive and any emergent business that may arise prior to the April 2006 meeting of the Executive.

November 21, 2005, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed members to the selection committee for the Executive Minister – Resource Production and Distribution.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council authorized persons to affix the Seal of the Church.

November 29, 2005, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed Dan Benson, Executive Minister, Resource Production and Distribution Unit.

January 9, 2006, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed members to the following committees:

- Redesign Evaluation Task Group (to December 2008)
- Funding the Work of the Church Task Group (to December 2007)
- General Secretary Search and Selection Committee (to August 2006)

January 31, 2006, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council heard an update on St. Andrew's/St. Stephen's College.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council approved the position description for the General Secretary, General Council.

February 28, 2006, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council heard the recommendation and appointed David Woodall to the position of Conference Executive Secretary, London Conference, effective June 1, 2006.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council authorized the persons to affix the Seal of the Church:

The Sub-Executive of the General Council heard an update on the unionization initiative.

April 13, 2006, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive heard the recommendations and appointed Vanda Orsini as Executive Officer, Information Technology Services.

The Sub-Executive appointed Carmen Lansdowne as a voting member of the Executive of the General Council by virtue of her election to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council approved the borrowing by Naramata Centre of the sum of \$150,000 by way of a mortgage loan for a term of 3-5 years, for the purpose of funding the operating loss incurred by Naramata Centre in 2004, and repaying the Centre's operating fund for capital expenditures made from the operating fund rather than the capital fund.

April 28 – May 1, 2006, Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council met at the Toronto Marriott Airport Hotel. Opening Communion worship covenanted with Carmen Lansdowne, the new member of the Executive, and with staff: Vanda Orsini, Executive Officer, Information Technology Services; Bill Steadman, Executive Minister, Financial Stewardship; and Dan Benson, Executive Minister, Resource Production & Distribution.

The Very Reverend Marion Parry presided at a Service of Apology and Appreciation to Women in Ministry affected by the Disjoining Rule. The United Church was presented with the bowl of stones which remembered women who played important roles in our lives by Elizabeth Eberhart-Moffat.

Saturday morning, the Executive gathered for a Sunrise Ceremony and Sacred Fire. Elder Wes Whetung was the Spiritual Leaders for the ceremony.

The Executive acknowledged the members who left bequest gifts, annuity residues and insurance proceeds to The United Church of Canada.

The Executive of the General Council approved their minutes from the meeting held on October 28 – 31, 2005. The Executive also received, for information, the minutes of the meetings of the Sub-Executive of the General Council held November 21 and November 29, 2005 and January 9, January 31, February 28, and April 13, 2006.

The Executive of the General Council heard Accountability Reports from the Moderator and the General Secretary. The Executive also heard reports from the Residential Schools Steering Committee; Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry; Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services; Permanent Committee, Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes; Permanent Committee, Finance; 39th General Council 2006 Agenda and Planning;

Correspondence from Rev. Dr. Richard Hollingsworth regarding the Pension Plan was received and forwarded to the chair of the Pension Board for a response.

Muriel Duncan, editor of The United Church Observer, was thanked and recognized for her years of gifted service to the church.

Throughout the meeting, our global partner, Reinerio Arce Valentin, led Bible Study.

The Executive of the General Council unanimously approved the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and directed its officers to sign the Agreement on behalf of The United Church of Canada.

The Executive of the General Council expressed their profound appreciation to the members of the Residential Schools Steering Committee and staff, for their

- Careful consideration of the matters related to the Residential Schools legacy.
- Leadership in advising this and previous Executives of the General Council.
- Their persistence in negotiating according to the Six Principles discerned by the Church.

The Executive of the General Council moved in camera to receive the report of the General Secretary's Supervision Committee on the annual performance review of the General Secretary. The Executive affirmed the work of the General Secretary Supervision Committee and requested them to continue to refine the Performance Evaluation Process. They also expressed appreciation and affirmation of the leadership of Jim Sinclair in the role of General Secretary, General Council. After the in camera session, the Moderator met with the Elected Members.

The Executive of the General Council heard a report from the members of the Aboriginal Consultation Follow-up Design Team. The Executive also heard reports from the Committee on Theology and Faith on the Statement of Faith; the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil; the results from the questionnaire and the Self-Evaluation of the Executive; Emerging Spirit; and the Redesign Evaluation Task Group.

The Executive of the General Council heard a report on the budgeting process and presentation on the Budget 2007-2008.

The Executive of the General Council adopted principles, practices, and pathways for work flowing to and from the General Council.

The Executive of the General Council directed the General Council Agenda and Planning Committee to use plenary and up to three commissions to facilitate the work of the 39th General Council 2006 and that the work of the commissions be assigned thematically and that the assignment of commissioners to commissions be by table group to a commission using a random procedure.

The Executive of the General Council worked in 4 sessional committees to look at work under the following groupings: Faith and Order, Congregational Mission and Justice, Leadership for Ministry, and Stewardship and Resources.

The Executive of the General Council asked the 39th General Council 2006 to receive the following and refer them to the Executive of the General Council for oversight and decision-making with respect to implementation:

- Compensation Models Project – Centralized Payroll Service
- Compensation Models Projects – Comprehensive Salary
- Redesigned Salary Structure for Ministry Personnel
- Compensation be augmented in Exceptional Circumstances
- Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality: Circle and Cross

The Executive of the General Council postponed definitely the Proposal on the Compensation Models Project Funding to its Fall 2006 meeting.

The Executive of the General Council recommended that the 39th General Council 2006 take no action on the Denominationally funded salary administration system at this time, until progress is made on the other proposals of the Compensation Models Project Report.

The Executive of the General Council approved the following:

- 2007 Budget Assumptions
- Fund Policy
- Appointment of members and directors for The United Church of Canada Foundation

The Executive of the General Council established the following Task Groups and requested the General Secretary to draft terms of reference:

- General Council Office Accommodation Task Group
- Task Group on the General Council Grant to Conferences

The Executive also approved an expenditure from the Project Fund to be used for external resources for the Redesign Evaluation Task Group.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the report entitled *The United Church of Canada Administrative Standards for Seniors' Homes – Long Term Care Facilities, Seniors' Apartments – Independent Living*, as the standards for all seniors homes/seniors apartments using the name

of The United Church of Canada; and delegated the responsibility for accreditation and oversight of the Administrative Standards for Seniors Homes and Seniors Apartments to the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry.

The Executive of the General Council forwarded the following reports to the 39th General Council 2006 for information:

- Isolation in Ministry
- Lay Presidency at the Sacraments
- Outcomes for Ministry Leadership
- *That We May Know Each Other: Statement on Christian-Muslim Relations* and proposal
- Report of the Anglican-United Church Dialogue
- Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire

The Executive of the General Council affirmed and will propose to the 39th General Council 2006 that it the purpose and overall direction of the Isolation in Ministry report. The Executive tabled the recommendations in the report.

Regarding the Lay Presidency at the Sacraments, the General Secretary was asked for an opinion. The General Secretary stated that, in his opinion, the lay presidency at the Sacraments had not been decided in its complete form and it is a question for the Executive of the General Council to address.

The Executive of the General Council will propose that the 39th General Council 2006 establish an office to be known as Sacraments Elder and instruct the Committee on Theology and Faith to undertake a thorough reflection on Ministry and Sacraments, to serve as context for the further development of these processes.

The Executive of the General Council received for information the correspondence items.

The Executive of the General Council recommended to the 39th General Council 2006 that it approve a leadership outcome framework model as the standard of minimum requirements for the preparation of Ordered ministers in The United Church of Canada and direct the Executive of the General Council to refine the leadership outcomes framework model in light of the visioning of the 39th General Council 2006 and change the parts of *The Manual* pertaining to the theological study to reflect the shift to a Leadership Outcomes framework.

The Executive of the General Council will propose to the 39th General Council 2006 to review the formula in *The Manual* Section 423 regarding the number of Commissioners to each General Council and make the changes to *The Manual*.

The Executive of the General Council heard background on the remit formula and the General Secretary ruled that the remit was ultra vires on the basis of opinions from outside legal counsel. The motion to authorize a remit to add to the Basis of Union 11.3 the possibility of General Council providing alternative Ordination and Commissioning Vows was defeated.

The Executive of the General Council appointed people to the following committees and task groups or as representatives of the United Church.

- Archives and History Committee
- Audit Committee
- Congregational Stewardship Development Committee
- Education for Church Leadership Coordinating Committee
- Executive of the General Council - Members at Large
- Faith Formation for All Ages Committee
- Funding the Work of the Church Task Group
- GCE Agenda, Planning and Business Committee
- Gender Justice Advisory Committee
- Gender Justice and Partnership Monitoring Committee
- General Council Agenda and Planning Committee
- General Secretary Supervisory Committee
- Global Partnership Advisory Committee
- Healing Fund Council
- Justice, Peace and Creation Advisory Committee
- Ministry Vocations Committee
- New Congregations and Ministries Task Group
- PC – Finance
- PC – Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
- PC – Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
- PC – Programs for Mission and Ministry
- Peace Task Group
- Racial Justice Advisory Committee
- Representative to the Canadian Council of Churches Governing Board
- Representative to the KAIROS Board of Directors
- Representative to the World Religions of Canada Board
- Stewardship Studies Committee
- Theology and Faith Committee

The Executive of the General Council directed the General Council to establish a Task Group on Aboriginal Membership of the United Church.

The Executive of the General Council also recommends to the 39th General Council 2006 the following proposal: that The United Church of Canada transform its historical legacy to that of an equal and joint partnership in healing the church and the world in the Spirit of Christ, with the active partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples of The United Church of Canada.:

The Executive of the General Council proposed to the 39th General Council 2006 that it receive the report: *Water: Life Before Profit* with affirmations that water is a sacred gift that connects all life; encourage United Church congregations to learn more about, and become engaged in, water issues and participate in advocacy campaigns; and to call upon the Government of Canada to ensure access to clean water for all, both nationally and internationally.

The Executive of the General Council proposed to the 39th General Council 2006 that it approve the recommended revisions to Appendix IV of *The Manual*.

The Executive of the General Council proposed to the 39th General Council 2006 that ministry personnel from partner denominations with which The United Church of Canada participates in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry not be designated as ordained/diaconal supply, and that changes be made to *The Manual* and that these changes take into account the “Guidelines for Pastoral Relations” offered in the Handbook for a Canadian Ecumenical Shared Ministry.

The agenda for the 39th General Council 2006 was reviewed followed by discernment time using the model of the Kerygma Café. Worship was woven through this discernment process.

The Executive of the General Council proposed to the 39th General Council 2006 that the General Council receive the report *A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada* and affirm the directions within it, refer it to the Executive of the General Council, and that The United Church of Canada commit itself to becoming an intercultural church and that this be a denominational priority in living out its commitment to racial justice, where there is mutually respectful diversity and full and equitable participation of all Aboriginal, Francophone, ethnic minority, and ethnic majority constituencies in the total life, mission, and practices of the whole Church.

The Executive of the General Council adopted the Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures to be effective June 30, 2007 and directed the General Secretary to make the required changes to *The Manual*.

The Executive of the General Council accepted the invitation of Kamloops Okanagan Presbytery in British Columbia Conference to host the 40th General Council 2009 at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Regarding the Six Nations Land Claim, the Executive of the General Council directed the General Secretary to write to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Ontario, and the Federal and Provincial ministers responsible for Indian Affairs.

The Executive of the General Council endorsed, in principle, the concept and scope of Emerging Spirit Regional Training Events and an Emerging Spirit Leadership Development Module.

The Executive of the General Council transmitted all the remaining business to the Sub-Executive. The Executive also authorized its Sub-Executive to deal with the business placed before it by this meeting of the Executive and any emergent business that may arise prior to the meeting of the 39th General Council 2006.

Reinerio Arce Valentin gave his reflections on the meeting. The Moderator presented Reinerio with a gift and thanked him for his time with us.

On Saturday evening, the Moderator hosted a triennium “kitchen party”.

The Elected Members who were the Executive of the General Council during this triennium were thanked for their contributions and presented with plaques. Staff members leaving the General Council Office, Steven Chambers and Richard Choe, were presented with gifts of appreciation.

May 8, 2006, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council adopted the minutes of its April 13, 2006 meeting as circulated.

Regarding Retirement, the Sub-Executive of the General Council recommended that *The Manual* be amended to comply with legislation which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age and specifically prohibits mandatory retirement, authorized the General Secretary to amend the Human Resources Policy Manual, and communicate these changes to all Conferences, Presbyteries/Districts and Pastoral Charges.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council proposed that the date for implementation for the proposed changes to bylaws concerning the vulnerable sector police records check be ninety days after the publication of the Record of Proceedings of the 39th General Council.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council proposed that the Proposal on Staff as Corresponding Members be referred to the General Secretary for clarification.

Regarding the Roles and Relationships of Elected Members and Staff, the Sub-Executive of the General Council proposed that the terms of reference for the four permanent committees be consistent with Sections 601, 602, 603 and 604 of *The Manual* and that these sections be moved in *The Manual* to the section on the Executive of the General Council.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council endorsed more effective communication between the Moderator and the General Council commissioners during the triennium and directed the General Secretary to assist in implementation.

May 23, 2006, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive of the General Council adopted its minutes of May 8, 2006 as circulated.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council adopted the Terms of References for the following:

- Moderator's Advisory Committee.
- Nominations Committee

And adopted principles for reviewing terms of reference for all committees and task groups of the General Council and its Executive:

The Sub-Executive of the General Council revised its process for Strategic Planning so that the third step would be: "The General Secretary develops a proposed strategic plan based on the General Council's discernment, visioning and directions; and the Executive of the General Council's goals".

The Sub-Executive of the General Council directed the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry to consult with the Theology and Faith Committee to engage in further

study on the statement of the World Methodist Council on the Joint Statement on Justification and bring a recommendation to the Executive of the General Council.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council approved the “Guidelines for Accreditation of Faith Formation and Education Unit-Related Education Centres” for use in the current cycle of accreditation; accredited Five Oaks Christian Workers Center as an Education Centre of The United Church of Canada until the next round of accreditation is completed; and Stewart House not be accredited as an Education Centre of The United Church of Canada.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council set the General Council minimum travel rate for 2007 at \$.39 cents per kilometre and directed the General Secretary determine yearly adjustments of the General Council minimum travel rate and report annually to the Executive of the General Council.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council adopted Human Resources Policy 1.4 on Job Evaluation.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council set, for ministry personnel in pastoral relationships in pastoral charges, a minimum annual allowance at \$1200 for continuing education and books including prorating the allowance for part time personnel based on hours of work, and to review the minimum allowance annually by the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council referred Petition 20 to the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry, and Report #9 to the Permanent Committee, Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council received for information the report from the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry on the petitions approved by the 38th General Council 2003 as completion of the directives of the General Council; and

The Sub-Executive of the General Council named the Rev. Dr. William Smith its appointee to the Bridge Street United Church Foundation Board, effective July 1st, 2006

The Sub-Executive of the General Council authorized the Moderator and General Secretary to host an appreciation reception for General Council Office and Conference Office staff for the faithful and significant work that they have accomplished during the triennium.

June 5, 2006, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive adopted its minutes of May 23, 2006 as circulated.

The Sub-Executive’s agenda included proposals not dealt with by the past meeting of the Executive.

Regarding Designated Ministry, the Sub-Executive took no action on proposal MEPS 7 and asked the General Secretary to write a new proposal to adopt the policy for designated lay ministry as outlined in the report.

The Sub-Executive received for information the Moderator's and General Secretary's Accountability Reports.

The Sub-Executive appointed members to the following committees:

- Executive of the General Council – Ethnic Ministries Constituencies
- Audit Committee
- PC-Finance – Chairperson
- Ethnic Ministries Unit Wide Committee – Chairperson
- Faith Formation for All Ages Committee

and received an update for information on nominations to the 39th General Council 2006, Manual Committee, and Canadian Council of Churches appointment.

Follow-up from the previous Sub-Executive included an update on staff appreciation for the work done over the past triennium with an additional day holiday (July 4) to the staff group at the General Council Offices and at the Conference Offices.

June 28, 2006, Sub-Executive of the General Council

The Sub-Executive adopted their minutes of June 5, 2006, as circulated.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council appointed members to the following committees:

- Nominations Committee-Conference Representative and Members-at-Large
- Redesign and Evaluation Task Group
- Funding the Work of the Church
- Pension Advisory Committee
- Gender Justice Advisory Committee
- Permanent Committee – Finance
- Permanent Committee – Governance, Planning and Business Processes
- Permanent Committee – Ministry Employment, Policies and Services
- Permanent Committee – Programs for Mission and Ministry
- Racial Justice Advisory Committee

The Sub-Executive of the General Council approved the terms of reference for a Task Group on the General Council Grant to Conference.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council reviewed the Designated Lay Ministry/ Congregational Designated Ministry document which was revised as requested.

The Sub-Executive of the General Council endorsed the War Resisters Support Campaign (in relation to the Iraqi war) in the name of The United Church of Canada and directed the Justice, Global, and Ecumenical Relations Unit to participate in the campaign in ways consistent with the practices and values of the Church.

The Sub-Executive heard an update on comments in the press related to the proposal to the General Council on the Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel and the separate actions of a committee of Toronto Conference.

JUDICIAL COMMITTEE REPORT (Commons)

Origin: Frank Van Veen, Chair, Judicial Committee Executive

The Judicial Committee (which meets as an Executive of ten of the fifty-two members, four named by each Conference) held two meetings in the period since August 2003, both of which were conducted by telephone conference.

The Executive of the Judicial Committee deals primarily with appeals at the General Council level: from Decisions of Formal Hearing panels, Conferences, the Executive of General Council and of Rulings made by the General Secretary of the General Council.

During this term Frank Van Veen assumed the Chair of the Judicial Committee Executive when Patricia Elliott's term as a member of the Committee ended in 2003. Jim Sinclair took on the role of Secretary on assuming the position of General Secretary, General Council, and Marilou Reeve finished her term on the Executive.

In the term from 2003 to 2006 the following items were dealt with and are reported here:

Item 1

Richard Bott appealed the General Secretary's Ruling 04-002-R dated September 30, 2001 concerning whether a congregation, through its governing body (Session/Board/Council) can set policy on whether a minister may conduct a same-sex marriage outside of church property. The Judicial Committee Executive decided to hear the Appeal and ordered a panel be struck for that purpose.

The Appeal was heard by a duly appointed panel composed of Mr. Justice Charles Huband, Mr. Justice Norman Carruthers, Reverend Phil Cline, Ms. Sheila Duffin, and Reverend Angela Bailey. The panel dismissed the appeal and affirmed the Ruling of the General Secretary that "where a minister is in a pastoral relationship with a Congregation, the minister must always comply with that Congregation's policies in all marriage ceremonies conducted by that minister."

Item 2

Lucy Fellowes appealed two decisions: the Decision of Erskine and American United Church dated June 13, 2004 and the Decision of Montreal Presbytery dated June 15, 2004. Kofo Dedeke and others appealed the Decision of Montreal Presbytery dated June 14, 2004. The Decisions appealed from dealt with the disposition of assets and amalgamation of Erskine and American United Church. The Appeal was made to Montreal and Ottawa Conference which asked the Judicial Committee Executive to consider the matter on their behalf.

The Executive considered each of the grounds for appeal in each of the Appellants' Statements of Appeals separately. The Appeals were found not to meet the grounds for an Appeal pursuant to Section 076 (f) of *The Manual*.

STEPS ON THE JOURNEY TO RIGHT RELATIONS (Commons)

Origin: Residential Schools Steering Committee

Introduction

During the past triennium, the Residential Schools Steering Committee has remained deeply committed to the *vision of reconciliation* that was outlined in its report to the 38th General Council 2003. In particular, the Committee has endeavoured to adhere faithfully to the Six Principles contained in that report and adopted by the Executive of the General Council in October 2003 as those that should guide the church.

1. Anti-racism and Decolonization

“The church’s response to the legacy of Residential Schools must be framed by a commitment to challenge the ideology of racism and an acknowledgement of our role in the colonization of Aboriginal peoples which manifested this racism.”

2. Holistic Approach

“The church’s response to the legacy of Residential Schools must be comprehensive and must address the loss of language, culture and spirituality as well as sexual and physical abuse within the system.”

3. Full Participation of Aboriginal People

“Any agreement between church and government that affects the rights of survivors of Residential Schools or of Aboriginal peoples in general needs to include the participation of Aboriginal peoples in the process leading to an agreement.”

4. Whole Community Involvement

“With regard to the impacts of Residential Schools there must be an acknowledgement that these are communal as well as individual and that they are intergenerational.”

5. Healing and Education

“Addressing the legacy of Residential Schools must always include elements of support for healing initiatives within Aboriginal communities and a recognition of the need for healing and education within the non-Aboriginal community.”

6. Building Right Relations

“In all that we do in relation to our responsibility for the Residential School system, the goal of working towards right relations between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal peoples should be uppermost in our thoughts, words and actions.”

In carrying out its mandate to “co-ordinate all aspects of the issues related to residential schools, including the legal, pastoral, communications, alternate resolution possibilities and healing initiatives, and financial planning” (Executive of the General Council 1998), the Committee has also borne in mind that each decision and action must reflect our commitment to give substance and integrity to the Apologies of 1986 and 1998. This commitment is reflected in the statement released by the Committee in April 2005, entitled *Establishing a Firm Foundation for Healing and Right Relations*, which called for a comprehensive approach to redressing the harms of the residential school system (See www.united-church.ca).

I. Residential Schools Steering Committee

Over the past 3 years, the Committee has changed its membership structure in order to respond to the expressed wish of the Aboriginal community that there be stronger Aboriginal representation on the Committee, to reflect the changing emphasis of its work (away from litigation and towards healing), and to strengthen the feedback and accountability role of its members.

The current structure and membership is:

All Native Circle Conference: 2 representatives (at least one of whom is a survivor)

Nelson Hart and **Ann Callahan**

British Columbia Native Ministries Council: 2 representatives (at least one of whom is a survivor)

Charlotte Sullivan and **Alvin Dixon**

Non-aligned Aboriginal congregations: 2 representatives (at least one of whom is a survivor)

Murray Whetung and **Geraldine Robertson**

The General Council Officer: Residential Schools Steering Committee, **James Scott**

The Liaison Minister: Residential Schools Steering Committee, **Cecile Fausak**

The Special Advisor: Residential Schools Steering Committee, **David MacDonald**

The General Secretary: General Council, **Jim Sinclair**

The Moderator (ex-officio), **Peter Short**

One representative from the Executive of the General Council, **Allan Sinclair**

The General Council Minister: Racial Justice and Gender Justice, **Kim Uyede-Kai**

The Co-ordinator of Aboriginal Ministries, **Laverne Jacobs**

Corresponding Members are:

Legal /Judicial Counsel: **Cynthia Gunn**

Chief Archivist: **Sharon Larade**

Communications Officer: **Mary-Frances Denis**

The Committee bid a sad farewell to long-time staff member **Brian Thorpe**, and members **Bernice Saulteaux** and General Council Minister: Racial Justice **Wenh-In Ng** with profound gratitude for the gifts and contributions each brought to our work.

The Steering Committee welcomed new elected members Ann Callahan, Alvin Dixon, Nelson Hart, Geraldine Robertson, and Allan Sinclair (Executive of the General Council appointee) as well as new staff person, Cecile Fausak. Alvin Dixon was chosen as the Chairperson in June 2005.

The Committee meets three times per year. At least one meeting each year is held in a community outside Toronto, often the site of a former residential school. This allows the Committee members to remain grounded in the reality of the legacy of the residential schools by connecting with former students and with church and community members across Canada. During the past triennium, the Committee visited Walpole Island First Nation, Six Nations Reserve (Mohawk IRS), Winnipeg (Portage La Prairie IRS), and Port Alberni (Alberni IRS). We also met with Toronto Urban Native Ministries at Council Fire.

The Residential School Steering Committee reports regularly to Executive of the General Council and publishes a quarterly Update that is found on the United Church website: www.united-church.ca/residentialschools and it maintains webpages related to residential schools news, suggestions for learning and action, and responses to frequent questions.

II. Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement

On a national level, the most significant development in the past three years has been the negotiation of a multi-party, comprehensive agreement on a compensation and settlement package for all former students of Indian residential schools. In a press release (May 2, 2006) announcing that The United Church of Canada would sign the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, the church said that “This is an historic agreement that recognizes and begins to address in a comprehensive package the harm done to Aboriginal individuals and communities by the Indian residential school system...It is important for former students, for our church, and for our nation”. The Agreement was the result of much hard work, an evolution in thinking and changes of heart with respect to addressing the legacy of the residential school system.

Parties to the negotiations and the Agreement included the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit organizations, plaintiffs (represented by the National Consortium, Merchant Law Group and other legal counsel), The Anglican Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The United Church of Canada and approximately 41 Roman Catholic entities.

A. Background

In June 2001, the Department of Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada was created to address claims of physical and sexual abuse and wrongful confinement. In November 2003, the Government launched a National Resolution Framework to provide a litigation strategy, health supports, a Commemoration Program and an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process was intended as a speedier and less adversarial option than trials for former students who wished to settle abuse claims outside the courts.

Soon after it was launched, however, criticism of the ADR process began. A March 2004 conference at the University of Calgary, organised by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and financially supported by the United Church, concluded that the ADR was too limited in scope, not fair, too time consuming and, most importantly, did not reflect the principles of restorative justice as defined by expert panellists. The AFN then convened an “expert group” which issued a Review Report in November 2004 calling for the government to revise the ADR process, implement a lump sum payment to all former IRS students, and launch a national Truth and Reconciliation process.

In a statement issued in April 2005 (Establishing a Firm Foundation for Healing and Right Relations), The United Church of Canada supported the positions taken by the AFN in its Review Report. Consistent with our six principles, we maintained that any real resolution to the legacy of Indian residential schools must include Aboriginal voices in its design, must address the wide range of harms experienced at the schools, and should emphasize healing as well as compensation. We supported the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation process (see Section 4).

On May 30, 2005, the Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) signed a Political Agreement recognizing “the need to develop a new approach to achieve reconciliation” on the legacy of Indian residential schools. Central to that Agreement was the appointment of the Hon. Frank Iacobucci as federal representative to negotiate a comprehensive, fair and final resolution.

Mr. Iacobucci’s mandate was “*to negotiate with plaintiffs’ counsel, and work and consult with the Assembly of First Nations and counsel for the churches, in order to recommend, as soon as feasible, but no later than March 31, 2006, to the Cabinet through the Minister Responsible for Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, a settlement package that will address a redress payment for all former students of Indian residential schools, a truth and reconciliation process, community based healing, commemoration, an appropriate ADR process that will address serious abuse, as well as legal fees*”.

Mr. Iacobucci convened two “tables” which met almost weekly from June to November 2005. The first table discussed compensation issues. Legal counsel for the four parties (Canada, the churches, the AFN and the plaintiffs counsel) attended. The second table dealt with a Truth and Reconciliation process, commemoration and healing. The United Church was participated and ensured that the BC Survivors Society was also invited.

The negotiation process resulted in an Agreement in Principle (AIP) on Nov 20, 2005 that formed the framework for the final Settlement Agreement. The final, detailed Agreement was completed in late April 2006. It has received the support of all the parties to the process. The Agreement must yet be approved by 7 jurisdictional courts and pass a 5-month opt out period before being implemented, possibly early in 2007.

B. Contents of the Agreement

Common Experience Payment (CEP):

Every former student alive on May 30, 2005 is eligible to apply for a lump sum payment, called the *Common Experience Payment*, to recognize the wide range of harms that students experienced at the schools such as separation from family and home, lack of development of parenting skills, loss of language and culture, poor education, humiliation, etc. The government payment will provide \$10,000 for the first year of attendance (or part thereof) and \$3,000 for each additional year (or part thereof). An advance payment of \$8,000 is available (by application) to former students who are 65 years of age and older.

Any surplus funds will be distributed to survivors as personal education credits. Funds may also be transferred to Aboriginal educational foundations.

Abuse claims:

The process for settling serious sexual and physical abuse claims will be called the Independent Assessment Process (IAP). The IAP has been improved by simplifying the application form, expanding categories of recognized harms, using a single compensation grid for the whole country, recognizing Consequential Harms and Consequential Loss of Opportunity, and an expedited decision-making process. The government will pay 100% of all awards made by the independent adjudicator.

Truth and Reconciliation Process:

A 5-year national Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be established to conduct archival research, facilitate national and community-based truth and reconciliation events as opportunities for all those involved with the residential school system to tell their stories, create as complete an historical record as possible, and promote public awareness among Canadians about the impacts of the residential school system.

Healing Programs:

The Government of Canada will provide \$125 million to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) to fund community healing programmes over the next 5 years.

Commemoration:

Canada will provide \$20 million for commemoration initiatives, memorials, events and projects at the national or community level.

C. Implications for The United Church of Canada

Under our agreement, The United Church of Canada agrees to contribute a total of \$6,891,170.00 towards compensation and healing. Almost this entire amount has already been paid in settlements. Some of this commitment can be fulfilled through in-kind contributions to healing projects that meet criteria set out in the Agreement. A United Church Healing and Reconciliation Service Evaluation Committee will be set up to approve in-kind services to admissible programs.

As a result of fulfilling our legal and financial obligations under this Agreement, the liability of the Church for all compensation for all residential school abuse claims will be discharged. There is one exception to this blanket indemnity. Former students may make a claim for loss of language and culture in civil court against the federal government and/or the Church. The Church would be financially responsible for any compensation awarded against it for loss of language and culture. This is, however, an unlikely scenario since the courts have never recognized this as a compensable loss.

Fulfilling our legal/financial obligations under the Agreement, however, does not constitute our full participation in Settlement Agreement. The United Church will be actively involved in the healing and reconciliation components, such as the national and community events of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We will also continue to attend adjudication hearings for abuse claims to bear witness to the claimant's story and offer words of acknowledgement, apology and support.

The Executive of the General Council unanimously approved the Agreement on April 30, 2006 after receiving the report and recommendation of the Residential School Steering Committee.

More detailed information about the Settlement Agreement is available on the United Church website: www.united-church.ca/residentialschools

III. Legal Processes

Blackwater/Barney

In December 2003, the British Columbia Court of Appeal ruled that, in the Blackwater case involving 23 survivors of the Alberni Indian residential school, 100% of vicarious liability lay with Canada. This changed the original decision that had apportioned liability at 75% for the government and 25% for the church. In spite of concerns expressed by the churches and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) that an appeal of the BC decision would further delay moving on with a broader healing and right relations agenda, the federal government decided to seek leave to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada.

On October 21, 2005, the Supreme Court, in the case now known as Barney, restored the original court decision that Canada and the Church share vicarious liability (75/25) for the physical and sexual abuse of former students at the Alberni School. Vicarious liability relates to who had ultimate responsibility for the employees of the school arising out of control over policy and funding.

The decision of the Supreme Court means that the United Church continues to do what it had been doing for several years — settling claims as quickly and fairly as possible, and paying its share of settlements. The church is satisfied that the courts have now resolved the question of vicarious liability.

Baxter Class Action

The Baxter Class Action is a comprehensive lawsuit seeking compensation from the federal government and the churches for each former student of a residential school and their immediate family members. When required by the court in September 2003 to take a position on whether or not the church would defend in this case, the Steering Committee was faced with a difficult choice between defending in a situation in which many of the claims are related to matters for which we have already accepted our share of responsibility and have apologized or choosing not to defend and, thus, not have a voice in the court process.

The Steering Committee indicated to the courts that we would be defending. In so doing the committee was clear that the important matter of how the church defended itself would be guided by the Six Principles. The Executive affirmed the actions taken by the Steering Committee and mandated that “any further legal decisions and actions be guided by the six principles.”

The Baxter Class lawsuit is the largest of 22 class actions that have been filed in seven jurisdictions across Canada. The others don't name the United Church. The Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement recently negotiated will be submitted to the courts in the 7 jurisdictions where class action lawsuits have been filed in the summer of 2006. The courts will be asked to approve the Settlement Agreement as full and final resolution of all class actions.

Settlements

a. Litigation

Throughout this triennium, the United Church has continued to settle abuse claims out of court and as expeditiously as possible. Many former students who filed lawsuits against the church have elected to transfer their claims over to the Alternative Dispute Resolution process. To date

the only case to proceed to trial is the original Blackwater claim involving 23 former students of the Alberni residential school.

b. Alternative Dispute Resolution process (ADR)

On November 6, 2003, the Hon. Ralph Goodale, minister responsible for the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, announced a new dispute resolution process intended to provide a “user-friendly” alternative to litigation for claims related to sexual or physical abuse and wrongful confinement against Canada and church organizations. Independent adjudicators were hired and trained to conduct hearings in an informal setting where claimants could tell their story without cross-examination. The process is intended to be less intimidating, speedier and less adversarial than the court process.

Churches and survivors were consulted in the development of this government initiative. Due to pressure from these groups, the government made significant changes to the timing and scope of the release which participants in the process are required to sign. The release was moved from the beginning to the end of the adjudication process and “expressly excludes” issues of language and culture.

The Residential Schools Steering Committee felt that the United Church should be present at hearings to listen to the stories of former students, to acknowledge the harm they had suffered and to apologize. As a result, the Committee committed itself to support volunteer representatives to attend all hearings of former students making a claim against the United Church, unless the claimant asked the church not to attend.

In November 2003, the Committee recruited and trained 25 volunteers who would represent the United Church at either individual or group dispute resolution hearings. Representatives came from the four western Conferences and from the ANCC, and included the Moderator, three former Moderators and the General Secretary. In 2006, additional training sessions were held in MNWO and BC Conferences. This is a significant commitment by the church to acts of repentance and its own healing, and to provide a pastoral presence. Experience is also demonstrating that former students often find our presence a significant contribution to their own healing as well as for others at the hearing.

As of May 2006, Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) had screened in nearly 4300 applications to the ADR process. About 11% of claims are from former students of United Church-associated residential schools. The vast majority are from Manitoba and BC.

Number of ADR applications forwarded to The United Church of Canada by May 2006	394
Number of hearings completed or scheduled by March 2006	185
Number of hearings attended by a United Church representative:	91

While the United Church committed itself to participate fully in both court litigation and the government adjudication option, we recognized the need to continue to explore more effective and reconciliatory processes for resolving the legacy of the residential school system. Our

concerns for a more holistic approach were one element that led to the recent multi-party negotiations that resulted in the comprehensive Settlement Agreement.

IV. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In 1996, in the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, one chapter stood out. Chapter 11 described the compelling need for a Public Inquiry on Indian residential schools. The Commission had become totally convinced that there could be no major advance in the fate of Aboriginal Peoples or in their relationship with Canadian society if this legacy was not addressed.

At the 38th General Council in Wolfville, Nova Scotia in 2003, George Erasmus, former Chair of the Royal Commission and now President of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, re-enforced that conclusion and urged the United Church to take the lead in initiating such an inquiry. A notice of motion was later presented at Council.

At the first meeting of the new Executive of the General Council in November 2003, in response to a motion from Maritime Conference, the Executive decided to send a letter to the Prime Minister urging the government to act on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples that a public inquiry into residential schools be held.

In addition, the Executive of the General Council directed the Residential Schools Steering Committee to establish a task group “in consultation with the All Native Circle Conference, B.C. Native Ministries and Aboriginal communities not so represented to bring a proposal for the process of truth-telling to the April 2004 meeting of the Executive of the General Council.” This also addressed a notice of motion from the 38th General Council 2003 calling for the church to initiate the equivalent of a public inquiry (only governments can initiate public inquiries).

Early in 2004, the United Church initiated a series of Roundtables on Truth and Reconciliation. From the outset, it was our intention to make these sessions inclusive for all interested or affected parties. Over the course of the next 18 months, the Roundtable continued to meet and develop a vision for a Truth and Reconciliation process. That vision evolved from a “public inquiry” model to a locally-based model where communities could create truth-sharing and healing opportunities based on regional and cultural norms. It is particularly significant that the basic leadership from the Roundtable is shared among Aboriginal members, survivors and survivor-led organizations.

By September of 2004, we had circulated our first draft of a proposed “Peoples’ Commission for Truth, Hope and Reconciliation.” We also shared our proposals with the national leadership of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) who were very supportive of our work. Later that fall, the AFN issued their Review Report with recommendations to revise the Dispute Resolution process. The report also included a call for a national mechanism for Truth-Sharing, Healing and Reconciliation.

By early 2005, Members of Parliament on the Committee for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development were calling for a government response to the AFN report and its recommendations. On May 30, 2005, as the Roundtable was preparing to put wheels on its

process, the government signed an agreement with the Assembly of First Nations seeking a “new approach to achieve reconciliation on the basis of the AFN report.” This agreement announced the appointment of former Supreme Court Justice, Hon. Frank Iacobucci as the Federal Representative and instructed him to create a settlement package which would include “a truth and reconciliation process.”

Throughout the summer and fall of 2005, members of the Roundtable participated in, and brought their community-based vision to, the Iacobucci deliberations on a truth and reconciliation mechanism. The final Settlement Agreement announced on May 10, 2006 includes a 12 page “Mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”

At its June 1st, 2006 meeting in Ottawa, the Roundtable agreed that it would continue to meet to facilitate the participation of its various constituencies in the Truth and Reconciliation process and to ensure that the message contained in the opening paragraph of this Mandate will be fulfilled. It states: *“There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experience will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation.”*

V. Healing, Education and Reconciliation

A. Hazelton Feast

On March 20, 2004, The United Church of Canada and the Government of Canada had the privilege of hosting a “Coming Home” feast in Hazelton, B.C. for 23 survivors of residential schools who had completed a group resolution process and were now being welcomed back into their respective houses and feast hall traditions of the Gitksan community.

The feast, held according to Gitksan tradition, was an opportunity for the United Church and for the government of Canada to demonstrate in action our words of apology to residential school survivors and to the Gitksan nation.

On behalf of the United Church, former Moderator Marion Best delivered the apology of the church. Marion was accompanied by Brian Thorpe and James Scott representing the General Council, Doug Goodwin and Keith Howard from British Columbia Conference, and Donna Zeigler representing Prince Rupert Presbytery. Local United Church folk were also invited to attend by the Gitksan nation.

As a part of the preparation for the feast, and with the guidance of two chiefs, Vernon Milton and Jim Angus, representatives of the Church and Canada went to the homes and extended personal invitations to the feast to the Gitksan chiefs in six different communities within the nation. On several occasions the reply to the invitations involved verbal responses from the chiefs, dancing, gift-giving and feasting. Most of the process was conducted in Gitksanimax, the language of the Gitksan.

It was an extraordinary privilege for the Church to be allowed to host a traditional feast in Gitxsan culture. The 11-hour event rich in tradition saw the former students welcomed into one of the 4 clans with prayer, singing, dancing and joyful tears. More can be read about the feast in the cover story of the June 2004 *United Church Observer*.

While the feast may be seen by some as the culmination of the Hazelton ADR, it is important to note that for the United Church, it represents an important step in a long journey of response to the impact of the residential school system on the Gitxsan and other nations. It also represents a commitment on the part of the church to the building of a new relationship based on justice seeking and respect between the Gitxsan nation and the church.

B. Justice and Reconciliation Fund

The Justice & Reconciliation Fund is a United Church of Canada fund to enable regional events in support of reconciliation and relationship building initiatives between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. It is available to Conferences, presbyteries, congregations, outreach/community ministries, and education centres. It is distinct from the Healing Fund which is intended to support grass-roots projects that are First Nations-initiated and community-oriented. The Justice and Reconciliation Fund is administered through JGER although the \$50,000 annual budget comes from the Residential School Fund.

The Fund made total grants of \$39,401 in 2003, \$18,500 in 2004 and \$38,754 in 2005. Details about the Fund and about the projects that received grants is available on the United Church website at www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/relationships/fund

During this triennium, the criteria for the Fund were updated, a streamlined decision-making process was implemented and new promotional material developed. Since its inception in 2000, the Fund has been under-utilized. Recent promotion of the Fund has resulted in a substantial increase in interest and applications in 2006.

C. National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (NDHR)

For several years, the United Church has joined with other organizations to promote May 26th as a National Day of Healing and Reconciliation. The initiative to declare a national day acknowledging the history and harm caused by Indian residential schools, and other discriminatory government policies, as well as the general need for reconciliation in our lives, is based on Australia's National Sorry Day, proclaimed in 1998 after a Royal Commission into the forced removal of thousands of Aboriginal children from their homes.

Survivors, churches and healing organizations are hopeful that by encouraging communities and congregations to remember this dark history and current challenge for over 80,000 Aboriginal survivors and their communities, increased support will be generated around actions towards healing and reconciliation.

The National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (NDHR) is an initiative meant to effect healing and reconciliation among all races, creeds, and denominations now residing in Canada. The

national NDHR Campaign is hosted by and administered first through the Nechi Institute and now through Native Counselling Services of Alberta. (www.ndhr.ca)

D. Congregational Study

In February 2006, the Residential School Steering Committee in conjunction with JGER, the Coordinator of Aboriginal Ministries and the Program Officer for the Healing Fund developed and mailed to every congregation a special resource package relating to 20th Anniversary of the 1986 Apology. Among other things, the package contained a 3-session congregational study process for use between the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (May 26th) and National Aboriginal Day (June 21st). The study booklet, *A Healing Journey for Us All: Uncovering the Wounds of Empire*, explores the roots of colonialism and its resulting policies of assimilation and cultural destruction, of which residential schools was one prime example.

E. Community visits

In an attempt to remain grounded, visible and accountable, and to encourage the building of right relations, the Residential School staff have visited the following communities over the past three years: Bella Bella, Bella Coola, Rivers Inlet, Nanaimo, Hazelton, Alberni, Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Walpole Island First Nation, Portage La Prairie, White Bear Reserve, Christian Island, Curve Lake, Wasauksing First Nation, Rama First Nation, Kitimaat, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Morley, Norway House, Sudbury, Cross Lake (MB), Goodfish Lake Reserve (AB), Saddle lake Reserve (AB), Terrace, Port Simpson, and Hobbema.

VI. External and Internal Working Relationships

B. Working Caucus

The United Church, along with a dozen Aboriginal delegates and representatives of the Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches, sits on an advisory committee to the federal department, Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC). The advisory committee called the *Working Caucus* meets four times a year to dialogue with the department on various initiatives to address the legacy of Indian residential schools. Most importantly, the Working Caucus has offered a constructive critique of the development and implementation of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. This feedback has, in some cases, resulted in substantive changes to the government's position, most notably in changes to the final release required of claimant's in the ADR process. The Working Caucus has been an important forum for government-church-survivor dialogue.

C. Aboriginal Healing Foundation/ Legacy of Hope Coalition (D)

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) established in 1998 has engaged survivors in well over a thousand projects and involved more than 100,000 persons in native communities across Canada. The original allocation of \$350 million has funded over \$400 million in actual projects and programs.

In 2004, when it appeared that funding for the AHF would not be renewed, the United Church wrote to the government to support the extension of the Foundation. In addition, the United Church, along with the AHF, was a founding member of the Legacy of Hope Coalition which was created to ensure a base of support for long term healing work with other partners including churches, charitable foundations, concerned agencies and philanthropic organizations.

Under the recent Settlement Agreement, the federal government committed a further \$125 million to the AHF for the next five years. Forty-nine Catholic organizations have also pledged between \$25 to \$50 million to healing which will be directed through the Foundation. Nevertheless, there is a growing realization that healing work needs a long-term commitment of human and financial support over the next ten to thirty years in order to meet the vital needs of the 80,000 residential school survivors, their families and communities.

D. Assembly of First Nation (AFN) (D)

Over the past triennium, the United Church has developed a closer working relationship with the Assembly of First Nations through periodic meetings with the National Chief, Phil Fontaine.

Early in 2004, the AFN called a national conference jointly with the University of Calgary law school to examine the government's dispute resolution process for residential school abuse claims. The theme was "Is Reconciliation Possible?" and brought together representatives of First Nations, government, churches, legal experts, health and social advisors.

The United Church contributed financially to the conference and former Moderator, Very Reverend Bill Phipps, and David MacDonald, Special Advisor to the United Church on residential schools were among the speakers. The conference itemized a number of criticisms and shortcomings of the Alternative Dispute Resolution process and proved a pivotal event in launching a more comprehensive approach, by all parties, to the legacy of residential schools.

From the fall of 2004 to the spring of 2006, the AFN and its leadership have been front and center in the process that led to the Political Agreement in May 2005 and the final Settlement Agreement signed in May 2006. The United Church has actively supported the approach and leadership of the Assembly of First Nations.

E. Ecumenical (D)

Over the past decade, the Ecumenical Working Group made up of Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and United Church representatives, has met on a regular basis to consult and cooperate in addressing the legacy of residential schools. This has involved collaboration in such initiatives as the "public inquiry" Roundtable and the Legacy of Hope Coalition.

In recent years there have been several attempts to arrive at a comprehensive resolution for abuse claims. Each faith group has had to find its own path while attempting to understand and support the others in their journey.

The comprehensive Settlement Agreement of early May 2006 contains distinct agreements with Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United Church organizations. Consistent in substance but differing in some details, these agreements represent over 75 different church entities.

With this historic Agreement concluded, the Ecumenical Working Group will now look to how it can work collaboratively to further significant healing and reconciliation for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

F. Internal Working Relationships

The staff of the Residential Schools Steering Committee have participated in and strengthened a number of working relationships within the church over the past three years. This includes participation in regular Aboriginal Ministries and Justice meetings which co-ordinate the work of all those working on Aboriginal related justice issues. Several members of the Steering Committee attended the Aboriginal Consultation in Sudbury in July 2005.

We participated in the ANCC Grand Council in 2005 and have attended at least one of the meetings of each of the ANCC presbyteries and the BC Native Ministries Council over the past three years. We have met with representatives of the native congregations not aligned with ANCC or BC Native Ministries on three occasions. We have also met with native solidarity or justice groups in several other Presbyteries (Agassiz and Yellowhead).

We made presentations to a gathering of the Presidents of Conferences who began their terms in 2005, and in 2006, and led a workshop and worship at the Alberta and Northwest UCW Conference annual meeting. Plans are afoot to be more connected to the UCW network.

Staff members made presentations at M&O, ANW, Maritime Conferences in 2006 to highlight the 20th anniversary of the 1986 Apology. Previously, staff had resourced Saskatchewan and Montreal & Ottawa Conference annual meetings. Other committee members and past staff also drew attention to the 20th anniversary of the 1986 apology and the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in at least 5 other conferences.

G. Collaboration with Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit (JGER)

In 2003, JGER published *Toward Justice and Right Relationships: A Beginning*. This is a study guide with a video (and now DVD) for congregations and church groups as they explore the legacy of Indian residential schools and forge new relationships with First Nations' peoples. This and the previous resource published in 2001 *Justice and Reconciliation* have been foundational to spurring the church into learning and action. The special *Mandate* magazine May 2005 to develop the mission theme "One More Step: Living in Right Relationship" has also been very helpful in terms of drawing attention to how many more steps are necessary.

In June 2005, RSSC held a joint visioning session with JGER, and from that three projects emerged. One was the special mailing for the 20th anniversary of the apology which was completed in February 2006, and involved a special printing of the 1986 apology and part of the response with a picture of the cairn. The other two projects, "recognition of aboriginal territory" and "cross-cultural experiences with First Nations" are in initial development stages.

Residential Schools staff also make regular contact with JGER staff relating to each Conference around aboriginal justice. The Residential Schools *Update* is now sent to JGER's conference contact list. Preliminary discussions were held with staff regarding inclusion in "Online Youth for Justice."

H. Collaboration with Faith Formation

The 2005 visioning session also gave priority to a project with the Faith Formation Unit doing an “inventory” of the kind of efforts made by the theological schools and lay training centres to educate with an aboriginal perspective, and to explore the history of residential schools and their impact.

I. Translation of the Apologies

The 1998 apology had been translated into several aboriginal and ethnic languages, but the 1986 apology was only in Swampy Cree and Oji-Cree. In 2005, the Steering Committee undertook to have both apologies available in Ojibway, Mohawk, and TH Cree as well as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Portuguese.

VII. Next Steps?

The Settlement Agreement defines legal and financial obligations of the United Church as negotiated with the federal government, Aboriginal leaders, plaintiffs counsel and other churches. These obligations will soon be paid off. What then? The Agreement does not define or limit our moral responsibilities as they relate to our active and long-term commitment to build right relationships of trust, respect and mutuality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Lawsuits, claims and settlement processes have absorbed a great deal of the Church’s attention over the past decade. It is as if the Residential School Steering Committee has, of necessity, been working primarily in one corner of the “tent” (i.e. its mandate). It is to the work of healing, justice-seeking and reconciliation that the Steering Committee and the Church must now turn our attention and our resources.

The church’s attempt to “live out” our Apologies has involved the incremental steps of learning to be present to those we do not know, learning to listen to what survivors feel and need for healing, and being open to the gifts and leadership of former students in the process of reparation and reconciliation. To seriously pursue this work in the absence of legal or financial threat will challenge our commitment as well as our theological and cultural assumptions. It will also challenge our pocketbooks, but we believe it offers the promise of personal and denominational transformation.

THE UNITED CHURCH OBSERVER’S REPORT TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)

Origin: Lois O’Neill, Chairperson, The United Church Observer Board of Directors

The United Church Observer is the national news magazine of The United Church of Canada, published 11 times a year under the authority of the General Council. So it is natural that since the last General Council, The Observer has been writing about many of the issues that this Council has before it: the Emerging Spirit project, the active welcoming of younger people, especially between 30 and 45 years, into our congregations; the growing discussion of beliefs

through work on a new statement of faith; concerns about isolation of ministers. And maybe the most important, seeking the word of God as the church looks to its future.

These are just a few of the stories The Observer has covered in this time of significant shifts both in our church and God's world. Global warming, world development, elder abuse, new hymns, peace prospects, protection of our water, keeping our families strong: these all show up on Observer pages.

As the church recognizes itself at a crossroads with weighty decisions to make, The Observer has been carrying frequent articles by Moderator Rt. Rev. Peter Short over the past three years. This spring, The Observer published *Outside Eden: Essays of Encouragement*. The book includes six of his published pieces, along with eight new essays. We believe this collection will be of great benefit to the church and beyond.

Changes are occurring at the magazine itself. Editor/Publisher Muriel Duncan has given notice of her early retirement in September. The Board of Directors expects to announce a new Editor/Publisher this summer. Linda McNamara, promotion co-coordinator is also leaving, moving out of the Toronto area.

The Observer itself is actively following its Five Year Plan. As usual, its finances are fragile but support from the Observer Friends Fund appeal allows it to maintain a high quality magazine that informs and engages the United Church community. The Friends Fund contributions—over \$250,000 this year—go to pay down operating expenses and to provide long-term financial stability. The magazine also gets a grant from the church unified budget, \$126,575 in 2005. We are grateful for the stability this brought to our financial planning.

Promotion remains our greatest challenge. In congregations where The Observer is not paid for by the church, the magazine is sold by volunteer Observer reps at the congregation level, with the magazine supplying professional, free, promotional resources and backup support. The wonderful work of the volunteers has kept the cost of the magazine down but we realize over the years it is more difficult to find people to take on this mission in every congregation. We fear we are not reaching all the people we should be in each community with opportunity to subscribe to their own church magazine.

The United Church Observer was recognized for excellence this spring in national and international competition, winning 29 awards. For the second year in a row, the Observer won the best denominational magazine category in the Canadian Church Press awards, 17 awards in all in that association. In the North American Associated Church Press presentations, the Observer won 12 awards, the highest among denominational magazines.

“The Board wishes to thank Muriel for her many years of faithful service and for the commitment to excellence she has shown throughout her time as editor of The United Church Observer. The church across Canada has benefited enormously from the quality of writing, the informative and balanced reporting and the intimate understanding of our United Church that have been the hallmarks of the ‘Duncan era’. Our gratitude and admiration for Muriel’s

editorship are unreserved. We are certain that The Observer's thousands of faithful readers join us in offering thanks to her and best wishes for a happy retirement."

Respectfully submitted,

Lois O'Neill, Chairperson, Board of Directors, The United Church Observer

INTRODUCTION TO DUTY OF CARE (Commons)

Origin: Support to Local Ministries

The United Church of Canada has expressed its social justice witness and commitment to faith formation through the creation and support of outreach ministries, camps, seniors' facilities, schools, financial trusts, housing initiatives, education centres, and chaplaincies located across Canada.

The Duty of Care Program in the Support to Local Ministries Unit works with these ministries, their managers, directors, staff, and volunteers as they oversee the nearly 400 non-congregational ministries across the country. The work includes developing administrative standards, monitoring their implementation, and certifying through an accreditation program ministries that use the name of The United Church of Canada.

Exercising a duty of care involves taking steps to avoid causing foreseeable harm to another person or his/her property. Boards and directors of specialized and institutional ministries of the United Church have the responsibility to exercise the care, diligence, and skill of a reasonably prudent person in the oversight of their organizations' governance.**

**Based on principles from Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector, *Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada's Voluntary Sector* (Voluntary Sector Roundtable, February 1999).

Sector-specific standards have been or are being developed for each type of ministry. The goal of these standards is to ensure that the highest standards of care in the delivery of services and the proclamation of the gospel in deed and word is exercised in United Church ministries.

Where the best possible care of people is the goal, better ministry is the result.

Introducing the Program

"Introducing The United Church of Canada Duty of Care" brochure highlights the objectives of a duty of care program and some practical steps to take in developing your own program.

Congregations and non-congregational ministries will find this helpful in reviewing the work of their ministries through a duty of care lens.

Introducing The United Church of Canada Duty of Care (PDF at www.united-church.ca/duty)

Duty of Care with Children's Ministries

“But Jesus called for them and said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs’” (Luke 18:16).

Children are the future of our churches and our communities. Providing a safe, secure environment for worship and faith formation is essential. The “Duty of Care with Children's Ministries” brochure provides congregations with some practical considerations for working with our youngest population.

Duty of Care with Children's Ministries (PDF at www.united-church.ca/duty)

Emergency Preparedness

In times of crisis, many turn to their faith community for support. Emergencies take many forms: epidemic/pandemic, extreme weather, natural disasters, or losses to infrastructure.

As part of the wider community, the faith community needs to be ready to respond. However, the very nature of community may increase the level of risk to which ministry personnel, lay leaders, and participants are exposed. How do we continue to offer our ministry, on Sunday mornings and throughout the week, while minimizing the risk?

Check this flyer for ideas that may help your ministry develop its own emergency preparedness plan.

Are You Ready for a Health Emergency? (PDF at www.united-church.ca/duty)

Screening Process

This handbook is provided by the Support to Local Ministries Unit of the United Church to help our institutions, organizations, ministries, camps and congregations understand the principles of screening, as one measure of our “Duty Of Care,” and to put these procedures into practice in the recruitment and selection of both staff and volunteers.

Faithful Footsteps: Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in the United Church of Canada (PDF at www.united-church.ca/duty)

From The United Church of Canada website (www.united-church.ca/duty)

**ALBERTA AND NORTHWEST CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE
39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)**

Origin: Alberta and Northwest Conference

Item 1: Personnel Changes in the Conference

During the triennium since the 38th General Council 2003 the Staffing Model in Alberta and Northwest Conference has been reviewed. There have been several changes in the staff complement. Gale Glover retired in 2004 from the position *Personnel Administration Coordinator*. The position was evaluated, revised and given a title to bring it into harmony with

the titles for this position in other Conferences. Earl Reaburn was appointed to the position *Personnel Minister*. The job descriptions of the former *Congregational Development Coordinators* were reviewed and revised. These three staff persons are now our Regional Resource Personnel. Janet McDonald resigned the position *Resource Development Coordinator* in 2004 to take on new work in the General Council Office. The position was declared redundant and a new part time position *Resource Administration Coordinator* was developed as a contract position, made a permanent part-time position in 2005. Kathy Suteau is incumbent in this staff position. In 2004 a half-time *General Office Assistant* position was added to the staffing complement and we welcomed Anne King to that work. In 2005 the Conference established a part-time contract position *Youth and Young Adult Ministry Training Program Coordinator* for three years ending in 2008. Shauna Gibbons joined the staff in this capacity in January 2006. Alberta and Northwest Conference is blessed with a full staff complement of 9.5 FTE expressed in the work of twelve (12) staff persons. The staffing complement is comprised of an Executive Secretary, a full-time Personnel Minister, three full-time Regional Resource Personnel, an Archivist (0.6 FTE), Resource Administration Coordinator (0.5 FTE), Youth and Young Adult Ministry Training Program Coordinator (0.3 FTE), a full-time Office Coordinator, an Accountant (0.6 FTE), a full-time Administrative Assistant and a General Office Assistant (0.5 FTE)

At the 80th Meeting of Alberta and Northwest Conference held May 25-28, 2006 the Conference recognized with deepest appreciation and esteem the work of our Office Coordinator, Sandra Ranger, for her long and continuing service, celebrating a quarter century of service to the Conference. The Conference also recognized, with appreciation for their dedicated service Patricia Bourque, Regional Resource Personnel for the Northern Region who has served on the Conference Staff since 1994; and Jane Bowe-McCarthy for ten years of service as Conference Archivist.

Item 2: Changes, Challenges and Future Directions

In addition to the above staff changes, the Conference has undertaken a review of its visioning function and decided at its 80th meeting to disband the three Overview and Visioning Committees and reconfigure the work of the Executive to enable the Executive as the governing body in the Conference to engage more effectively in discerning purpose, vision and strategic focus for the work of the Conference.

Alberta and Northwest Conference is excited about the prospects of the *Emerging Spirit* program initiated by the Executive of the General Council. The theme of the 80th Meeting of the Conference: *A Question of Leadership* was resourced in part by theme speaker Keith Howard, Executive Director of the *Emerging Spirit* project. Keith provided the Conference with a profound and insightful opportunity to explore dimensions of leadership in our context and to hear and discuss research and leadership principles engaged in the *Emerging Spirit* program. The Conference recognizes both a call for the church to bear witness to the life-transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the opportunity provided within the *Emerging Spirit* program to nurture congregations in this mission, to equip them to make connections with people between the ages of 30 and 45. We note particular opportunities in Alberta's growing economy. The Conference is well positioned to embark on this work.

Implementation of a Conflict Intervention Awareness Program during the triennium has had a positive impact on both understanding of and capacity to respond creatively and appropriately to situations of Conflict that arise in a church in a changing context. Presbyteries and Pastoral Charges are making effective use of the Alternative Dispute Resolution resources developed over the past three years.

The Conference has established a practice of meeting two out of the three years in the General Council triennium and to hold Regional events as an alternative to the Conference Meeting in the years when the Conference does not meet. The pattern for meetings of Conference has now been set for every other year with inspirational, educational events planned in each of the three regions within the Conference in the alternate year. This strategy provides opportunity for the church to gather in configurations other than judicatory for nurture and renewal during the in-between years and to do the business of Conference in the alternate years.

Alberta and Northwest Conference has been ably served by Presidents Doug Coubrough, Cecile Fausak and Wayne Flewelling during the triennium.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn I. Maki, Executive Secretary

**ALL NATIVE CIRCLE CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE
39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)**

Origin: All Native Circle Conference

Over the past 3 years there has been an increasing awareness of the approach of the 20th Anniversary of the United Church Apology to First Nations congregations. Last summer the Aboriginal Consultation focused on 3 areas of work for the Aboriginal church – Youth at Risk, Leadership and Right Relations – the Theme being: Listening to the Spirit – Preparing the Way. This was immediately followed by All Native Circle Conference’s Grand Council with the theme: The Healing Way. Themes and work specifically focused on working as healed persons, and communities. Our Leading Elders provide much sought after leadership for all areas of the work of the conference.

At the 2005 Aboriginal Consultation and the All Native Circle Conference (ANCC) Grand Council we paused to list and uplift the strides we have taken with the United Church. At the Aboriginal Consultation we celebrated and lifted up our First Nations leaders in the theological schools – Brenda Simpson (Francis Sandy Theological Centre), Melody McKellar (Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre), and Martin Brokenleg (Native Ministries Program at Vancouver School of Theology) and acknowledged that all 3 schools had First Nations leaders. We continued our time together with celebration and ceremony at the site of the Cairn where the Apology took place (Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario). Further – Moderator Peter Short was honoured with a naming ceremony – Shining Rock Chief.

While we have been celebrating this year and last we also understand that there is much work to do. We struggle with recurring themes of trying to bring understanding to the wider church about who we are ...how we live together, and how our ministries function in a different way, and with this to bring wider validation to the ministries of ANCC.

ANCC is very aware of the tension caused by shrinking resources in all areas of the church's work. And we are especially aware of the tension that ANC attracts with the focus of the Mission Support allotments. Over the past year and a half we have made ourselves accessible to the questions, and open to conversation and accountability. However, we are aware of the amount of work this will take, and how necessary strengthening relationships with national staff and volunteers will aid us in this initiative.

We are aware of how much healing needs to take place on the part of the First Nations and non First Nations alike in the church. One of the 'for sures' in ANCC and our training centres is that it is known that these are the safest places to heal. But with that comes the difficulty of making space for that to happen during the 'regular' work of the church.

The ANCC lost its sacred bundle several years ago...and had much healing to do with that, and much learning. This past year the Conference and its Executive made steps toward spiritual healing by gifting the circle with a bundle. Sacred items were brought from each Presbytery to be included in the bundle...with teachings for each item. The Leading Elders and the Executive have spent much time talking about this, spending time with the bundle, and being present for the responsibilities of learning and healing that it holds.

We struggle with the continuing challenges of youth at risk, and leadership development and right relationships...time for conversation and planning for these initiatives is ongoing, and needs many, many staff hours, planning and resources.

Today, All Native Circle Conference staff consists of 1 Speaker, 1 Conference Personnel Minister, and a term Finance officer (May 06-May07) and 2 part time administrative support staff. The ANC Councils of Sharing and Learning have been responding to the business and administration of the church. The Council of Healing and Respect had been meeting during the biennial meetings of conference. This past year the Council of Healing and Respect asked and was allotted budget to meet as frequently as the other 2 councils – twice per year. They also asked for a full time staff position. This request proved impossible with the present funding of the conference. However, the staff committee responded with a 20% allotment of staff time from the incoming Conference Personnel Minister – September 2006.

The Council Healing and Respect's work relates primarily to Justice, Global, and Ecumenical relations. With this huge piece of oversight before them, the council has had to prioritize its work and focus – for community, for harnessing/directing work and for responding to the pressures for First Nations guidance for difficult issues, with the recognition of its limited "Response Ability". With 8 members and one elder representing 4 presbyteries in ANCC– the amount of work is overwhelming. Until September 2006 the Speaker staffs this council.

Ministry with Youth and Children: ANC is very aware that no programs are in place at the conference level to train or provide leadership for events and/or ongoing programming within

communities. Several communities have been able to move forward with this, but many are yet to be developed. A recent visit to northern Manitoba took place, with resource staff from UCC attending with the Speaker for the development of new (appropriate) aboriginal children's resources. All Native Circle Conference presently has no program staff or budget to meet this need. Creative responses are needed.

Plans are in place for the fall of 2006 for two ministry personnel retreats. It is hoped that these retreats will offer healing, support and direction to persons in ministry within the conference.

ANC has provided staff and elected representation to the "Design Team" working on the structure, function, and vision of a native ministries unit (staffed by the Native Ministries Coordinator) and called for by the Aboriginal Consultation 2005.

The journey has just begun, ANCC has engaged in a number of initiatives...and undertaken a significant amount of work. There is a five year plan in place that is well under way. The boundaries of ANC (Albert to Quebec) still challenge the staff and volunteers who travel to do the work. Conversation and visits between BC Native Ministries and ANCC have fostered sharing ideas and insights. All ANC presbyteries endorsed the nomination of Jim Angus as Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

The larger church continues its steady pace, and we hope for the energy, insight and resources to find ways to come together...and narrow the gap between First Nations church and the wider church.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Jourdain, Speaker

BAY OF QUINTE CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)

Origin: Bay of Quinte Conference

Over the past few years, in an effort to increase efficiency, achieve some financial savings as well as valuing the time and passion of our volunteers the Conference has restructured. The size of the Executive has been reduced, some committees eliminated, and others reorganized with new mandates. We will monitor these changes and continue to discern how best to fulfil God's mission and ministry in the Conference.

We have also been engaged in a priority setting process. At the recent annual meeting the Conference adopted five ministry pursuits. These include:

- To provide skilled leadership resources to presbyteries and congregations

- To enable spiritual development and education of all those involved in the ministry of The United Church of Canada in the Bay of Quinte Conference
- To provide pastoral support for Ministry Personnel and their families
- To provide pastoral support and administrative resources for those carrying Conference responsibilities
- To fulfill the duties of the Conference as prescribed in *The Manual*.

The Ministry Personnel & Education Committee has been seeking ways to provide a system of support to ministers in their initial years of ministry, and one of their committees has been exploring how to strengthen the work of Pastoral Relations and Pastoral Oversight Committees. In light of the Isolation in Ministry Report, our Personnel Minister has been providing opportunities for Ministry Personnel Retreats as well as ongoing Pastoral Support.

We celebrate the opportunity to run a trial project entitled “Extra Measures Initiative” which allows congregations/presbyteries to support a specific Project of a United Church global partner while maintaining their contributions to the M&S fund. This opportunity has created great interest and excitement within the Conference, and was initiated in response to congregations who wished to have stronger UCC ties in Mission. The Conference celebrates that we are the second highest Conference in increased givings to the M&S Fund, and fifth in overall givings. Opportunities for Conference members to see first hand the Mission work of the church in the Philippines and China, as well as a 9-week return visit last year from two members of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, has helped raise M&S awareness throughout the Conference.

Our Alternate Dispute Resolution Committee has been developing ways to assist congregations to deal with conflict as it arises and the Conference has also trained a group of people who will voluntarily assist congregations in the aftermath of a conflict situation. While we applaud the opportunity for a one person review process as this alleviates some of the stress on the Presbytery, we are still concerned about the number of reviews and litigious situations in our Conference and are monitoring these.

Other concerns include the increased scrutiny of the local health units regarding food preparation for Church suppers and the potential impact this could have on the sense of community in local congregations. Also, many congregations are struggling with questions of viability and many of our presbyteries seem unable to know how to address these issues. The number of part-time ministries is also on the increase.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Bulloch, Executive Secretary

**BRITISH COLUMBIA CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE
39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)**

Origin: British Columbia Conference

When God declared, “I am about to do a new thing” the people of Israel would have been wise to duck and take cover. The “new” does not necessarily mean “good”, and even if good is not always welcome. A time of “doing a new thing” is also a time of trouble.

Located in the most secularized region of North America, British Columbia Conference in recent years has been struggling to decide what new things to adopt, and what new things to avoid.

The B.C. Conference Executive adopted a significantly different model of governance in 2000. Half a decade later governance is still a major issue in the Conference with many levels of church courts reviewing and changing their traditional practices and habits. A recent weekend training event for the Chairs of congregational boards was oversubscribed with a second event already fully registered. The Conference Executive itself has been able to focus much more on broader issues and directions, enabling it to identify “Effective Leadership” with a focus on Ministry Personnel as its top priority concern.

After prioritizing “effective leadership”, especially for Ministry Personnel, as the top priority for Conference work, it became clear that a major need of ministry personnel is spiritual pastoral care. A new Conference working group is preparing programming and support structures to ensure our leadership are not left isolated and carrying their burdens alone.

An initiative has also begun to restructure and refinance the camping ministry of the Conference to ensure high quality, well financed and sustainable camps. Plans are to invest close to \$12 million in church camping over the next few years. Money for this project will come from the sale of some camp properties. The combination of huge hope and possibility for camping, along with grief over the loss of some camping properties, has meant decision-making is not easy. By August 2006 the process will have reached the two and a half year mark, with at least another half year to go before clear decisions are made.

Throughout the Conference there appears to be a revival of youth ministry. Several presbyteries and many congregations are hiring youth leaders. Many of these leaders are being training though the Certificate Program for Youth Ministry, jointly provided by B.C. Conference and the Naramata Centre.

Recent years has also witnessed a huge interest in congregational renewal. A series of “ReVive” events was held in the Vancouver area with inspirational speakers and numerous workshops covering a wide range of interests that others have found helpful in congregational revival.

Depopulation of rural areas and huge growth in urban and newly-urban areas has resulted in a wide variety of experiences of being “church.” Rural Kootenay Presbytery has experimented with a circuit-rider model (“Mutual Ministries”) to provide lay leadership training to several small congregations. Congregations struggle to keep up with inflating costs and aging buildings. Vancouver-area congregations try to learn what it means to be located in a part of the country

where recent immigrant families make up 50% of the population. Soaring property values throughout many areas of the Conference mean marginal ministries are occupying land resources worth multi-million dollars, raising questions of mission and stewardship.

Over the past ten years B.C. Conference has distributed \$3 million of its assets to presbytery, congregational, and regional projects. Although these assets have now been depleted, it is hoped that good stewardship of church properties within the Conference will allow a continuing practice of turning underutilized property value into active ministry.

B.C. Conference is privileged to have many First Nations communities as part of the Conference. Like many rural congregations, these, too, have felt the pressures of high costs, the lack of ministry personnel willing to live in rural areas, and decreasing membership. A long-standing project to build up indigenous leadership has not proved very successful, leading to an initiative to look again at how appropriate leadership can be found for these communities. Meanwhile, existing leaders continue to provide exemplary guidance for the Conference in many areas of church life. In that regard, we are proud to be able to join with All Native Circle Conference presbyteries in nominating Jim Angus as Moderator of our church.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Douglas Goodwin, Executive Secretary

HAMILTON CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)

Origin: Hamilton Conference

Since the 38th General Council 2003 the mission and ministry of Hamilton Conference has been influenced by three presidential themes: “Discerning the Way”, “On Earth as in Heaven” and “Draw the Circle Wide”.

We have continued to seek to clarify the ways and means through which the four priorities named by the Conference in the last triennium, Healthy Congregations and Presbyteries, Effective Leadership, Faithful Public Witness and Strengthening Partnerships, shall guide the mission and ministry of Hamilton Conference.

Some Statistics

Over the course of the past three years Hamilton Conference has ordained 19 persons (up from 18 in the previous triennium), commissioned none (down from three), admitted one to the United Church’s Order of Ministry (down from five) and recognized three Lay Pastoral Ministers (up from one). Resident membership has declined from 56,351 in 2003 to 51,000 in 2006. The number of preaching places has declined from 313 in 2003 to 300 in 2006. The Conference’s per resident member assessment increased from \$10.00 in 2003 to \$10.75 in 2006.

Discernment and Planning

Cognizant of the deep listening in which the 39th General Council will engage and the work of the Task Group on the General Council Grant to Conferences and with concern that the four priorities named by Hamilton Conference in the last triennium are not widely known and therefore have not authentically guided the mission and ministry of the Conference, the Hamilton Conference Executive has mandated the formation of a Discernment and Planning Task Group. This Task Group will design and implement a process through which the individuals, pastoral charges and presbyteries within Hamilton Conference will be enabled to engage in a time of deep listening as we seek to discern God's purpose for our mission and ministry. The Executive hopes to bring the results of this deep listening to the 2007 Annual Meeting.

Staffing

The past triennium has once again been a time of significant staff transition in Hamilton Conference. After seventeen years of faithful ministry within Hamilton Conference John Asling, Conference Minister for Mission and Communication accepted a five year appointment as the General Secretary for Communication for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. This appointment was made possible through a partnership between The United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

After twelve years serving as Conference Minister for Christian Nurture: Leadership Development, Worship and Stewardship Education Ann Fleming retired in June of 2005. Ann's faithful and faith-filled ministry encouraged and nurtured many in their journey of faith.

We were pleased to welcome Debbie Johnson as Conference Minister for Faith Formation and leadership Development in September of 2005.

Sue Jackson is completing an eighteen month contract as Minister for Mission and Communication at the end of June 2006. We thank Sue for sharing her many gifts with us during this time of staff transition.

Both Jenny Stephens, Conference Personnel Minister and Fred Monteith, Executive Secretary have benefited from the General Council extended study leave policy in this triennium.

The Staff Committee continue to review the Conference staffing needs and will be guided in their work by the discernment of Hamilton Conference in the year ahead.

Significant Work in the past Triennium

Since the 38th General Council 2003, Hamilton Conference has established one new unit for the purpose of planning and co-coordinating programming within the Conference. The Bearing faithful Public Witness Unit joins the Christian Nurture Unit and a number of energy and passion based networks in addressing the program and educational needs of the Conference.

New provincial legislation in the areas of safe drinking water and safe food handling has generated significant work as we sought to assist our many rural pastoral charges with the information and resources they needed to ensure the safety of their members and guests.

Explosive growth in many of the urban/suburban centres within the Conference and shifting population patterns in some of the more rural areas of the Conference has meant that many pastoral charges and presbyteries have been deeply involved in discerning new models and configurations for ministry.

We continue to seek new opportunities for the spiritual nurture, education and support of ministry personnel serving within Hamilton Conference. One concrete measure that has been taken is the recent of approval by the Conference Executive of an increase in the number of people serving on the Pastoral Care Team. The team is available to ministry personnel and their families for pastoral care.

Looking Ahead

The work done to date by the Emerging Spirit Project is generating a high level of excitement in Hamilton Conference. The challenge will be to have congregations ready to welcome those 30 to 45 year olds in meaningful ways. We look forward to that challenge.

We are engaged in a review of our Website and electronic communication strategy with a view to improving this important means of information sharing.

Recent events Caledonia, Ontario have provided a renewed sense of energy and interest in the need for the congregations and presbyteries within Hamilton Conference to engage in the faithful work of right relationships. This will be the top priority for our work in the years ahead.

May God grant us grace as we seek to be faithful to God's call.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Monteith, Executive Secretary

LONDON CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)

Origin: London Conference

Areas of Celebration

We celebrated the retirement of Rev. Dr. Lloyd Smith as our Conference Personnel Minister and welcomed the Rev. Peter Kingsbury as our new Conference Personnel Minister in November. This began for us a major change in conference personnel. In May 2006 our Executive Secretary, Peter Scott retired, and Pat Milliken our Outreach & Development/Stewardship/Farm & Rural Resource Personnel resigned. Rev. David Woodall was welcomed as our new Executive Secretary and a search is on for a new Stewardship Education and Justice position. In June 2006 our much beloved Administrative Support person, Barb Fitzgeorge will retire and we will welcome Cathy Lloyd in a redesigned Administrative Support role.

We are excited by the growing youth ministry within the Conference. There has been a good response to our camping ministry with medium to high registrations in all camps. A youth

worship, “The Swell” is anxiously looked forward to by our youth – many thanks to the dedicated people who help this event to happen. Connected with our annual meeting are Children At Conference, Youth Forum (with a weekend event prior to conference from which 24 youth participate fully during this meeting) and a university aged program, YATs (Young Adults in Transition). A number of presbyteries have established youth ministry positions.

Our “Accompaniment” Program of Conference Staff working intensively in congregations, presbyteries and camps is working extremely well.

A number of pastoral charges are experimenting with alternate forms of employment clustering options.

Areas of Concern

The nature of ministry in many congregations is changing. There is a great struggle to adapt to these changes. The nature of God’s mission into the future is changing. There is a recognition that we will not need as many buildings as we currently have and this is proving to be a struggle.

We are struggling to truly honour those in paid accountable positions and hearing that often they experience, along with the joy and excitement of ministry, many difficult and challenging circumstances.

The Transfer and Settlement process was very disappointing for us in 2006. Conversations are in process exploring whether it continues to serve the church, our ministry personnel, and is it a helpful response to the will of God.

There is anxiety amongst clergy as jobs disappear, hours are cut to part-time, more positions are filled by appointments. One result is growing animosity between ordained and lay ministry as each feels threatened and challenged by the other.

Future Directions

There is an intense searching going on for a sense of what the nature of “church” will be in the years ahead.

A greater exploration of the effectiveness of internet capability and support through the conference offices with congregations and presbyteries will continue.

We are experimenting with the viability of a two year office for our President.

We continue to work clustering congregations and ministry personnel to discuss the future and to build mutual support networks.

We are building a new future built on a solid and effective past. What this is we do not know, but we trust. That is the nature of faith.

Respectfully submitted,
David Woodall, Executive Secretary

MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO CONFERENCE REPORT (Commons)

Origin: Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference

First off, let me take this opportunity to welcome all General Council Commissioners, visitors, General Council resource staff and support staff to the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario for the 39th General Council 2006! We are most pleased to be hosting this Council and hope your time here will be productive and renewing. Much thanks goes to Cambrian Presbytery and the local arrangement folk who have worked hard to ensure your time will be enriching.

The Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario is a geographically diverse area. From the northern shores of Lake Superior to the vast tracks of agricultural land in the west and to the forest and mining industries of northern Manitoba, we are a people with many different lifestyles and interests. It is this diversity that defines and challenges us as a Conference.

The last three years as a Conference has not been an easy time for us. The B.S.E. crises, the flooding of much of southern Manitoba, the profound job loss in Northern Ontario have affected our church communities in ways that we have never experienced before. It has caused us to ask questions of what it means to be Church in times that are quickly changing and ever shifting. While at times it is exciting, it can also be demoralizing and exhausting work. Yet the Church remains and in some cases it remains with a renewed vision and new hope for the future.

While all this has been going on within our boundaries, the Conference itself has had its share of challenges. Among them are the closing of our local bookstore, the on-going saga of our office space location, the dismissal of two staff members, decreasing financial resources and the pains of adjusting to a new Conference structure. The result of all this is our erosion of confidence and support in the things we call 'institutional' Church. We believe, however, that we are turning the corner. We have a competent, energetic staff team in place and this year's annual meeting voted to give Conference sufficient financial resources in which to carry out the ministry.

Of particular note for us as a Conference over the last three years has been the high number of Alternative Dispute Resolution hearings in regards to Residential schools. We have had close to a hundred hearings. This is a painful, lonely ministry and we long for the day of true healing and reconciliation.

In my short time as Executive Secretary of this Conference I have witnessed many examples of faithfulness and passion for the Church. That has been exciting. We are strong in many areas and our resilience is truly amazing. We have congregations re-defining themselves. Some Presbyteries are wondering how they might share their resources with other Presbyteries. And over and over again we have people taking leadership in difficult circumstances. While the past three years have been uniquely challenging we look forward to the future with faith, trusting in the Good News of Jesus Christ!

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce Faurschou, Executive Secretary

**MANITOU CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006
(Commons)**

Origin: Manitou Conference

Significant demographic changes continue to affect our life and ministry here in northeastern Ontario and northwestern Quebec. The loss of many jobs in the natural resource sectors has meant a further out-migration of families, leaving many of our churches really struggling financially. At the same time, in many rural communities, The United Church of Canada is the remaining church presence. This provides much opportunity for mission and truly being the hands and feet of Christ!

New models of “being church” here in the north are being studied and piloted. This creative consideration is being guided by a conference “Area Wide Ministry” task group. We appreciate work that has been undertaken by the General Council Office to review the current funding formula and help ensure our Conference’s financial viability.

Manitou has been focussed on the issue of working at right relations with our First Nation brothers and sisters. Much energy has gone into a touring Anishinabek art exhibit titled: “The Manitou Collection: Celebrating the Spirit of the People.”

The 38 original works were donated by a generous United Church member, in response to the 1986 Apology. The pieces were distributed in 1988 and hang in churches throughout the Conference. We are proud that the exhibition will be on display in Thunder Bay during this meeting of General Council. We hope this tour will serve as a catalyst for building respect and understanding between First Nations neighbours and other cultures.

To mark the 20th Anniversary of the Apology, a number of Conference and Presbytery gatherings have taken place at the Cairn, on the campus of Laurentian University. Questions have arisen over what it means to have been named as “Keepers of the Cairn.” We look forward to further consultation with reps from the All Native Circle Conference and wider First Nation United Church constituency.

An important proposal comes to this meeting from Manitou, encouraging the church to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples as guiding principles in our ongoing work in the area of “right relations” and that RCAP form the basis of our public witness and prophetic voice.

In news relating to the conference staff, we recently mourn the death of our long time and beloved Office Coordinator, Liz Butti, following a two year battle with cancer. As we work to find Liz’ successor we are also mindful of other significant change ahead in our office with the retirement next year of our Conference Minister: Mission, Stewardship and Congregational Development. In light of financial realities already noted, we anticipate, at that time, a reduction in our current staff allocation.

Respectfully submitted,
William Kunder, Executive Secretary

**MARITIME CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006
(Commons)**

Origin: Maritime Conference

“...without a vision, the people perish...” These words from Proverbs have served as a beacon for the Maritime Conference since the 38th General Council 2003. This Conference has been impacted by economic, demographic and social change. Each of these influences the day to day life of the Spirit in the Presbyteries, Pastoral Charges and congregations of the Conference. The Conference has turned its focus to assist each court of the church to dream dreams and seek God’s vision.

The Maritime Conference has devoted a great deal of its energies to assisting Presbyteries and Pastoral Charges in looking at the realities they face in their contexts. The Annual Meeting 2005 set as a priority these transformational directions. These include work to outline the spiritual connections we have to place; the shifting realities of part-time ministries throughout the Conference; and ways and means of working within communities to do some asset mapping. We have met with representatives from the two Anglican Dioceses who are our geographic neighbours to begin a discussion around sharing resources.

We have adopted a statement which clearly states that Presbyteries and Congregations are not to discriminate within the Pastoral Relations call/appointment process. With the advice of the General Secretary we acknowledge the need to respect the Human Rights Acts which exempt religious bodies from portions of the Human Rights Acts.

We have had our staffing configuration challenged by the illness of our Office Administrator Shirley Streach who is being treated for cancer. Eric Tusz-King is leaving the Office to pursue his environmental visions. The willingness of others to assist is gratefully acknowledged and we will begin a needs assessment in the late summer under an interim appointment.

The Maritime Conference is facing the future with eyes upon the vision of Christ. Our hearts remain open to the call of the Spirit and we endeavour to follow humbly the vision we have of the realm of God’s choosing. We know that change is upon us. We acknowledge the call we share. The Conference has approved the development of a continuing education program, “Ministry In Changing Times” which will be offered in twelve sites across the Conference and will integrate on-line learning. This project has been generously supported by the Support for Local Ministries Unit and the Faith Formation Unit of the General Council.

Without a vision, the people perish. May our vision be that of God’s calling and leading.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Gaw, Executive Secretary

MONTREAL AND OTTAWA CONFERENCE REPORT (Commons)**Origin:** Montreal and Ottawa Conference

We are a Conference forever in transition, challenged but not defeated, committed to grappling with the realities that the social norms dictate in our area. Much of our reflection has occurred because we have concluded that we need to live our life as a community of faith in a way that makes optimum use of our human and financial resources in the service of our mission. There is good work being done, some work in need of fine tuning, other work not getting done, and maybe some getting done that needs to be left undone. There are many complicated and inter-related issues that must be considered as well as the means to evaluate these issues and weigh value.

One of the recent accomplishments has been the development of a Living Mission Statement, which provides a guideline for our ministry, and holds us accountable to all areas of church life. We are committed to...

1. Promote the spiritual support, pastoral care, and professional development of Ministry Personnel.
2. Provide leadership in supporting Presbytery efforts to ensure that all Pastoral Charges have ongoing effective pastoral ministry and participate in the formation of new Ministry Personnel.
3. Promote the co-ordination of strategic use of resources through exploring regional co-operation.
4. Promote efforts/initiatives/support of development and redevelopment of Pastoral Charges and Mission Units.
5. Ensure ways of providing a collective Conference voice on public Christian witness.
6. Provide an inspirational link between local United Church communities and the United Church of Canada as a whole community.
7. Promote whole-life stewardship
8. Provide administrative effectiveness in the “art” of making Conference life happen.

The Staffing model we have adopted includes two Personnel Ministers; one dedicated to the needs of our Ontario ministry personnel and congregations, the other to those in Quebec, and support staff in each of our regional offices, leaving much of the program work to the Presbyteries, who strive to work co-operatively, sharing the human resources. A pending change will occur due to the retirement of Sharon Johns, who served as our CPM for the past twelve years, of which nine were solo, and the last three teaming with Debbie Aitken (CPM west). We have been minister to and truly blessed, for Sharon was a wealth of wisdom, patience and encouragement.

A very real struggle are the number of aging and declining congregations, particularly in Quebec and rural Ontario, and many churches are investigating the possibilities of part time ministry, or re-alignments with other congregations, in order to provide continuity and a United Church presence where there are great distances to the next community. The necessity of providing Lay leadership training is increasing as we explore new ways to help bridge the gaps, and encourage the ministry of all believers.

There has been energy and passion dedicated to supporting two families who were in sanctuary in Montreal churches for close to two years, waiting for the government to show compassion and understanding to human needs, and horror when another refugee was removed from a church in Quebec City. “Loving the neighbours” took on a whole new meaning for many.

There is an ever-growing awareness that the future of our congregations, particularly in Quebec, requires the necessity to be linguistically sensitive, not only to the Anglophones and Francophones in our midst, but many others in our multi-cultural context. At our 2005 Celebration of Ministry, we had four ordinants and three candidates by admission, speaking six maternal languages, and at the 2006 Celebration of Ministry, we had eight ordinants and six different maternal languages spoken (English and French being the only two repeated over the two years), truly a celebration of our diversity. Opportunities for our church abound.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Lambie, Executive Secretary,
in consultation with Brian Cornelius, Acting Executive Secretary 2003-2005

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CONFERENCE REPORT (Commons)

Origin: Newfoundland and Labrador Conference

During the past three years the East and West Districts have held 12 major spring and fall meetings with varied themes: “Exploring the Issues: From National to Local”, “Care for the Body of Christ”, “Body, Mind, Soul: Spiritual Nurturing”, “Dare To Be”, “Renewing the Mission”, “God’s Abundance”, “We Are Not Alone” and “Launce Out Into The Deep”, which was also the theme for our triennial Conference meeting this year. Planning and resourcing these events along with numerous Executive meetings have demanded significant staff energy and time. In 1992, we adopted a District system, anticipating that the national church would be moving in a similar direction. Fourteen years later, we remain the only Conference in The United Church of Canada to adopt this governance system. Conference and Districts have been involved in visioning processes as we discern God’s will for our future.

One area of special emphasis has been clergy self care which was promoted during two clergy retreats and they were well attended. We were delighted to have our Moderator, The Right Rev. Peter Short lead one of our retreats and Mr. Ralph Milton the other. We are planning to make the clergy retreat an annual event. Female clergy also have an annual retreat which they have incorporated into a “learning community” event.

Our Conference and church community have been significantly impacted by the death of the Rev. John Murphy and the Rev. Sonja Bent, both of whom were active ministers. As well, we currently have several clergy on restorative care and we continue to experience staff changes.

The Rev. Dr. George LeDrew, our Human Resource Minister retired in 2004 and was replaced by the Rev. Faith March-MacCuish. Shortly after taking on the role of Conference Personnel Minister, Faith along with the Rev. Roger Janes, Program & Leadership Development Staff were required to take on the additional role of Acting Executive Secretary during my eight month medical leave. In addition, one of our support staff took a one year leave of absence, two people were hired on a contractual basis for one year and a secretarial support staff position was filled. The Conference and Districts have also decided to use trust funds and raise assessments to hire a Youth Minister as a resource to our young people.

The challenges of conflict and change continue to stretch our financial and human resources. Two reviews and one formal appeal were completed and our conflict resolution process was successful in three cases.

Transformation and change continues to be a theme throughout our faith journey. Five candidates successfully completed the five year IMPO program through the Atlantic School of Theology and were recently ordained. All four of our pastoral charges in Labrador for the first time in many years have ordained ministers. Red Bay, Labrador successfully “called” its first minister in many years. The last decade has seen the number of our people attending worship services on Sunday decline by nearly one-quarter and yet in its midst, this period marks a very significant increase in NL givings to the Mission and Service Fund.

Our rural areas continue to experience out migration and economic hardship! To meet the challenges, some pastoral charges are moving into part time ministries and amalgamations. A significant number of the pastoral charges in the West District are partially funded through Mission Support funding and this trend may grow. We are fortunate that many of our retired ministers are continuing in active ministry but this will only be a short term solution to our human resource challenges.

Following demographic trends throughout the world, some of our urban areas are experiencing economic and population growth. Oil and gas production and tourism are contributing factors. Churches and outreach ministries such as Stella Burry Community Services are seeking creative ways to meet the challenges and opportunities. The target population for the “Emerging Spirit” campaign are in these areas. The United Church of Canada continues to have a passionate and compassionate presence throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Respectfully submitted,
William G. Bartlett, Executive Secretary

SASKATCHEWAN CONFERENCE REPORT (Commons)

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

Mission / faithful witness

Saskatchewan Conference continues to grapple with what it means to be a faithful witness in the community. While we are disappointed that there are still only two affirming congregations within Saskatchewan Conference there are some congregations doing the work and Calling Lakes Centre has been recognised as an Affirming Ministry. Our Affirming Ministries Committee has been called upon frequently to assist congregations, who are developing marriage policies. Also, transmitted from the Annual Meeting, are two proposals about “freedom of conscience” and “access to marriage.”

Saskatchewan Conference continues the practice of presenting an annual Brief to the provincial government as well as the opposition. The Brief is an extensive description of the various proposals directed toward the government of Saskatchewan in the past year. It affords us the opportunity for dialogue with the provincial decision-makers. This year, the Cabinet challenged us to continue the practice with our federal Members of Parliament as well.

Staffing

Since the last report of the conference to General Council, it has been necessary financially to reduce one of the office administrative staff positions to .8. Last fall, one of our programme staff informed us of her intent to pursue other ministry opportunities beyond the conference office. This has resulted in the conference executive establishing a conference staff needs assessment process. This is intended to clarify not only the needs resulting from a vacancy but also the new and continuing needs for staff support within the conference. The staff continue to work on establishing a strong team relationship and bring much energy to the ministry of the conference.

Program

The staffing needs assessment indicates increased need for leadership in facing the changing church. Several Presbyteries have held regional gatherings of pastoral charges to discuss the future shape of ministry with in those regions. There has been an openness to considering new possibilities while faced with inevitable change and loss. Faced with rural declining population, and more limited resources, congregations have expressed exciting new visions and potential for future ministry by sharing their combined potentials.

Farm Crisis

Wheat farmers have faced a time when the bakeries pay more for the plastic tag to close the bag than they do for the wheat to make the flour to bake the bread. During the fall of 2005 and winter of 2006, commodity prices still lagged behind the costs of production. An agrologist advised a young farmer to plant wheat this spring—it's the crop where you will have the smallest loss. In Northeast Saskatchewan the spring of 2006 brought too-much rain, preventing seeding, at a time when wheat prices are projected to be the highest in ten years.

Justice & Reconciliation

The conference continues to have one or two annual events on Justice & Reconciliation with representatives from each presbytery, from Plains Presbytery of All Native Circle Conference

and the Conference Social Justice Committee. Most recently, the event focused on the aboriginal women who have disappeared. The conference Annual Meeting passed a proposal to affirm the 1986 apology and included a re-affirmation within our celebration to acknowledge the apology. Saskatchewan Conference is also appreciative of the work of the Residential Schools Coordinating Committee and takes pride in its work.

Changing Shape of Ministry

There has been a dramatic change in the number of Pastoral Charges moving to part-time ministry in order to remain viable. We currently have 59 part-time ministries filled and an additional 12 part-time vacancies. Of the 59 ministries, 15 are only served by pulpit supply. As well, there are 7 full time vacancies. For Saskatchewan Conference, the need for implementation of the Lay Presidency at Sacraments recommendations is urgently required if we are to provide support for the sacramental ministry with our Pastoral Charges.

The impact of fewer congregations and more part-time ministry is also seen in the work of presbytery. Often, if ministry personnel are appointed to part-time positions, there is little or no time included for the larger church responsibilities. The proposal about quorum is an example of the impact on the ministry of the Conference.

Effects of Diminished Resources

Since our last report of the conference had to remove from its budget the universal membership in AVEL. The result was that all of the presbyteries have taken on the costs of AVEL memberships PCTC / Calling Lakes Centre has worked its way through some of the financial challenges of funding for continuing education. There is disappointment that the decision of GC to put back the funding for Continuing Ed. (Petition 92) has not resulted in funds being made available. We await with interest and anticipation the results of the joint task group on Continuing Education (PC-MEPS and PC-PMM). At a time when we need to be supporting shared ministries, and new ministry initiatives we don't have Mission Support grant money to support the programs we have already been funding.

The conference is generally supportive of the direction of the Compensation Report while acknowledging concern for pastoral charges facing financial constraints. It is our hope that the Saskatchewan conference might offer to be the test site for the implementation of the centralised payroll system if approved by General Council.

Complexity of Policy and Administration

A strong theme expressed through the Needs Assessment was that policies and procedures continue to change frequently and with each change become increasingly more complex which increases reliance on the program staff to interpret and answer questions. Our Presbyteries continued to struggle with the implementation of the 363 and 333 review processes. We believe that it is important to continue to work of revising and refining these procedures as they seek to address difficulties when pastoral relationships are broken or wounded. More attention is required for procedure is to appropriately care for both ministry personnel and pastoral charges during a review. Also, the cost to Presbytery is becoming unmanageable, both in terms of dollars and personnel.

Strengthening Relations with General Council

In conversation with the various divisions and committees of the conference frequently there is concern expressed related to the communication flow between the conference and the general council structure. The issue is the ability of members of General Council committees and task groups to inform and communicate with the Conference. This used to exist because of the way in which members of Conference Divisions and Committees moved into General Council work as a result of their work in the Conference (e.g. the chair or a member of the Nominations Committee in the Conference would serve on the GC Nominations Committee). This is not about going back to a/the former structure. It is about how we help strengthened the link with the Conference.

Mission & Vision Re-Visited

Conference Executive has completed a review of its mission statement. The 2006 theme of the Annual Meeting was “transformation/walk with me,” moving into a theme for 2007 of being a Spirit-filled church, living out the mission to which we are called.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Campbell, Executive Secretary

TORONTO CONFERENCE REPORT TO THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006 (Commons)

Origin: Toronto Conference

Statistics

Since the last meeting of General Council, Toronto Conference ordained 29 people (31 in the previous triennium), commissioned two (up from 0), recognized 3 people as Lay Pastoral Ministers (up from none), and admitted seven into the Order of Ministry (down from nine). Resident membership figures for the year ending 2002 were 53,546, with the 2006 estimate declining to 48,000. The Conference’s assessment went from \$12.05 in 2002 to a 2006 figure of \$12.50 which will increase to \$14.75 in 2007. The number of preaching places has declined from 318 at December, 2001 to just more than 300 at the end of 2005; we celebrate the formation of at least four new missions or congregations. In one situation, a Presbytery approved a call for a joint Presbyterian/United Church ministry.

Conference vision and staffing

The Conference is in a transitional time. Decisions are even more provisional than usual as we await God’s calling to new forms of ministry. The Conference has been guided by three prominent phrases in the triennium – nurturing spiritual life, striving for justice, and developing healthy ministries. These phrases have provided impetus in the development of some programs.

The Conference’s Executive spent much time in activities listening for God’s direction for the Conference. A number of consultations took place with Presbyteries, Conference committees, staff, and related organizations. The need for increased work with youth was highlighted in 2005; the Toronto Conference Youth Community continued to provide spiritual nourishment and

leadership development and, for the year 2006-2007, the Conference's children, youth, and camping minister will be working full-time.

In March 2006 the Executive established two major task groups with formidable mandates. A task group on governance will look at issues such as the roles of the Executive, the president and the executive secretary, the number of Conference committees, Conference-level staffing, and relations with other Conferences. A task group on Presbytery concerns has an equally daunting task, as it looks at issues such as the health, mission, and ministry of the Presbyteries, Presbytery boundaries and staffing, and resource sharing with neighbouring Conferences. Both task groups will report with recommendations in January 2007.

All staff positions were reviewed in a program audit in the fall of 2005. Pending the reports of the task groups mentioned, above, the Executive approved the extension of several staff contracts, and determined that any vacancies in permanent positions will not be filled on a permanent basis.

Health of Presbyteries

While the Conference has been involved in discernment regarding its future, so have a number of the Presbyteries. The task group on Presbytery concerns, named above, arises from issues which were named by the Presbyteries – many tasks with few volunteers, rising costs and inadequate staffing support, concerns for the well-being of Ministry Personnel, etc. A number of Presbyteries have reviewed their own structures, have reduced the number of meetings, and have focused more on education and inspiration while doing most of the business in a shortened time with the remainder being handled by the Presbytery's Executive. A particularly dynamic program, Spirit Works, continues to evolve in Toronto Scarborough Presbytery, partially funded by money from the sale of church property.

Ethnic congregations within the Conference continue to evolve. One phenomenon is the transfer of some ethnic congregations from the inner core of Toronto to the more suburban areas. Four ethnic congregations moved from the heart of Toronto in the triennium, and one closed.

Seeking justice and reconciliation

We were blessed with the ministry of Wesley and Khwezi Mabusa, who spent a year within the Conference as part of a Partner in Residence program. The program focused on reconciliation, with a particular emphasis on aboriginal relations. A proposal to establish another Partner in Residence program in the future will be discussed in the fall of 2006. The Conference maintained its commitment to seeking right relations with aboriginal people by hiring an aboriginal relations vision keeper working one day a week with the Aboriginal Solidarity Sharing Circle. At its 2006 annual meeting, the Conference re-read the Apology to Aboriginal Peoples from 1986. The Conference established a committee for racial justice which will assist the Conference in its commitment to being a community which lives out the church's anti-racism policy. The Executive asked itself whether it would start a process of becoming an Affirming Ministry; a task group was established to give guidance; its report to be received in the fall of 2006 will recommend that the Conference is not yet ready to undertake this action. The Conference's coordinating committee is already planning workshops introducing revisions to sexual abuse policy.

Litigation

The Conference and its Presbyteries continue to deal with Section 333 and 363 reviews of Pastoral Charges and Ministry Personnel, respectively. The emotional, spiritual and financial toll has been high, and the revised procedures for having reviews conducted by a trained individual is a welcome development. The Executive passed a motion stating its willingness to conduct reviews on behalf of Presbyteries. Presbyteries still authorize the reviews, but the Conference, when asked, will look after the conducting of the review and the costs associated with it.

Property and mission

The closing and amalgamating of congregations has provided infusions of cash to assist with development of new and established churches. While the amounts received can be significant, the needs are greater still. The Conference conducted a thorough review of its property policies after having consulted the Presbyteries, and will refine practices in the coming years. The receipt of physical property, not just cash, has meant that a new area of work has landed at the Conference wherein the Conference has become a property manager while awaiting sale. In an interesting situation, the Conference has entered into a three-year agreement with Toronto West Presbytery and Beverley Hills United Church, the site of the Conference office; during the three years the Conference will manage the property while the congregation retains trusteeship; during the three years the three bodies are in discernment about God's will for the property.

The Conference reviewed its relationship with Toronto United Church Council (TUCC), and continues to benefit from TUCC's expertise in church development and property management. TUCC is the main contact in helping Presbyteries with their church development tasks, including the funding of new ministries. TUCC has also established a centre for church development leadership to train individuals in the complex tasks of growing and reshaping communities of faith.

Learning and mission

The closing of the Cedar Glen Conference Centre several years ago provided approximately \$1.5 million to be used for educational purposes. Grants are available to individuals, groups and organizations, and centres of learning. Approximately 30 percent of the yearly interest is available to centres of learning across the church; grants have been made to theological schools and lay centres, and are available to camps as well. In addition, all staff at the General Council office are able to access funds individually, no matter their Conference of membership. And the Conference has been able to withdraw from the educational money available from the General Council, meaning that more funds are available to the other Conferences.

In addition to the Partner in Residence program mentioned earlier, Conference staff and committees have provided numerous opportunities for learning and growth, including events to grow welcoming communities, programs for delving into the fundamentals of our faith, retreats for Ministry Personnel and lay people, and stewardship events within the Conference and in collaboration with other Conferences.

Respectfully submitted,

David Allen, Executive Secretary

with assistance from Conference Commissioners to General Council

ISOLATION IN MINISTRY (Commons)

Origin: Permanent Committee Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
Isolation in Ministry Steering Group

Summary

Task

The United Church of Canada became aware in 1998, through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that, when surveyed, counsellors reported significant feelings of isolation among Ministry Personnel. A resolution was presented to the 37th General Council (2000), resulting in a motion directing the Human Resources Committee to identify ways to reduce the impact of isolation on individuals serving the church. The General Council contracted our EAP provider WarrenShepell to assist the United Church by conducting focus groups and interviews. Report #1 was presented to the 38th General Council 2003 resulting in the establishment of a Steering Group to study the issue and bring forward recommendations. In the first phase of its work, the Steering Group observed that the term “isolation” seemed to refer to a variety of related but distinct experiences: institutional alienation, geographical distances, role-based alienation, theological differences, spiritual needs, social alienation, cultural differences and economic hardship. The continuing task would be to understand these various forms of isolation and recommend to the church an appropriate response.

Scope

All United Church members are equal as participants in the ministry of Jesus Christ. However, the roles and responsibilities of members within and to the church are not the same. Some members are “set apart” to offices of responsibility and accountability. We designate positions that carry roles and functions that require particular gifts, skills and commitment. This report is concerned with that group of members that the church sets apart as its paid, accountable leaders and our covenantal obligation to equip Ministry Personnel for the roles and functions they are called to fulfill.

Process

The Steering Group brought together a variety of experiences of both lay and ordered members of the church, studied previous reports, and conducted the most extensive survey of Ministry Personnel in the church’s history. The survey was administered for 4 broad reasons:

1. To assess **levels of isolation** among Ministry Personnel;
2. To assess **levels of psychological adjustment problems** among Ministry Personnel;
3. To assess a variety of **personal attributes** (social support, and coping styles) that may exacerbate or ‘buffer’ the negative impacts of isolation;
4. To assess the **criticality** of certain types of Ministry Personnel isolation by correlating them with adjustment problems.

Findings

The most significant findings for the Isolation Steering Group resulted from the survey of Ministry Personnel, which indicated some good news for the United Church. First of all, isolation levels are *generally* low. For example, almost 85% generally feel supported by others and more than 80% do not experience negative interactions with others. Second, Ministry Personnel commitment levels are generally **high**. For example, almost 75% ‘talk up’ their

pastoral charges as great charges to serve, and over 90% are satisfied with their vocation as a minister. Third, the commitment to ministry as a vocation is relatively *impervious* to isolation factors. That is, although Ministry Personnel report feeling isolated, the sense of isolation does not seem to make much of an impact on their commitment to the vocation of ministry. And the last piece of good news is that the *organizational* sources of isolation are *not* powerful drivers of stress, depression, anxiety, or aspects of burnout.

However, not all the news is good. For the segments of Ministry Personnel that *do* report higher isolation, the impact of that isolation on adjustment and commitment can be tragic for the individual minister and family members, and crippling and costly to the whole church. While the actual percentage of Ministry Personnel who report isolation and its negative effects may not seem particularly alarming, the impact of the experience of isolation is so devastating that the whole church is significantly affected. One of the reasons why this may be true is suggested by one of the survey findings: The experience of Ministry Personnel in *pastoral charges* has the greatest impact on isolation and adjustment. In other words, the pastoral relationship between Ministry Personnel and their pastoral charge (or ministry) has a very direct relationship with their levels of stress, anxiety, depression and burnout. In addition, the survey provides evidence that *social alienation*, as a form of Ministry Personnel isolation, is one of the strongest and most consistent drivers of Ministry Personnel adjustment problems. Of all those surveyed, over 44% have difficulty building strong social networks in the United Church. Almost 44% often feel lonely. Nearly 60% feel that there are few people they can openly trust and confide in.

Recommendations

The United Church of Canada must recommit at all levels to the covenant with Ministry Personnel serving Pastoral Charges and other ministries. Moreover, we must recognize the significance of the pastoral relationship to the health and well-being of Ministry Personnel, members of our congregations, and the effectiveness of our mission and ministry. The work of the Steering Group has shown that our greatest capacity to positively address stress, depression, and burnout among Ministry Personnel is by investing in healthy relationships between Ministry Personnel and the people with whom they minister. Steps must be taken to nurture and sustain the health of the pastoral relationship through changes in both attitude and program commitments. The study has also shown that social alienation is highly correlated to stress, depression, anxiety and burnout, and therefore any efforts by the church to decrease social alienation for ministers will make a positive difference. Fortunately, the skills and competencies needed to strengthen pastoral relationships and build social networks are cognitive, or teachable, and are already possessed by many people in ministry. As well, pastoral relationships can be strengthened through policy changes, and through programs at the congregation, or ministry, and Presbytery/District levels.

The Permanent Committee – Ministry and Employment Policies and Services recommends adaptive and programmatic changes through the following initiatives:

- Strengthen Pastoral Relationships
- Invest in Human Resources for Ministry Personnel
- Nurture Relationships Among Ministry Personnel
- Invest in Continuing Education
- Invest in Communication Technology

- Continue to Address Compensation Issues
- Address Institutional and Structural Sources of Isolation

Members of the Isolation in Ministry Steering Group:

David Boyd, (Chair) Ordained, British Columbia Conference
 Elizabeth Brown, Ordained, Alberta and North West Conference
 Bob Gibson, Ordained, London Conference
 Norm Graham, Lay, Hamilton Conference
 John McGonigle, Diaconal, Newfoundland and Labrador Conference
 Gordon Sonmor, Lay, Saskatchewan Conference
 John Thompson, Ordained, All Native Circle Conference
 Linda Thompson, Lay, Toronto Conference
 Nancy Wilson, Ordained, Maritime Conference

Staff Resource:

Joe Ramsay, Manager, Ministry Personnel Policies and Programs
 Michael Burke, Executive Minister, Ministry & Employment Policies and Services

Consultants:

Gerry Smith, Vice-president, Organizational Health, WarrenShepell
 Paul Fairlie, WarrenShepell
 Scott Fagan, WarrenShepell

Background

Jesus Christ came into the world to be the servant of God and all people. As servant Lord, Jesus calls his Church to a ministry of worship, witness, and reconciliation. In baptism we were received as members of his Church and at confirmation we committed ourselves to its ministry. In order that this ministry of the whole Church may be fulfilled, God has given the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, and the diaconal ministry of Education, Service and Pastoral Care. It is the responsibility of the Church to seek, train and set apart those whom God calls so to serve. (The Basis of Union, 11.3)

The practice of The United Church of Canada since its inception has been to train and vocationally “set apart” men and women chosen as paid, accountable leaders for the church. When any community or organization distinguishes within itself certain members with unique roles, responsibilities, training and functions, the circumstance for isolation is created. It was not surprising when the United Church’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider found in 1998 that, when surveyed, counsellors reported feelings of isolation among Ministry Personnel. At the same time, our EAP Provider, WarrenShepell, reported that usage of the EAP program by ministry personnel was twice the average for comparable professions.

The United Church of Canada collectively invests more than 90 million dollars every year supporting salaries and housing for ministry personnel serving pastoral charges and outreach ministries.

The EAP Committee of the General Council, with the Human Resources Committee, recognized the need to understand further the extent of isolation experienced by Ministry Personnel, especially the relationship, if any, to the high use of EAP. A resolution was presented to the 37th General Council 2000, resulting in a motion directing the Humans Resources Committee to identify ways to reduce the

impact of isolation on individuals serving the church and report back to the 38th General Council 2003. The EAP Committee contracted WarrenShepell to assist the United Church with the task, and from 2000 to 2003, counselling data was analyzed, telephone interviews were conducted, and focus groups were offered in Moncton, NB, Winnipeg, MB, and Naramata BC. A report (Report #1) was presented to the 38th General Council 2003, prepared by Gerry Smith, vice-president of organizational health for WarrenShepell. The General Council responded by passing a resolution to form a steering group to follow up on the issues identified in the report.

Following the restructuring of the General Council and General Council offices, the resolution became the responsibility of the Permanent Committee on Ministry Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS). The PC-MEPS established a task group to set out the mandate and terms of reference for a steering group to shepherd a study of isolation among Ministry Personnel. Over the next 18 months, Isolation Steering Group has attempted to further understand the breadth of experiences described by ministry personnel as isolation. Our methodology included three levels of investigation:

1. Deep conversation within the steering group, whose members were selected because of a demonstrated familiarity with some form of isolation, or the issues of isolation in ministry.
2. Consultation with professional opinions, in person or through research, including previous United Church studies, other General Council staff, United Church theologians and ecumenical reports and surveys.
3. The most extensive survey of ministry personnel ever conducted in the United Church, with response from nearly 1600 individuals, providing feedback on more than 400 questions. The survey included several measures commonly used in workplace evaluations, as well as the Clergy Isolation Inventory, developed by WarrenShepell for the United Church. The survey also posed some open-ended questions; the responses were recorded verbatim, and sorted thematically.

Process

September 2003

- The PC-MEPS established a task group to define the mandate and scope of the project and to establish the terms of reference for a steering group.

December 2003

- The task group reviewed the study and resolution received by the 37th General Council 2000 and the Isolation in Ministry report that was received by the 38th General Council 2003, with the resulting resolution.
- Criteria for populating the steering group were established, including a balance of Ministry Personnel categories, experiences of isolation, urban/rural and ethnic diversity, and gender balance.
- A mandate for the steering group was formulated.

January 2004

- **MANDATE:** The Permanent Committee on Ministry Employment Policies and Services approved the report of the task group, and established a steering group to “identify issues that contribute to the experiences of isolation in ministry and re-examine practices and supports for order of ministry to determine priorities and to develop programs to address these issues.”
- The PC-MEPS nominating committee was directed to recruit steering group members based on the established criteria.

March 2004

- The two Permanent Committee members and resource staff met with the consultants from WarrenShepell, the Moderator and the General Secretary to clarify the strategy for the work of the steering group.

June 2004

- The full steering group met for an orientation meeting and to set out the work for the next two years.

October 2004

- The steering group reviewed the previous work related to isolation: the 1998 survey of EAP counsellors, reports to the 37th and 38th General Councils.
- Key program strategies for mitigating the effects of isolation as an aspect of vocational ministry were adopted.
- Links to other General Council initiatives were identified.
- Theological and policy driven causes of isolation were also considered.
- The group established protocols for using an Internet based resource for continuing work between meetings.
- A survey of all 2600 active ministry personnel was selected as the best method for gathering data to identify key drivers of isolation, enabling the steering group to recommend the programs and policy changes that would have the greatest impact.

January 2005

- Consultation with Paul Fairlie (WarrenShepell), statistician and lead staff for survey
- Development of programmatic strategies to mitigate experiences of isolation

March 2005

- Conference call meeting to further develop survey questions

April 2005

- Consultation with GCO Staff regarding capacity for communication and information technologies
- Consultation with the Moderator concerning his meetings with ministry personnel throughout the church
- Further refinement of survey questions

June 2005

- Consultation with theologian John Young (Queen's Theological College) concerning the theology of ministry in the United Church, ministry role and identity, and possible correlation to perceptions of isolation within the church

September 2005

- Survey results received. 2600 surveys were distributed, 1600 returned for a return rate of 62%. Initial analysis of the survey was received.
- Determining format and style of reporting to PC-MEPS

November 2005

- Further results of survey, analysis, drafting of report to PC-MEPS, formulation of strategic initiatives for recommendation

December 2005

- Focus groups held in 6 conferences to review the report and draft recommendations

January 2006

- Conference calls to receive further survey analysis from WarrenShepell and reports from focus groups held in December

- First draft of report and recommendations to PC-MEPS
- Conference call to receive comments and suggestions from PC-MEPS and finalize report and recommendations

February 2006

- Final report and presentation to PC-MEPS

Isolation Among Ministry Personnel

Why focus on isolation? When counsellors from WarrenShepell, the church's EAP provider, worked with ministry personnel and their families in the late 1990's, they tracked a number of presenting issues associated with the vocation of ministry. The word used by counsellors consistently throughout the church to describe dissatisfaction with vocational ministry was isolation. The focus groups held in 2002 attempted to more clearly understand what ministers meant by isolation. The report to the 38th General Council 2003 reflected on the three recurrent themes that emerged:

“Ministers feel generally unsupported in their work, theologically, spiritually, structurally, financially and geographically. There is a general sense that, although the church talks openly about inclusivity, the practice is not apparent to ministry personnel who feel “excluded” by their theologically labelling, their “acquired” reputation, their gender, sexual orientation...financial status and community status.

Most ministers expressed discontent with current church structures indicating that one of the biggest causes of isolation for them as ministers is the fact that Church House and the General Council live in a world completely separated from the real church found in the pastoral charge and local congregations.”¹

Ministry personnel themselves were able to name the impact that feelings of isolation had on their ministry and their personal lives, ranging from mild to intense. They identified high levels of stress, apathy, frustration, resentment, and bitterness. They also associated the sense of isolation with behaviours of withdrawal and interpersonal conflicts. Finally, many ministry personnel from the focus groups reported that they were losing heart and questioning their future in the church.

The Steering Group, at its initial meetings in 2004,

Sometimes in the vast organizational machine of The United Church of Canada, I don't know whom I am accountable to, how I can have any influence on decisions in the church, or even who my boss is. When I faced some pastoral relations issues, I tried to find the appropriate information only to realize that I didn't know who to call or where to find answers. And when I turned to my colleagues for support, two of them informed me that they were coming to conduct a Presbytery oversight visit. My presbytery Pastoral Relations Convener isn't much help because he's just new to the position, doesn't know all of the policies, and doesn't have much time. I do not feel as though there is anywhere I can turn for pastoral care – my conference Personnel Minister is sympathetic but is stretched so thin that she doesn't have the time. And when I try to make some suggestions to my conference executive about some possible changes, I'm told that the governance model that we are utilizing doesn't allow for the kind of input that I'm offering. And now I find myself facing a 363 review and have discovered that the resources of the national church are available to the presbytery but I am on my own. I

¹ Record of Proceedings 2003, p. 673.

speculated that that the use of the term “isolation” may refer to a variety of related but distinct experiences: institutional alienation, geographical distances, role-based alienation, theological differences, spiritual needs, social alienation, cultural differences and economic hardship.

feel powerlessness, distrustful and lonely, and I wonder if I should just get out.

Institutional Alienation

Anecdotal reports of members of the Steering Group suggested that Ministry Personnel are reporting in significant numbers they feel isolated from The United Church of Canada as a denomination.

Ministry Personnel express a mistrust of leaders that they believe are affecting the direction of the church as an institution. Over the last decade, section 363 of the Manual, which gives Presbyteries the power to review the effectiveness of Ministry Personnel, has become a familiar noun among Ministry Personnel: “the Presbytery is going to do a 363 on her.” Ministry Personnel report feeling conflicted in their role as Presbytery/District officers and colleagues. Trust is difficult when neighbouring ministry personnel are asked to be both friend and judge.

Of those surveyed:

- 82% agree with the values of the United Church of Canada while 35% said that the United Church does not act on what it says it believes
- 1 in 3 say they are troubled by the church’s belief systems
- 1 in 3 have difficulty working with different beliefs in church courts
- 1 in 3 feel excluded by others

Geographical Isolation

Members of the Steering Group reported many stories of geographical isolation experienced by ministry personnel serving the church: the size of community in which they live, the time required to visit family and friends, the distance to the closest learning centre, time it takes to visit a trusted colleague, the nearest urban centre, access to an Internet connection, the time spent traveling to Presbytery/District or Conference. One member of our steering group can only travel from his community by airplane during the spring and fall of the year! This is not common, but it does illustrate the scope of the geographical breadth of the United Church.

God’s call meant new career, new city and new relationships. The rich intensity of life and spirit in the church carried me through to ordination. But settlement on a prairie charge is lonely... and the travel! Presbytery meetings three hours each way. Conference committee six hours. Airport - four hours. Nearest trusted colleague - four hours. Always each way.

Three funerals cancelled my study leave/retreat. I got to mom’s side four days after dad’s stroke. I learned about local issues like money and building problems but our series on same sex marriage was shunned. I dare not have my life partner visit me here. Where is my church?

Role-based Alienation

By role isolation, the Steering Group is referring to the experiences identified as Ministry Personnel where their vocational identify, and professional distancing, hinders genuine and personal relationships with others. The group also suspected that one of the drivers for isolation is the ambiguity about their role as minister, and feelings of being overloaded by the demands of their role within their

church and community.

Theological (belief-based) Isolation

Conversation by the Steering Group indicated that in many areas there are spiritual and theological issues that separate ministry personnel from one another, from their congregations, and from the General Council. Other anecdotes suggested that, although ministers are proud of The United Church of Canada for its stance on social issues, they have a hard time reconciling the denominational stance with the local congregation.

Spiritual Isolation

Isolation is understood by many as a spiritual issue. Throughout the church, ministry personnel report not receiving the spiritual guidance they need. Although they are regarded by their congregations as spiritual leaders, many report that they do not have the time to pray, reflect, and worship in ways that maintain their spiritual health. They feel that they must be “busy” for time to be counted as “work.” Associated with this is an “impostor syndrome,” when ministers feel that church members assume that they practice a healthy spiritual discipline.

Social Isolation

Social isolation is related to role, but is experienced as a separate form of isolation. The steering group has identified that many of those in vocational ministry report that they are separated from former social networks, and they feel alienated from the social networks nearby. Many Ministry Personnel live at a distance from family and close friends. While not unique to the vocation of ministry, it seems to be a significant form of isolation for many ministry personnel.

Cultural Isolation

As a national denomination, the United Church expects a high degree of mobility for Ministry Personnel who are members of the Order of Ministry. Settlement on a first pastoral charge may mean relocating to another part of the country where cultural alienation is experienced. The increased number of ministry personnel admitted from other denominations has also become a factor, and may involve language and ethnic differences.

Economic Isolation

Financial stress is perceived as a type of isolation. More

I just received an invitation to a party. As much as I would love the chance to meet some new people, I know it won't take long before the question is posed, 'So, what do you do?'" With my response usually comes an awkward silence, a strained conversation; a change in the person's behaviour. Soon, all the people at the party know me as 'the minister' and not as a social being. People's perceptions of ministers and our families can certainly alter our social relationships. I've tried to establish social networks and develop friendships beyond my local community but I get tired driving an hour to the nearest centre, which provides me more anonymity and social opportunities. Because of my social struggles, I feel even more separated from my family and friends who truly know me for who I am and not just what I do. Maybe I'll just send my regrets to the party and get caught up on some of my many church responsibilities on Friday night... after all why should this weekend be any different from the others?

One-third of ministry personnel report that they worry often about their financial situation.

Called into ministry, I had no expectations of getting financially

than 67% of Ministry Personnel earn less than \$50,000. Requests for equity and justice in the payroll system, and in how it is administered, resulted in a major compensation study undertaken by the 38th General Council 2003.

Defining Ministry in the United Church

For the first 40 years of the United Church's history, the roles of leadership in the church were fairly clearly defined: laity, ordained ministers, and overseas personnel (for example, medical deaconesses). In the mid to late 1960's, there were discussions with the Anglican and Presbyterian denominations as to how we might blend our one order of ministry with their three orders. In 1964 a commission was established, and it produced the document *Report on Ministry in the 20th Century*. The role of Conference Personnel Minister was introduced as an oversight role for ministry personnel. A task force resulting from the 26th General Council 1974 considered the offices of ordained and diaconal ministries. Some voices called for the elimination of ordered ministry altogether. In the end, the task force recommended three non-hierarchical orders of ministry: service (diaconal); pastoral (presbyterial) and oversight (episcopal). The report was not adopted, and the 27th General Council 1977 established another committee to continue the study.

rich but some of my economic challenges don't always seem just. In my isolated location, I face high costs of living but my pastoral charge is financially unable to pay beyond minimum. I live in a manse making it most difficult to build up equity for a home in retirement. Going to another part of Canada is not easy as many churches cannot afford moving costs. Salary, the housing situation and study payments vary so greatly among our ministers that the church seems far from "united."

In 1980, Project Ministry was presented to the General Council. Even though this report was not adopted in whole, it may be the most constitutive of how we currently think about ministry. This report articulated an understanding of "the ministry of the whole people of God." The report affirmed that ministry does not belong to us, but that all "participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ." For the living out of this ministry as an organized church, Project Ministry recognized four offices: pastoral, teaching, service and oversight. The report also affirmed the role of lay leadership within the church's life and work.

The 37th General Council 2000 received the report *Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*, resulting from a study commissioned by the 35th General Council 1994. The report recommended that the church recognize two categories of ministry personnel: designated lay ministry in congregations, outreach ministries and chaplaincies; and ordered ministries of word, sacrament, pastoral care, outreach and service. Again, sections of the report were affirmed, but the report was not adopted in its entirety.

Running through all of the debates and reports of the last 40 years is the recognition that ministry happens in two distinct spheres. First, and most importantly, ministry is the faithful engagement of everyday life by followers of Jesus Christ. The living out of the Christian faith has through the years been called by many names: discipleship, ministry of the laity, and more recently, the ministry of the whole people of God.

Within this broad understanding of ministry is a second sphere: the mission that is corporately ordered and institutionalized as the ministry of The United Church of Canada. To accomplish

this ministry, we have organized a common life, established norms, created programs, developed systems, and shared our resources. As The United Church of Canada, we are accountable for our corporate ministry: to each other, to society, and to the will and wisdom of our membership as determined by the decisions of church councils.

All United Church members are equal as participants in the ministry of Jesus Christ. However, the roles and responsibilities of members within and to the church are not equal. Some members are “set apart” to offices of responsibility and accountability. We designate positions that carry roles and functions that require particular gifts, skills and commitment.

This report is concerned with that group of members that the church sets apart as its paid, accountable leaders. It is concerned with the capacity of our paid ministers to manage the challenges inherent in the work to which they are called. It is concerned also with the United Church’s capacity to equip ministry personnel for the roles and functions they are called to fulfill.

As a church, we promise to equip and support ministry personnel, who in turn promise to accept responsibility for the well being of a congregation, ministry, or the United Church as a whole. We call this mutual promise a covenant.

A Theology of Covenant

Covenant theology is deeply rooted in our historical and biblical faith, beginning with Adam and Eve, Sarah and Abraham, Jacob, Moses and God’s gift of Torah. Psalm writers and prophets remind their hearers of the blessings and obligations of covenant. Jesus offered his followers a new covenant symbolized by his life, death and resurrection.

We are a people of covenant. At our baptisms, through our parents, families and friends, or as adults, we enter into a covenant with God and with a community of faith. Our baptism celebrates our participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world. The covenant of baptism is renewed when we participate in the liturgy of every baptism. For many, the covenant of baptism is renewed at confirmation.

Whenever church communities ask individual members to respond to a call to leadership, we enter into covenant. Ministry personnel, whether ordained, diaconal or lay, participate in a covenant with the whole church. This covenant is between ministry personnel, the Presbytery/District and the congregation or mission. The covenant that is created each time ministry personnel take up new positions is vital to the health and well-being of those in ministry, congregations and outreach units, as well as the Presbytery/District as a whole. Promises are made that set the parameters for support, accountability, responsibility and mutual ministry to take place. In terms of the vocational health of ministry personnel, this covenant is imperative and, when honoured, it is life giving. The embrace of the covenant enables communities of faith to “set apart” members to distinct roles of leadership, with unique roles, authority and responsibilities, without creating the experience of isolation.

We witness a broken covenant when presbyteries forget that they have promised to support ministry personnel in their leadership roles. We experience a broken covenant when

congregations place unreasonable demands on ministry personnel while not offering support. We recognize a broken covenant when ministry personnel selfishly or inappropriately put their own needs and desires ahead of the well-being of a congregation or the mission of the wider church. We acknowledge a broken covenant when ministry personnel choose to withdraw from Presbytery/District and colleagues.

Yet we believe that the grace of God is close at hand. Renewing the covenant specific to ministry personnel means that each participant takes the covenant seriously, repents of wrongdoing and in humility opens up to new possibilities in relationship. Sometimes this process takes a long time, especially when there is significant distress, pain, and trust has been broken.

One way the United Church can help to renew the covenant and rebuild trust is to provide vocational support for the ministry personnel with whom we have covenanted. By vocational support, we mean the policies, programs and practices that support the roles and responsibilities we have placed on ministry personnel. We hope that his report will address ways in which the church can significantly improve its capacity to provide vocational support to ministry personnel.

The Survey of Ministry Personnel

Purpose

In an effort to further understand the isolation experienced by Ministry Personnel, the Steering Group initiated a survey of the nearly 2600 active Ministry Personnel in the United Church. The survey was administered for 4 broad reasons:

1. To assess **levels of isolation** among Ministry Personnel; that is, to use particular experiential and cognitive measures to determine the percentage of ministry personnel that self-report isolation, and the degree to which those factors make a difference.
2. To assess **levels of psychological adjustment** problems in the Ministry Personnel population; that is, the mental and emotional difficulties reported by Ministry Personnel, including access to the Employee Assistance Program
3. To assess a variety of **personal attributes** that may exacerbate *or* ‘buffer’ the negative impacts of isolation; for example, personality, social support, and coping styles
4. To assess the **criticality** of certain types of Ministry Personnel isolation by correlating them with adjustment problems, commitment levels and turnover cognitions; that is, what forms of isolation are connected to indicators of emotional or psychological difficulties, and thoughts about leaving ministry.

The original intention was to survey only levels of isolation in terms of the *stressors* for members of the Order of Ministry (i.e., what external situations or circumstances may be contributing to isolation). However, in order to obtain a more complete perspective, it was deemed necessary to conduct a full audit of all active Ministry Personnel (ordered and lay), and include measures of *strain* (i.e., psychological adjustment), and *moderating* variables (i.e. personal attributes). In doing so, the United Church could **validate** its model of isolation among all Ministry Personnel by a) linking *types* of isolation to *adjustment* (i.e., “Is this type of isolation as harmful as we think it is?”), b) establish priorities for organizational change to support ministers, and c) identify personal attributes that are either (i) risk factors to monitor, or (ii) indicators of a need for resources through training and development.

Our Employee Assistance Program provider, WarrenShepell, developed and conducted a Survey of Ministry Personnel, which included measurements to address each of the four reasons named above:

1. Isolation

- Organizational Alienation
- Perceived Persecution (Victimization)
- Respect & Recognition
- Social Alienation
- Belief-Based Alienation
- Role Ambiguity and Overload
- Role Conflict

These dimensions of Ministry Personnel isolation are *empirically informed*. That is, despite the theoretical groupings of isolation issues that were derived by the Steering Group from anecdotal reporting and focus group content, data analyses suggest that the above groupings and themes represent a more reliable and valid way of describing and measuring Ministry Personnel isolation. It is these dimensions of Ministry Personnel isolation that were examined in the study.

2. Adjustment

- Depression symptoms
- Anxiety Symptoms
- Stress Symptoms
- Burnout-Emotional Exhaustion
- Burnout-Depersonalization
- Burnout-Lack of Personal Accomplishment

These dimensions of adjustment were measured because they represent the most critical elements of emotional well-being. In addition, burnout is a work-specific form of adjustment that has been studied in other clergy populations. There is a vast research literature base on the impact of these adjustment problems on work performance and employee withdrawal behaviors. These dimensions of adjustment were measured through well-known, standardized measures that are associated with norms. This allowed us to compare United Church Ministry Personnel to benchmarks.

3. Commitment & Turnover Cognitions

- Pastoral Charge Commitment
- United Church Commitment
- United Church Turnover Cognitions

It was also important to understand levels of Ministry Personnel satisfaction, commitment, and thoughts of leaving the pastoral charge and the Church as an employer. While knowledge of Ministry Personnel isolation and adjustment levels are important, it is also important to understand how these problems ‘feed through’ to key employee outcomes. This is yet another way of validating aspects of isolation as critical problems. Commitment and turnover

cognitions, in particular, are known from other research as substantive drivers of actual turnover. Thus, they are ‘acid tests’ of just how malignant certain types of isolation may be in thinning the Ministry Personnel ranks.

4. Personal Attributes

- Trait Perfectionism
- Sources of Social Support
- Coping Styles
- Dispositional Optimism

The well-being of individuals is always an interaction of *person plus situation*. It is one thing to understand what *organizational/systemic* and *role-related* stressors are impacting the well-being of Ministry Personnel. It is quite another to understand what Ministry Personnel bring to the Ministry Personnel role that may, alternatively, *exacerbate or buffer* the distress that comes with isolation. By measuring these personal attributes, the United Church can take action to prevent Ministry Personnel adjustment and commitment problems by managing risk factors, as well as equip Ministry Personnel with personal resources to help them manage the unique difficulties associated with the ministerial role. Trait perfectionism was particularly measured because this personal attribute has been associated with Ministry Personnel adjustment in past research. It was measured using a well-known and valid instrument. The social support measures were designed especially for Ministry Personnel response, and were based on a well-known theoretical and empirical model of social support. The measures of coping styles and dispositional optimism (generalized expectation that good things, rather than bad things, will happen) represent ‘teachable’ personal attributes that many past studies have indicated are associated with high well-being both in work and non-work domains. There was a strong interest to ‘discover’ what well-known personal attributes were especially effective at helping Ministry Personnel to stave off the damaging effects of isolation and maladjustment, and keep them satisfied and committed to their vocational role.

As an aside, the survey also included a well-known, valid measure of workplace bullying. While this is not considered to be a dimension of clergy isolation, it is a role stressor that has been linked to clergy adjustment in past research. There was some interest to audit levels of workplace bullying in the Ministry Personnel population and to examine its impact on adjustment and commitment.

For the sake continuity, the top line results from the survey will be discussed in order of *strengths to opportunities for development*.

Analysis

Ministry Personnel isolation levels are **generally** low.

For *most* areas of Ministry Personnel isolation, the majority of Ministry Personnel report low isolation. The following are a few results that exemplify this:

In general...

- Almost 85% generally feel supported by others.

- More than 80% do not experience negative interactions with others.
- Almost 90% believe they have a say in decision making that affects their work
- Over 90% feel accepted by others as a capable and credible minister.

Organizational Alienation

- Only 1 in 3 feels troubled by current belief movements within the Church.
- Two thirds have a high degree of respect for Church leaders.
- Less than 1 in 5 feel that the Church no longer cares or believes in its cause.

Belief-Based Alienation

- Almost 70% do not feel that they are forced to work within a belief system that is different from their own.
- Less than one-third feel excluded by others because of their beliefs.

Respect & Recognition

- Almost two-thirds feel that their skills and efforts are sufficiently recognized and rewarded.

Social Alienation

- Almost 65% do not feel isolated or cut-off from their friends and family
- Only 1 in 4 feel that they have little in common with their colleagues.

Perceived Persecution

- Only 1 in 5 feels that they do not have enough privacy.
- Almost 75% feel that they have adequate privacy in their personal lives.
- Over 70% are not often treated unfairly because of who they are.

Workplace Bullying

In addition, the reported frequency of workplace bullying was low. When the six questions that measure this role stressor are rolled up into a composite scale the average minister reports a score that is only 38% of the maximum possible score.

Ministry Personnel commitment levels are generally **high**.

The majority of Ministry Personnel also report high commitment to their vocation, their pastoral charges, and the Church as an employer. The following are a few results that exemplify this:

- Almost 75% 'talk up' their pastoral charges as great charges to serve.
- Over 80% are satisfied with their current pastoral charge.
- Almost 90% feel that being a minister is an important part of who they are as a person.
- Over 90% are satisfied with their vocation as a minister.
- More than 75% feel they belong to the United Church as an organization.
- Over 75% do not often think about leaving the United Church to work somewhere else.

Commitment to ministry as a vocation is relatively **impervious** to isolation factors.

Not only is commitment to **ministry** high among Ministry Personnel, levels of such commitment are relatively unaffected by issues of isolation. *No single isolation question or dimension correlated substantively with vocational commitment.*

The only factor that appeared to diminish commitment to the ministry was feelings of diminished personal accomplishment on the part of Ministry Personnel (i.e., a component of burnout). When Ministry Personnel feel that they are no longer able to serve as effective ministers, it is time to move on. As vocational commitment diminishes, so too does commitment and retention with the Church as an employer. Time to leave ministry equates with time to leave the United Church. However, levels of personal accomplishment in the Ministry Personnel population hover around average, so this not an immediate concern.

Organizational sources of isolation are **not** powerful drivers of adjustment.

While some sources of Ministry Personnel isolation stem from difficulties related to the Ministry Personnel role and pastoral charge, others stem from relationships with the United Church as a whole (e.g., leadership, culture, climate).

A few aspects of *Organizational Alienation* and *Belief-Based Alienation* could be judged as problematic in terms of levels reported by Ministry Personnel:

- Almost 4 in 10 have a high degree of distrust in Church leaders.
- 4 out of 10 Ministry Personnel feel powerless to effect change in the Church.
- Less than half of Ministry Personnel feel that leaders are interested in what goes on at other courts of the United Church.
- 1 in 3 Ministry Personnel often feel alone in their beliefs

However, neither source of isolation was a substantive **driver** of **adjustment**. These ‘systemic’ dimensions of isolation were the **lowest-ranked** drivers of depression, anxiety, stress, and emotional exhaustion symptoms. In other words, whether Ministry Personnel feel connected or disconnected to the United Church has little bearing on how well or unwell they are. Relatively-speaking, there are few ‘oppressive’ issues affecting the wellness of the Ministry Personnel population.

There are **caveats** associated with these relatively positive findings. While Ministry Personnel adjustment may not be *directly* affected by systemic factors, Ministry Personnel adjustment is likely affected *indirectly* by a lack of sufficient organizational support to enable Ministry Personnel to deal with stressors associated with the Ministry Personnel role and experiences in the pastoral charge. The following finding backs this up:

- Less than half of Ministry Personnel feel they receive the level support they need within the United Church.

This single issue is the **second-highest driver** of commitment to the Church as an employer and thoughts of leaving. *For every 1-point decrease in the level of perceived organizational support among Ministry Personnel, the United Church can expect over a half point decrease in commitment to the United Church as an employer.*

In general, Organizational Alienation and Belief-Based Alienation, as dimensions of isolation, are the **strongest** drivers of commitment and turnover cognitions.

Feelings of commitment and thoughts of turnover should not be taken lightly. Two published meta-analyses of hundreds of studies indicate that these withdrawal variables correlate $-.33$ and $.45$ with *actual* turnover.^{2 3} What likely *protects* the United Church against Ministry Personnel acting on these attitudes is a *stronger* commitment to ministry as a vocation.

So far, the picture of Ministry Personnel isolation at the United Church may appear rather benign. The average minister appears to be **integrated** rather than **isolated**. The average minister also appears to be highly committed to the ministry and the United Church as an employer.

However, percentages and averages can hide enclaves of Ministry Personnel for whom isolation is a problem and for whom associated distress and feelings of withdrawal are high. For some segments of Ministry Personnel that *do* report higher isolation, the impact of that isolation on adjustment and commitment can be crippling and costly to the United Church. Here, we are making the important distinction between **level** and **leverage**. Levels associated with isolation may be low, on average, but the total cost of isolation to the United Church, attributable to a smaller group of Ministry Personnel, may be similar to the total cost attributable to the entire Ministry Personnel population at a moderate level of isolation (e.g., drug costs, diminished Ministry Personnel performance, closure of pastoral charges, turnover).

The experience of Ministry Personnel in **pastoral charges** has the greatest impact on isolation and adjustment.

The average minister is not isolated, has moderate to high well-being, and is committed in various ways. When results are tabulated to identify *when* isolation and maladjustment are high, all (or most) roads lead to the pastoral charge. Consider the following:

- All forms of Ministry Personnel adjustment are correlated more **highly** with **pastoral charge commitment** than with vocational commitment, United Church commitment or United Church Turnover Cognitions (correlations from $-.19$ to $-.38$).

A “correlation” measures the degree to which two separate items increase or decrease in relation to each other. For example, a person’s height and weight are positively correlated. If a person’s height increases, so will her/his weight. A “negative correlation” means that the items move opposite to each other; that is, as one increases, the other decreases. For example, in the table on this page, as workplace bullying increases, the level of pastoral charge commitment decreases by a factor of -0.45 .

These findings contextualize the “hurt.” They tell the United Church *where* a good deal of the isolation factors originates.

² Eby, L.T., Freeman, D.M., Rush, M.C., & Lance, C.E. (1999). Motivational bases of affective organizational commitment: A partial test of an integrative theoretical model. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 72, 463-483.

³ Tett, R.P., & Meyer, J.P. (1993). Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and turnover: path analyses based on meta-analytic findings. *Personnel Psychology*, 46, 259-293.

Additionally, correlations among types of Ministry Personnel isolation and pastoral charge commitment helps the United Church to *rank* the types of isolation that are of greatest concern.

Ministry Personnel Isolation Items & Dimensions	Pastoral Charge Commitment
<i>I am appreciated by and supported by the community that I serve</i>	0.53
Workplace Bullying	-0.45
Lack of Respect & Recognition	-0.44
<i>I generally feel supported by others</i>	0.36
Perceived Persecution	-0.35
Social Alienation	-0.35
Role Conflict	-0.33
Role Ambiguity & Overload	-0.29

The above dimensions of Ministry Personnel isolation are correlated with pastoral charge commitment at **higher** levels than with United Church Commitment. This, again, helps the United Church to pinpoint the pastoral charge as the context for addressing isolation when it is high. For example, Lack of Respect and Recognition and Perceived Persecution, when they are high, are *not* occurring between colleagues, nor between ministers and the United Church, but largely between ministers, their pastoral charges, and their communities.

Additionally:

- The six dimensions of isolation, tabled above, are **more highly** correlated with emotional exhaustion and depression than Organizational Alienation or Belief-Based Alienation.

This is further evidence that the most potent isolation factors are those that originate in the pastoral charge setting.

Role ambiguity/overload and role conflict may not, at first, appear to be substantive drivers of pastoral charge commitment. However, these dimensions of isolation were among the *highest* reported by Ministry Personnel:

- Almost 75% feel that they have too much work for one minister to do.
- Over 60% feel that they do not have adequate time to think and contemplate in their role as a minister
- Less than 40% feel that there are clear, planned goals and objectives for their roles as ministers.

Higher levels of role difficulties combined with moderate leverage in affecting adjustment and commitment suggest that these are areas of concern.

One of the learnings here is that organizational/systemic isolation factors can have an indirect impact on Ministry Personnel adjustment and commitment. The United Church as an employer can create and deliver supports that address these different forms of isolation, point for point.

Social alienation, as a form of Ministry Personnel isolation, is one of the strongest and most consistent drivers of Ministry Personnel adjustment problems.

The levels associated with social alienation were higher than for other forms of isolation.

Consider:

- Over 44% have difficulty building strong social networks in the United Church.
- Almost 44% often feel lonely.
- Nearly 60% feel that there are few people they can openly trust and confide in.
- 35% believe that few people understand their issues and problems.
- Almost 50% are not receiving the amount of spiritual guidance they need.
- When questions that measure social alienation are rolled up into a composite scale, the average minister reports a score that is **54%** of the **maximum** possible score.

While some of these figures may not seem very high, bear in mind that many adjustment problems, including both depression and emotional exhaustion, are considered by many psychologists to be socially-mediated. Most theories and models of depression are interpersonal in nature. Our social relationships are our greatest source of well-being.

The impacts of social alienation:

- Social alienation was one of the top drivers of all Ministry Personnel adjustment and commitment outcomes.
- Social alienation was the top driver of all Ministry Personnel adjustment outcomes.
- ‘Having warm relations with others’ while not low in the Ministry Personnel population, was one of the top drivers of every measure of stress, depression, anxiety, and burnout for Ministry Personnel, as well as commitment to the church.

In summary, social alienation has the most impact of all the Ministry Personnel isolation dimensions. It is also the most consistent in its impact on a broad range of Ministry Personnel adjustment and commitment outcomes. Thus, its effects are assumed to be both invasive as well as pervasive.

Ministry Personnel require specific competencies to help them manage **depression** and **emotional exhaustion**.

The adjustment levels of Ministry Personnel are, for the most part, average for the general population (e.g., anxiety symptoms, emotional exhaustion). However, they are higher for depression (78th. percentile) and stress symptoms (88th. percentile). It is recommended that the United Church focus on addressing the Ministry Personnel isolation issues that *most* impact **emotional exhaustion** and **depression symptoms**.

Both of these adjustment states are considered ‘end states’ that are difficult for individuals to recover from without outside counselling. Both adjustment states are also associated with cognitive changes that are difficult to reverse. Ministry Personnel who are depressed may have negative, unrealistic views of themselves, the world, and the future. Ministry Personnel who are emotionally-exhausted may become cynical about their role as a minister and depersonalize their charges. Both are associated with lower performance and turnover in a variety of occupations.

Due to the criticality of these adjustment outcomes, the United Church should monitor and address their specific isolation drivers:

Ministry Personnel Isolation Dimensions	Depression Symptoms
Social Alienation	0.46
Workplace Bullying	0.36
Perceived Persecution	0.36
Respect & Recognition	0.32
Role Ambiguity & Overload	0.31
Role Conflict	0.29

Ministry Personnel Isolation Dimensions	Burnout - Emotional Exhaustion
Role Ambiguity & Overload	0.57
Perceived Persecution	0.49
Workplace Bullying	0.48
Role Conflict	0.46
Social Alienation	0.45
Respect & Recognition	0.39

Both depression and emotional exhaustion are also implicated with *lower* pastoral charge commitment.

In addition to addressing the isolation drivers of these adjustment problems through organizational change and development initiatives, it would behoove the United Church to provide training and development to Ministry Personnel to equip them with cognitive and behavioural competencies that are known to ‘stave off’ such emotional problems. Psychologists have identified a number of ‘trainable’ personal attributes that help individuals to manage problems in their lives and regulate the negative emotions that accompany them. Some of these are behavioural, such as practices taught through *problem-solving therapy*.⁴ Others are cognitive styles such as *locus of control* and *hardiness*.⁵ Another cognitively-based personal attribute was measured in this study – dispositional optimism.⁶

Following are the results related to dispositional optimism:

⁴ D’Zurilla, T.J., & Nezu, A.M. (1999). *Problem-solving therapy* (2nd. ed.). New York: Springer.

⁵ DeNeve, K.M., & Cooper, H. (1998). The happy personality: A meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124, 197-229.

⁶ Seligman, M.E.P. (1998). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life*. New York: Pocket Books.

- Dispositional optimism was the only personal attribute that was negatively correlated with **most** forms of Ministry Personnel maladjustment (correlations ranged from -0.36 to -0.52).
- Among the personal attributes, dispositional optimism correlated highest with Vocational Commitment.
- Dispositional optimism was related to fewer EAP accesses (-0.25).

By equipping ministers with effective coping styles such as dispositional optimism, the Church is addressing those aspects of the Ministry Personnel role that cannot be changed. The United Church can help ministers to help themselves to approach the problems that they face a little differently. Since there are many significant drivers of emotional exhaustion and depression, building effective coping styles would address many of them simultaneously. It is important to bear in mind that coping styles such as dispositional optimism and hardiness (the ability to withstand adverse conditions) are not just thought-based. They are associated with a host of adaptive habits and other behaviours that are also effective in improving life and work functioning (e.g., planning, setting goals).

It is important to bear in mind that no social support or coping style appeared *entirely* effective at buffering the effects of *high* Ministry Personnel isolation in the study. At best, social support and coping styles can help alleviate isolation factors when they were minimally or moderately present. This further strengthens the recommendation that the United Church, as an employer, must fill the gap left by personal attributes by lending more tangible or constructive supports to Ministry Personnel who are isolated in their pastoral charges.

Strategic Initiatives

The report of the steering group indicates that The United Church of Canada is failing to adequately provide the financial resources and the denominationally administered support programs for ministry personnel to faithfully exercise the vocation of ministry. The conclusions of the Steering Group compel The United Church of Canada to recommit at all levels to the covenant with Ministry Personnel serving Pastoral Charges and other ministries. There are three categories of response that the Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services encourages the church to make.

Support for coping with the isolating nature of ministry

The practice of paid, accountable ministry in The United Church of Canada is by its very nature isolating. In accordance with our denominational theology and polity, we invite some of our members to accept positions of leadership that symbolically and relationally, by degree and by function, set them apart from other members of the community. We are therefore responsible, at a denominational level, to provide the programs and resources that mitigate the hardships and challenges of the isolating nature of the vocation.

Provide resources for personal development and competency

Some folk in ministry experience isolation stemming from personal, individual or family systems factors. Isolation of this kind is not directly related to the vocation of ministry in a generic sense, and therefore must be addressed by the provision of programs and resources appropriate to individual needs. In the same way, the church must improve the screening and discernment

processes to ensure that it does not place individuals into ministry positions for which they are not suited spiritually, theologically, intellectually or psychologically.

Address the systemic and institutionalized causes of isolation

As the steering group analyzed the drivers of isolation, the systemic causes of isolation became abundantly clear. Isolation and its debilitating outcomes are unnecessarily created by a number of institutional factors including:

- A lack of denominational clarity concerning the various categories of paid accountable ministry
- A mistrust of leadership and apprehension toward clerical authority
- Inadequate policy and procedures for the supervision and support of ministry personnel
- An ambiguous employment relationship between ministry personnel and the wider church that becomes problematic when disciplinary procedures are required

The PC-MEPS offers, as the General Council's response to isolation in ministry, the following eight strategic initiatives. Each of these initiatives can, in part, equip individuals to manage the challenges of ministry, support emotionally and psychologically the person in ministry, and bring about changes to the systemic issues that may contribute to isolation in ministry. This Steering Group recommends establishing clear national directions, policies, and programs in the following areas: Pastoral Relations, Human Resources, Peer Relationships, Continuing Education, Communication Technology, Compensation, and Institutional Structures.

1. Strengthen Pastoral Relationships

We recommend that the General Council initiate and fund programs that assist presbyteries, ministry personnel and pastoral charges in the creation and sustaining of faithful, healthy pastoral relationships.

Potential Program Initiatives

- Presbytery/District based program for (at least) those in the first 5 years of commissioning, ordination, or recognition (an expansion of the Starting Well program). The program should include mentoring, support to pastoral relationships, the development of role and identity (formation), challenges, expectations and rewards. The "Fresh Start" program in use by the Anglican dioceses of Toronto and Niagara is a good model.
- Provide a nationally supported, consistent orientation program for ministry personnel moving from one conference to another
- Develop and fund a national program for the training and support of M&P Committees, especially enabling them to better inform pastoral charges regarding the challenges of congregational ministry.

2. Invest in Human Resources to support Ministry Personnel

We recommend that the General Council provide a nationally administered program that will equip presbyteries with paid ministers whose sole function is to deliver pastoral care and vocational support to ministry personnel and their families.

3. Nurture Relationships Among Ministry Personnel

We recommend that The United Church of Canada institute a national policy to provide programs and funding that promote collegial, supportive relationships among ministry personnel based on their call to a common vocation.

Potential Program Initiatives

- Develop and fund a national programming for facilitated peer groups of ministry personnel, appropriate to the context (face to face, teleconferencing, web based).
- Develop a process and provide funding so that ministry personnel can from time to time reflect on vocation, call and role in ministry within the United Church, (retreats, vocational assessments, etc)
- Provide funding or personnel resources for spiritual guidance/direction

4. Invest in Continuing Education

We acknowledge the work that other bodies are doing in the development of education for leadership and recommend that The United Church of Canada institute a national policy to adequately resource the educational programs of the denomination in order to ensure that ministry personnel receive educational support from discernment to retirement thereby continuing to affirm the principle of an educated ministry.

Potential Program Initiatives

- Provide a national fund specifically for continuing education, training and skill development for professional ministry based on at least 1.5% of the church's gross compensation budget, (representing the minimum industry standard).
- Offer throughout the church regional continuing education seminars for ministry personnel that have a proven affect on adjustment issues in ministry, for example, wellness, conflict resolution, goal setting, problem solving, stress management, time management.
- When determining funding grants for educational programs, take into account the geographic implications of ministry personnel attending residential events.

5. Invest in Communication Technology

We recommend that The United Church of Canada institute a national policy to provide appropriate communication technology in order to provide networking capabilities among all ministry personnel.

Potential Program Initiatives

- Increase the effective use of teleconferencing / videoconferencing
- Ensure that all ministry personnel are provided with a computer and the best available internet connectivity.

6. As we make better use of communication technologies we suggest:

- Develop a web based resource and online community specifically aimed at supporting ministry as a professional vocation in the United Church
- Support and sponsor Ministry Personnel exchange programs
- Continue funding and supporting the development and provision of worship materials and other resources supporting the practice of ministry
- Enhance Connex or publish a journal specifically devoted to vocational ministry in the United Church (similar to the former *Practice of Ministry in Canada* journal).

7. Continue to Address Compensation Issues

We affirm the directions of the Compensation Steering Group in instituting a national compensation system that recognises education, years of service and special circumstances.

- We have continued to consult with the Compensation Steering Group, which has undertaken a complete and separate study related to compensation, and we find that the directions of this group are consistent with our group's study and research. We particularly support special programs for geographically remote settlements to compensate for the challenges of being removed from previous support networks (travel allowances, etc).

8. Address Institutional and Structural Causes of Isolation

We recommend that the General Council adopt the policy of clearly defining the roles and relationships of paid accountable leaders within the governance and employment structure of The United Church of Canada, with clear lines of accountability and authority.

Potential Program Initiatives

- Separate the oversight and support functions of Presbytery/District within the polity of the United Church
- Establish a position ombudsperson for ministry personnel at the General Council Office
- Establish a program at the General Council Office to recognise key anniversary dates, milestones, and retirements of Ministry Personnel
- Provide adequate funding for educational and information resources to support consistency with respect to Pastoral Relations work
- Develop a General Council based strategy to promote a healthy organization
- Develop a communication strategy and program, either in conjunction with Presbytery/District meetings or via some other mechanism, to educate and inform Ministry Personnel about United Church programs and changes in policy as they occur.
- Research and produce a report to clarify the lines of accountability and authority in the United Church in terms of ministry personnel employment and governance relationships; essentially, answer the question *who is the employer for Ministry Personnel?*
- Review the disciplinary authority of Presbyteries under section 363 of the *Manual*, and make recommendations for changes that would provide a fairer and more competent process, which would include adequate support and advocacy for any Ministry Personnel whose ministry is under review or scrutiny.

Recommendations to the General Council

The Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services recommends that the United Church direct increased and sufficient resources to fund the strategic initiatives contained in this report. We believe their implementation will lead to reduced ministry isolation, a more positive morale among ministry personnel, and a healthier work climate; by investing in a healthier leadership, the church will benefit through increased revenues, including to Mission & Service, and enhance our mission in Canada and the world.

MINISTRY COMPENSATION (Commons)

Origin: Permanent Committee Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
Steering Group on Compensation

Summary

Mandate

Concerns about the current compensation policies have been on the United Church's horizon since at least 1997. A specific proposal was presented to the Executive of the General Council in April, 2003 to request funding for the expertise to develop compensation models that would address the concerns. The proposal was approved subject to interim reporting to the Executive of the General Council and final recommendations to the 39th General Council 2006. Jim King was hired as the project manager and the Compensation Steering Group was established by the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC MEPS) to provide guidance in the development of recommendations.

Scope

Throughout its history, The United Church of Canada has attempted to compensate its paid workers through policies and practices that are just, fair and equitable. In the past 10 or so years, a significant number of issues have been raised as they relate to the Church's compensation systems. Some changes have been made but a number of the issues have far reaching implications and additional research was required to make recommendations that would be comprehensive and still be just and equitable.

Process

The research model employed for this project includes:

1. statistical analysis of current and past compensation practices;
2. analysis of qualitative information provided by both ministry personnel and members of congregations; and
3. a review of the practices of other denominations in Canada and the United States.

The study reviewed all elements of ministry compensation but focussed on cash compensation which includes base salary, housing (or housing allowance) and the clergy tax deduction.

Findings

The research reveals a pattern of inequity in all cash compensation elements which is largely due to the "congregational" polity of The United Church of Canada. This inequity seems to be driven by the pastoral charges' ability to pay. This can create a competitive, market driven environment pushing ministers to seek the "best offer".

Other issues that reflect inequities within cash compensation include:

1. women are paid less than men;
2. a significant spread in base salaries in all categories;
3. manses are usually the least desirable form of housing; and
4. some ministers have to ask or wait for their salary each pay period.

On the one extreme we have ministry personnel who are struggling to provide the basics for themselves and/or their families and other commitments. At the other extreme we have those who are doing much better. Due to our congregational structure, declining attendance and finances, as well as the repeated unsuccessful attempts through the years to modify the way we compensate ministry personnel, we have created a system that is not fair, just, or equitable. The challenge is to realign these policies to meet these criteria.

Recommendations

To realign compensation policies with just, fair and equitable principles the following recommendations address the systemic problems and provide the tools to monitor progress and compliance:

1. take steps to implement a denominationally funded salary administration system for ministry personnel including a remit to test the will of the church in this regard OR further study the feasibility of implementing a denominationally funded salary administration system for ministry personnel including the possibility of a remit; (see full recommendation)
2. implement a centralized payroll service for all ministry personnel in pastoral relations and other paid personnel in pastoral charges on a per capita fee basis so that ministry personnel are paid on time in the correct amount;
3. provide a comprehensive salary to all ministry personnel so that base salary and all allowances, including the housing allowance or equivalent, are combined into one cash payment;
4. take steps to move to a new salary structure that includes a minimum and maximum in each category with a greater differential in the salaries of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associates; and
5. implement a vehicle to augment compensation in exceptional circumstances such as exceptionally high cost, remote areas and for ministry personnel couples unable to claim the full clergy residence deduction.

Background and Mandate

From the Minutes of the Executive of the General Council April 25 – 28 2003:

“Throughout its history The United Church of Canada has attempted to compensate its paid workers through policies and practices that are just and equitable, recognizing that our values are more than a simple reflection of the systems of our world....Going back 20 years, but particularly in the past 10 years, a significant number of issues have been raised related to the Church’s compensation systems. Changes have been made to address some of these issues. Often the changes created additional complexities and inequities.”

In April 2003 the Sub-Executive of the General Council passed a motion giving effect to the “Compensation Models Project” to address the compensation practices of the Church as they impact on ministry personnel. Although the resolution wanted the models for compensation to be “... (without dependence on the Clergyman’s Residence provisions of the Income Tax Act)...” it became almost impossible to unbundle. This provision of the Income Tax Act has an impact on a minister’s net income and, therefore, the best that can be done is to try to equalize the impact. See Appendix A for the proposal as it was submitted to the Executive of the General Council. The study and resulting recommendations deal with salary, housing and allowances

and respond to Petitions 56, 93, 94, 95, and 96 submitted to the 38th General Council 2003. The recommendations are to be presented to the 39th General Council 2006.

In January 2004, Jim King was hired as Project Manager, Compensation Models Project (“Project Manager”). The Project Manager, reporting to the Executive Minister, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS) was also guided by the Compensation Steering Group, which was established by PC MEPS in June 2004. The Compensation Steering Group has met six times and sent a report to the PC MEPS after each meeting. In its turn, PC MEPS sent interim reports to the Executive of the General Council in the spring and fall of 2005. See Appendix B for the list of members of PC MEPS and Appendix C for a full list of the dates on which the work arising out of the Compensation Models Project was considered and by which group.

The Compensation Steering Group’s stated purpose is to work with the Project Manager, to help bring clarity and context to the issues; review the research results and analytical data provided during the course of the study; provide input regarding the hypotheses presented; and provide guidance in the development and affirmation of the recommendations for the PC-MEPS in preparation for the Executive of the General Council and the 39th General Council 2006.

Historical Highlights of Compensation

“We want to be a fair employer”.⁷

Through an examination of written documents, it is apparent that both pastoral charges and the General Council office identified justice, fairness, and equitableness as worthy faith values when determining compensation.

The need for a pastoral charge minimum salary for ordained ministers was decided as early as 1930. “Deaconesses” – now diaconal ministers – were paid significantly less with their salaries primarily determined by the Women’s Missionary Society, the Board of Home Missions or the local pastoral charge. The minimum salary for ordained ministers was originally set at a flat \$1,800.00² (plus housing) and was updated from time to time. All pastoral charges did not meet the required minimum salary until 1951.

The 23rd General Council 1968 approved a salary increment policy based on years of service, known as the “Maturity Curve” Salary System. Since then, adjustments have been approved and increments applied annually based upon the increase in the cost of living. The 2006 salary scale is:

⁷ “Principles Found Within the Pastoral Charge Compensation System of the 80’s and 90’s”, Barbara Copp, General Secretary Personnel and Administrative Services.

² If increases in the minimum salary had kept pace with increases in the average industrial wage, \$1,800 would have grown to \$60,000 in 2006.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Years Of Eligible Service →	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 10	11 – 13	14 & over
Ordained/Diaconal Minister	\$29,512	\$30,840	\$32,168	\$33,496	\$34,824	\$36,152
Lay Pastoral Minister	\$28,561	\$29,846	\$31,132	\$32,417	\$33,702	\$34,987
Lay Pastoral Minister in Training; Staff Associate	\$27,931	\$29,188	\$30,444	\$31,701	\$32,958	\$34,215

Theological Principles for Compensation

Compensation policy is one component that shapes our Church's ministry and nurtures strong, healthy and respectful pastoral relationships. It is however, an important component and one that must be clearly shaped by a faith grounded in the Judeo-Christian principles of:

- Justice
- Fairness
- Equitableness

These imperatives challenge the Church to live out its theology in its relationships with ministry personnel within the context of contemporary economic culture. The Church is called to model a compensation structure that does not accord personal value on the basis of how much one earns or an environment that encourages one to compete endlessly for more. Rather it invites all of the Church to acknowledge that we have been richly blessed within God's realm, entrusted with an abundance, not a scarcity of good things, and challenged to utilize these blessings and abundance in a way that is just, fair, and equitable not only within the Church but in the world.

The Church is called by Christ to model its understanding of community at the Table of the God's Realm. Nourished at the Table, we are strengthened in mind, body and spirit to serve faithfully and fully. At the Table, Jesus shares with those who are called and gathered and in so doing builds community and sustains relationships. The Christ story calls all those within The United Church of Canada to gather at the same denominational Table to share the same loaf and cup.

The bread that is broken is a symbol of that which sustains our bodies and spirits. The scriptures abound with rich images of bread. In the desert God provides manna sufficient for each day. Through a child, with only enough for himself, Jesus provides bread for all who are gathered. At the Table, with those closest, Jesus breaks bread and shares it.

Our faith tradition is grounded in a firm and sure confidence that in God's realm there is enough bread to sustain and to satisfy all. However, we know from our experience, that our human structures do not always encourage, or even allow us to distribute "enough" so that all have what they need today. This is also true in the Church.

There are many Biblical images and accounts, which speak of the requirement for just, fair, and equitable practices in our economic relationships. In fact, it can be said that economic justice and equitableness (consistently fair and unbiased) are primary imperatives of Jesus. Throughout the gospels Jesus is informed by his faith tradition's adamant assertion that God is just and calls us into just relationships with each other.

The United Church of Canada is called to model through its compensation policies a just economic relationship between its ministry personnel and the Church. It is imperative that our policies nurture and sustain right relationships reflecting the values of the Table of community and the abundance to which Christ invites us.

This theological understanding leads the Church to the following principles upon which to build its compensation policy and practice:

1. **Justice** is done when gender is not a factor (stated or tacit) to determine compensation levels; when ministry personnel are not called upon to disproportionately bear the financial costs of declining membership or be held responsible for instances of inadequate congregational stewardship practices and commitments; when ministry personnel who accept part-time appointments are not expected to serve full time; when financially limited pastoral charges with viable ministry potential are eligible for ministry personnel services. Therefore, **just** compensation policies contribute to right relationships. Compensation policies and practices that are just enable relationships between ministry personnel and pastoral charges/outreach ministries that are respectful, life giving and healthy.

Each month in order to get my pay cheque I would have to have supper at the treasurer's house. Some folks I didn't mind spending time with and invitations to supper in rural areas are very much part of our lives as ministers – but this person was an individual who would really drain my energy and really not the greatest cook – so I left each month with a pay cheque but also heartburn! It only took six months for me to ask to have all my cheques post-dated for the year and given to me in an envelope at the beginning of each year!
2. **Fairness** is experienced when minimum compensation levels are adequate to provide for oneself and those in one's care; when debt incurred to meet educational requirements can be reasonably discharged; when one can make adequate provision for one's retirement years. Therefore, **fair** compensation practices recognize the realities of living in the world, without abandoning ministry personnel and pastoral charges to the free market assumptions of the world. They recognize the skill and requirements necessary for the undertaking of ordered ministries and the values attributed to similar skills and requirements in comparable vocations. They ensure fair levels of compensation for all in paid accountable ministries.
3. **Equitable** practices (as in fair and impartial among ministry personnel) are in evidence when ministry personnel are paid on time and regularly; when ministry personnel couples are not disadvantaged in the value of the clergy residence tax deduction by virtue of their partnerships; when ministry personnel, who have lived in manses while serving, retire with resources for securing adequate housing; when remuneration levels do not vary as much as 100% within a category; when ministry personnel are not pushed towards competitive free-market principles and undermine collegial and respectful

Two months after requesting a change in Pastoral Relations, with only a month left to be ministering there, the treasurer came to me and said that he had been over paying me all year and I owed the Church \$1400. He said that the pay cheque I had received two weeks ago would be my last. They would re-coup their money by not paying me that last pay cheque. A friend of mine who is a United Church treasurer

relationships with peers; when pastoral charges/outreach ministries are not left to manage payroll and taxation provisions without trained staff (paid or volunteer). Therefore, **equitable** compensation practices build relationships of mutuality, trust and sustainability among ministry personnel and pastoral charges. Transparency of these practices contributes to trust that the policies are being equitably and fairly applied throughout the Church.

pointed out after the fact – that it had been the treasurer’s fault that I was over paid – it was no fault of mine and it had taken the congregation nine months to over pay me, it would have only been fair to allow me nine months to pay this amount back to the congregation.

Other principles to take into account:

- 4. Sustainable** compensation policies are essential. Compensation practices that meet the criteria of just, fair and equitable but are not sustainable in the practical functioning of the Church are of limited value to the Church and to ministry personnel. At the same time, there might be different and new ways to define what constitutes sustainable and affordable compensation practices. We are enabled in this endeavour as we reflect upon God’s abundance of blessings and challenge the ethic of scarcity.

Changing demographics and spiritual commitments among Canadians have strongly impacted congregations and the resources they have available to meet the financial expenses associated with ministry personnel, programmes and services. A greater sharing of financial and leadership resources across the Church reminds us that we are not alone. Developing rich and liberating understandings of the opportunities for faithful stewardship (locally and nationally) of that which God has entrusted to us will open new and exciting opportunities for The United Church of Canada to continue to minister in the Spirit of Christ.

- 5. Consistent** and equitably applied compensation policies across the Church contribute to a sense of common ministry and to being part of the ministry of the whole of The United Church of Canada. They enhance and strengthen our denomination and its leaders to respond to the ministry to which this Church is called by God.

Research Process

The research model employed in this project includes statistical analysis of current and past compensation practices, the analysis of qualitative information provided by ministry personnel and members of congregations and a review of the practices of other denominations in Canada and the United States.

The statistical analysis was a significant challenge, as it required the extraction and matching of data elements from various databases. Current data was largely unavailable.

The qualitative information was solicited through focus groups held with ministry personnel and separate meetings with representatives of the official boards of pastoral charges. The questions asked at the focus groups and the locations of the meetings are listed in Appendices D, E and F. The meetings were generally arranged with the assistance of the Conference Personnel Ministers

in each of the conferences in locations that ranged from the far north to the southern reaches of Canada in both rural and urban settings. In total, 56 meetings were held involving approximately 400 ministry personnel and 750 pastoral charge leaders. Many more offered their comments via email and letters. The frequently asked questions with answers are documented in Appendix G.

In addition individuals, congregations and presbyteries provided their opinions directly in response to the article on the Compensation Models Project in *Connex*, a newsletter from PC MEPS, distributed to all active and retired ministry personnel, and to a similar article in *The Observer*.

All who took the time to participate were open, honest and passionate in their expression of the issues and committed to the future of the United Church.

Findings

A major problem identified back in 1997 and one of the drivers for the Compensation Models Project was inequity for ministry personnel couples concerning housing. While, from the Church's perspective housing is considered part of total compensation because the exemption allowed in the Income Tax Act reduces the amount of tax that would otherwise be payable, ministry personnel couples discovered that only one partner could include housing as a reduction. This meant that some ministry personnel couples were effectively receiving less compensation. For clarification, the cash compensation of ministry personnel has three major components: base salary, housing or housing allowance and clergy residence deduction.

Other concerns emerged during research, discussions and submissions:

- low ministry personnel salaries;
- living in a manse inhibits the capacity of ministry personnel to build equity for retirement;
- manses are often poorly maintained by the pastoral charge and presbytery or are poorly cared for by ministry personnel;
- gender inequities;
- inequities among ministry personnel within the whole system; and
- payroll practices which do not always deliver salaries on time in the correct amount.

Identifying these concerns does not mean that it is the experience of all ministry personnel or pastoral charges. It is to assert, however, that there are sufficient concerns in these areas to state that the time has come to address as many of these concerns as possible. It appears to be a "Kairos" – an opportune time – in the Church to attend to compensation in a faithful, intentional manner.

The quantitative analysis revealed two realities that do not satisfy just, fair and equitable principles:

1. A comparison of male and female ministers reveals that, in total, 24.9% of full time males and 41.4% of full time females receive minimum salary. The average salary for full time female ministers is less than males in every category (see Appendix H).
2. Another apparent inequity is the disparity in base salary for both males and females. Appendix I illustrates the spread in salaries paid in each category of A to F. One would expect a significant spread in individual salaries in Category F due to the tenure of ministry

personnel. Categories A through E are hard to explain except for the “ability to pay” of some of the pastoral charges. We frequently heard, “We cannot afford to pay any more”. Another, and related, issue is the number of ministry personnel called to a part time appointment but end up working full time. It is sometimes seen as another way of paying less than the minimum salary.

The qualitative analysis found that housing was a significant point of contention for both the pastoral charges and ministry personnel. Based on current Year Book data, approximately 40% of the pastoral charges, mostly in rural communities, still provide a manse for their minister. In many of these communities it is the only form of appropriate or available housing. However, a noticeable trend is that, where alternative housing is available within a reasonable distance from the Church, ministers are requesting a housing allowance instead of the manse. The manse is still preferred for those in their settlement pastoral charge.

Although there are a few ministers who prefer living in a manse, the majority of those who participated in focus groups expressed a preference for a housing allowance. As they see it, when the real estate market is stable or growing, they have an opportunity to build up equity for retirement. The current housing policy is seen to create significant inequity in “Total Cash Compensation”. Ministry personnel noted that:

- A manse is an advantage primarily to the pastoral charge as they own the property; it has short term value for some ministers living in particular communities;
- Some manses are poorly maintained;
- Respecting privacy is not always observed;
- Living in a manse makes it difficult to build up equity for retirement; and
- With little savings and low income it is difficult to obtain a mortgage

Our minister, who had been with us for five years, would never give us access to the manse. He had four young children and we wanted to do an inspection to see if any maintenance was required. When he and his family moved out, we were shocked to see the condition of our manse. It was a mess, there were holes in the walls, the carpet was beyond repair (it was new when they moved in), kitchen cupboard doors were missing, the kitchen stove was badly damaged and the place was filthy. Unfortunately we have no recourse.

From the point of view of congregational leaders, it was noted that:

- Pastoral charges are increasingly finding the manse costly to maintain as volunteer help is becoming difficult to find;
- Manses in some cases have been a point of contention with the minister and have caused stress in the relationship;
- Several pastoral charges experienced significant and costly damage to the manse by the minister with no recourse to recover the cost of repairs; and
- Many pastoral charges find themselves having to rent the manse when the minister preferred to receive a housing allowance.

Finally, the qualitative analysis also revealed that total cash is perceived to be inequitable and unfair. In fact there is wide disparity in total cash compensation (base salary plus housing allowance) between ministry personnel. Some of the disparity can be explained by differences in

the housing market across Canada. However, average total cash varies dramatically even within presbyteries. The sense of inequity is exacerbated among some ministry personnel when a minister who is paid a high housing allowance due to the location of their pastoral charge can choose to live in a much lower cost area, giving them a significant cash advantage.

Conclusion of Research and Findings

Employment practices followed by most employers adhere to fair, just and equitable practices. There is no doubt that The United Church of Canada has intended to follow, if not lead, in the creation of such a workplace.

Due to our congregational polity, declining attendance and finances, as well as the repeated unsuccessful attempts through the years to modify the way we compensate ministry personnel, a system has evolved that is not fair, just or equitable. We have not been able to translate our core values in relation to compensation into practice.

On the one extreme we have ministry personnel who are struggling to provide the basics for themselves and/or their families and other commitments. At the other extreme we have those who are doing much better. There are those who own homes while many others, who have lived in manses during their active service years, do not have a home to live in or have the means to acquire one when they retire. It is neither just, fair nor equitable to expect someone to devote their career to the gospel of Jesus the Christ and retire without adequate resources or support.

Recommendations

The following recommendations do not offer a magic formula to “fix” all injustices. They do, however, enable pastoral charges, other employing units and ministry personnel to have healthier, fairer, more just and faithful relationships with greater equity.

Recommended Directions:

1. A Denominationally Funded Salary Administration System

It is recommended that the General Council take steps to develop models for a denominationally funded salary administration system, including the nature and timing of a remit to pastoral charges.

As a result of the theological reflections, research and findings, the Permanent Committee – Ministry and Employment Policies and Services feel strongly that a denominationally funded salary administration system, which is different from the recommendation for a centralized payroll service below, is the most faithful direction to take our compensation policies so as to secure the greatest possible justice and equitableness. In a denominationally funded salary administration system, pastoral charges and other ministry units would contribute to a central pool from which ministry personnel are paid, regardless of where they are called to serve. This would ensure a more just and equitable application of compensation policies and a more equitable and fair provision of ministry personnel across the church for ministry in all places. Such a policy, however, would be a dramatic change in our long-established polity and practice, raising questions of faithfulness that are larger and further reaching than compensation. Such a change is not appropriately driven solely by compensation but by prayerful and careful discernment of the mission to which The United Church of Canada is called. A decision to implement a denominationally funded salary administration system

should be undertaken only within this broader context of prayerful discernment and reflection.

2. A Centralized Payroll Service

It is recommended that a centralized payroll service be implemented for all pastoral charges and other related employers beginning in 2007.

A centralized payroll service would simply manage the payroll for each pastoral charge based on input from each employer. This would relieve pastoral charges of a sometimes onerous responsibility and would address many current issues of fairness in administrative practice and enable a monitoring of the compensation system and allow the resolution of some of the inequitable practices. It would also make current data available so a thorough analysis of the impact of recommendations 4 and 5 below would be possible.

This payroll service would provide direct deposit to ministry personnel ensuring that their pay arrives on time, with the correct deductions, T4's etc. This service would also include congregational-accountable employees on the pastoral charge's payroll. To function in a cost-effective way all pastoral charges and other participating employers would be required to participate. It is estimated that the per capita charge for this centralized payroll service would be about \$10 to \$15 per pay period. With the participation of all pastoral charges and ministry units, the economy of scale would provide for minimal service cost while freeing considerable volunteer time within congregations. With approval of General Council, this centralized payroll service could commence in 2007, recognizing that it might take two years to roll it out to all pastoral charges and other ministry units.

3. Provide a Comprehensive Salary to all Ministry Personnel

It is recommended that ministry personnel be paid a comprehensive salary instead of a base salary plus housing allowance/housing.

This recommendation envisages a move away from the current system where compensation for ministry personnel is expressed in several pieces – base salary, housing allowance/housing, heating, telephone, etc. – to a single expression. Ministry personnel would receive an annual salary that is intended to cover all needs.

As the findings indicate, both ministry personnel and pastoral charges experience disadvantages in the present situation in relation to manses. Both ministry personnel and pastoral charges could benefit from a comprehensive salary system. In this recommendation manses would be “revenue producing” property which could be rented to ministry personnel or some other interested party. A comprehensive salary eliminates the common perception that housing allowances are a perk in addition to salary and also reduce the perception some ministry personnel have of being grossly underpaid (by looking at the base salary amount only). It would be another step forward in enabling ministry personnel to build up housing equity.

A comprehensive salary would largely be cost neutral and would not affect the value of the current Customs and Revenue Canada (CRA) clergy residence deduction in calculating

income tax liabilities. There could be a small increase in cost to the pastoral charge if the additional salary in place of the housing allowance attracts premiums for Employment Insurance and contributions to the Canada Pension Plan. If a minister's base salary under the current system is \$39,000 or more then no additional premiums would be required. If it is less, then for every additional \$1,000 up to \$39,000 the pastoral charge would have to pay an additional \$63.50 per annum.

4. Redesign the Salary Structure of Ministry Personnel

It is recommended that steps be taken to implement a new salary structure that has:

- minimum and maximum levels of compensation for each category to enable charges to have flexibility in attracting ministry personnel and a modest recognition of regional differences;
- a greater differential in the salaries of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associates; and
- a provision that Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training/Staff Associates not accumulate service credits until they were recognized as Lay Pastoral Ministers.

This recommended direction seeks to address the principles of fairness, equity and consistency. The findings indicate that there was considerable discrepancy among ministry personnel in the same categories, sometimes within similar regions. Tensions were noted in the discussions of the salaries of the Order of Minister, Lay Pastoral Ministers and Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training/Staff Associates.

There are many ways to create a salary structure that encompasses the recommendations. The following examples are two different approaches for comparison purposes. For instance, it could be based on the current minimum salary plus the average national housing allowance of \$13,000. Based on the desire for fair and equitable practices, it could be argued that the maximum should be 120% of the minimum. This approach might not give sufficient recognition to regional differences in housing costs but would provide more incentive for ministry personnel to move to a rural pastoral charge. Using these assumptions, an example of a new salary structure could then look like:

	INCREMENT CATEGORY						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Yrs of Eligible Service →	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 10	11 – 13	14 -16	17 +
Ordained/Diaconal Minister							
Existing (Minimum)	\$29,512	\$30,840	\$32,132	\$33,496	\$34,824	\$36,152	n/a
New Maximum (120% of New Min.)	\$51,014	\$53,361	\$55,816	\$58,383	\$61,069	\$63,878	\$66,816
New Minimum (Existing A + \$13,000, then 4.6% each step)	\$42,512	\$44,648	\$46,513	\$48,653	\$50,891	\$53,232	\$55,680

Lay Pastoral Minister							
Existing (Minimum)	\$27,931	\$29,188	\$30,444	\$31,701	\$32,958	\$32,415	
New Maximum (120% of New Min.)	\$48,464	\$49,978	\$51,450	\$53,005	\$54,519	\$56,033	
New Minimum (Ordained/Diaconal Minister New Min. less 5%)	\$40,386	\$41,648	\$42,875	\$44,171	\$45,433	\$46,694	

Another approach might put recognizing differences in housing costs across the country as a higher priority. In this case, a salary structure may encompass a lower housing component like \$6,000 in the minimum salary but have a larger differential between the minimum and maximum like 150%. This type of salary structure might look like:

	SALARY INCREMENT						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Yrs of Eligible Service →	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 10	11 – 13	14 -16	17 +
Ordained/Diaconal Ministers							
Existing (Minimum)	\$29,512	\$30,840	\$32,132	\$33,496	\$34,824	\$36,152	n/a
New Maximum (150% of New Min.)	\$53,268	\$55,719	\$58,281	\$60,963	\$63,767	\$66,701	\$69,768
New Minimum (Existing A + \$6000, then) 4.6% each step	\$35,512	\$37,146	\$38,854	\$40,642	\$42,511	\$44,467	\$46,512
Lay Pastoral Minister							
Existing (Minimum)	\$27,931	\$29,188	\$30,444	\$31,701	\$32,958	\$32,415	
New Maximum (145% of New Min.)	\$48,917	\$51,168	\$53,522	\$55,983	\$58,560	\$61,252	
New Minimum (Ordained/Diaconal Minister New Min. less 5%)	\$33,736	\$35,288	\$36,912	\$38,609	\$40,386	\$42,243	

If recommendations 2 and 3 above are implemented, data will be available to accurately assess the impact of this recommendation on pastoral charges and high cost housing areas.

5. Augment Compensation in Exceptional Circumstances

It is recommended that a centrally administered vehicle be set up to compensate those (a) in exceptionally high-cost, remote locations and (b) clergy couples where one is restricted from

claiming the full clergy residence deduction. Funding for these initiatives will be determined by the Executive of the General Council.

The provision of a vehicle to augment compensation in exceptional circumstance would ensure a greater degree of justice and fairness across our Church. If the centralized payroll service is approved, the administration of this compensation element would be greatly facilitated.

- (a) The cost to cover additional expenses incurred by living in high-cost, remote areas is estimated to be up to \$140,000 per year for all locations. This is based on a number of assumptions:
- There would be about 60 such locations based on the federal government's definition but modified to meet the needs of the United Church;
 - Cost includes \$2,000 per year to recognize higher cost of living; and
 - An amount to cover emergency medical transportation of up to \$1,000 per location per year would be available.

A different set of assumptions would produce a different estimate of the annual cost.

- (b) To compensate clergy couples where one is restricted from claiming the full clergy residency deduction is a greater challenge. A rough estimate of the cost is \$480,000 per year. This is based on a number of assumptions:
- There are about 65 individuals affected;
 - Their average new salary is about \$53,000; and
 - The top up would be about 14%.

Pension data identified 80 clergy couples but not all would be eligible so it was estimated that about 80% would apply.

Compensation Steering Group

Elected Members:

Eric Bacon, OM – Hamilton Conference
 Ken Clark, Lay – Maritime Conference
 Alan Hall, OM – Toronto Conference (Chair and PC MEPS Rep.)
 Bob James, Lay – Manitoba & NW Ontario Conference (PC MEPS Rep.)
 Gary Jones, OM – London Conference
 Lillian Roberts, OM – Montreal and Ottawa Conference
 Alex Taylor, OM – Saskatchewan Conference
 Dawne Taylor, OM – British Columbia Conference

Staff Resources:

Jim King, Project Manager
 Michael Burke, Executive Minister, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
 Linda M. Begley, Manager, Pension & Benefits

Appendix A

Proposal approved by the Executive of the General Council in 2003:

In April, 2003 the Human Resources Committee, through the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, submitted a Proposal to Executive of the General Council as follows:

Whereas the Executive of General Council passed the following motion at it's meeting in April 1997:

Whereas The United Church of Canada has been focused on intentionally building good sound, just personnel/compensation policies throughout its history; and

Whereas this type of policy development work is becoming increasingly multi-faceted, multi-layered, and complex; and

Whereas the current issues confronting "Ministry Personnel Couples" give rise to many questions/issues concerning our current compensation policy assumptions; and

Whereas there is a perceived need to urgently act to revise our current policies and practices at the earliest possible opportunity;

Therefore be it Resolved That:

The Executive of the General Council instruct the Human Resources Committee to move expeditiously to provide models of compensation for its employees which embody principles of pay equity (without dependence on the Clergymen's Residence Allowance provisions of The Income Tax Act) and present these options to the November 1997 Executive of the General Council meeting; ...and

Whereas much work has been accomplishing in identifying compensation issues and in resolving some of those issues, but the work related to developing models that are not dependent on the clergy residence tax deduction has not been completed; and

Whereas the Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit does not have the staff or financial resources to undertake a project of such scope;

Therefore be it Resolved That the Executive of the General Council confirm that the Compensation Models Project should continue, and

THAT up to \$150,000 be provided from the Executive of the General Council Project Fund annually for up to three years to enable the Ministry Employment Policies and Services to engage the services of a project manager and consultants; and to conduct such consultations and meetings and other work as necessary to complete this project, and

That interim progress reports be presented to the Executive of the General Council at least annually, and

THAT alternate models and a recommendation be presented at the 39th General Council 2006.

April 2003 was the Season of SARS and, with the Executive of the General Council meeting cancelled, the Sub-Executive (meeting all weekend through Reading and Recommendation Groups and Plenary via Teleconference) affirmed the above Proposal through motion, duly seconded and carried (Proposal 17, MEPS-7) with an additional sentence:

That the Permanent Committee on Finance be directed to research and recommend to the Executive of the General Council ways by which this project may be funded (General Council Sub-Executive Meeting, April 25 – 28, 2003, p. 270).

Upon recommendation of the Permanent Committee on Finance (Proposal No. 8), Executive of the General Council, at its meeting October 30 – November 3, 2003, approved the following motion:

That the Compensation Model Project be funded from The United Church of Canada Reserve Fund at \$150,000 per year for 2004, 2005 and 2006. Carried.
(Executive of the General Council meeting minutes, page 27)

The first report to the Executive of the General Council was on April 23, 2005 followed by a report on October 30, 2005. The channel of reporting to the Executive of the General Council was through the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services.

Appendix B

Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Permanent Committee (PC MEPS)

Elected Members:

Name		Location	Conference
Jim Blanchard (Chair)	Lay	Kensington, P.E.I	MAR
Elizabeth Brown	OM	Lethbridge, AB	ANW
Brian Copeland	OM	Nepean, ON	M&O
Dwaine Dornan (GCE Rep.)	Lay	Regina, SK	SK
Norm Graham	Lay	Oakville, ON	HAM
Alan Hall	OM	Toronto, ON	TOR
Peter Hardy	Lay	Hamilton, Bermuda	MAR
Linsell Hurd (GCE Rep.)	OM	Watson, SK	SK
Robert James	Lay	Winnipeg, MB	MNO
Tracy Murton	Lay	Vancouver, BC	BC
Catherine Somerville	OM	Sudbury, ON	MTU
Linda Thompson	Lay	Markdale, ON	TOR
Kate Young	OM	Mississauga, ON	TOR
Alison West	OM	Watrous, SK	SK

Staff Resources:

Ian Fraser, General Council Minister, Resources for Mission & Ministry

Michael Burke, Executive Minister, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services

Appendix C

Meeting schedule to date:

- Compensation Models Project Steering Group, June 22 – 23, 2004
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), September 23 – 24, 2004
- Compensation Models Project Steering Group, November 18 – 19, 2004
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), January 20 – 21, 2005
- Compensation Models Project Steering Group, March 10 – 11, 2005
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), April 7 – 8, 2005
- Executive of the General Council, April 21 – 25, 2005
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), June 16 – 17, 2005
- Compensation Models Project Steering Group, September 15 – 16, 2005
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), September 22 – 23, 2005
- Executive of the General Council, October 28 – 31, 2005
- Compensation Models Project Steering Group, November 21 – 22, 2005
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), January 12 – 13, 2006
- Compensation Models Project Steering Group, February 2 – 3, 2006
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), February 16 – 17, 2006

Meetings to come:

- Executive of the General Council, April 28 – May 1, 2006
- 39th General Council 2006, August 13 – 20, 2006

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Guide

Ministry Personnel

1. Housing

During my early research, I have noted a number concerns about housing. I would be hard pressed to say that there is a consistent theme, other than many people have an opinion. The exception is with respect to ministry personnel couples, which we will discuss.

- If we were to start with a clean slate, describe the ideal housing policy for the United Church
- Is home ownership or other means of building equity an issue?

2. Base Compensation

Our current “base compensation” design is the result of manipulation of the system over the years. Like housing, I have noted many concerns about base compensation, but again there does not seem to be a consistent theme.

- If you were to design a new system, what factors would you consider in developing an equitable system?

- On what basis should salaries be differentiated?
 - Should the church use a market pricing approach, one in which we compare our compensation with other professional groups?
 - Compare to what group or groups?
 - How does the M&P Committee discuss compensation with you?
 - Do they ask what your needs might be?
 - Do you have to negotiate?
3. Cost Of Living
- Should there be any recognition of the difference in the cost of living in different communities?
4. Pay Delivery
- Are you satisfied with the current system?
 - Do you receive your cheque on time?
 - Are the deductions correct?
 - Should we consider any changes?
5. Hours Of Work
- What is a reasonable workweek?
 - Do you have any issues around hours worked?
6. Ministry Personnel Couples
- This seems to be a topic that can stir a lot of emotion as it can make some of our colleagues feel less equal than others.
- What do you see as a solution?
7. Group Benefits
- Since 1981, the Church has made an effort to provide reasonable coverage for the members. Recently our Group Insurance plans have been enhanced.
- What do you see as its pluses and minuses?
8. Professional Expenses
- The allowances currently in place vary from those with specified amounts or percentages and those which are described, but left to the discussion of the pastoral charge.
- What expenses do you believe should be covered?
9. Honoraria
- Like all other components of your compensation package, the fees charged or honoraria for such things as weddings, funerals etc. are handled in a variety of ways. Some charges levy a fee; some leave it to the Minister; some levy a fee and consider it Church revenue; others share it with the Minister, Organist, and Custodian etc. Some Ministers charge a fee but don't declare it to Customs and Revenue Canada (CRA), which I am told they are watching.
- What, in your mind, would be the appropriate approach?
 - Do you believe that charging a fee for service is appropriate, e.g. counselling?

Appendix E

Focus Group Interview Guide

Board/Council Members

1. Housing

From the many petitions submitted to General Council I have noted a number of concerns about housing. I would be hard pressed to say that there is a consistent theme, other than that many people have an opinion. The exception is with respect to ministry personnel couples.

- Based on your experience, what are some of the housing issues experienced by the pastoral charges?
- Does your congregation own a manse or pay housing allowance?
- Which of these do you feel is preferable within the context of your setting from a pastoral charge point of view?
- If we were to start with a clean slate, describe the ideal housing policy that could meet the needs of pastoral charges and ministry personnel.

2. Base Compensation

Our current “base Compensation” design for Ministry Personnel is the result of manipulation of the system over the years. As with the subject of housing, I have noted many concerns about base compensation, but again there does not seem to be a consistent theme.

- What messages do you as a congregation think you convey through the compensation of your clergy?
- In general, do you think clergy are adequately compensated? What leads you to this opinion?
- Do you view ministry as a profession? What other professions do you see in the same grouping?
- What factors do you consider as a church board/council when setting clergy compensation?
- Does your congregation provide an annual cost of living adjustment to those paid above the minimum?
- Do you expect the clergy to make their needs known; in other words, do you expect them to negotiate?
- How is compensation discussed at budget time?
- If you were to design a new system, what factors would you consider in developing an equitable system?
- I have spoken to many ministry personnel who have experienced paycheques not being available on time, mistakes in calculations, etc. Would you consider a centralized payroll service?

3. Honoraria

- Does your congregation have a policy regulating honoraria for weddings, etc.?

Appendix F

Locations of Focus Group Meetings

Conference	Location	Comments
ANCC	Keewatin Presbytery	Prince Rupert Presbytery
British Columbia	Skidigate	

	Victoria Lower Mainland Kelowna	
Alberta Northwest	Grande Prairie Edmonton Stettler Calgary Lethbridge	
Saskatchewan	Regina Saskatoon	
Manitoba & North Western Ontario	Thunder Bay Thompson Rivers Winnipeg	Four Meetings
London	London	2 Meetings
Hamilton	Conference Office Beamsville	Niagara Presbytery
Toronto	Toronto Conference Office Scarborough Parry Sound Owen Sound	Muskoka Presbytery
Manitou	Porcupine Timmins Sudbury	
Bay of Quinte	Peterborough Kingston	
Montreal/Ottawa	Winchester	Conference Personnel Ministers
Maritime	Tatamagouche NS Riverview NB Charlottetown PEI Pictou NS	
Newfoundland/Labrador	St. Anthony Bonavista	West District Meeting East District Meeting incomplete)

Appendix G

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is the difference between a centrally administered compensation system (renamed denominationally funded salary administration system) and a centrally administered payroll service?

Answer: A centrally administered compensation system implies that in addition to managing the payroll, decisions regarding the actual compensation of ministry personnel would be made centrally, with input from the pastoral charges, based on criteria approved by General Council. This is the best way to deal with issues of pay equity.

A centrally administered payroll service on the other hand is simply a service to pastoral charges. This service will manage payroll of ministry personnel and regular church staff. Pastoral charges will continue to determine what their staff shall be paid. With input from the employer, the service provider will determine the correct deductions, deposit the net amount in employee's accounts (direct deposit); issue monthly statements to each employee and T4's at year end.

Question: How much will it cost a pastoral charge in total for the centralized payroll service?

Answer: We have sought an estimate from two major payroll service organizations. The monthly cost per employee is estimated to be between \$10 and \$15 per pay. While this represents an additional cost to the pastoral charge it also represents a decreased expectation on volunteer time and less frustration in ensuring correct payroll deduction information.

Question: How will a centralized payroll service and comprehensive salary scale eliminate the present inequity between female and male salaries?

Answer: The payroll service alone will not eliminate this inequity. It will however provide data that will be used to inform presbyteries so that through their oversight can insure greater equity.

Question: How will ministry personnel couples be compensated if the recommended changes are adopted?

Answer: Both partners have not been able to benefit from the Clergy Tax deduction, which is clearly part of their compensation. With the centralized approach, the individual not able to claim the tax deduction may notify central payroll of their status. Their salary will be adjusted to help offset the difference in net pay. The cost of this initiative will be shared by the whole church through the Mission and Service fund.

Question: What should pastoral charges do with their manses?

Answer: Approximately 40% of our pastoral charges still maintain a manse. Pastoral charges have been disposing/selling their manses for many reasons, which may include the cost of upkeep or the fact that some ministers do not wish to live in the manse.

In many communities there is no other available, appropriate or affordable housing, in which case the charge must maintain a manse in order to attract and retain a minister.

Question: Some pastoral charges (e.g. large congregations or congregations with specific goals) command particular skills/expertise/education not necessarily required in other pastoral charges and it seems fair that they be compensated accordingly. How might this occur in this new comprehensive compensation system?

Answer: The salary structure that is proposed provides a range maximum thus providing a pastoral charge the flexibility to compensate ministry personnel for special

skills/expertise, education or performance. It will be at the discretion of the pastoral charge, in negotiation with ministry personnel, to determine the appropriate amount within that range.

Question: It is also reasonable to assume that ministry personnel with additional training (e.g. leadership development; conflict management, etc.) and academic education would exercise a more effective ministry in smaller pastoral charges or pastoral charges receiving a mission support grant. Is there a way for these additional skills/education to be compensated in the new system?

Answer: The establishment of a range within the salary categories is meant to address the growing gap between salaries in pastoral charges paying at the minimum level and those pastoral charges with financial resources to pay more. While it will still be the case that those pastoral charges on mission support will only be able to pay minimum in the salary range, the decreased differential is hoped to be a way of making their pastoral charges more able to attract the leadership they need and seek.

Question: To implement a salary only system, what principles/criteria will be used concerning regional differences in housing and the urban/rural differences within regions?

Answer: The new system (if approved) will require 3 to 5 years to implement in order to minimize the impact on pastoral charges. In the initial step, a minister's salary will simply be the sum of their current salary and housing allowance/manse. Those who receive salaries above the indicated ranges would be maintained at their current remuneration level until:

- They move from their present pastoral relationship or
- The salary ranges reach their level of compensation.

Question: What "safeguards" might be in place to ensure that pastoral charges submit the required amount of money to the national office in a timely fashion?

Answer: Good stewardship of resources and financial practice will require that pastoral charges carry overdraft protection. Remittance to the centrally administered payroll will be by automatic bank transfer.

Question: Some pastoral charges will claim that they are unable to meet the basic new salary structure. What are the options for these pastoral charges?

Answer: Since the beginning of the United Church, there has been an indication from the denomination that there are basic levels of compensation that pastoral charges are encouraged to meet. In order to help pastoral charges meet those levels of compensation, money through the mission fund of the church has been available upon application. While the funds available are not growing, there continues to be resources available through the mission support grants of the United Church.

Question: Why was the "focus group" approach used to obtain responses instead of surveying all pastoral charges (ministry personnel and key members of congregations)?

Answer: A focus group discussion enables the “interviewer” to engage the participants in a two-way conversation. Although the discussion is focused on a series of questions, participants are encouraged to exchange ideas with each other as well as the interviewer. The interviewer can expand on questions and seek clarification of answers provided. It provides the opportunity to ask the participants for solutions to problems they pose.

The outcomes of focus groups, although not quantitative, tend to be much richer in context.

Question: How will a centralized payroll service and comprehensive salary scale eliminate the present inequity between female and male salaries?

Answer: The implementation of these initiatives will not, of themselves, correct the inequities. The inequity between males and females does not appear to be intentional but rather the consequences of the pastoral charges not being aware of the trend. The centralized payroll service will enable the General Council Office staff to provide each presbytery (through the appropriate Conference Office) reports on compensation trends so that, through oversight, the presbytery will be able to ensure that this situation is corrected.

Question: How will this system compensate the present inequity for ministry personnel couples?

Answer: One partner will be able to apply to have their salary adjusted to help offset the difference in net pay.

Question: How might “high cost” locations be identified?

Answer: It is suggested that the church follow a protocol established by the Federal Government to identify high cost locations. We will need to agree on the extent of the subsidy.

Question: If approved by General Council, when and how will this system be totally implemented?

Answer: It should be possible to begin the implementation of the payroll service as early as January 2007. It could take as long as three to five years to complete the implementation of the new salary structure.

Appendix H

A sampling of the available data suggests that the average salary for full time female ministers is less than males in every category as is illustrated in the following table for the calendar year 2004.

Average Base Salary for Active Full Time Ordained & Diaconal Ministers

Category	Stats	Males	Females
A	Mean	\$29,686	\$29,080
	Standard Deviation ⁸	3,078	1,037
	No. of Ministers	17	35
B	Mean	\$32,282	\$30,630
	Standard Deviation	6,175	2,240
	No. of Ministers	23	46
C	Mean	\$32,854	\$31,908
	Standard Deviation	3,143	1,823
	No. of Ministers	38	73
D	Mean	\$35,623	\$33,492
	Standard Deviation	4,408	2,218
	No. of Ministers	45	75
E	Mean	\$36,124	\$34,942
	Standard Deviation	3,067	2,270
	No. of Ministers	55	78
F	Mean	\$39,174	\$37,278
	Standard Deviation	5,131	3,496
	No. of Ministers	589	219

Appendix I

A sampling of the available data shows the minimum and maximum base salaries paid in each category for ordained & diaconal ministry personnel based on 2004 data.

The minimum salaries in 2004 were:

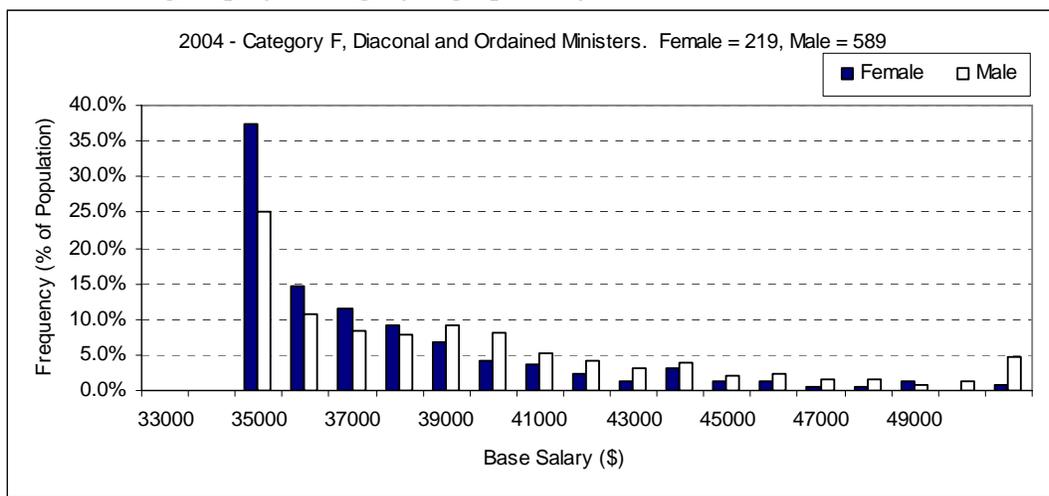
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Years Of Eligible Service →	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 10	11 – 13	14 & over
Ordained Minister	\$28,366	\$29,642	\$30,919	\$32,195	\$33,472	\$34,748
Diaconal Minister	\$28,366	\$29,642	\$30,919	\$32,195	\$33,472	\$34,748

Spread in Salaries paid to 1,293 active, full-time Ordained & Diaconal Ministers in 2004:

⁸ The standard deviation is a measure of how widely values are dispersed from the average value (the mean).

		Category					
Sex	Base Salary	A	B	C	D	E	F
F	Number	35	46	73	75	78	219
	Minimum	28,366	29,642	30,919	32,195	33,472	34,748
	Maximum	32,366	41,220	40,800	44,990	44,102	55,564
M	Number	17	23	38	45	55	589
	Minimum	28,366	29,642	30,919	32,195	33,472	34,748
	Maximum	41,499	59,725	46,800	52,500	45,942	67,860
Total		52	69	111	120	133	808

The following displays Category F graphically:



PROPOSED STATEMENT OF FAITH (Commons)

Origin: Committee on Theology and Faith

Introduction

The Committee on Theology and Faith presents in this report a proposed statement of faith for The United Church of Canada as mandated by the 37th General Council 2000. The General Council directed Theology and Faith “to produce the draft of a timely and contextual statement of faith, with a view to circulation throughout the whole church for study and response, while honouring the diversity of our church and acknowledging our place in a pluralistic world and in an ongoing and developing tradition of faith, with interim reporting to the 38th General Council 2003.” The General Council also directed: “That in the preparation of a new statement of faith, the Committee on Theology and Faith give priority to engaging the church in conversation on the nature of the church (ecclesiology), ministry and the sacraments.” This report includes: the rationale for the statement of faith; a summary of the process for developing it, the responses

received, and how the committee addressed the terms of its mandate; the Doctrine section of the Basis of Union and the 1940 Statement of Faith; and the proposed statement of faith.

Why a Statement of Faith, and Why Now?

Statements of faith are like maps. As the landscape in which we live changes – sometimes slowly and imperceptibly, sometimes suddenly and dramatically – we must make new maps to help us find our way. The United Church stands in the tradition of Protestant churches, especially those of the Reformed and Methodist traditions, which have followed the principle “once reformed, always reforming.” From its beginning, the United Church has recognized the need to restate our faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ in words and ways that are meaningful to new generations of Christians, facing both challenges and blessings that those who came before us neither faced nor imagined when they committed their statements of faith to words.

Although formally begun in 2000, the development of a new statement of faith for the United Church has been over twenty years in the making. The “Confessing Our Faith” project in the 1980s began a process of study and conversation that envisioned the eventual development and adoption of a statement of faith. The studies and reports on “Authority and Interpretation of Scripture” and “Reconciling and Making New,” undertaken by Theology and Faith from 1988 to 2000, also helped prepare the way for the current work. Other developments in the United Church over the past twenty years have also shaped this process. The United Church’s apology to Canadian Aboriginal peoples and the implications of the church’s involvement with the residential school system have raised painful and essential questions about how we express and enact our faith. Debates about human sexuality have highlighted disagreements in the church but also have emphasized the need to clarify what we hold in common. Increasing religious pluralism and cultural diversity have deepened the challenge to many of our assumptions about the mission of the church in the world and Anglo-Protestant ways of expressing the truth of the good news of Jesus Christ. Questions about the relation of ordered ministries, the ministry of the whole people of God, and the celebration of the sacraments also press the need for clarity about our beliefs. The reasons why the United Church from time to time restates its faith, however, originate long before the United Church was established.

Since the early years of the Christian movement, followers of Jesus have expressed their faith in many ways and in response to many questions and concerns. The New Testament includes many confessions of the faith of the first Christians, from Peter’s brief confession of faith in Jesus, “You are the Messiah,” in Mark 8:29, to his longer testimonies of faith in Acts 2-4. In the second century of the common era, the Apostles’ Creed arose to clarify the meaning of Christian faith in the midst of differing views on God’s relationship with creation. In the early fourth century the church’s first ecumenical council adopted a creed, now known as the Nicene Creed, to summarize the church’s beliefs, especially on the divinity of Jesus Christ. As Christianity grew and changed in subsequent centuries, and as different theological questions arose, Christians have continued to confess their faith at different times and in different ways.

Since the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, Protestants have emphasized that faith is primarily a matter of trust in God rather than agreement with doctrines. Protestant attitudes towards the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds have varied. One view, reflected in section 2.0 in the United Church’s Basis of Union, is that these historic creeds are important but not sufficient as expressions of Christian faith. Employing the principle of “once reformed, always reforming,”

Protestants have regularly expressed their faith in light of the particular questions and demands of their times. For example, the Westminster Confession of 1647, which became a standard of Calvinist theology for many generations was written during the English Civil War and addressed the need for clear theology and polity in a time of unrest and uncertainty. In the Barmen Declaration of 1934, some European Christians confessed their faith in opposition to Nazism, and in the Kairos Document of 1985, some South African Christians confessed their faith in opposition to apartheid. In Canada in 1904 when the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and Local Union Churches decided that church union was possible, they formed a Joint Committee on doctrine which by 1908 had substantially completed the Doctrine section of the proposed Basis of Union. After 1908 they made a few changes and added Article XIII “Of Prayer,” and the Basis of Union was approved by the uniting churches and at the first General Council of The United Church of Canada in 1925. (The Doctrine section of the Basis of Union is included in this report before the proposed statement of faith.)⁹

The founders of the United Church understood the “Doctrine” section “as a brief summary of our common faith” and “commend[ed] it to the studious attention of the members and adherents of the negotiating Churches, as in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.”¹⁰ They also understood that no statement of faith can ever be perfect, complete, or final. They expected the church, from time to time, to review and rewrite its expression of its faith. Nathanael Burwash, a Methodist member of the “Doctrine” committee, wrote in 1912: “Scriptural elements of the faith we held to be essential, the theories human and at best imperfect, and changing with the progress of human science and philosophy.” And T. B. Kilpatrick, a Presbyterian member of the committee, wrote in 1928: “Let it be further noted that this doctrinal statement makes no claim to infallibility or finality It will be the duty of those who come after us to find a more fitting intellectual expression for the unchanging and inexhaustible truth of the Gospel. We have sought, humbly and earnestly, to serve our own generation; and now we hand on the result of our toil, with prayer and hope, to the generation following.” For the United Church, therefore, all statements of faith not only can be but *must* be revised or restated from time to time in order to remain faithful to the truth of the gospel.¹¹

In fact, shortly after union the United Church saw the need for a new expression of faith, one that reflected the context of the time. The 7th General Council 1936 authorized work on a new statement of faith, and the Commission on the Statement of Faith presented its work to the 9th General Council 1940, which acted to “give general approval to this Statement of Faith and commend it to the Church for the instruction of the young and for the guidance of believers.”¹² Once again, the people who wrote this statement of faith did not see their work as final or unchangeable and said in the statement’s Preamble that while the Gospel of Jesus Christ is

⁹ The report of the Committee on Christian Faith, “Creeds, Ancient and Modern,” *Record of Proceedings of the 23rd General Council 1968* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1968), pp. 311-343 is a helpful discussion of the place of creeds and statements of faith in Christianity, in the Protestant churches, and in the United Church.

¹⁰ Basis of Union, Section 2.0.

¹¹ John Young’s article, “Sacred Cow or White Elephant?: The Doctrine Section of the Basis of Union” *Touchstone* 16/2 (May 1998): 29-46 discusses how the founders of the United Church, including Burwash and Kilpatrick, understood the necessity and limits of statements of faith. T. B. Kilpatrick’s reflections are found in his book *Our Common Faith* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1928), pp. 63-64, which was published as the United Church’s official theological explanation of the Doctrine section of the Basis of Union.

¹² *Record of Proceedings of the 9th General Council 1940* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1940), p. 40.

unchanging, “Christians of each new generation are called to state it afresh in terms of the thought of their own age and with the emphasis their age needs.” (The 1940 Statement of Faith is included in this report, just before the proposed statement of faith.)

By the 1960s, many in the United Church began to think it was time for an expression of their faith appropriate to their time. Reflections on the place of creeds in worship and sacraments led in 1968 to “A Contemporary Expression of Christian Faith,” which we now commonly call “A New Creed.” It too has undergone change: it was amended in 1980 to make its language inclusive, and again in 1994 to add the words “to live with respect in creation.” It continues and will continue to be used widely in worship and sacraments in the United Church.

Reviewing and revising how we express our faith is integral to the faith, the life, and the witness of The United Church of Canada. That is why the United Church, only eleven years after it was founded in 1925, embarked on the process of developing a new statement of faith that was adopted in 1940; why the United Church undertook a study of the historic creeds of Christianity in the 1960s and first adopted what has come to be known as “A New Creed” in 1968; why the United Church began the “Confessing the Faith” project in the 1980s; and why the 37th General Council 2000 directed the Committee on Theology and Faith to take up this task for *this* time.

How Will the United Church Use this Statement of Faith?

If adopted by the General Council, this statement of faith (like the United Church’s 1940 Statement of Faith) would be used primarily for faith formation and education, and for theological guidance in the development and articulation of church policies. The Committee on Theology and Faith assumes that the United Church will continue to use “A New Creed” in worship and sacraments. The proposed statement of faith, then, will have educational uses alongside, but not in place of, the liturgical and sacramental uses of “A New Creed.” Immediately following the proposed statement of faith, Appendix A, “On the Purpose and Status of the Statement of Faith” discusses this question further.

How Did the Committee on Theology and Faith Address Its Mandate?

The Process for Developing the Statement of Faith:

Over the last five and one half years, we have engaged in activities to help people throughout the church think about what it means to confess our faith today. We have met with various United Church committees and mission units, conducted an e-mail survey of United Church youth and young adults, engaged in research and reflection on recent faith statements by other churches around the world, and sought feedback from ecumenical partners. We produced and received responses to “Faith Talk” (2002-2004) and “Faith Talk II: A Draft Statement of Faith for Discussion and Response” (2004-2005), which were workbooks developed to foster discussion about professing our faith and to invite responses to the draft statement of faith. We sponsored a “symposium” on the statement of faith that generated further discussion and feedback, some of which was made available on the United Church web site.

Both “Faith Talk” and “Faith Talk II” were announced in several editions of *Infopac*, and in issues of *Gathering, Exchange*, and *Women’s Concerns*. In addition, both workbooks were posted on the United Church web site. “Faith Talk” was translated into French, and “Faith Talk II” was translated into French, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese. Ecumenical partners invited to

respond to the draft statement of faith include the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church, the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Christian Council of Namibia, the Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa, Sabeel, and the United Church of Zambia.

Since it was first available in January 2005, there have been 4,863 requests for “Faith Talk II.” Of these, 60 were made by telephone, 114 by e-mail, and 4,689 by download from the web site. And we have received 210 responses from individuals, pastoral charges, program units, and ecumenical partners. The following table shows the responses from pastoral charges organized by Conference as well as responses from other groups and individuals.

Alberta and Northwest Conference	19	Manitou Conference	5
All Native Circle Conference	0	Montreal and Ottawa Conference	5
Bay of Quinte Conference	4	Newfoundland and Labrador Conference	0
British Columbia Conference	14	Saskatchewan Conference	5
Hamilton Conference	12	Toronto Conference	31
London Conference	13	Program Units and Committees	7
Maritime Conference	14	Ecumenical/Interfaith Groups	6
Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference	2	Individuals	73

As noted above, we received no responses from All Native Circle Conference to “Faith Talk II,” nor did we receive any for “Faith Talk.” We received one response to “Faith Talk” from a French Presbytery and one from a Korean congregation, and one response to “Faith Talk II” from a Chinese congregation. Recognizing that printed materials might be a barrier rather than an aid to consultation with Aboriginal congregations and congregations affiliated with Ethnic Ministries, Theology and Faith sought opportunities for face-to-face discussions at meetings of these constituencies at various times over the past six years.

What the Committee on Theology and Faith Heard:

Throughout the consultations, we have heard a variety of concerns and convictions from people in the United Church. Some think that developing a “timely and contextual statement of faith” is unnecessary or unhelpful, but most people welcome the opportunity to talk about and clarify our common faith. Many people strongly affirm the Trinitarian character of our faith, and want the United Church to find better ways to express what it means and why it’s important. Many people strongly affirm church as a place of relationship and community. Some people talk about their deep concern about evil and suffering in the world, and some express a firm assurance that the whole world is held in the palm of God’s hand. Most of those from whom we have heard strongly affirm the importance of the saving work of Jesus Christ, both for themselves and for the world, and they use a variety of images and ideas to convey the meaning of Christ and Christ’s work: as friend and example, as Lord and saviour, as healer and teacher, as the one who died and was raised. At the same time, many also feel that openness to the beliefs of people of other faiths is important for us as Christians, but they also want to be clearer about what ‘openness’ means in practice. Most people do not want any new statement of faith to replace “A

New Creed” in the life of the United Church, and some think that “A New Creed” is the only statement of faith the United Church really needs.

Response to the draft statement of faith, on which we received comment from January through November 2005, was also diverse. Some expressed deep appreciation for the draft statement, others expressed strong disagreement with it, and others repeated the view that another statement of faith is unnecessary. Most who responded offered thoughtful and constructive criticism and encouraged the committee in its work. The most commonly expressed view was that the draft statement of faith was far too long; another common criticism was that some of the words and phrases used in the draft were difficult to understand. A few disliked the more poetic form and style used for the statement, but most warmly welcomed it as a fitting way to express the faith of the church today. Some thought that the draft statement of faith used too little traditional language about God, and others thought that its language was too traditional. We also received varied comments on the theology expressed in the draft statement, including on the Trinity, the identity and saving significance of Jesus Christ, the mission of the church, the relation of Christianity to other faith traditions, sacraments and ministry, and Christian hope. As we moved from that first draft to the proposed statement of faith included here, we took seriously all of the constructive feedback. We attempted faithfully to discern how best to articulate a statement of faith that is not only “timely and contextual” but also in substantial continuity, or “essential agreement,” with the faith traditions of the United Church.

A Timely and Contextual Statement of Faith:

Discerning the most important features of our context was one of the first and most important parts of our work. What is it about what is going on in the world, in Canada, and in the United Church today that most needs our attention and response? How can we express our beliefs today, in ways that are faithful to our theological heritage and understandable by people in the church as well as people outside the church? Following the proposed statement of faith, Appendix B “On the Language and Form of the Statement of Faith” and Appendix C “On the Context of the Statement of Faith” provide information and reflections on these and other related questions.

Honouring the Diversity of Our Church:

The United Church has not only permitted but also encouraged some difference of belief, in part because our Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian founders affirmed that faith is more about how we live than about what we think or say. Church union, then, was not intended to produce uniformity; some diversity of belief is possible in the broader unity of undertaking God’s mission in the world. As the United Church has become more diverse, however, the values of diversity and inclusiveness have become strained. Are there any limits to diversity and inclusiveness? How do we know what differences can be permitted by our commitment to diversity, and what differences should be discussed and resolved? At what point do differences become irreconcilable disagreements? Are there ways for us to discuss our disagreements with mutual respect and love, and in the hope of achieving broader agreement? Following the proposed statement of faith, Appendix D “On the Identity of the United Church as Reflected in the Statement of Faith” addresses these and related concerns, but the questions remain for all in the United Church.

*Acknowledging Our Place in a Pluralistic World and
in an Ongoing and Developing Tradition of Faith:*

Pluralism means, in part, that other people hold beliefs and values different from our own. Acknowledging our place in a pluralistic world means that participating in the wider community requires respecting and being in conversation with people who hold diverse beliefs and values. Acknowledging pluralism does not mean that we think that everyone is right, or that there is no right and wrong. It does, however, mean that we can no longer assume that our beliefs and values are the ones by which everyone will live. In our time, loving one another includes expressing our own beliefs in ways that are faithful to our traditions and understandable to others, even as we strive to understand and respect their beliefs. The Committee on Theology and Faith has tried to reflect this acknowledgment of pluralism in the proposed statement of faith.

A question that arose as the committee began its work was how this statement of faith would relate to other United Church faith statements. After careful consideration, the committee adopted two working assumptions: first, a new statement of faith would *not* replace the Doctrine section of the Basis of Union or “A New Creed,” but might be understood as replacing the 1940 Statement of Faith; and third, that the relationship of any new statement of faith to the Doctrine section of the Basis of Union would be the same as the relationship of the 1940 Statement of Faith. As we continued our work, we discovered that these assumptions are not as helpful as we had first thought. One reason is that the United Church never explained the relationship between the Basis of Union and the 1940 Statement of Faith. Another reason was that some in the church had forgotten, or never knew, that the United Church had the 1940 Statement of Faith. A further important reason is that, although the General Council directed Theology and Faith to develop a statement of faith “while acknowledging our place . . . in an ongoing and developing tradition of faith,” United Church members hold diverse and incompatible views on whether our tradition of faith is ongoing and developing. Some think that any new statement of faith should be a translation of the Basis of Union in contemporary language, and that the Basis of Union is the only doctrinal standard for evaluating all United Church statements and documents. Others think that a statement of faith can and should express theological insights that are in continuity with the Basis of Union, but that may differ from it in some ways. Still others report that neither the Basis of Union nor the 1940 Statement of Faith have any significance for their faith. For members and adherents of the United Church, the relation of the Doctrine section of the Basis of Union to “our place in an ongoing and developing tradition of faith” remains unclear and may require further research, discussion, and deliberation throughout the church.

Church, Ministry, and Sacraments:

The 37th General Council 2000 considered several issues related to church, ministry, and sacraments; and recognized that clarification of these issues would be an important part of Theology and Faith’s work on a statement of faith. Other committees, task groups, and projects also continue to work on these issues. One of them has been the Task Group on Lay Presidency of the Sacraments, which is also reporting to the 39th General Council 2006. Two members of Theology and Faith served on this task group, and Theology and Faith kept the task group’s deliberations in view as it worked on the statement of faith, especially the sections on ministry and sacraments. It is difficult for the church to be clear about ministry and sacraments, in part, because United Church people hold diverse of theologies of ministry that are not easily

reconciled. United Church people are also examining the relationship between leadership and discipleship, and between vocations to particular ministries and the ministry of the whole people of God. Issues of vocational and personal identity are also at stake for many people. We believe that the United Church will benefit from deeper discussion and fuller clarification of these issues.

The Committee on Theology and Faith

A Standing Committee of General Council, the Committee on Theology and Faith was established by the 27th General Council 1977 “to study, to clarify, and to make provision for the issuance of position statements expressive of the theology of The United Church of Canada.” Its predecessor committees date to the Commission on the Christian Faith established to develop what became the 1940 Statement of Faith. In its present form, membership of the committee includes twelve people, and the term of membership is for one triennium, renewable for a second term. Current members come from various Conferences, and some have relocated from other Conferences since their terms began. The committee currently has one vacancy, and nine current members will reach the end of their second three-year term at rise of the 39th General Council 2006. The membership of the committee since the 37th General Council 2000 has included:

Susanne Abbuhl (OM) Bay of Quinte Conference, 2000-2006
Gail Allan (L) Alberta and Northwest Conference, 1997-2003
Michael Bourgeois, Chair (L) Toronto Conference, 2000-2006
Alvin Dixon (L) British Columbia Conference, 2000-2006
Scott Douglas (L) Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference, 2000-2006
Janet Gear (L) British Columbia Conference, 2003-2006
Jennifer Janzen-Ball (OM) Maritime Conference, 2001-2006
Alex Kasirye-Musoke (OM) London Conference, 2000-2002
Gordon MacDermid (OM) Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference, 2000-2006
Catherine MacLean (OM) Alberta and Northwest Conference, 2000-2006
Joyce Matheson (DM) Maritime Conference, 1997-2001
John Moses (OM) Bay of Quinte Conference, 2000-2006
Arlyce Schiebout (OM) Bay of Quinte Conference, 2003-2006
Debra Schweyer (DM) Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference, 2000-2006
David Zub (OM) Ordained Minister, Toronto Conference, 1997-2003

Over the last six years, the restructuring of the General Council offices approved by the 37th General Council 2000 resulted in changes in staff to the Committee on Theology and Faith. Committee staff during the period of the work on the statement of faith has included: Peter Wyatt, General Secretary for Theology, Faith and Ecumenism (2000-2001); Brian Thorpe, interim lead staff (2001-2002); Steven Chambers, Executive Minister of the Faith Formation and Education Unit (2002-2006); and Mary Purdon (2000-2002) and Melodie Mui (2002-2006), who have provided program support. Theology and Faith has been exceptionally well served by all, and committee members are deeply grateful to them.

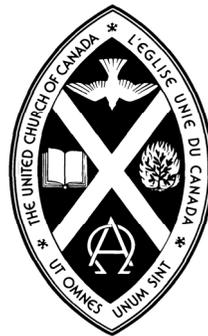
A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith of The United Church of Canada

The proposed statement of faith and accompanying materials follow immediately in this report. The preamble and appendices provide additional information on the context in which this statement has been written, on the statement’s purpose and status as well as its language and form, and on how the statement relates to the identity of The United Church of Canada.

A Song of Faith

A Statement of Faith of The United Church of Canada L'Église Unie du Canada

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PREAMBLE

This statement of faith seeks to provide a verbal picture of what The United Church of Canada understands its faith to be in its current historical, political, social, and theological context at the beginning of the 21st century. It is also a means of ongoing reflection and an invitation for the church to live out its convictions in relation to the world in which we live.

The church's faith is grounded in truths that are timeless. These truths, however, must be embraced anew by Christians of each generation and stated "in terms of the thoughts of their own age and with the emphasis their age needs" (Statement of Faith, 1940).

This is not the first time the United Church has formally expressed its collective faith. In the Basis of Union (1925), in the Statement of Faith (1940), and in A New Creed (1968), the United Church stated its faith in words appropriate to its time. This current statement of faith is offered within that tradition, and in response to the request of the 37th General Council (2000) for a “timely and contextual statement of faith” that especially engages “the church in conversation on the nature of the church (ecclesiology), ministry and the sacraments.”

This statement of faith attempts to reflect the spirit of The United Church of Canada and to respond to various defining elements in our social, political, and historical context, including the place of the church in society, the cultural and intellectual setting in which we find ourselves, the meaning of “truth,” the impact of the market economy on our daily lives, and the growing issue of the meaning of “security.” These contextual elements are further explored in the appendices to this document.

This is not a statement for all time but for our time. In as much as the Spirit keeps faith with us, we can express our understanding of the Holy with confidence. And in as much as the Spirit is vast and wild, we recognize that our understanding of the Holy is always partial and limited. Nonetheless we have faith, and this statement collects the meaning of our song.

God is Holy Mystery,
beyond complete knowledge,
above perfect description.

Yet,
in love,
the one eternal God seeks relationship.

So God creates the universe
and with it the possibility of being and relating.
God tends the universe,
mending the broken and reconciling the estranged.
God enlivens the universe,
guiding all things toward harmony with their Source.

Grateful for God’s loving action,
We cannot keep from singing.

With the Church through the ages,
we speak of God as one and triune:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
We also speak of God as
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer
God, Christ, and Spirit
Mother, Friend, and Comforter
Source of Life, Living Word, and Bond of Love,
and in other ways that speak faithfully of

the One on whom our hearts rely,
the fully shared life at the heart of the universe.

We witness to Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

God is creative and self-giving,
generously moving
in all the near and distant corners of the universe.
Nothing exists that does not find its source in God.
Our first response to God's providence is gratitude.
We sing thanksgiving.

Finding ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery,
of living things, diverse and interdependent,
of complex patterns of growth and evolution,
of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls,
we sing of God the Creator,
the Maker and Source of all that is.

Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the Creator,
who is both in creation and beyond it.
All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related.
All creation is good.
We sing of the Creator,
who made humans to live and move
and have their being in God.
In and with God,
we can direct our lives toward right relationship
with each other and with God.
We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.
We can grow in wisdom and compassion.
We can recognize all people as kin.
We can accept our mortality and finitude, not as a curse,
but as a challenge to make our lives and choices matter.

Made in the image of God,
we yearn for the fulfillment that is life in God.
Yet we choose to turn away from God.
We surrender ourselves to sin,
a disposition revealed in selfishness, cowardice, or apathy.
Becoming bound and complacent
in a web of false desires and wrong choices,
we bring harm to ourselves and others.
This brokenness in human life and community
is an outcome of sin.
Sin is not only personal

but accumulates
to become habitual and systemic forms
of injustice, violence, and hatred.

We are all touched by this brokenness:
the rise of selfish individualism
that erodes human solidarity;
the concentration of wealth and power
without regard for the needs of all;
the toxins of religious and ethnic bigotry;
the degradation of the blessedness of human bodies
and human passions through sexual exploitation;
the delusion of unchecked progress and limitless growth
that threatens our home, the earth;
the covert despair that lulls many into numb complicity
with empires and systems of domination.
We sing lament and repentance.

Yet evil does not—cannot—
undermine or overcome the love of God.
God forgives,
and calls all of us to confess our fears and failings
with honesty and humility.
God reconciles,
and calls us to repent the part we have played
in damaging our world, ourselves, and each other.
God transforms,
and calls us to protect the vulnerable,
to pray for deliverance from evil,
to work with God for the healing of the world,
that all might have abundant life.
We sing of grace.

The fullness of life includes
moments of unexpected inspiration and courage lived out,
experiences of beauty, truth, and goodness,
blessings of seeds and harvest,
friendship and family, intellect and sexuality,
the reconciliation of persons through justice
and communities living in righteousness,
and the articulation of meaning.
And so we sing of God the Spirit,
who from the beginning has swept over the face of creation,
animating all energy and matter
and moving in the human heart.

We sing of God the Spirit,
faithful and untamable,
who is creatively and redemptively active in the world.

The Spirit challenges us to celebrate the holy
not only in what is familiar,
but also in that which seems foreign.

We sing of the Spirit,
who speaks our prayers of deepest longing
and enfolds our concerns and confessions,
transforming us and the world.

We offer worship
as an outpouring of gratitude and awe
and a practice of opening ourselves
to God's still, small voice of comfort,
to God's rushing whirlwind of challenge.
Through word, music, art, and sacrament,
in community and in solitude,
God changes our lives, our relationships, and our world.
We sing with trust.

Scripture is our song for the journey, the living word
passed on from generation to generation
to guide and inspire,
that we might wrestle a holy revelation for our time and place
from the human experiences
and cultural assumptions of another era.
God calls us to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

The Spirit breathes revelatory power into scripture,
bestowing upon it a unique and normative place
in the life of the community.
The Spirit judges us critically when we abuse scripture
by interpreting it narrow-mindedly,
using it as a tool of oppression, exclusion, or hatred.

The wholeness of scripture testifies
to the oneness and faithfulness of God.
The multiplicity of scripture testifies to its depth:
two testaments, four gospels,
contrasting points of view held in tension—
all a faithful witness to the One and Triune God,
the Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

We find God made known in Jesus of Nazareth,
and so we sing of God the Christ, the Holy One embodied.

We sing of Jesus,
a Jew,
born to a woman in poverty
in a time of social upheaval
and political oppression.
He knew human joy and sorrow.
So filled with the Holy Spirit was he
that in him people experienced the presence of God among them.
We sing praise to God incarnate.

Jesus announced the coming of God's reign—
a commonwealth not of domination
but of peace, justice, and reconciliation.
He healed the sick and fed the hungry.
He forgave sins and freed those held captive
by all manner of demonic powers.
He crossed barriers of race, class, culture, and gender.
He preached and practised unconditional love—
love of God, love of neighbour,
love of friend, love of enemy—
and he commanded his followers to love one another
as he had loved them.

Because his witness to love was threatening,
those exercising power sought to silence Jesus.
He suffered abandonment and betrayal,
state-sanctioned torture and execution.
He was crucified.

But death was not the last word.
God raised Jesus from death,
turning sorrow into joy,
despair into hope.
We sing of Jesus raised from the dead.
We sing hallelujah.

By becoming flesh in Jesus,
God makes all things new.
In Jesus' life, teaching, and self-offering,
God empowers us to live in love.
In Jesus' crucifixion,
God bears the sin, grief, and suffering of the world.
In Jesus' resurrection,

God overcomes death.
Nothing separates us from the love of God.

The Risen Christ lives today,
present to us and the source of our hope.
In response to whom Jesus was
and to all he did and taught,
to his life, death, and resurrection,
and to his continuing presence with us through the Spirit,
we celebrate him as
the Word made flesh,
the one in whom God and humanity are perfectly joined,
the transformation of our lives,
the Christ.

We sing of a church
seeking to continue the story of Jesus
by embodying Christ's presence in the world.
We are called together by Christ
as a community of broken but hopeful believers,
loving what he loved,
living what he taught,
striving to be faithful servants of God
in our time and place.
Our ancestors in faith
bequeath to us experiences of their faithful living;
upon their lives our lives are built.
Our living of the gospel makes us a part of this communion of saints,
experiencing the fulfillment of God's reign
even as we actively anticipate a new heaven and a new earth.

The church has not always lived up to its vision.
It requires the Spirit to reorient it,
helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring tradition,
challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement,
for we are called to be a blessing to the earth.

We sing of God's good news lived out,
a church with purpose:
faith nurtured and hearts comforted,
gifts shared for the good of all,
resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize,
fierce love in the face of violence,
human dignity defended,
members of a community held and inspired by God,
corrected and comforted,

instrument of the loving Spirit of Christ,
creation's mending.
We sing of God's mission.

We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit.
For the sake of the world,
God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry.
In the church,

some are called to specific ministries of leadership,
both lay and ordered;
some witness to the good news;
some uphold the art of worship;
some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering;
some build up the community of wisdom;
some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.
To embody God's love in the world,
the work of the church requires the ministry and discipleship
of all believers.

In grateful response to God's abundant love,
we bear in mind our integral connection
to the earth and one another;
we participate in God's work of healing and mending creation.
To point to the presence of the holy in the world,
the church receives, consecrates, and shares
visible signs of the grace of God.

In company with the churches
of the Reformed and Methodist traditions,
we celebrate two sacraments as gifts of Christ:
baptism and holy communion.
In these sacraments the ordinary things of life
—water, bread, wine—
point beyond themselves to God and God's love,
teaching us to be alert
to the sacred in the midst of life.

Before conscious thought or action on our part,
we are born into the brokenness of this world.
Before conscious thought or action on our part,
we are surrounded by God's redeeming love.
Baptism by water in the name of the Holy Trinity
is the means by which we are received, at any age,
into the covenanted community of the church.
It is the ritual that signifies our rebirth in faith
and cleansing by the power of God.
Baptism signifies the nurturing, sustaining,

and transforming power of God's love
and our grateful response to that grace.

Carrying a vision of creation healed and restored,
we welcome all in the name of Christ.

Invited to the table where none shall go hungry,
we gather as Christ's guests and friends.

In holy communion

we are commissioned to feed as we have been fed,
forgive as we have been forgiven,
love as we have been loved.

The open table speaks of the shining promise
of barriers broken and creation healed.

In the communion meal, wine poured out and bread broken,
we remember Jesus,

We remember not only the promise but also the price that he paid
for who he was,
for what he did and said,
and for the world's brokenness.

We taste the mystery of God's great love for us,
and are renewed in faith and hope.

We place our hope in God.

We sing of a life beyond life
and a future good beyond imagining:
a new heaven and a new earth,
the end of sorrow, pain, and tears,
Christ's return and life with God,
the making new of all things.

We yearn for the coming of that future,
even while participating in eternal life now.

Divine creation does not cease
until all things have found wholeness, union, and integration
with the common ground of all being.

As children of the Timeless One,
our time-bound lives will find completion
in the all-embracing Creator.

In the meantime, we embrace the present,
embodying hope, loving our enemies,
caring for the earth,
choosing life.

Grateful for God's loving action,
we cannot keep from singing.
Creating and seeking relationship,

in awe and trust,
we witness to Holy Mystery who is Wholly Love.

Amen.

Appendix A

On the Purpose and Status of the Statement of Faith

Intended Audience

It may be worth asking, “Who is this statement of faith for?” Knowing *who* it is for may provide a clearer sense of *what* it is for. The short answer is that it’s written for The United Church of Canada—its members, congregations, and courts—as a means to help the church clarify and discuss its beliefs. Of course, it may very well be read with interest by individuals and bodies outside the United Church, and as such it serves more than one purpose.

Our ecumenical partners will find areas of common ground. They will find an affirmation of the Holy Trinity, of scripture as a source of revelation, and of the significance of Jesus Christ in our communal life. They may also find places where the interpretation or emphasis placed on particular aspects of the Christian tradition differs from theirs. We hope they will see in this document an invitation to ongoing dialogue.

Likewise, members of non-Christian faith communities may find an openness to conversation and cooperation. The statement of faith makes an explicit claim that the Spirit is active in *all* peoples, not merely in those who call themselves Christian, and that the church is challenged to recognize and celebrate the holy in all its expressions, both familiar and foreign.

Those who come to this statement of faith from no faith community in particular will find some insight into the essential beliefs of the Christian tradition, and into The United Church of Canada’s particular way of interpreting and living out those beliefs. There may be times in the statement of faith when the concepts or terminology used seem unfamiliar to an individual with no background in religious matters; if the document had been composed specifically as a primer in the faith, it would have been written quite differently. Nonetheless, such a reader will hopefully discover an adequate summary of the assumptions and values that ground the church.

Those who work for justice in our society and in the global context will find in this statement an expression of common goals and a desire for solidarity. The statement of faith names human diversity as a blessing and identifies as sinful those forces that threaten, oppress, and exploit. While it is an expression of faith and not a policy statement, it does name religious and ethnic bigotry, the concentration of wealth at the expense of the vulnerable, complicity with empires of domination, and the harming of the earth as areas of dire concern.

Those in the church and outside of it who have experienced hurt at the hands of the institution, or who continue to struggle with the role the church has played in historical injustices, will find in the statement of faith an acknowledgement that the church often failed to live up to its vision and a desire to repent, to reorient itself, and to work for the healing and reconciliation of all.

This statement of faith, clearly, will be different things to different people.

But first and foremost it is a document for the church itself. It is intended as a means by which the church can express its beliefs to itself and to the world, and a tool to help the church's members reflect on their individual and collective faith. It is more descriptive than prescriptive, which is to say it does not claim to tell the church what it should believe so much as it attempts to put forward in an orderly and evocative way what the church seems to believe, based on its actions, its discourse, and its relationship to the Christian tradition in general and its own history in particular.

The expression of a denomination's collective faith is not necessarily identical to the particular faith expressions of its individual members. The United Church has a long tradition of spiritual freedom, and this statement of faith should not be seen in any way as a condition of membership in The United Church of Canada. There is a wide theological spectrum in the United Church and a diversity of interpretations and understandings. This statement of faith seeks to be something of a metaphorical "tent," encompassing the many divergent perspectives in the denomination. At times the "tent" can get stretched quite tightly; the section in Appendix D on United Church identity explores this point further. Members of the church are encouraged to find their own particular place in the theological tent, and are challenged to recognize the value of their tent-mates' faith even when expressions and emphases differ. If this statement of faith facilitates greater understanding among members of the church, it will have achieved something quite remarkable.

In addition to being a tool for reflection, it is hoped that this statement of faith will provide theological grounding and support to the church's work in the world—its various congregational and social ministries, its political witness, and its global partnership work. The statement may also prove useful in study groups and confirmation classes, again as an entry into a discussion of the relationship between personal faith and communal faith. Parts of this statement of faith may also find their way into the church's worship life, although the statement was not intended to serve the same sort of liturgical function as A New Creed.

In the end, the practical purpose of this document will have to be determined not by the intentions of the committee charged with drafting it but by the use it ultimately finds in the life and work of the church.

Status

The status of this statement of faith as a document of the church will be determined formally by the General Council and practically by its usage in the church. It is up to the church to say what this statement, as it stands, is. The drafters of the statement, however, offer some suggestions and clarifications as to what it is not.

This statement is not intended to be in any way a replacement of the beloved New Creed, which is used in congregations across Canada. A New Creed (adopted in 1968) is a concise and usefully open-ended creedal statement for use, primarily, in liturgical settings. And people in the United Church love it. This current statement of faith is obviously longer and goes into more detail about the church's understanding of itself and its faith convictions. It does not aspire to the same liturgical standing as A New Creed.

This statement does not seek to replace the Twenty Articles of Faith included in the United Church's 1925 Basis of Union. The Twenty Articles have historical significance for the church, being an expression of the theological agreement negotiated among the founding denominations, which allowed significantly different bodies (the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist denominations and the Local Union Churches) to come together as one united church.

Nor does the statement seek to replace the United Church's 1940 Statement of Faith. Each statement—the Twenty Articles of Faith (1925), the Statement of Faith (1940), A New Creed (1968), and this current document—has its own particular character, use, and place in the church's life. Each speaks to its time and context in its own way.

It will be up to the church to determine what place this document will have in relation to these other expressions of the church's shared faith, and whether all of these statements can stand comfortably side by side.

Appendix B

On the Language and Form of the Statement of Faith Naming The Holy

This statement of faith maintains the United Church's custom of using inclusive language. This is not simply a matter of sensitivity or "political correctness"; it is a matter of accuracy. The term "man" is no longer common usage when referring to all of humanity, and the generic pronoun "he" is likewise not reflective of both men and women. The use of exclusively male language and metaphors to refer to God distorts our understanding of a divine being who transcends the human categories of gender.

The statement employs and honours the traditional image of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), but also offers other images, such as Mother, Friend, Comforter, Source of Life, Living Word, Bond of Love. Words are a significant means of understanding and relating to the Holy, and the statement of faith recognizes the adequacy of all images or metaphors that speak faithfully of "the One on whom our hearts rely." However, the first designation of God in the statement of faith, that of Holy Mystery, serves as a reminder that all subsequent attempts to name the Divine are simply that—attempts to describe a reality that is always greater than human language can encompass.

At times the use of inclusive language demands a certain amount of "verbal gymnastics" or awkwardness of phrasing, and perhaps this is not a bad thing. It reminds us that the object of worship is ultimately God and not our images of God.

We Sing

In its layout and language, the statement of faith has some of the look and feel of poetry. Its primary intentions, however, are not artistic; it has no aspirations of rivalling William Blake, Christina Rossetti, Leonard Cohen, or Jalal ad-Din Rumi. The drafters of the statement of faith intentionally opted for a form and a tone that would be more evocative than definitive. In response to the diversity in the church, the pluralism in society, and the "untamable" nature of the Holy, they sought an expression that would invite dialogue—a conversation-starter rather than a conversation-ender. The statement of faith, with its leanings toward the lyrical, seeks to be

something of a love song, an offering up of those values, ideas, and truths that the United Church holds close to its heart. It is a song that is open to the possibility of other songs, in the hope that others might add their own counter-melodies, descants, and harmonies.

Of course, poetry is not everyone's preferred form. Some may find the layout and the language of the statement hard to read and will wish for a more simple, straightforward, and unambiguous statement of doctrine. Nevertheless, the drafters deem this form and language most appropriate for the statement of faith as a way of negotiating the varying perspectives to be accommodated and as a way of expressing truths that could not be stated in simple straightforward terms without distortion.

Terminology

In many places the statement of faith avoids using certain stock phrases that have become conventional in the Christian tradition. This is done in an effort to make the statement more accessible to those not grounded in traditional Christian language. It is also done in the awareness that, given the theological diversity in the United Church, one group might view a certain term or phrase as a standard around which to rally, while another group might view the same term or phrase as a "red flag." The drafters of this statement encourage all members of the church, regardless of their place in the theological spectrum, to look beyond conventional phraseology to the shared meanings that underlie and give rise to the varied expressions of faith that find currency in the United Church.

In other places traditional theological terms and concepts, such as "sin," "repentance," "witness," and "grace," have been maintained because they offer a unique or challenging truth for our time and context. Occasionally the statement of faith offers an alternate interpretation of theological terms that are part of common usage in our society but that the United Church understands and uses in its own particular way.

In all its work, the drafters of the statement of faith have attempted to balance the need for widespread accessibility with the need for accuracy and the desire to encourage increased theological literacy, reflection, and conversation.

Appendix C

On the Context of the Statement of Faith

The Theology and Faith Committee was instructed by the United Church's General Council to draft a faith statement that would be "timely and contextual"—in other words, a statement that would arise from and speak to the here and now, the world in which we live. Certain aspects of the church's current social, political, and historical context stood out as significant as the drafters of the statement of faith went about their work. These contextual elements influenced both the content and the form of the statement.

The Hunger for Relationship

Many of the traditional connections that once bound people to one another in Canadian society have eroded. Church membership, at least in mainline denominations, and political party affiliation have declined. Many people do not know their neighbours. We have technologies that allow instant communication across great distances but offer, at best, "virtual" community.

Increasingly relationships are governed by convenience and utility. Yet there is a hunger for connection, and while some find themselves lost in alienation and estrangement, others lose themselves in blind, uncritical allegiance to whichever group, gang, cult, or movement offers the sensation of belonging.

The theme of “relationship” runs throughout the statement of faith. God’s desire for relationship is cited as the source of creation and the nature of the Holy Trinity. The statement of faith holds up Jesus’ challenging ethic of love as central to Christian faith. And it uses words such as “partnership,” “solidarity,” “community,” and the quest for “right relationship” to talk about the gifts of the Spirit and tasks of the church.

The De-Centred Church

The church in Canada and in much of Western society has been moved from the public to the private sphere. No longer able to act on assumptions of power and influence, the church finds itself situated on the edges rather than at the centre. No longer enjoying the political and cultural influence it once had, the church worries about how to make a difference in the larger society. It may even think back with nostalgia on the era of Christendom when it held a position of privilege. But, separated as it now is from the centre of power, the United Church has also become increasingly aware of its complicity with historic oppressions and abuses (for example, in its relationship with First Nations peoples). The shift to the margins produces worry but also provides the opportunity to embrace faithful solidarity with the marginalized and to situate our theology and world view away from the centre of power.

The statement of faith acknowledges that the church has “not always lived up to its vision” and challenges it “to live by grace rather than entitlement.” It calls the church to a mission of solidarity, standing with the oppressed, offering resistance to “forces that exploit and marginalize.” And it affirms that the Spirit is active not only in Christian community but also “in the world.”

The question of “truth”

The context in which this statement is written is one in which the modern notions of universal experience and overarching truth are crumbling. People struggle for some elusive “common ground,” yearn for a “collective identity.” Because no statement will provide such firm ground and no embrace of it will secure a sense of belonging, the question of a “uniting truth” opens before us in a new way. We are in a position to wrestle deeply with the theological conviction that in Christ we have been made one.

In a multicultural society, in a multifaith world, in a Christian community composed of varying theological perspectives, it is often difficult to know what “truth” means. Some in our world make exclusive claims to absolute truth and find in these claims authorization to do harm; others regard all truth as relative and consequently are complacent in the face of harm. Over the years the United Church has become increasingly able to embrace diversity while still affirming a sense of distinctive significance that unites us as a faith community. While believing that its faith is grounded in truth, the church strives to understand that its truth need not deny the truths of others.

The statement of faith begins by acknowledging God as “Mystery,” which throws into question any human claims to absolute truth. Recognizing that the Spirit challenges us to celebrate the Holy “not only in what is familiar, but also in that which seems foreign,” the church does well to respect “other ways that speak faithfully of the One on whom our hearts rely.” (See also the section on terminology in Appendix B.)

The Market Economy

We live in a culture in which economics (commerce, commodities, consumption) governs what we count as important. The economic world view is so pervasive that we are barely aware of its impact on our relationships, values, identities, and understanding of church. Many find their spiritual hunger co-opted by the culture of consumption. The dominant mindset commodifies the world, reducing it to objects merely to be manipulated and controlled. Many find themselves feeling impoverished in a society of affluence, leaving them indifferent to real poverty. In a world increasingly dedicated to unrestrained competition, all social interactions, values, and goals are subordinated to economic growth and capital accumulation. In contrast to this economy of exploitation, the prophetic voice of faith offers a vision of an economy of promise based on the model of a household. In such an economy the inhabitants appreciate that they share a world that can become a home only if they are related by way of interdependence with one another and with their special environment.

The statement of faith speaks of “gifts shared” in contrast to the “concentration of wealth and power without regard for the needs of all.” It speaks of creaturely inter-dependence in contrast to the “delusion of unchecked progress and limitless growth.” It speaks of “right relationship” and “resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize” in contrast to “complicity with empires and systems of domination.”

The Climate Of Terror

We live in a world of threats, both real and manufactured. Some fear for their identities, values, security, or ability to survive. There are different ways of responding to fear: Some attack the “other,” whom they see as a threat; some build walls to keep the threats out; some divert precious resources to military buildup; some search for powerful alliances. At the same time, prophetic individuals and communities of faith risk dialogue and reconciliation, living with threat as a place where repentance and new vision are beckoned.

The statement of faith recognizes “all people as kin,” calling on the church with a vision of “human dignity defended,” and so to offer “fierce love in the face of violence” and to “work with God for the healing of the world, that all might have abundant life.” The story of Jesus, crucified and risen, is a reminder that death does not have the last word and that violence, fear, war, and hatred cannot “overcome or undermine the love of God.”

Our Home, The Earth

Society has become increasingly aware of the fragility of our natural environment and of the potential that human civilization has for upsetting the balance. The idea of the “sacred earth” and the “good creation,” long a part of tribal and of religious tradition, has re-emerged as a challenge to the doctrine of conquest and exploitation that has often characterized our culture’s relationship to the earth.

The statement of faith describes creation, in all its diversity, complexity, and interdependence, as a reflection of the divine Creator. It emphasizes the connection of all creatures, and identifies humans, not as lords and masters of the earth, but as “one strand in the web of life.” It names the “mending of creation” as part of God’s plan and the work of the church.

Appendix D

On the Identity of the United Church as Reflected in the Statement of Faith

Who are “we”?

Much of the statement of faith is written in the first person plural, which naturally raises the question, Who is the “we” who is talking? Sometimes the “we” is a reference to the entire human race (e.g., “Nothing separates us from the love of God.”) Occasionally it indicates the larger Christian community (“We find God made known in Jesus of Nazareth.”) But for the most part the “we” of this statement of faith is we, The United Church of Canada.

Which raises another question: How does one know, let alone express, the faith of a collective body like the United Church? Who has the authority to say what the denomination as a whole believes, and what is the relationship between such a statement of belief and the faith expressions of the denomination’s individual members?

In order for a statement of faith such as this one to be embraced by the members of the United Church, it must be experienced as in some way reflecting the church’s distinctive spirit and values. Such a sense of the church’s “spirit” is, of course, a subjective perception, based on one’s personal experiences, relationships, and associations with the church. One person’s sense of “who the church is” may be significantly different from another person’s, which, as you can imagine, makes the creation of a statement expressing the church’s communal and shared truths somewhat tricky, especially given the diversity of perspectives in the church.

As the drafters of the statement went about the work of composing a document that could accurately reflect The United Church of Canada and its living faith, certain working assumptions about the church’s nature and identity came into play. Some of these assumptions could be expressed explicitly from the start; others became apparent only in the process of deciding the content of the statement and in the process of widespread consultation with the church at large.

Justice, Inclusivity, and Scripture

Despite the diversity in The United Church of Canada, a few things could be generally agreed on as being significant elements of the United Church’s collective identity, both from within the membership of the church and from those who observe the church externally. Appropriately, these elements are reflected in the statement of faith.

The United Church of Canada is a mainline Protestant Christian denomination, and as such it should not be surprising to find in this document an affirmation of the existence and activity of a compassionate God as well as an expression of the particular significance of the person of Jesus Christ to the faith community. The United Church belongs to the Christian tradition, and therefore shares much common ground with other Christian denominations.

Some qualities, however, make the United Church distinctive and are significant aspects of its self-identification. One could safely describe the metaphorical “head, heart, and guts” of the United Church’s sense of itself as, respectively: its approach to the interpretation of scripture, its affection for the concept of inclusivity, and its passion for social justice.

The origins of the United Church are closely linked to the Social Gospel movement of the early 20th century, and the church has always seen itself as an advocate for social justice in society and in the world. This can be seen reflected in the statement of faith’s vision of God’s reign as “a commonwealth not of domination but of peace, justice, and reconciliation”; in its naming as sinful those “systemic forms of injustice, violence, and hatred” that threaten human community and the integrity of creation; and in its call to the church to “stand with the oppressed,” offering “resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize.” Over the years the church’s stated commitment to justice has led it to reinterpret its understanding of “mission,” moving from models of charity and conversion toward a model of mutuality, “grounded in partnership and solidarity.”

The United Church sees itself as an “inclusive” church, aspiring to a practice of honouring and acknowledging the value of all people regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, economic class, and so on. This desire for inclusiveness plays out differently in different parts of the church but is nonetheless a significant part of the church’s self-image. The statement of faith reflects this value in its recognition of all people as family and its naming of diversity as a blessing; in its honouring of Jesus as one who crossed barriers of race, class, culture, and gender; and in its criticism of biblical interpretations that make scripture into a “tool of oppression, exclusion, or hatred.” The value of inclusiveness can also be seen throughout in the statement’s use of inclusive language. (See the section on terminology in Appendix B.)

The United Church, in its use of scripture, exhibits an approach that seeks to take the Bible seriously, but not literally. Biblical study and interpretation in the United Church often take into consideration scripture’s historical context, its literary value and function, the diversity of voices and perspectives being represented, and the voices not being represented. The statement of faith recognizes scripture as testaments of “human experiences and cultural assumptions,” but also as a source of revelation, a “faithful witness,” and “our song for the journey.”

Tensions

While certain attributes are commonly acknowledged as aspects of the United Church’s collective identity, the process of drafting the statement of faith (and the accompanying process of consultation) has revealed that other elements of its collective identity remain unresolved. This should not be too surprising; no living group or institution has all of its issues settled. Some of the United Church’s unresolved issues are a result of change and growth, the transition from the old to the new. Others come from differences in perspective. The resulting tensions are sometimes creative and dynamic, sometimes divisive and anxiety-producing. The analytical reader may discern hints of some of these unresolved (and possibly unresolvable) tensions reflected in the statement of faith.

Diversity and Unity—The United Church’s affirmation of inclusiveness creates certain problems in establishing a sense of unified identity for the church. The church is increasingly skilled at

accommodating a wide spectrum of theological perspectives, liturgical practices, political opinions, cultural values, and social practices, as well as a variety of ethnic backgrounds, regional associations, sexual orientations, and so on. However, there remains a longing for unity, for that which binds the disparate together. But to name what that “common thread” might be always runs the risk of excluding, of creating division, of establishing boundaries. The church’s aversion to “us” and “them” distinctions for fear of excluding anyone makes attempts to establish who exactly “we” are difficult, so the church’s dream of being a “united and uniting” church remains in tension. The statement of faith will likely not resolve this tension, but it does seek to engage it.

Progressiveness and Tradition—The United Church is considered by many, inside and out, to be a “progressive” denomination. It is a church that engages its culture, adapts to its context, and, to a large extent, embraces the intellectual tools of modernity (and post-modernity, and whatever it is that comes after post-modernity). At the same time it strives to stay rooted in the Christian tradition. Sometimes those members of the church who ally themselves with what they see as orthodox values and those who champion an ideal of progressiveness seem to be pulling the church in opposite directions. The statement of faith attempts to negotiate this tension creatively and faithfully.

Global Perspective and Eurocentric World View—The United Church, through its evolving understanding of mission and its sense of inclusiveness, has sought to be intentionally attuned to a variety of voices hitherto unacknowledged: voices coming from women, from people living in poverty, from ethnic minorities, and from brothers and sisters in the global community, especially those in the so-called “Third World.” At the same time, the majority of United Church membership continues to be predominantly white, middle-class, of European descent, and, obviously, North American. While the church moves toward a greater awareness of its global solidarity, it would be dishonest to pretend that its values and perspectives are not influenced by its social location as a historically white, middle-class, Euro-Canadian church. The content of the statement has benefits from many voices, but there are always more voices to be heard.

Individual Freedom and Institutional Authority—The United Church has a long tradition of honouring spiritual freedom. The very existence of this statement of faith raises questions about the relationship between the individual church member (and his or her faith) and the institution (and its expression of collective faith). (See Appendix A on purpose and status.) In a consumer society, in which relationships are increasingly defined by utility and convenience, what does “membership” in a collective body like the church mean? By what authority does the institutional church speak and act on behalf of its members? The question has an impact on the acceptance and use of the statement of faith, as well as on the sense of personal responsibility the individual member might feel for such things as the church’s complicity in running Indian residential schools or for the church’s commitment to social justice.

These tensions are symptomatic of a living church. They can be uncomfortable at times, but they are our tensions, and we live with them.

Un chant de foi

Déclaration de foi de l'Église Unie du Canada

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PRÉAMBULE

Par cette Déclaration de foi, l'Église Unie présente une image verbale de sa foi, telle qu'elle la comprend dans son contexte historique, politique, social et théologique en ce début du 21^e siècle. Cette déclaration devrait lui permettre de continuer sa réflexion et de vivre ses convictions en interaction avec le monde dans lequel nous nous trouvons.

La foi de l'Église se fonde sur des vérités intemporelles. Cependant, les chrétiens et chrétiennes de chaque génération doivent se les réapproprier «dans les termes et la pensée de leur propre temps, et avec l'importance exigée par leur époque» (Déclaration de foi, 1940).

Ce n'est pas la première fois que l'Église Unie exprime officiellement sa foi collective. Dans les Principes d'Union (1925), dans sa Déclaration de foi (1940), et dans sa Confession de foi, l'Église Unie a formulé ses croyances dans des termes qui conviennent à chaque époque. La présente Déclaration de foi vous est présentée dans le cadre de cette tradition et à la demande du

37e Conseil général (2000) «de produire une déclaration de foi opportune et contextuelle» invitant tout spécialement l'Église «à un échange sur la nature de l'Église (ecclésiologie), le ministère et les sacrements».

Cette Déclaration de foi tente de refléter l'esprit de l'Église Unie du Canada et de réagir à divers éléments déterminants pour notre contexte social, politique et historique, comme la place de l'Église dans la société, l'environnement culturel et intellectuel qui est le nôtre, le sens que nous donnons au mot «vérité», l'impact de l'économie de marché sur notre quotidien et, question qui gagne en importance, le sens de la «sécurité». Les annexes à ce document explorent ces données contextuelles plus en profondeur.

Cette déclaration n'est pas valable pour toutes les époques mais pour notre temps. Dans la mesure où l'Esprit nous est fidèle, nous pouvons exprimer notre compréhension du Dieu Saint avec confiance. Et dans la mesure où l'Esprit est incommensurable et indomptable, nous reconnaissons que notre compréhension du Dieu Saint restera toujours partielle et limitée. Néanmoins nous avons la foi, et cette déclaration expose le sens de notre chant.

Déclaration de Foi

Dieu est Mystère, Dieu est Saint
au-delà de toute saisie humaine dans sa totalité
et au-delà de toute description parfaite.

Mais,
dans l'amour,
le Dieu unique et éternel recherche la relation.

Ainsi, Dieu crée l'univers
et fait advenir la possibilité d'exister et d'être en relation.
Dieu prend soin de l'univers,
réparant ce qui est brisé et réconciliant ce qui est aliéné.
Dieu anime l'univers
et guide toutes choses vers l'harmonie avec sa Source.

En reconnaissance de l'amour agissant de Dieu,
nous ne pouvons taire notre louange.

Avec l'Église à travers les âges,
nous parlons de Dieu, une et trois personnes:
Père, Fils et Saint-Esprit.
Nous parlons aussi de Dieu comme
Créateur, Sauveur, et Soutien;
Père, Christ, et Esprit;
Mère, Ami, et Consolateur;
Source de Vie, Parole vivante, et Lien d'Amour.

Nous avons aussi d'autres manières de parler avec fidélité
de Dieu à qui se fie notre cœur,
vie pleinement partagée au cœur de l'univers.

Nous témoignons du Mystère Saint qui est total Amour.

Dieu crée et se donne,
généreusement présent
en tous les lieux de l'univers, proches et lointains.
Rien n'existe qui ne trouve sa source en Dieu.
La gratitude est notre première réponse à la providence de Dieu.
Nous chantons notre action de grâces.

Au cœur d'un monde de beauté et de mystère
fait d'êtres vivants divers et interdépendants,
de complexes systèmes de croissance et d'évolution,
de particules subatomiques et de tourbillons cosmiques,
nous célébrons le Dieu Créateur,
Source de tout ce qui est.

Chaque élément de la création révèle une facette unique du Dieu Créateur
qui se trouve dans la création et au-delà de celle-ci.
Tous les éléments de la création, animés et inanimés, sont inter-reliés.
Toute création est bonne.
Nous célébrons le Créateur
qui a donné aux humains de vivre et se mouvoir
et de trouver leur vie en Dieu.
En Dieu et avec Dieu,
nous pouvons orienter nos vies vers des relations justes
les uns, les unes avec les autres et avec Dieu.
Nous pouvons trouver notre place dans le tissage de la vie dont nous sommes un fil.
Nous pouvons croître en sagesse et en compassion.
Nous pouvons reconnaître toute personne comme reliée à la même famille.
Nous pouvons accepter notre mortalité et notre finitude non comme une malédiction
mais comme un appel à donner sens à nos vies et à nos choix.

Créatures à l'image de Dieu,
nous désirons ardemment la plénitude de la vie en Dieu.
Pourtant nous choisissons de nous en détourner.
Nous nous livrons au péché,
qui est propension à l'égoïsme, à la lâcheté et à l'indifférence.
En nous soumettant avec complaisance

à un ensemble de faux désirs et de mauvais choix,
nous faisons du mal, aux autres et à nous-mêmes.
Cette destruction de la vie humaine et de la communauté
est conséquence du péché.
Le péché n'est pas que personnel,
il cumule
des formes systémiques et familiaires
d'injustice, de violence et de haine.
Cette destruction nous atteint tous et toutes:
la montée de l'individualisme égocentrique
qui affaiblit la solidarité humaine;
la concentration du pouvoir et de la richesse
au mépris des besoins de chaque personne;
les effets pervers de l'intolérance religieuse et ethnique;
la dégradation de la dimension sacrée du corps humain
et l'aviilissement des passions qu'engendre l'exploitation sexuelle;
l'illusion d'un progrès sans mesure et d'une croissance sans limite
qui menacent notre maison, la terre;
le désespoir latent et paralysant qui amène beaucoup de gens à se faire les complices
insensibles
des empires et des systèmes de domination.
Nous entonnons le chant de nos regrets et de notre repentance.

Cependant, le mal ne peut ni miner,
ni triompher de l'amour de Dieu.
Dieu pardonne,
et nous appelle à reconnaître nos peurs et nos faiblesses
avec honnêteté et humilité.
Dieu réconcilie,
et nous appelle à déplorer notre contribution
au tort causé à notre monde, à nous-mêmes et aux autres.
Dieu transforme,
et nous appelle à protéger les êtres vulnérables,
à prier pour être délivrés du mal,
à s'associer à l'œuvre divine de guérison du monde,
afin que tous et toutes aient la vie en abondance.
Nous célébrons la grâce de Dieu.

L'abondance de la vie c'est, entre autres,
des moments d'inspiration soudaine et de courage,
des expériences de beauté, de vérité et de bonté,
des bénédictions semées et récoltées,
dans l'amitié et la famille, dans le travail intellectuel et dans la sexualité,
la réconciliation par la justice,

les communautés cultivant la droiture,
et l'expression du sens de toute chose.
Ainsi nous célébrons Dieu qui est Esprit
et qui, dès le commencement, a plané sur toute la création,
généralisant toute énergie, animant toute matière,
et vivant dans le cœur humain.

Nous célébrons Dieu qui est Esprit,
fidèle et indomptable,
dynamique créative pour le salut du monde.

L'Esprit nous convie à célébrer ce qui est saint
non seulement dans ce qui nous est familier,
mais aussi dans ce qui nous apparaît étranger.

Nous célébrons l'Esprit
qui exprime à travers nos prières notre quête la plus profonde,
embrasse nos préoccupations et nos confessions,
et nous transforme ainsi que le monde.

Nous rendons un culte
qui se veut élan de gratitude et d'admiration,
et une pratique de réceptivité
au murmure paisible de la voix tenue de Dieu qui nous reconforte,
au souffle puissant de l'appel de Dieu à notre mission,
Par les mots, la musique, l'art, et les sacrements,
en communauté et dans la solitude,
Dieu change nos vies, nos relations, et notre monde.
Nous chantons notre confiance.

Les Écritures sont notre chant pour la route, la Parole vivante
transmise de génération en génération
pour nous guider et nous inspirer
afin que nous tirions une révélation vivante
des expériences humaines
et des réalités culturelles d'une autre époque
pour le temps et le lieu qui sont les nôtres.
Dieu nous appelle à mettre la Parole en pratique et non seulement à l'entendre.

L'Esprit insuffle une puissance de révélation à travers les Écritures,
ce qui leur permet d'occuper une place unique et normative
dans la vie de la communauté.

Ce même Esprit nous juge sévèrement lorsque nous abusons des Écritures
en les interprétant de manière étroite
pour en faire un instrument d’oppression, d’exclusion ou de haine.

L’ensemble des Écritures témoigne
de l’unicité et de la fidélité de Dieu.

La multiplicité des Écritures témoigne de sa richesse:
deux testaments, quatre évangiles,
des perspectives contrastées et tenues en tension –
le tout concourant à rendre un témoignage fidèle à Dieu, une et trois personnes,
Sainteté du Mystère qui est total Amour.

Nous découvrons Dieu qui s’est fait connaître en Jésus de Nazareth,
ainsi nous célébrons le Christ de Dieu, Dieu Saint incarné.

Nous célébrons Jésus,
un Juif,
né d’une femme dans la pauvreté,
à une époque d’agitation sociale
et d’oppression politique.

Il a connu la joie et la tristesse humaines.
En lui, la présence de l’esprit était telle
qu’à son contact les gens vivaient la présence de Dieu parmi eux.
Nous chantons notre louange au Dieu incarné.

Jésus a annoncé l’avènement du règne de Dieu –
un royaume non pas de domination
mais de paix, de justice et de réconciliation.

Il a guéri les malades et nourri les affamés.

Il a pardonné les péchés et délivré celles et ceux retenus captifs
de l’emprise du mal sous toutes ses formes.

Il a abattu les barrières entre les races, les classes et les cultures, et entre les hommes et les femmes.

Il a prêché l’amour inconditionnel et l’a mis en pratique –
amour de Dieu, amour du prochain,
amour des amis-es et des ennemis-es –

et il a commandé à ses disciples de s’aimer les uns les autres
comme il les aimait.

Devant la menace que représentait son témoignage d’amour,
ceux qui détenaient le pouvoir ont cherché à réduire Jésus au silence.

Il a été abandonné et trahi,
torturé et exécuté avec la sanction de l’état.

Il a été crucifié.

Mais la mort n'a pas eu le dernier mot.
Dieu a relevé Jésus de la mort,
 changeant la tristesse en joie,
 et le désespoir en espérance.
Nous célébrons Jésus relevé d'entre les morts.
Nous chantons alleluia.

En prenant corps en la personne de Jésus,
 Dieu fait toutes choses nouvelles.
À travers l'existence de Jésus, son enseignement et le don de sa vie,
 Dieu nous rend capables de vivre dans l'amour.
À travers la crucifixion de Jésus,
 Dieu porte le péché, la détresse et la souffrance du monde.
À travers la résurrection de Jésus,
 Dieu triomphe de la mort.
Rien ne nous sépare de l'amour de Dieu.

Le Christ ressuscité vit aujourd'hui,
 présent à nous et source de notre espérance.
En réponse à ce que Jésus a été,
 et à tout ce qu'il a fait et enseigné,
 à sa vie, sa mort et sa résurrection,
 et à sa présence continuelle auprès de nous par l'Esprit,
nous le célébrons comme
 la Parole faite chair,
 celui en qui se rejoignent pleinement Dieu et l'humanité,
 et la transformation de nos vies,
le Christ.

Nous chantons une Église
 qui cherche à poursuivre l'histoire de Jésus
 en incarnant la présence du Christ dans le monde.
Le Christ nous appelle à nous rassembler
 en une communauté de croyantes et croyants fragiles mais espérants
 qui aiment ce qu'il a aimé,
 vivent ce qu'il a enseigné,
 et cherchent à servir Dieu avec fidélité
 dans le temps et le lieu qui sont les nôtres.
Nos ancêtres dans la foi
 nous lèguent leurs expériences de fidélité;

c'est sur leur vécu que nos vies se construisent.
Vivre l'Évangile nous rend participants-es à cette communion des saints et des saintes
qui vivent l'accomplissement du règne de Dieu
tout en anticipant avec ardeur un nouveau ciel et une nouvelle terre.

L'Église n'a pas toujours été à la hauteur de sa vision.
Elle prie l'Esprit de la réorienter
pour l'aider à vivre une foi en émergence tout en honorant la tradition,
pour l'inviter à vivre par la grâce plutôt qu'à exercer ses prérogatives,
car nous sommes appelés-es à être bénédiction pour la terre.

Nous chantons la Bonne Nouvelle de Dieu
vécue dans une Église qui a pour but
de nourrir la foi et de reconforter les cœurs,
de partager les dons pour le bien de tous et toutes,
de résister aux forces d'exploitation et de marginalisation,
d'opposer l'amour à la force de la violence,
de défendre la dignité humaine,
de rassembler les membres d'une communauté inspirée par Dieu,
de les reprendre et de les reconforter,
d'être un instrument de l'Esprit d'amour du Christ,
et de prendre soin de la création.

Nous chantons la mission de Dieu.

L'Esprit accorde à chacune, chacun, des dons qui lui sont propres.
Pour le bien du monde,
Dieu appelle tous les disciples de Jésus au ministère chrétien.
Dans l'Église,
certaines personnes sont appelées à des ministères particuliers de leadership
laïques et ordonnés,
d'autres annoncent la Bonne Nouvelle,
d'autres développent l'art de la célébration du culte,
d'autres reconfortent celles et ceux qui pleurent et guident celles et ceux qui errent,
d'autres construisent une communauté de sagesse,
d'autres prennent le parti des opprimés et travaillent pour la justice.
Afin de manifester l'amour de Dieu dans le monde,
le travail de l'Église requiert le ministère et la vie de disciple
de tous les croyants et croyantes.

Dans notre élan de reconnaissance pour l'abondance de l'amour de Dieu,
nous gardons à l'esprit le lien essentiel
qui nous rattache à la terre et les uns, les unes aux autres,
nous participons à l'œuvre divine de guérison et de restauration de la création.
Pour signifier la présence du sacré dans le monde,

l'Église reçoit, consacre et partage
des signes visibles de la grâce de Dieu.
Avec les Églises
de racines réformées et méthodistes,
nous célébrons les deux sacrements que le Christ nous a donnés :
le baptême et la communion.
Dans ces sacrements, les choses de la vie quotidienne
– l'eau, le pain, le vin –
annoncent, au-delà de ce qu'elles sont, Dieu et son amour,
et nous apprennent à prêter attention
à la présence du sacré au cœur de la vie.

Avant toute prise de conscience ou action de notre part,
nous naissons dans ce monde brisé.
Avant toute prise de conscience ou action de notre part,
nous sommes entourés par l'amour de Dieu qui nous sauve.
Le baptême d'eau au nom de la Sainte Trinité
est le moyen par lequel la communauté d'alliance de l'Église
nous reçoit à tout âge.
Il est le rituel qui représente notre nouvelle naissance dans la foi
et notre restauration par la puissance de Dieu.
Le baptême signifie le pouvoir de l'amour de Dieu
qui nourrit, soutient et transforme,
et notre réponse de gratitude pour cette grâce.

Porteurs d'une vision de création guérie et restaurée,
nous accueillons toute personne au nom du Christ.
Répondant à l'invitation du Christ à la table qui ne laisse personne sur sa faim,
nous nous rassemblons comme ses convives et ses proches.
Dans cette sainte communion
nous avons pour mission de nourrir comme nous-mêmes avons reçu nourriture,
de pardonner comme nous-mêmes avons obtenu pardon,
et d'aimer autant que nous l'avons été.
La table ouverte annonce la promesse lumineuse
de l'abolition des barrières et de la restauration de la création.
Dans le repas de communion, par le vin versé et le pain rompu,
nous faisons mémoire de Jésus.
Nous faisons mémoire non seulement de sa promesse mais aussi du prix qu'il a payé
pour ce qu'il a été,
pour ce qu'il a dit et fait,
et à cause de la brisure du monde.
Nous sommes nourris au mystère du grand Amour de Dieu pour nous,
et la foi et l'espérance nous régénèrent.

Nous mettons notre espérance en Dieu.
Nous célébrons la vie au-delà de la vie
et un avenir au-delà de nos espérances:
un nouveau ciel et une nouvelle terre,
la fin de la tristesse, de la souffrance et des larmes,
le retour de Christ et la vie avec Dieu,
et le renouvellement de toutes choses.
Nous appelons ce temps à venir,
bien que nous ayons part dès maintenant à la vie éternelle.

Dieu ne cessera pas de créer
avant que toutes choses aient trouvé leur intégrité, leur unité
et leur intégration au fondement commun à toute créature.
Comme enfants du Dieu sur lequel le Temps n'a pas prise,
notre finitude trouvera son accomplissement
auprès du Créateur qui embrasse toutes choses.
Entre temps, nous saisissons le présent,
en incarnant l'espérance, en aimant nos ennemis,
en prenant soin de la terre,
en choisissant la vie.

En reconnaissance de l'amour agissant de Dieu,
nous ne pouvons taire notre louange.
Dans l'émerveillement et la confiance,
nous créons des liens et développons des relations
pour témoigner du Dieu Saint, Mystère et total Amour.
Amen.

Annexe A

La visée et le statut de cette Déclaration de foi Public Cible

«À qui cette Déclaration de foi est-elle destinée ?» La question est opportune. Savoir à qui elle est destinée peut donner une meilleure idée de ce à quoi elle est destinée. La réponse courte est la suivante: elle a été rédigée pour l'Église Unie du Canada – ses membres, ses paroisses, ses assemblées décisionnelles – pour l'aider à clarifier ses convictions et en discuter. Bien entendu, elle peut intéresser des personnes et des groupes à l'extérieur de l'Église et, de ce fait, elle peut servir plus d'une fin.

Nos partenaires œcuméniques y trouveront des terrains d'entente communs, notamment l'affirmation relative à la Sainte Trinité, aux Écritures comme source de révélation et au sens de Jésus-Christ pour notre vie communautaire. Ils pourront toutefois constater l'importance qu'elle accorde à certains aspects de la tradition chrétienne ou l'interprétation qu'elle fait et qui diffère de la leur. Nous espérons qu'ils verront dans ce document une invitation à la poursuite du dialogue.

De même, les membres des communautés de foi non chrétiennes pourront y trouver une ouverture à la discussion et à la coopération. Cette Déclaration de foi affirme explicitement que l'Esprit est à l'œuvre dans toute personne, pas seulement dans celles qui se disent chrétiennes, et que l'Église est appelée à reconnaître et célébrer ce qui est saint sous toutes ses formes, que celles-ci lui soient familières ou non.

Les personnes n'appartenant pas à un groupe religieux particulier trouveront dans cette Déclaration de foi un aperçu des convictions fondamentales de la tradition chrétienne et de l'interprétation que l'Église Unie du Canada en fait pour sa propre vie. Il se peut qu'en certains endroits les notions auxquelles cette Déclaration de foi réfère ou la terminologie qu'elle emploie aient peu de résonance pour les personnes sans arrière-plan religieux ; si ce document avait été conçu comme une introduction à la foi, il aurait été rédigé bien différemment. Nous espérons néanmoins que ces personnes pourront y découvrir un résumé satisfaisant des présupposés et des valeurs sur lesquelles se fonde l'Église.

Les personnes qui travaillent pour la justice dans notre société et au niveau mondial trouveront dans cette déclaration le même désir de solidarité et les mêmes objectifs que ceux qui les animent. Ce document parle de la diversité humaine comme d'une bénédiction et identifie au péché les forces d'intimidation, d'oppression et d'exploitation. Bien qu'il s'agisse d'une expression de foi et non d'une déclaration de politique, cette déclaration qualifie d'extrêmement problématiques l'intolérance religieuse et ethnique, la concentration de la richesse aux dépens des plus vulnérables, la complicité avec les empires de domination et la détérioration de la planète.

Pour les personnes de l'intérieur ou de l'extérieur de l'Église qui ont souffert à cause de l'institution ou qui sont toujours troublées par le rôle que celle-ci a joué dans les injustices de l'histoire, l'Église reconnaît par cette Déclaration de foi ses fréquents échecs à vivre à la hauteur de sa vision et formule le désir de s'amender, de se réorienter et de travailler pour tous et toutes à la guérison et à la réconciliation.

Il est clair que cette Déclaration de foi sera interprétée différemment d'une personne à une autre.

Cette déclaration constitue un document destiné à l'Église Unie. Elle a été conçue pour permettre à notre dénomination d'exprimer ses convictions pour elle-même et pour le monde, et pour aider ses membres à réfléchir sur leur foi individuelle et collective. Cette déclaration est plus descriptive que prescriptive, ce qui revient à dire qu'elle ne prétend pas décrire les convictions que l'Église devrait adopter mais qu'elle cherche plutôt à énoncer de manière ordonnée et dans un langage évocateur les convictions que l'Église semble nourrir. Pour ce faire, elle se base sur ses actions, son discours et son lien avec la tradition chrétienne en général et sa propre histoire en particulier.

L'expression de la foi collective d'une dénomination religieuse n'est pas nécessairement identique aux expressions de foi individuelles de ses membres. L'Église Unie du Canada a une longue tradition de liberté spirituelle et cette Déclaration de foi ne doit d'aucune manière être vue comme une condition pour accéder au statut de membre. Dans l'Église Unie se trouve une gamme très diverse d'interprétations et de visions théologiques. En termes métaphoriques, cette

Déclaration de foi se veut une espèce de «tente» recouvrant les nombreux points de vue divergents que l'on trouve dans l'Église. En certains endroits, cette «tente» est étirée au maximum ; l'Annexe D qui traite de l'identité de l'Église Unie explore ce point plus avant. Les membres de l'Église sont invités à trouver leur place sous cette tente théologique et à reconnaître la valeur de la foi de leurs coreligionnaires, même lorsque celle-ci s'exprime différemment et insiste sur des points divergents. Si cette Déclaration de foi favorise une meilleure compréhension des membres de l'Église entre eux, elle aura accompli quelque chose de remarquable.

En plus d'être un outil de réflexion, cette déclaration a pour but de poser les bases théologiques et d'offrir le soutien dont l'Église a besoin pour son travail dans le monde: ses divers ministères paroissiaux et sociaux, son témoignage politique et ses partenariats au niveau mondial. Ce document pourra également s'avérer utile pour les groupes d'étude, les classes de confirmation et, encore une fois, comme point de départ d'une discussion sur le lien entre la foi personnelle et la foi collective. Certaines parties de cette déclaration pourront peut-être trouver leur place dans la vie de prière de l'Église, quoique celle-ci n'a pas été conçue dans un but liturgique comme la Confession de foi.

Finalement, c'est l'utilisation que ce document trouvera dans la vie et pour le travail de l'Église qui en déterminera la fonction pratique, non l'intention du comité qui l'a préparé.

Statut

Le Conseil général décidera du statut de cette Déclaration de foi comme document officiel, mais c'est son utilisation par l'Église qui décidera de son statut pratique. Il revient à l'Église de décider ce qu'est ce document, tel qu'il se présente. Les personnes qui l'ont élaboré peuvent toutefois commenter et clarifier ce qu'il n'est pas.

Cette déclaration n'a aucunement été conçue pour remplacer la Confession de foi de l'Église Unie tant aimée et utilisée à travers le pays. Cette dernière (la Confession de foi adoptée en 1968) est une affirmation de foi concise et ouverte surtout destinée au contexte liturgique. Et tous les membres de l'Église Unie la chérissent. De toute évidence, la présente Déclaration de foi, plus longue et détaillée, décrit plutôt la manière dont l'Église se voit et comprend ses convictions de foi. Elle n'aspire nullement au même statut liturgique que la Confession de foi.

Cette Déclaration de foi ne tente pas non plus de remplacer les Vingt Articles de foi intégrés aux Principes d'union de l'Église Unie en 1925. Ces Vingt Articles ont une signification historique pour l'Église. Ils représentent l'entente théologique négociée entre les Églises fondatrices qui a permis à des groupes religieux passablement différents (les Églises méthodiste, presbytérienne et congrégationaliste, ainsi que les Églises de l'Union) de se fusionner en une même dénomination.

Cette Déclaration de foi ne tente pas non plus de remplacer la Déclaration de foi de l'Église Unie de 1940. Chaque déclaration de foi – les Vingt Articles de foi (1925), la Déclaration de foi (1940), la Confession de foi de l'Église Unie (1968), et le document présent – a son caractère particulier, son utilisation propre et sa place unique dans la vie de l'Église. Chacune réfère à son temps et à son contexte, à sa manière.

Il reviendra à l'Église de décider quelle place ce document doit occuper en rapport avec ces autres expressions de foi, et si toutes ces déclarations peuvent cohabiter harmonieusement les unes avec les autres.

Annexe B

Le langage et la forme de la Déclaration de foi

Nommer le Dieu Saint

Cette Déclaration de foi est conforme à l'habitude prise par l'Église d'utiliser un langage inclusif. Ce n'est pas seulement une question de sensibilité ou de «rectitude politique» ; c'est une question de précision. D'une manière générale, le mot «homme» n'est plus utilisé pour parler de l'humanité dans son ensemble, et le pronom générique «il» ne désigne plus indifféremment l'homme ou la femme. L'usage exclusif du masculin dans le langage et les métaphores qui s'appliquent à Dieu altère notre compréhension d'un Être divin qui transcende le genre humain et ses catégories.

La Déclaration de foi utilise et honore l'image traditionnelle de la Trinité (Père, Fils et Saint-Esprit), mais elle offre également d'autres images, telles que Mère, Ami, Consolateur, Source de Vie, Parole vivante, Lien d'Amour. Les mots ont une grande importance lorsqu'il s'agit de comprendre et d'entrer en relation avec le Dieu Saint, et cette Déclaration de foi reconnaît la pertinence de toutes les images ou métaphores qui désignent fidèlement «Dieu à qui se fie notre cœur». Toutefois, la première désignation de Dieu dans la Déclaration de foi, Dieu Saint et Saint Mystère, nous rappelle que toute tentative pour nommer le Divin ne sont – le mot le dit – qu'une tentative pour décrire une réalité qui dépasse toujours ce que le langage humain peut rendre.

En certaines occasions, l'utilisation du langage inclusif exige un peu de «gymnastique verbale» ou oblige à des formulations gauches, mais c'est probablement une bonne chose. Cela nous rappelle que, ultimement, le but premier du culte est Dieu et non nos images de Dieu.

Notre Chant

Par sa composition et son langage, la Déclaration de foi approche quelque peu la forme et la sensibilité de la poésie. Mais sa visée première n'est pas artistique ; elle n'aspire nullement à rivaliser avec William Blake, Christina Rossetti, Leonard Cohen ou Jalal ad-Din Rumi. Ou encore avec Yves Duteil, Gilles Vigneault ou Michel Rivard. Les rédacteurs et rédactrices ont opté intentionnellement pour une tournure et un ton plus évocateurs que définitifs. En réponse à la diversité de l'Église, au pluralisme de la société et à la nature « indomptable » du Dieu Saint, ils ont choisi une expression favorisant l'échange – un déclencheur de conversation plutôt qu'une conclusion. La Déclaration de foi au style lyrique cherche à offrir, un peu comme un chant d'amour, les valeurs, les idées et les vérités qui sont chères à l'Église Unie. C'est un chant qui se veut ouvert à d'autres chants, dans l'espoir que d'autres personnes y répondent par leurs propres mélodies, déchants et harmonies.

Bien entendu, la poésie n'est pas le style préféré de tous. Certains estimeront que la forme et le langage de la Déclaration de foi rendent difficile sa lecture et auraient préféré une forme plus simple, directe et claire. Cependant, les rédacteurs ont jugé que cette forme et ce langage leur permettaient de mieux accommoder les différentes perspectives et d'exprimer des vérités qui ne pourraient être rendues en termes simples et directs sans déformation.

Terminologie

En plusieurs endroits, la Déclaration de foi évite d'utiliser des expressions toutes faites devenues conventionnelles dans la tradition chrétienne. C'est un effort particulier pour rendre le texte accessible à ceux et celles qui ne possèdent pas les bases du vocabulaire chrétien traditionnel. Dans la diversité théologique de l'Église Unie, on a aussi voulu éviter qu'un groupe considère un terme ou une expression comme un critère autour duquel on doit se rallier, alors qu'un autre groupe pourrait voir la même expression ou le même terme comme une «question délicate». Les rédacteurs et rédactrices de cette Déclaration de foi souhaitent que tous les membres de l'Église, indépendamment de leur place dans la gamme des positions théologiques, s'intéressent à la réflexion commune suscitant les expressions de foi de l'Église Unie, au-delà de la phraséologie conventionnelle.

À d'autres endroits, des notions et des termes théologiques traditionnels comme «le péché», «la repentance», «le témoignage» et «la grâce» ont été conservés parce qu'ils proposent une vérité distinctive ou un défi particulier pour notre temps et notre contexte. À l'occasion, la Déclaration de foi propose une interprétation des termes théologiques différente de l'interprétation courante qu'en fait notre société mais qui est propre à la compréhension et à l'usage de l'Église Unie.

D'une manière générale, les personnes qui l'ont préparée ont cherché l'équilibre entre la nécessité de rendre la Déclaration de foi accessible au plus grand nombre et celle d'en faire un document précis, tout en favorisant la connaissance, la réflexion et la discussion théologiques en profondeur.

Annexe C

Le contexte de la Déclaration de foi

Le Conseil général de l'Église Unie a demandé au comité Théologie et foi de rédiger une Déclaration de foi qui serait «opportune et contextuelle» - en d'autres termes, un texte inspiré par l'ici et maintenant et pertinent pour ce même contexte, le monde dans lequel nous vivons. Au cours de leur travail, les rédacteurs de la Déclaration de foi ont découvert que certains aspects du contexte social, politique et historique actuel de l'Église se démarquaient par leur importance. Ces éléments contextuels ont influencé à la fois le contenu et la forme de la déclaration.

La Soif de Relation

Plusieurs des liens traditionnels qui unissaient les gens les uns aux autres dans la société canadienne se sont affaiblis. L'affiliation religieuse, du moins dans les Églises traditionnelles, a diminué, tout comme l'affiliation politique. Beaucoup de gens ne connaissent pas leurs voisins. Nous disposons de technologies qui nous permettent d'entrer en contact les uns avec les autres instantanément et à de grandes distances mais qui ne nous offrent, au mieux, qu'une communauté «virtuelle». Les relations sont de plus en plus dictées par la commodité et l'utilité. Pourtant la soif de relation existe et, alors que certaines personnes se retrouvent isolées et aliénées, d'autres adhèrent aveuglément et inconditionnellement à tout groupe, bande, secte ou mouvement qui offre un sentiment d'appartenance.

Le thème de la «relation» revient tout au long de la Déclaration de foi. Le désir de relation de Dieu y est cité comme la source de la création et la nature de la Sainte Trinité. L'éthique

d'amour mobilisatrice de Jésus y est placée au cœur de la foi chrétienne. Et des termes comme «partenariat», «solidarité», «communauté», et quête de «relations justes» sont utilisés pour parler des dons de l'Esprit et de la responsabilité de l'Église.

L'Église en Marge

Au Canada comme dans l'ensemble de la société occidentale, l'Église est passée du domaine public au domaine privé. Ne pouvant plus compter sur son pouvoir et son ascendant, l'Église se retrouve en marge de la société plutôt qu'au cœur de celle-ci. Ne jouissant plus de l'influence politique et culturelle d'autrefois, l'Église se demande comment faire une différence pour la société dans son ensemble. Il lui arrive même de se rappeler avec nostalgie l'époque où le christianisme bénéficiait d'une situation privilégiée. Mais, étant actuellement éloignée du siège du pouvoir, l'Église Unie prend de plus en plus conscience de sa complicité lors de certains abus et oppressions historiques (par exemple, sa relation avec les Peuples des Premières Nations). Sa marginalisation la préoccupe mais elle lui fournit l'occasion de se montrer authentiquement solidaire avec les marginalisés et de repenser sa théologie et sa vision du monde loin du centre du pouvoir.

La Déclaration de foi reconnaît que l'Église «n'a pas toujours été à la hauteur de sa vision» et l'invite à «à vivre par la grace plutôt qu'à exercer ses prérogatives». Elle appelle l'Église à «résister aux forces d'exploitation et de marginalisation» par une mission de solidarité aux côtés des opprimés. Et elle affirme que l'Esprit n'est pas seulement à l'œuvre dans la communauté chrétienne mais aussi «dans le monde».

La Question de la «Vérité»

Cette déclaration a été écrite dans un contexte où les notions modernes d'expérience universelle et de vérité imposée sont en train de s'effondrer. Les gens aspirent à une «identité collective» et luttent pour trouver un «terrain commun» difficile à définir. Mais puisque aucune déclaration de foi ne peut fournir cette base et que s'en réclamer ne peut garantir de sentiment d'appartenance, la question de la «vérité unificatrice» se présente à nous sous un jour nouveau. Nous en sommes donc au point de lutter intensément avec la conviction théologique voulant que, en Christ, nous avons été faits un.

Dans une société multiculturelle, dans un monde de diversité religieuse, dans une communauté chrétienne composée de perspectives théologiques variées, il est parfois difficile de cerner le sens du mot «vérité». Certaines personnes dans notre monde prétendent détenir la vérité absolue, ce qui leur permet de justifier leur oppression ; d'autres considèrent toute vérité comme étant relative et, de ce fait, se montrent indifférentes à l'oppression. Au fil des années, l'Église Unie s'est montrée de plus en plus apte à embrasser la diversité tout en affirmant le sens distinctif de son unité comme communauté de foi. Bien qu'elle ait la conviction que sa foi s'appuie sur la vérité, l'Église cherche à comprendre cette vérité sans avoir à nier celle des autres.

La déclaration de foi commence par reconnaître que Dieu est «Mystère», ce qui permet de mettre en doute toute prétention humaine à la vérité absolue. En reconnaissant que l'Esprit nous invite à célébrer le Dieu Saint «non seulement dans ce qui nous est familier, mais aussi dans ce qui dépasse notre compréhension», l'Église réussit à respecter les «autres manières de parler avec fidélité du Dieu sur qui se fie notre cœur».

(Voir également la section sur la terminologie à l'Annexe B.)

L'Économie de Marché

Nous vivons dans une culture où l'économie (le commerce, les produits, la consommation) décide de ce que nous jugeons important. La vision du monde basée sur l'économie est si omniprésente que nous sommes à peine conscients de ses effets sur nos relations, nos valeurs, notre identité et notre compréhension de l'Église. Beaucoup de gens voient leur besoin de spiritualité récupéré par la culture de consommation. L'attitude dominante fait que le monde se trouve réduit à une quantité d'objets à manipuler et à contrôler. Beaucoup de personnes se sentent appauvries dans une société d'abondance, ce qui les rend indifférentes à la vraie pauvreté. Dans un monde de compétition de plus en plus féroce, toutes les interactions, les valeurs et les objectifs sociaux sont subordonnés à la croissance économique et à l'accumulation des capitaux. Par contraste avec cette économie d'exploitation, la voix prophétique de la foi propose la vision d'une économie de promesse basée sur le modèle de la famille. Dans ce type d'économie, les habitants de la planète apprécient le fait qu'ils partagent le monde. Un monde où ils ne peuvent se sentir chez eux que s'ils sont reliés par voie d'interdépendance les uns avec les autres et avec leur environnement particulier.

La Déclaration de foi parle de «dons partagés» en contraste avec «la concentration du pouvoir et de la richesse au mépris des besoins de chaque personne». Elle parle de l'interdépendance des créatures en contraste avec «l'illusion créée par le progrès sans mesure et la croissance sans limite». Elle parle de «relations justes» et de «résistance aux forces d'exploitation et de marginalisation» en contraste avec «la complicité des empires et des systèmes de domination».

Le Climat de Terreur

Nous vivons dans un monde de menaces, certaines réelles, d'autres fabriquées. Certaines personnes craignent pour leur identité, leurs valeurs, leur sécurité ou leur survie. On peut réagir à la peur de différentes manières : certaines attaquent «l'autre» qu'ils voient comme un ennemi ; d'autres construisent des murs pour se protéger du danger ; d'autres allouent d'importantes ressources au développement de l'appareil militaire ; d'autres cherchent à faire alliance avec les puissants. Simultanément, des individus et des communautés prophétiques prennent le risque du dialogue et de la réconciliation, et considèrent ces menaces comme un lieu d'appel à la repentance et à l'émergence d'une vision nouvelle.

La déclaration de foi reconnaît «toutes personnes comme membres de la même famille», et appelle l'Église à «défendre la dignité humaine», à «opposer l'amour à la force de la violence» et à travailler «à l'œuvre divine de guérison du monde afin que tous et toutes aient la vie en abondance». Le récit de Jésus, crucifié et ressuscité, nous rappelle que la mort n'a pas le dernier mot et que la violence, la peur, la guerre et la haine «ne peuvent ni miner, ni vaincre l'amour de Dieu».

Notre Maison, la Terre

La société a de plus en plus conscience de la fragilité de notre environnement naturel et du pouvoir que possède la civilisation humaine de le déséquilibrer. La notion de «terre sacrée» et de «bonne création» qui appartient depuis longtemps à la tradition tribale et religieuse refait surface

comme un défi à relever devant la doctrine de conquête et d'exploitation qui a si souvent caractérisé la relation de notre culture avec la terre.

La Déclaration de foi décrit la création, dans toute sa diversité, sa complexité et son interdépendance, comme étant à l'image du divin Créateur. Elle met l'accent sur le lien entre toutes les créatures et identifie l'être humain non au maître de la terre mais à «un fil dans le tissage de la vie». Elle parle du «soin de la création» comme faisant partie du plan de Dieu et du travail de l'Église.

Annexe D

L'identité de l'Église Unie telle que reflétée dans la Déclaration de foi

Qui est ce «nous» ?

Une grande partie de la Déclaration de foi est écrite à la première personne du pluriel, ce qui soulève naturellement la question suivante: Qui est ce «nous» qui prend la parole ? Parfois, le «nous» réfère à la race humaine tout entière (e.g. «Rien ne nous sépare de l'amour de Dieu»). Parfois, le «nous» indique la communauté chrétienne dans son ensemble («Nous découvrons Dieu à travers Jésus de Nazareth»). Mais, dans la plupart des cas, le «nous» de cette Déclaration de foi c'est nous, les membres de l'Église Unie au Canada.

Ceci pose une autre question: Comment quelqu'un peut-il connaître, ou exprimer, la foi d'une collectivité comme l'Église Unie ? Qui a l'autorité d'affirmer ce que croit une dénomination dans son ensemble, et quel est le lien entre cette affirmation de foi et les expressions de foi individuelles des membres de cette Église ?

Pour que les membres de l'Église Unie adoptent une déclaration de foi comme celle-ci, ils doivent reconnaître qu'elle reflète en quelque sorte son esprit et ses valeurs distinctives. Bien entendu, la perception qu'a une personne de «l'esprit» de l'Église relève du domaine de la subjectivité ; elle est basée sur les expériences que cette personne y a vécues ainsi que les relations et les liens qu'elle y entretient. La perception de «ce qu'est l'Église» peut être assez différente d'une personne à une autre, ce qui peut rendre assez difficile – vous l'imaginez – la création d'une déclaration de foi exprimant les vérités de base communes à tous les membres de l'Église, surtout compte tenu de la diversité des perspectives théologiques qu'on y trouve.

Pour créer un document pouvant décrire avec précision l'Église Unie du Canada et la foi qu'on y vit, les rédacteurs de la déclaration de foi ont dû se servir de quelques présupposés sur la nature et l'identité de l'Église. Certains de ces présupposés ont été clairs dès le départ ; d'autres ne sont apparus clairement qu'au cours du processus du choix du contenu et de la consultation menée partout dans l'Église.

Justice, Inclusivité et Écritures

Malgré sa diversité, les membres de l'Église Unie tout comme ses observateurs extérieurs ont pu s'entendre sur quelques points jugés importants en ce qui concerne son identité collective. Il était à propos que ces éléments se retrouvent dans la Déclaration de foi.

L'Église Unie du Canada est une dénomination chrétienne protestante traditionnelle. Il n'est donc pas surprenant de retrouver dans ce document l'affirmation de l'existence et de l'œuvre d'un Dieu compatissant, de même que l'affirmation de l'importance particulière de la personne de Jésus-Christ pour la communauté de foi. L'Église Unie appartient à la tradition chrétienne et partage, par le fait même, plusieurs points en commun avec les autres dénominations chrétiennes.

Cependant, certaines caractéristiques distinctives de l'Église Unie sont particulièrement importantes pour son identité. En ce qui concerne la perception que l'Église Unie a d'elle-même, la métaphore «tête, cœur et ventre» pourrait s'appliquer à chacun des éléments suivants, respectivement : son approche de l'interprétation des Écritures, son affection pour le principe d'inclusivité et sa passion pour la justice sociale.

L'origine de l'Église Unie est étroitement liée au mouvement de l'évangile social du début du 20^e siècle, celle-ci s'étant toujours considérée comme le défenseur de la justice dans la société et dans le monde. Cet aspect se reflète dans la Déclaration de foi là où le règne de Dieu est décrit comme «un royaume non pas de domination mais de paix, de justice et de réconciliation» ; là où le péché est identifié aux «formes systémiques d'injustice, de violence et de haine» qui menacent la communauté humaine et l'intégrité de la création ; et là où l'on parle de l'appel de l'Église à «prendre le parti des opprimés» en «résistant aux forces d'exploitation et de marginalisation». Au fil des ans, l'Église a affirmé son engagement pour la justice, ce qui l'a amenée à réinterpréter sa compréhension de la «mission» et à s'éloigner des modèles de charité et de conversion pour adopter un modèle de mutualité «fondé sur le partenariat et la solidarité».

L'Église Unie se voit comme une Église «inclusive» qui aspire à reconnaître et honorer la valeur de toute personne, indépendamment de son sexe, sa race, son orientation sexuelle, son âge, ses capacités physiques, sa classe économique, etc. Ce désir d'inclusivité se manifeste différemment en divers lieux de l'Église mais demeure néanmoins un élément important de l'image que l'Église a d'elle-même. La Déclaration de foi souligne cette valeur en reconnaissant toute personne comme membre de la même famille et en associant la diversité à une bénédiction; en honorant Jésus comme celui qui a abattu les barrières entre les races, les classes sociales, les cultures, et entre les hommes et les femmes ; et en critiquant les interprétations bibliques qui font des Écritures «un moyen d'oppression, d'exclusion ou de haine». On peut également constater l'importance que l'Église accorde à l'inclusivité par l'utilisation du langage inclusif dans la Déclaration de foi. (Voir la section sur la terminologie à l'Annexe B.)

Par son approche des Écritures, l'Église Unie démontre qu'elle prend en compte sérieusement, mais non littéralement, ce que dit la Bible. L'étude et l'interprétation de la Bible dans l'Église Unie comprennent souvent le contexte historique des écrits, leur valeur et leur fonction littéraires, la diversité des voix et des perspectives représentées, et les voix non représentées. La Déclaration de foi voit dans les Écritures des testaments «d'expériences humaines et de réalités culturelles», mais aussi une source de révélation, un «témoignage fidèle», et «notre chant pour la route».

Tensions

Bien que certains éléments soient reconnus comme caractéristiques de l'identité collective de l'Église Unie, le processus de rédaction de la Déclaration de foi (tout comme le processus

simultané de consultation) a révélé que d'autres éléments posent toujours problème au regard de cette identité collective. Cela ne devrait pas nous surprendre ; aucune institution, aucun groupe actif n'a réponse à tous ses problèmes. Certains points non résolus dans l'Église Unie sont dus au changement et à la croissance, à la transition de l'ancienne réalité à la nouvelle. D'autres viennent des divergences de point de vue. Les tensions qui en résultent sont parfois créatives et dynamiques, mais elles peuvent créer des divisions et de l'anxiété. Les lectrices et lecteurs attentifs pourront discerner dans la Déclaration de foi des traces de ces tensions non réglées (et qui ne pourront peut-être jamais l'être).

Diversité et unité – L'affirmation de l'Église Unie sur l'inclusivité crée certains problèmes en ce qui a trait au sens de son identité collective. L'Église s'accommode de mieux en mieux d'une gamme très large de perspectives théologiques, de pratiques liturgiques, d'opinions politiques, de valeurs culturelles et de pratiques sociales, de même que d'une diversité de communautés ethniques, d'associations régionales, d'orientations sexuelles, etc. Cependant, le désir d'unité demeure. Le désir d'un lien ralliant les éléments disparates. Mais identifier ce que pourrait être ce «fil commun» serait prendre le risque d'exclure, de créer de la division et des frontières. De peur d'exclure qui que ce soit, l'Église évite de distinguer le «nous» du «eux et elles», ce qui ne lui rend pas facile la tâche de définir avec précision qui est le «nous». Ainsi, son rêve d'être une Église «unie et unifiante» demeure en tension. Vraisemblablement, la Déclaration de foi ne règlera pas cette tension, mais elle pourra aider à y travailler.

Le caractère progressiste et traditionnel de l'Église – Plusieurs personnes, de l'intérieur et de l'extérieur de l'Église Unie, la considèrent comme une dénomination « progressiste ». C'est une Église bien adaptée à son contexte qui s'investit dans sa culture et qui, dans une large mesure, se sert des outils intellectuels de la modernité (et de la post-modernité, et de ce qui s'en suit). En même temps, elle veut demeurer enracinée dans la tradition chrétienne. Il peut sembler que les personnes attachées à ce qu'elles voient comme les valeurs traditionnelles et celles qui défendent l'idéal progressiste de l'Église tirent cette dernière dans des directions opposées. La Déclaration de foi cherche à surmonter cette tension avec fidélité et créativité.

Perspective globale et vision du monde européocentrique – À travers sa compréhension évolutive de la mission et son sens de l'inclusivité, l'Église Unie cherche résolument à se mettre à l'écoute de plusieurs groupes restés sans voix jusqu'à présent: les femmes, les pauvres, les minorités ethniques, et nos frères et sœurs de la communauté globale, surtout ceux et celles qui habitent le soi-disant «Tiers-Monde». En même temps, le membership de l'Église Unie est toujours majoritairement composé de personnes de race blanche, de classe moyenne, d'ascendance européenne qui sont, de toute évidence, nord-américaines. Bien que l'Église soit de plus en plus sensibilisée à la solidarité mondiale, il serait malhonnête de prétendre que ses valeurs et ses points de vue ne sont pas influencés par le lieu social où elle se trouve et qui en font une Église historiquement euro-canadienne composée de personnes de race blanche et de classe moyenne. Plusieurs voix ont contribué à enrichir cette Déclaration de foi, mais il reste toujours d'autres voix à entendre.

La liberté individuelle et l'autorité institutionnelle – L'Église Unie a une longue tradition de respect de la liberté spirituelle. L'existence même de cette Déclaration de foi pose la question de la relation entre l'individu membre de l'Église (et ses convictions de foi) et l'institution (et

l'expression de sa foi collective). (Voir l'Annexe A sur la visée et le statut de la Déclaration de foi.) Dans une société de consommation où les relations sont de plus en plus dictées par le confort et l'utilité, que signifie «appartenir» à une collectivité comme l'Église ? En vertu de quelle autorité l'Église institutionnelle parle-t-elle et agit-elle au nom de ses membres ? Cette question a un impact sur l'adoption et l'utilisation de la Déclaration de foi, de même que sur le sentiment de responsabilité individuelle des membres au regard de réalités comme la complicité de l'Église dans la gestion des pensionnats amérindiens ou l'engagement de l'Église pour la justice sociale.

De telles tensions sont symptomatiques d'une Église vivante. Elles peuvent parfois créer des malaises, mais elles nous appartiennent et nous apprenons à vivre avec elles.

DOCTRINE SECTION OF THE BASIS OF UNION (1925)

AS PREPARED BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA,
THE METHODIST CHURCH,
AND THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF CANADA,
AND APPROVED BY THE SUPREME COURTS
OF THESE CHURCHES,
AS AMENDED BY THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

General

1.1 The name of the Church formed by the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches in Canada shall be "The United Church of Canada."

1.2 It shall be the policy of the United Church to foster the spirit of unity in the hope that this sentiment of unity may in due time, so far as Canada is concerned, take shape in a Church which may fittingly be described as national.

Doctrine

2.0 We, the representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational branches of The Church of Christ in Canada, do hereby set forth the substance of the Christian faith, as commonly held among us. In doing so, we build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. We affirm our belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life. We acknowledge the teaching of the great creeds of the ancient Church. We further maintain our allegiance to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, as set forth in common in the doctrinal standards adopted by the Presbyterian Church in Canada, by the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and by the Methodist Church. We present the accompanying statement as a brief summary of our common faith and commend it to the studious attention of the members and adherents of the negotiating Churches, as in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

2.1 Article I. *Of God.* We believe in the one only living and true God, a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being and perfections; the Lord Almighty, who is love, most just in all His ways, most glorious in holiness, unsearchable in wisdom, plenteous in mercy, full of

compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth. We worship Him in the unity of the Godhead and the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three persons of the same substance, equal in power and glory.

2.2 Article II. *Of Revelation.* We believe that God has revealed Himself in nature, in history, and in the heart of man; that He has been graciously pleased to make clearer revelation of Himself to men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that in the fullness of time He has perfectly revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of God, as containing the only infallible rule of faith and life, a faithful record of God's gracious revelations, and as the sure witness of Christ.

2.3 Article III. *Of the Divine Purpose.* We believe that the eternal, wise, holy, and loving purpose of God so embraces all events that, while the freedom of man is not taken away, nor is God the author of sin, yet in His providence He makes all things work together in the fulfilment of His sovereign design and the manifestation of His glory.

2.4 Article IV. *Of Creation and Providence.* We believe that God is the creator, upholder, and governor of all things; that He is above all His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and responsible to his Maker and Lord.

2.5 Article V. *Of the Sin of Man.* We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and that, by reason of this disobedience, all men are born with a sinful nature, that we have broken God's law, and that no man can be saved but by His grace.

2.6 Article VI. *Of the Grace of God.* We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. We believe also that God, in His own good pleasure, gave to his son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service, and salvation.

2.7 Article VII. *Of the Lord Jesus Christ.* We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin. Unto us He has revealed the Father, by His word and Spirit, making known the perfect will of God. For our redemption, He fulfilled all righteousness, offered Himself a perfect sacrifice on the Cross, satisfied Divine justice, and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, where He ever intercedes for us. In the hearts of believers He abides forever as the indwelling Christ; above us and over us all He rules; wherefore, unto Him we render love, obedience, and adoration as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

2.8 Article VIII. *Of the Holy Spirit.* We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who moves upon the hearts of men to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask Him. We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel; and that He abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of power, of holiness, of comfort, and of love.

2.9 Article IX. *Of Regeneration.* We believe in the necessity of regeneration, whereby we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God, who imparts spiritual life by the

gracious and mysterious operation of His power, using as the ordinary means the truths of His word and the ordinances of divine appointment in ways agreeable to the nature of man.

2.10 Article X. *Of Faith and Repentance.* We believe that faith in Christ is a saving grace; whereby, we receive Him, trust in Him, and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel, and that this saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, wherein we confess and forsake our sins with full purpose of and endeavour after a new obedience to God.

2.11 Article XI. *Of Justification and Sonship.* We believe that God, on the sole ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, pardons those who by faith receive Him as their Saviour and Lord, accepts them as righteous, and bestows upon them the adoption of sons, with a right to all privileges therein implied, including a conscious assurance of their sonship.

2.12 Article XII. *Of Sanctification.* We believe that those who are regenerated and justified grow in the likeness of Christ through fellowship with Him, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of saving faith; and that the believer's hope of continuance in such a life is in the preserving grace of God. And we believe that in this growth in grace Christians may attain that maturity and full assurance of faith whereby the love of God is made perfect in us.

2.13 Article XIII. *Of Prayer.* We believe that we are encouraged to draw near to God, our Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and on our own behalf and that of others to pour out our hearts humbly yet freely before Him, as becomes His beloved children, giving Him the honour and praise due His holy name, asking Him to glorify Himself on earth as in Heaven, confessing unto Him our sins, and seeking of Him every gift needful for this life and for our everlasting salvation. We believe also that, inasmuch as all true prayer is prompted by His Spirit, He will in response thereto grant us every blessing according to His unsearchable wisdom and the riches of His grace in Jesus Christ.

2.14 Article XIV. *Of the Law of God.* We believe that the moral law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, testified to by the prophets, and unfolded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, stands for ever in truth and equity, and is not made void by faith, but on the contrary is established thereby. We believe that God requires of every man to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; and that only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the Kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

2.15 Article XV. *Of the Church.* We acknowledge one Holy Catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who being united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their Head are one body in Him and have communion with their Lord and with one another. Further, we receive it as the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, consisting of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, together with their children, and other baptized children, and organized for the confession of His name, for the public worship of God, for the administration of the sacraments, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the Gospel; and we acknowledge as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular church throughout the world which professes this faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him as divine Lord and Saviour.

2.16 Article XVI. *Of the Sacraments.* We acknowledge two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were instituted by Christ, to be of perpetual obligation as signs and seals of the covenant ratified in His precious blood, as a means of grace, by which, working in us, He doth not only quicken but also strengthen and comfort our faith in Him, and as ordinances through the observance of which His Church is to confess her Lord and be visibly distinguished from the rest of the world.

2.16.1 Baptism with water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the sacrament by which are signified and sealed our union to Christ and participation in the blessings of the new covenant. The proper subjects of baptism are believers and infants presented by their parents or guardians in the Christian faith. In the latter case the parents or guardians should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and should expect that their children will, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, receive the benefits which the sacrament is designed and fitted to convey. The Church is under the most solemn obligation to provide for their Christian instruction.

2.16.2 The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of communion with Christ and with His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and His sacrifice on the Cross; and they who in faith receive the same do, after a spiritual manner, partake of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to their comfort, nourishment, and growth in grace. All may be admitted to the Lord's Supper who make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus and of obedience to His law.

2.17 Article XVII. *Of the Ministry.* We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein an Ordained Ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care and a Diaconal Ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care and calls men and women to these ministries; that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain or commission them to the work of the ministry.

2.18 Article XVIII. *Of Church Order and Fellowship.* We believe that the Supreme and only Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ; that its worship, teaching, discipline and government should be administered according to His will by persons chosen for their fitness and duly set apart to their office; and that although the visible Church may contain unworthy members and is liable to err, yet believers ought not lightly to separate themselves from its communion, but are to live in fellowship with their brethren, which fellowship is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

2.19 Article XIX. *Of the Resurrection, the Last Judgement, and the Future Life.* We believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, who shall come to judge the living and the dead; that the finally impenitent shall go away into eternal punishment and the righteous into life eternal.

2.20 Article XX. *Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph.* We believe that it is our duty, as disciples and servants of Christ, to further the extension of His Kingdom, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the inviolability of marriage and the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the State, and so to live in all honesty, purity, and charity, that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, declaring unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently believe that by His power and grace all His enemies shall finally be overcome, and the kingdoms of this world be made the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

Statement of Faith (1940)

[The doctrines of The United Church were formulated as the Basis of Union—the church’s “constitution”—in 1925 and were amplified in the Statement of Faith published by the church in 1940.]

Preamble

It is the purpose of this Statement to set out briefly and simply the substance of the Church’s faith. No attempt is made to answer all the questions, which devout men may reasonably ask in regard to God and man and salvation. But we believe that we have included what is essential to the life of the Church. If our purpose were apologetic we should have to use more of the language of modern science and philosophy. Because our purpose is affirmative we have as far as possible adopted rather the language of Scripture, a language which matches the supreme facts it tells of, God’s acts of judgment and of mercy.

The Church’s faith is the unchanging Gospel of God’s holy, redeeming love revealed in Jesus Christ. It is declared in Scripture; it is witnessed to both in the creeds of the Universal Church and in the Confessions of the Reformed Churches; and it is formulated for a specific purpose in our Basis of Union. But Christians of each new generation are called to state it afresh in terms of the thought of their own age and with the emphasis their age needs. This we have attempted to do for the people of The United Church of Canada—seeking always to be faithful to Scripture and to the testimony of the Universal Church, and always aware that no statement of ours can express the whole truth of God.

I. God

We believe in God, the eternal personal Spirit, Creator and Upholder of all things.

We believe that God, as sovereign Lord exalted above the world, orders and overrules all things in it to the accomplishment of His holy, wise, and good purposes.

We believe that God made man to love and serve Him; that He cares for him as a righteous and compassionate Father; and that nothing can either quench His love or finally defeat His gracious purpose for man. So we acknowledge God as Creator, Upholder, and Sovereign Lord of all things, and the righteous and loving Father of men.

II. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, Who, for us men and our salvation became man and dwelt among us.

We believe that He lived a perfect human life, wholly devoted to the will of God and the service of man.

We believe that in Him God comes face to face with men; so that they learn that God loves them, seeks their good, bears their sorrows and their sin, and claims their exclusive faith and perfect obedience.

We believe that in Jesus Christ God acted to save man, taking, at measureless cost, man's sin upon Himself; that the Cross reveals at once God's abhorrence of sin and His saving love in its height and depth and power; and that the Cross is for all time the effectual means of reconciling the world unto God.

We believe that Jesus was raised victorious over death and declared to be the Son of God with power; and that He is alive for evermore, our Saviour and our Lord. So we acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God Incarnate, the Saviour of the world.

III. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit by whom God is ever at work in the minds and hearts of men, inspiring every right desire and every effort after truth and beauty.

We believe that the Spirit of God moves men to acknowledge their sins and accept the divine forgiveness and grace.

We believe that the Spirit was present with power at the beginning of the Church, enabling the disciples to bear witness to what they had seen and heard, filling them with love of the brethren, and hope of the coming Kingdom, and sustaining them in the sense of Christ's continuing presence in their midst.

We believe that by the same Spirit the Church is continually guided and empowered, and her members fortified against temptation, fear and doubt, and built up in faith and holiness unto salvation. So we acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the Lord and Giver of life, through whom the creative, redeeming love of God is ever at work among men.

IV. The Holy Trinity

Knowing God thus, as Creator and Father, as Redeemer in Christ, and as Holy Spirit working in us, we confess our faith in the Holy Trinity. So we acknowledge and worship one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

V. Man and Man's Sin

We believe that God gave to man, as He did not to the lower creatures, capacity to share His thought and purpose, and freedom to choose whether he would or would not love and serve Him.

We believe that man has used his freedom of choice for low and selfish ends, thus estranging himself from God and his brother man, and bringing upon himself the judgment and wrath of God, so that he lives in a world of confusion and distress, and is unable of himself to fulfill God's high purpose for him. So we acknowledge man's sin, God's righteous judgment, and man's helplessness and need.

VI. Redemption

We believe that in the greatness of His love for man God has in Christ opened up a way of deliverance from the guilt and power of sin.

We believe that Christ, by living our life without sin, by dying at the hands of sinful men with faith unshaken and unfaltering love, has done for man what man could not do for himself. On the Cross, He bore the burden of sin, and He broke its power; and what He did there moves men to repentance, conveys forgiveness, undoes the estrangement, and binds them to Himself in a new loyalty.

We believe that by His resurrection and exaltation Christ stands victorious over death and all evil, and that He fills those who commit themselves to Him with such grace and strength that in Him they, too, are conquerors. His redemption of man is at once an awful mystery and a glorious fact; it is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes. So we acknowledge the unmerited love and the mercy of our God in giving His only-begotten Son that we might not perish but have everlasting life.

VII. The Church

We believe that the Church, the society of the redeemed, was brought into existence by God Himself through the work and risen power of Christ, Who in calling men into fellowship with Himself calls them by the same act into fellowship with one another in Him.

We believe that the Church is the organ of Christ's mind and redemptive will, the body of which He is the Head. Under Him the Church is called to the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel with its offer of salvation, to the worship of God, Creator and Redeemer, to the loving service of mankind, and to the care and nurture of the flock.

We believe that all members of the Church are one in Him, and that the life of the Church in every age is continuous with that of the first apostolic company. The groups commonly known as "churches" are called to share in the life of the whole Church, of all ages and of all lands, entering freely into the full heritage of thought, worship, and discipline, and living together in mutual confidence.

We believe that for the fulfillment of her mission in the world God has given to the Church the Ministry, the Scriptures and the Sacraments. So we acknowledge one holy, catholic, apostolic Church, the Body of Christ, the household and family of God.

VIII. The Ministry

We believe that God has appointed a Ministry in His Church for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the pastoral care of the people.

We believe that the Church has authority to ordain to the Ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands those whom she finds, after due trial, to be called of God thereto.

We believe that, for the due ordering of her life as a society, God has appointed a government in His Church, to be exercised, under Christ the head, by Ministers and representatives of the people. So we acknowledge the Holy Ministry appointed by God for the spread of the Gospel and the edification of His Church.

IX. The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the great moments of God's revelation and communication of Himself to men are recorded and interpreted in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

We believe that, while God uttered His Word to man in many portions progressively, the whole is sufficient to declare His mind and will for our salvation. To Israel He made Himself known as a holy and righteous God and a Saviour; the fullness of truth and grace came by Jesus Christ. The writings were collected and preserved by the Church.

We believe that the theme of all Holy Scripture is the redemptive purpose and working of God, and that herein lies its unity.

We believe that in Holy Scripture God claims the complete allegiance of our mind and heart; that the full persuasion of the truth and authority of the Word of God contained in the Scripture is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; that, using Holy Scripture, the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. So we acknowledge in Holy Scripture the true witness to God's Word and the sure guide to Christian faith and conduct.

X. The Sacraments

We believe that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are effectual means through which, by common things and simple acts, the saving love of God is exhibited and communicated to His people, who receive them in faith.

We believe that in Baptism men are made members of the Christian society. Washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit signifies God's cleansing from sin and an initial participation in the gifts and graces of the new life. The children of believing parents are baptized and nurtured in the family of God so that they may in due time take upon themselves the yoke of Christ.

We believe that the Lord's Supper perpetuates the fellowship between Christ and His disciples sealed in the upper room that at His table He is always present, and His people are nourished, confirmed, and renewed. The giving and receiving of bread and wine accompanied by His own words signifies the gracious self-giving of Christ as suffering and living Lord in such wise that His faithful people live in Him and He in them.

So we acknowledge Baptism as God's appointed means of grace at initiation into the Christian fellowship; and the Lord's Supper as His appointed means of maintaining the fellowship in health and strength, and as the act of worship in which the whole soul of man goes out to God and God's grace comes freely to man.

XI. Christian Life and Duty

We believe that the Christian life is the life lived in fellowship with Christ and His Church. It begins with repentance and faith. In repentance men turn from sin to serve the holy and forgiving God with new and glad obedience. In faith they entrust themselves to Christ and rest upon Him alone for salvation.

We believe that by the teaching and example of Jesus the Holy Spirit shows men the way and the end of the Christian life, what it means to love God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love their neighbour as themselves.

We believe that Christian men are called to abide within the fellowship of the Church, to maintain its peace and unity, and to give diligent heed to prayer, to the reading of Scripture, to common worship and the sacraments.

We believe that they are likewise called to live as those who are of the Kingdom of God, and to seek His righteousness both in individual and social life, serving their fellow-men in love for Christ's sake, and striving and waiting in prayer for an ordered common life where the will of God for the well-being and peace of men shall be done over all the earth.

We believe that in denying themselves and in following Christ men are enabled by the Spirit of God more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness; that they are, under the hand of a faithful Father, in labour, love, and duty, in suffering, sorrow and defeat, renewed in the inner man after the image of the crucified and victorious Christ; and that they receive in this life a foretaste of the final redemption, assurance of the divine favour, peace and joy, and the confidence that He is able to keep them to the end.

So we acknowledge the Christian life as the life lived within the family of God, with the graces and privileges, the duties and discipline, through which the Christian man grows up in all things into Christ.

XII. The Consummation

We believe that the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, following on His crucifixion, gives assurance that the long struggle between sin and grace will have an end, the Kingdom be revealed in its fullness, and God's eternal purpose accomplished.

We believe that God will judge all men by Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

We believe that, while salvation is offered to all, God does not take away or override the freedom with which He has endowed men. If they stubbornly refuse His mercy and prefer sinful ways they shut themselves out from the light and joy of salvation and fall under the righteous judgment of God.

We believe that those who accept the offer of salvation and persevere in the Christian way do after death enter into the joy of their Lord, a blessedness beyond our power to conceive. They see God face to face, and in the communion of saints are partakers with the Church on earth of its labours and prayers. So we acknowledge the righteous and merciful judgment of God and we wait for the coming of the Kingdom, which shall have no end.

“We know Whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him.”

“To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.”

Section doctrinale des Principes d'union

DOCUMENT PRÉPARÉ PAR LE COMITÉ MIXTE
DE L'ÉGLISE PRESBYTÉRIENNE AU CANADA,
DE L'ÉGLISE MÉTHODISTE
ET DES ÉGLISES CONGRÉGATIONALISTES DU CANADA
ET APPROUVÉ PAR LES INSTANCES SUPÉRIEURES DE CES ÉGLISES,
TEL QU'AMENDÉ PAR L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA.

Général

1.1 L'Église issue de l'union des Églises presbytérienne, méthodiste et congrégationalistes au Canada sera appelée l'Église Unie du Canada ».

1.2 L'Église unie aura pour politique de favoriser l'esprit d'unité dans l'espoir que ce sentiment d'unité puisse en temps voulu prendre forme, en ce qui concerne le Canada, dans une Église qui puisse adéquatement être décrite comme une Église nationale.

Doctrines

2.0 En tant que représentant(e)s des branches presbytérienne, méthodiste et congrégationaliste de l'Église du Christ au Canada, nous exposons par la présente la substance de la foi chrétienne, telle que nous y adhérons de manière générale. Ce faisant, nous construisons sur le fondement posé par les apôtres et les prophètes, dont Jésus-Christ est Lui-même la principale pierre angulaire. Nous affirmons notre foi dans les Écritures de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament, comme source primordiale et critère ultime pour la foi et la vie chrétiennes. Nous reconnaissons l'enseignement des grandes confessions de foi de l'Église ancienne. Nous maintenons également notre allégeance aux doctrines évangéliques de la Réforme, telles qu'établies en commun comme normes doctrinales par l'Église presbytérienne au Canada, par l'Union congrégationaliste de l'Ontario et du Québec et par l'Église méthodiste. Nous présentons la déclaration suivante comme un bref résumé de notre foi commune et nous la recommandons à l'étude attentive des membres et des adhérent(e)s des Églises participant aux négociations comme étant en substance conforme à l'enseignement des Saintes Écritures.

2.1 Article I. *Dieu*

Nous croyons au seul Dieu vivant et vrai, Esprit infini, éternel et immuable, dans la perfection de son Être; le Dieu Tout-Puissant, qui est amour, qui est juste dans toutes ses voies, glorieux de sainteté, insondable dans sa sagesse, riche en miséricorde, plein de compassion et rempli de bonté et de vérité. Nous lui rendons un culte dans l'unité de sa nature et le mystère de la Sainte Trinité, le Père, le Fils et le Saint-Esprit, trois personnes de la même substance, égales en puissance et en gloire.

2.2 Article II. *La Révélation*

Nous croyons que Dieu s'est révélé dans la nature, dans l'histoire et dans le cœur des humains; qu'Il a daigné se révéler plus clairement à des humains choisis par Dieu et poussés à parler par le Saint-Esprit; et, quand les temps furent accomplis, qu'Il s'est parfaitement révélé en Jésus-Christ, la Parole faite chair, qui est l'éclat de la gloire du Père et l'image fidèle de sa Personne. Nous recevons les Saintes Écritures de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament données par l'inspiration de Dieu, comme renfermant la seule règle infaillible de foi et de vie, comme un

rapport fi dèle des révélations pleines de la grâce de Dieu et comme le témoignage certain du Christ.

2.3 Article III. *Le projet divin*

Nous croyons que, sans que les humains ne perdent leur liberté ni que Dieu ne soit l'auteur du péché, le projet d'amour divin, éternel, sage et saint, embrasse tous les événements d'une manière telle que Dieu, Échange sur notre foi L'Église Unie du Canada Annexes 9 dans sa providence, fait concourir toutes choses à l'accomplissement de son plan souverain et à la manifestation de sa gloire.

2.4 Article IV. *La création et la providence*

Nous croyons que Dieu crée, maintient et gouverne toutes choses, qu'Il est au-dessus de toutes ses oeuvres et qu'Il est présent en elles; nous croyons qu'Il a fait les humains à son image, aptes à communier avec lui, libres et capables de choisir entre le bien et le mal, ainsi que responsables devant leur Créateur et Seigneur.

2.5 Article V. *Le péché des humains*

Nous croyons que nos premiers parents, ayant été tentés, ont opté pour le mal et se sont ainsi éloignés de Dieu pour tomber sous l'emprise du péché, dont la rançon est la mort éternelle. Nous croyons qu'à cause de cette désobéissance, tout humain naît avec une nature de pécheur, que nous avons enfreint la loi de Dieu et que personne ne peut être sauvé que par sa grâce.

2.6 Article VI. *La grâce de Dieu.* Nous croyons que Dieu, dans son grand amour pour le monde, a donné son Fils unique pour sauver les pécheurs et qu'il offre librement, dans l'Évangile, son plein salut à tous les humains. Nous croyons également que Dieu, de son plein gré, a donné à son fils un peuple, une multitude innombrable de personnes choisies dans le Christ en vue de la sainteté, du service et du salut.

2.7 Article VII. *Le Seigneur Jésus-Christ*

Nous croyons au Seigneur Jésus-Christ et nous le confessons, Lui le seul médiateur entre Dieu et l'humanité, Fils éternel de Dieu, devenu vrai homme pour nous les humains et pour notre salut, conçu du Saint-Esprit et né de la Vierge Marie, néanmoins sans péché. Par sa parole et son Esprit, il nous a révélé le Père, en nous faisant connaître la volonté parfaite de Dieu. Pour notre rédemption, il a accompli toute justice, s'est offert lui-même comme sacrifice parfait sur la croix, a satisfait à la justice divine et a expié les péchés du monde entier. Il est ressuscité des morts et est monté au ciel où il intercède toujours pour nous. Dans le coeur des croyants, il habite toujours comme le Christ intérieur; il règne au-dessus de nous tous et sur nous tous; pour cela nous lui rendons amour, obéissance et adoration en tant que notre Prophète, notre Prêtre et notre Roi.

2.8 Article VIII. *Le Saint-Esprit*

Nous croyons au Saint-Esprit, qui est Seigneur et qui donne la vie, qui procède du Père et du Fils, qui agit dans le coeur des humains pour les éloigner du mal et les inviter au bien, et que le Père est toujours prêt à donner à quiconque Le Lui demande. Nous croyons qu'Il a parlé par de saints hommes de Dieu qui ont fait connaître sa vérité aux humains pour leur salut; que par l'intermédiaire de notre Sauveur exalté aux cieux, Il a été envoyé avec puissance pour convaincre le monde de péché, éclairer les esprits des humains dans la connaissance du Christ ainsi que les persuader et les rendre capables d'obéir à l'appel de l'Évangile; et qu'Il habite l'Église, résidant dans chacun(e) des croyant(e)s comme l'esprit de vérité, de puissance, de sainteté, de réconfort et d'amour.

2.9 Article IX. *La régénération*

Nous croyons à la nécessité de la régénération par laquelle nous devenons de nouvelles créatures dans le Christ Jésus grâce à l'Esprit de Dieu, qui nous donne la vie spirituelle par l'action bienveillante et mystérieuse de sa puissance, en employant ordinairement les vérités contenues dans sa Parole de même que les prescriptions divines, de diverses manières qui conviennent à la nature humaine.

2.10 Article X. *La foi et la repentance*

Nous croyons que la foi en Christ est une grâce qui nous sauve et par laquelle nous le recevons tel qu'Il nous est offert dans l'Évangile, nous Lui faisons confiance et nous nous en remettons à Lui seul pour notre salut. Nous croyons que cette foi salvatrice est toujours accompagnée du repentir par lequel nous confessons nos péchés et nous en détournons, ayant pleinement l'intention de faire tous les efforts pour obéir de nouveau à Dieu.

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2.11 Article XI. *La justification et l'état d'enfant de Dieu*

Nous croyons que Dieu, sur la seule base de la parfaite obéissance et du sacrifice du Christ, pardonne à ceux et celles qui dans la foi le reçoivent comme Seigneur et Sauveur, les accepte comme étant justes et les adopte comme ses enfants, en leur donnant droit à tous les privilèges que cela comprend, y compris d'être enfants de Dieu.

2.12 Article XII. *La sanctification*

Nous croyons que ceux et celles qui sont régénérés et justifiés tendent à ressembler au Christ de manière croissante grâce à leur communion avec Lui, à la présence du Saint-Esprit en eux et à leur obéissance à la vérité; qu'une vie sainte est le fruit et le témoignage de la foi qui sauve; et que l'espérance, pour les croyants, de pouvoir continuer à vivre une telle vie réside dans la grâce protectrice de Dieu. Nous croyons également que, par cette croissance dans la grâce, les chrétiens et chrétiennes peuvent accéder à cette maturité et cette pleine assurance de la foi par quoi l'amour de Dieu atteint sa perfection en nous.

2.13 Article XIII. *La prière*

Nous croyons que nous sommes invités à nous approcher de Dieu, notre Père céleste, au nom de son Fils Jésus-Christ, pour nous-mêmes et pour les autres, et à épancher nos cœurs humblement et librement devant Lui, comme il sied à ses enfants bien-aimés, afin de lui rendre l'honneur et la louange dus à son saint Nom, de lui demander de manifester sa gloire sur terre comme au Ciel, de lui confesser nos péchés ainsi que de lui demander tous les dons nécessaires pour cette vie et pour notre salut éternel. Nous croyons également que, dans la mesure où toute prière vraie est inspirée par son Esprit, Il nous accordera en retour toute bénédiction en accord avec sa sagesse insondable et les richesses de sa grâce en Jésus-Christ.

2.14 Article XIV. *La loi de Dieu*

Nous croyons que la loi morale de Dieu, résumée dans les dix commandements, attestée par les prophètes et exposée dans la vie et les enseignements de Jésus-Christ, sera pour toujours vérité et justice et qu'elle n'est pas rendue vaine par la foi mais se trouve au contraire affirmée par elle. Nous croyons que Dieu demande à chacun et chacune de pratiquer la justice, d'aimer la miséricorde et de marcher humblement à ses côtés; et que c'est seulement grâce à cette harmonie avec la volonté de Dieu que sera réalisée la fraternité humaine par laquelle le Royaume de Dieu doit se manifester.

2.15 Article XV. *L'Église*

Nous reconnaissons une Église sainte et universelle, l'assemblée innombrable des saints et saintes de tous les temps et de toutes les nations qui, en étant unis par le Saint-Esprit au Christ leur chef, sont en Lui un seul corps et sont en communion avec leur Seigneur et les uns avec les

autres. De plus, nous accueillons comme la volonté du Christ que son Église existe sur terre comme une fraternité visible et sacrée, constituée de ceux et celles qui confessent leur foi en Jésus-Christ et leur obéissance à celui-ci, avec leurs enfants et les autres enfants baptisés, et servant à confesser son Nom, à rendre un culte public à Dieu, à administrer les sacrements, à l'édification des saints et à la propagation universelle de l'Évangile. Nous reconnaissons également comme faisant partie, de manière plus ou moins authentique, de cette fraternité universelle toute confession chrétienne particulière partout dans le monde qui confesse sa foi en Jésus-Christ et son obéissance à celui-ci en tant que Seigneur et Sauveur divin.

2.16 Article XVI. *Les sacrements* Nous reconnaissons deux sacrements, le Baptême et la Sainte Cène, institués par le Christ, afin d'être observés à jamais, en tant que signes et sceaux de l'alliance ratifiée par son précieux sang, en tant que moyen de grâce par lequel Il oeuvre en nous non seulement pour faire naître, mais aussi pour fortifier et affermir notre foi en Lui, et en tant que prescriptions par l'observance desquelles son Église doit confesser son Seigneur et se démarquer visiblement du reste du monde.

2.16.1 Le Baptême d'eau au nom du Père, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit est le sacrement par lequel sont signifiées et scellées notre union au Christ et notre participation aux bénédictions de la nouvelle alliance. Les personnes admises au baptême sont les croyants et croyantes ainsi que les petits enfants présentés par leurs parents ou leurs tuteurs(trices) dans la foi chrétienne. Dans le second cas, les parents ou les tuteurs(trices) Échange sur notre foi L'Église Unie du Canada Annexes 11 devraient fournir à leurs enfants une éducation et une discipline inspirées par le Seigneur et devraient s'attendre à ce que, par l'opération du Saint-Esprit, leurs enfants reçoivent les bienfaits pour lesquels le sacrement est conçu et qu'il est propre à transmettre. L'Église a le devoir solennel de se charger de leur formation chrétienne.

2.16.2 La Sainte Cène est le sacrement de communion avec le Christ et avec son peuple, dans lequel le pain et le vin sont donnés et reçus avec gratitude en mémoire de Lui et de son sacrifice sur la croix; ceux et celles qui le reçoivent dans la foi ont part, d'une manière spirituelle, au corps et au sang du Seigneur Jésus-Christ pour leur réconfort, leur nourriture et leur croissance dans la grâce. Toute personne faisant profession crédible de sa foi au Seigneur Jésus et de son obéissance à sa loi peut être admise à la Sainte Cène.

2.17 Article XVII. *Le ministère*

Nous croyons que Jésus-Christ, en tant que chef suprême de l'Église, a institué au sein de celle-ci un ministère ordonné de la Parole, des sacrements et des soins pastoraux ainsi qu'un ministère diaconal de formation, de service et de soins pastoraux, ministères auxquels Il appelle les hommes et les femmes; que l'Église, sous la conduite du Saint-Esprit, reconnaît et choisit ceux et celles que le Christ appelle et doit alors les ordonner ou les consacrer en bonne et due forme pour l'oeuvre du ministère.

2.18 Article XVIII. *L'ordre et la communion dans l'Église*

Nous croyons que le chef suprême de l'Église, et son seul chef, est le Seigneur Jésus-Christ; que le culte, l'enseignement, la discipline et le gouvernement de l'Église devraient être administrés selon la volonté du Christ par des personnes choisies pour leur aptitude à ce faire et dûment mises à part afin d'exercer leurs fonctions. Nous croyons également que, malgré la présence de membres indignes dans l'Église visible et malgré le fait que l'Église puisse se tromper, les croyants et croyantes ne devraient pas se séparer de sa communion à la légère, mais devraient vivre en union avec leurs frères et soeurs, laquelle union doit inclure, selon que Dieu en donne l'occasion, toute personne, où qu'elle se trouve, qui invoque le nom du Seigneur Jésus.

2.19 Article XIX. La résurrection, le Jugement dernier et la vie à venir

Nous croyons qu'il y aura une résurrection des morts, à la fois des justes et des injustes, par la puissance du Fils de Dieu qui viendra pour juger les vivants et les morts; que les personnes qui seront finalement impénitentes iront à la punition éternelle tandis que les justes iront à la vie éternelle.

2.20 Article XX. *Le service chrétien et le triomphe final*

Nous croyons qu'il est de notre devoir, comme disciples et serviteurs du Christ, de favoriser l'accroissement de son Royaume, de faire le bien envers tous les humains, de maintenir un culte public et privé à Dieu, de sanctifier le jour du Seigneur, de préserver l'inviolabilité du mariage et le caractère sacré de la famille, de soutenir la juste autorité de l'État et de vivre en toute honnêteté, pureté et charité de telle manière que nos vies témoignent du Christ. Nous recevons joyeusement la parole du Christ ordonnant à son peuple d'aller dans le monde entier et de faire des disciples de toutes les nations, en leur déclarant que Dieu était en Christ, réconciliant le monde avec Lui-même et qu'Il désire que tous les humains soient sauvés et parviennent à la connaissance de la vérité. Nous croyons fermement que, par sa puissance et par sa grâce, tous ses ennemis seront finalement vaincus et que les royaumes de ce monde deviendront le Royaume de notre Dieu et de son Christ.

Déclaration de foi (1940)

[La doctrine de l'Église Unie a été formulée dans les Principes d'union - la «constitution» de l'Église - et a été développée dans une Déclaration de foi publiée par l'Église en 1940.]

Préambule

Cette Déclaration a pour but de présenter brièvement et simplement l'essentiel de la foi de l'Église.

Elle ne répond pas à toutes les questions qu'une personne croyante pourrait raisonnablement se poser sur Dieu, l'humanité et le salut. Mais nous croyons avoir inclus ce qui est essentiel à la vie de l'Église. Si nous l'avions fait dans un but apologétique, nous aurions dû nous servir davantage du langage de la science moderne et de la philosophie. Mais puisque notre propos est celui d'affirmer notre foi, nous avons plutôt adopté dans la mesure du possible le langage de l'Écriture, un langage qui s'apparente au souverain sujet dont nous traitons, l'oeuvre de jugement et de miséricorde de Dieu.

L'Église croit en l'Évangile immuable du saint amour de Dieu qui nous sauve, tel que révélé en Jésus-Christ. Cet Évangile est proclamé dans l'Écriture ; les deux confessions de foi de l'Église universelle ainsi que les confessions de foi des Églises réformées en témoignent ; et il est formulé dans un but spécifique que dans nos Principes d'union. Cependant, les chrétiens et chrétiennes de chaque nouvelle génération sont appelés à le formuler à nouveau dans les termes qui traduisent la pensée de leur époque et qui mettent l'accent là où il est nécessaire de le faire. Nous avons tenté de faire cet exercice pour les membres de l'Église Unie du Canada - en cherchant à demeurer fidèles à l'Écriture et au témoignage de l'Église universelle, et en restant conscients qu'aucune de nos déclarations ne peut exprimer la véritable réalité de Dieu.

I. Dieu

Nous croyons en Dieu, Esprit personnel et éternel, qui crée et maintient toutes choses.

Nous croyons que Dieu, tel un souverain Seigneur au-dessus du monde, fait et défait toutes choses à des fins saintes, sages et bienfaitantes.

Nous croyons que Dieu a créé les humains pour l'aimer et le servir ; Dieu prend soin d'eux comme un Père juste et compatissant ; et rien ne peut éteindre son amour ou faire échouer définitivement son dessein bienveillant pour eux.

Nous reconnaissons donc Dieu comme Créateur, Soutien, et Souverain Seigneur de toutes choses, et comme Père juste et aimant des humains.

II. Jésus-Christ

Nous croyons en Jésus-Christ, le Fils du Père, qui s'est fait homme et est demeuré parmi nous, pour nous et pour notre salut.

Nous croyons qu'il a parfaitement vécu sa vie humaine, totalement fidèle à la volonté de Dieu et voué au service des humains.

Nous croyons qu'en lui Dieu rencontre les humains face à face ; afin que ces derniers sachent que Dieu les aime, cherche leur bien, porte leurs souffrances et leur péché, et qu'il exige leur foi exclusive et leur parfaite obéissance. Échange sur notre foi L'Église Unie du Canada Annexes
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Nous croyons qu'en Jésus-Christ Dieu a agi pour sauver les humains, prenant, à un prix infini, leur péché sur lui; nous croyons que la croix révèle en même temps l'aversion de Dieu pour le péché et son amour dans toute sa plénitude, profondeur et puissance ; nous croyons que la croix demeure pour tous les temps le moyen efficace de réconcilier le monde à Dieu.

Nous croyons que Jésus a été élevé, victorieux, au-dessus de la mort et déclaré Fils de Dieu avec puissance; nous croyons qu'il vit pour toujours, notre Sauveur et Seigneur.

Nous reconnaissons donc Jésus-Christ comme le Fils incarné de Dieu, le Sauveur du monde.

III. Le Saint-Esprit

Nous croyons au Saint-Esprit par qui Dieu est toujours à l'oeuvre dans l'esprit et dans le coeur des humains, inspirant tous leurs justes désirs et tous leurs efforts de vérité et de beauté.

Nous croyons que l'Esprit de Dieu amène les humains à reconnaître leurs péchés et accepter le pardon et la grâce de Dieu.

Nous croyons que l'Esprit était présent dans toute sa puissance dès les débuts de l'Église, rendant les disciples capables de témoigner de ce qu'ils avaient vu et entendu, suscitant en eux l'amour de leur prochain, les remplissant d'espérance pour le Royaume à venir, et leur gardant le sens de la présence continue du Christ parmi eux.

Nous croyons que ce même Esprit guide et habilite continuellement l'Église, fortifie ses membres contre la tentation, la peur et le doute, et augmente en eux la foi et la sainteté vers le salut.

Nous reconnaissons donc le Saint-Esprit comme Seigneur et Dispensateur de vie, par qui l'amour créatif et salvateur de Dieu est toujours à l'oeuvre parmi les humains.

IV. La Sainte Trinité

Connaissant ainsi Dieu comme Créateur et Père, comme Sauveur en Christ, et comme Esprit saint travaillant en nous, nous confessons notre foi en la Sainte Trinité.

Nous reconnaissons donc et adorons un Dieu, Père, Fils et Saint-Esprit.

V. L'humanité et Son Pêché

Nous croyons que Dieu a pourvu les humains, contrairement aux autres créatures, de l'aptitude à partager leurs pensées et leurs intentions, ainsi que de la liberté de choisir de le servir ou non.

Nous croyons que les humains ont utilisé cette liberté à des fins basses et égoïstes, s'éloignant ainsi de Dieu et de leurs frères et soeurs, et appelant sur eux le jugement et la colère de Dieu, de sorte qu'ils vivent dans un monde de confusion et de détresse et sont incapables par eux-mêmes de réaliser le noble dessein de Dieu pour eux.

Nous reconnaissons donc le péché des humains, le jugement juste de Dieu, ainsi que la vulnérabilité et la dépendance des humains.

VI. Le Salut

Nous croyons que dans son amour infini pour l'humanité, Dieu a ouvert en Christ une voie de délivrance du pouvoir du péché et de la culpabilité qu'il entraîne.

Nous croyons que le Christ, en vivant notre vie sans péché, en mourant aux mains des pécheurs dans une foi inébranlable et un amour indéfectible, a fait pour les humains ce que ces derniers ne pouvaient faire pour eux-mêmes. Sur la Croix, il a porté le poids du péché, il a brisé son pouvoir ; et ce qu'il a accompli ainsi amène les humains à se repentir, annonce le pardon, restaure les liens et établit une loyauté nouvelle entre les humains et lui.

Nous croyons que par sa résurrection et son exaltation, le Christ est victorieux de la mort et de tout mal, et qu'il comble ceux et celles qui s'engagent envers lui d'une grâce et d'une force telles qu'en lui ils sont également vainqueurs. Le salut qu'il a assuré pour l'humanité est à la fois un grand mystère et un fait glorieux ; à nos yeux, il est l'oeuvre merveilleuse du Seigneur.

Nous reconnaissons donc l'amour non mérité et la miséricorde de notre Dieu qui a donné son Fils unique afin que nous ne périssions pas mais que nous ayons la vie éternelle.

VII. L'église

Nous croyons que l'Église, l'assemblée de ceux et celles qui sont sauvés, est née de la volonté de Dieu, par l'oeuvre et le pouvoir du Christ ressuscité. En appelant les humains à entrer en

communion avec lui, il les appelle par conséquent à entrer en communion les uns avec les autres, en lui.

Nous croyons que l'Église est l'instrument de la pensée du Christ et de sa volonté de rédemption, le Corps dont il est la tête. Sous sa gouverne, l'Église est appelée à proclamer l'Évangile immuable et son offre de salut, à rendre un culte à Dieu, Créateur et Sauveur, à servir l'humanité avec amour, ainsi qu'à veiller sur ses membres et à nourrir leur foi.

Nous croyons que tous les membres de l'Église sont un en Christ, et que la vie de l'Église de toutes les époques est en continuité avec celle de la première assemblée apostolique. Les groupes communément appelés 'églises' sont appelés à se joindre à la vie de l'Église tout entière, de tous les temps et de tous les pays, en partageant librement et pleinement son héritage de pensée, de prière et de discipline, et en vivant ensemble dans la confiance mutuelle.

Nous croyons que Dieu a donné à l'Église le ministère, les Écritures et les sacrements pour qu'elle accomplisse sa mission dans le monde.

Nous reconnaissons donc une Église sainte, catholique et apostolique, Corps du Christ et famille de Dieu.

VIII. Le Ministère

Nous croyons que Dieu a créé le ministère de l'Église pour proclamer la Parole, administrer les sacrements et dispenser les soins pastoraux à ses membres.

Nous croyons que l'Église détient l'autorité d'ordonner au ministère, par la prière et l'imposition des mains, les personnes qu'elle juge, après une juste évaluation, appelées par Dieu à cette vocation.

Nous croyons que, pour le bon ordre de sa vie comme société, Dieu a voulu que son Église soit dirigée, sous la gouverne du Christ à sa tête, par des ministres et des représentants de ses membres.

Nous reconnaissons donc le saint ministère voulu par Dieu pour la diffusion de l'Évangile et l'édification de son Église.

IX. Les Saintes Écritures

Nous croyons que les moments importants de la révélation de Dieu à l'humanité sont inscrits et interprétés dans les Écritures de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament.

Nous croyons que, même si Dieu a transmis sa Parole aux humains en plusieurs étapes progressives, l'ensemble des Écritures est suffisante pour rendre compte de son intention et de sa volonté pour notre salut. Il s'est fait connaître à Israël comme un Dieu Saint et Juste, et comme un Sauveur ; et sa vérité et sa grâce en plénitude ont été réalisées en Jésus-Christ. Les Écritures ont été rassemblées et préservées par l'Église.

Nous croyons que le thème de toutes les Saintes Écritures est l'intention de salut et l'oeuvre de Dieu, et que c'est en ce thème qu'elles trouvent leur unité.

Nous croyons que Dieu nous demande une allégeance absolue d'esprit et de coeur dans les Saintes Écritures; que la pleine conviction de la vérité et de l'autorité de la Parole de Dieu contenue dans les Écritures relève de l'oeuvre du Saint-Esprit dans nos coeurs ; que l'Esprit nous fait comprendre l'oeuvre du Christ dont parlent les Saintes Écritures pour nous nourrir spirituellement et nous faire grandir dans la grâce.

Nous reconnaissons donc que les Saintes Écritures témoignent vraiment de la Parole de Dieu et constituent le guide sûr de la foi et de la vie chrétiennes.

X. Les Sacrements

Nous croyons que les sacrements du Baptême et du Repas du Seigneur sont des moyens efficaces par lesquels, en des gestes simples et des éléments ordinaires, l'amour de Dieu qui sauve est manifesté et communiqué à son peuple qui les reçoit dans la foi.

Nous croyons que par le Baptême les humains deviennent membres de l'assemblée chrétienne. L'eau versée au nom du Père, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit est signe que Dieu les purifie du péché et symbolise leur participation initiale aux dons et aux grâces de la vie nouvelle. Les enfants de parents croyants sont baptisés et accompagnés dans la famille de Dieu, afin qu'en temps voulu ils endossent Christ eux-mêmes.

Nous croyons que le Repas du Seigneur perpétue la communion scellée entre Christ et ses disciples dans la chambre haute, que le Seigneur est toujours présent à sa Table, et que son peuple est ainsi nourri, confirmé et renouvelé. Le don et la réception du pain et du vin, accompagnés des paroles mêmes du Christ, sont le signe du don de sa vie en tant que Seigneur souffrant et vivant, de sorte que les membres de son peuple fidèles vivent en lui et lui en eux.

Nous reconnaissons donc dans le Baptême le moyen de grâce donné par Dieu comme entrée dans la fraternité chrétienne ; de même que nous reconnaissons dans le Repas du Seigneur le moyen donné par Dieu comme façon de maintenir la communion dans la santé et dans la force, et comme l'acte de dévotion par lequel l'âme tout entière de la personne va vers Dieu et la grâce de Dieu lui vient librement.

XI. La Vie et La Responsabilité Chrétiennes

Nous croyons que la vie chrétienne est la vie vécue en communion avec Christ et son Église. Elle commence dans le repentir et la foi. En se repentant, les humains se détournent du péché pour servir, avec une nouvelle et joyeuse obéissance, le Dieu saint qui pardonne. Dans la foi, ils se confient au Christ et font reposer sur lui seul leur salut.

Nous croyons qu'à travers l'enseignement et l'exemple de Jésus, le Saint-Esprit montre aux humains la voie et le but de la vie chrétienne, ce que signifie aimer Dieu de tout son coeur, de toute son âme, de tout son esprit et de toute sa force, ainsi que d'aimer son prochain comme soi-même.

Échange sur notre foi L'Église Unie du Canada Annexes 16

Nous croyons que les chrétiens et chrétiennes sont appelés à demeurer dans la communion de l'Église, d'y maintenir la paix et l'unité, de s'adonner avec ferveur à la prière et à la lecture des Écritures, de rendre collectivement un culte à Dieu et recevoir ensemble les sacrements. Nous croyons qu'ils sont également appelés à vivre comme ceux et celles qui appartiennent au Royaume de Dieu, et à rechercher sa justice autant dans leur vie personnelle que dans leur vie sociale, en servant leur prochain par amour au nom du Christ, dans l'attente et l'effort de parvenir, dans la prière, à une vie commune ordonnée où la volonté de Dieu pour le bien-être et la paix des humains sera devenue une réalité sur toute la terre.

Nous croyons qu'en renonçant à eux-mêmes et en suivant le Christ, les humains deviennent de plus en plus capables par l'Esprit de Dieu de mourir au péché et de vivre dans la vertu ; qu'ils sont, soumis à leur Père fi dèle, dans le travail, dans l'amour, dans la responsabilité, dans la souffrance, dans la peine et dans l'échec, transformés en un être intérieur à l'image du Christ crucifié et victorieux ; et qu'ils ont dans cette vie un avant-goût du salut final, l'assurance de la faveur divine, la paix et la joie, et la confiance que le Christ peut les soutenir jusqu'à la fin.

Nous reconnaissons donc la vie chrétienne comme étant la vie vécue dans la famille de Dieu, avec ses bénédictions et ses privilèges, ses responsabilités et sa discipline, une vie dans laquelle le chrétien, la chrétienne, peuvent croître dans Christ en toutes choses.

XII. Le Couronnement

Nous croyons que la résurrection et l'exaltation du Christ, après sa mort sur la croix, nous donne l'assurance que la longue lutte entre le péché et la grâce connaîtra une fin, le Royaume sera révélé en plénitude, et le dessein éternel de Dieu sera accompli.

Nous croyons que Dieu jugera tous les humains par l'entremise de Jésus-Christ, le Fils de l'homme.

Nous croyons que, si le salut est offert à toute personne, Dieu ne retire ni n'outrepasse la liberté qu'il a accordée aux humains. S'ils refusent obstinément sa miséricorde et préfèrent la vie dans le péché, ils se coupent de la lumière et de la joie du salut et tombent sous le coup de la justice de Dieu.

Nous croyons que ceux et celles qui acceptent l'offre de salut et persévèrent dans la voie de la vie chrétienne entrent après la mort dans la joie de leur Seigneur, une félicité que nous ne pouvons concevoir. Ils voient Dieu face à face et, par la communion des saints, participent au travail et aux prières de l'Église sur terre.

Nous reconnaissons donc le juste et miséricordieux jugement de Dieu et nous attendons l'avènement du Royaume qui n'aura pas de fin.

“Nous connaissons Celui en qui nous croyons, et nous sommes persuadés qu'il est digne de la confiance que nous lui faisons.”

“Au seul Dieu sage, notre Sauveur, soient la gloire et la majesté, le règne et la puissance, aujourd'hui et pour toujours.”

EMERGING SPIRIT (Commons)

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
From Keith Howard, Executive Director

Executive Summary

Emerging Spirit grew out of a motion passed by the Executive of the General Council at its April 2005 meeting. At that meeting, authorization was given for the research and development of a proposal for an initiative that would:

1. Raise awareness and recognition of the values and beliefs of The United Church of Canada among 30-45 year olds
2. Create a willingness among non-church-goers to discover a United Church congregation
3. Renew a sense of positive identity and enthusiasm for mission among United Church congregations
4. Equip United Church congregations for ministry in the new Canadian context.

This report contains the results of the year-long process of research and development.

The initial research, encompassing six different strands, indicates some powerful realities.

1. There exists significant interest among those Canadians between the ages of 30 and 45 years of age, not currently associated with another faith group, in establishing some relationship with a church like The United Church of Canada. Some researchers place the number of those interested as high as 77 percent.
2. The perception of organized religion is that its followers are judgmental, arrogant, and unwilling to listen. Response to The United Church of Canada is virtually indistinguishable from the larger category.
3. There are deep rooted congregational cultures highly resistant to change; and
4. There are leaders who do not feel equipped or supported in their efforts to lead change.

The **recommendation** is to proceed with an initiative to reach out to those Canadians between the ages of 30 and 45 years of age, not currently associated with another faith group, and that the initiative proceed with profound awareness of the significant communication challenge posed by certain fundamental attitudes towards organized religion.

In-depth investigation of the media use patterns of this demographic, combined with sensitivities engendered by other research and good stewardship, leads to the **recommendation** that the prime media vehicles used in the reach out initiative include magazines, direct to home mailing, and viral video spots and that a unique web site be developed which models key aspects of The United Church of Canada and provides access to information about United Church congregations.

Extensive conversations with people representing different positions and levels of the church engenders the **recommendation** that Emerging Spirit conduct a significant number of regional training events in an effort to engage as many congregations and regions as possible throughout the country during the next three years.

Persistent concerns about the challenges faced by congregational leaders prompt the **recommendation** that Emerging Spirit, in consultation with other units of the church, continue to develop an effective response in the area of leadership development for emerging leaders within the church.

Emerging Spirit Report

There is cause for hope.

Theologically we believe this to be true because the God known through Easter and Pentecost is on the loose creating and re-creating. The discernment, including sociological and demographic research conducted by Emerging Spirit, confirms that the time is right for a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as provided by The United Church of Canada. And, across the church, the preparation and exploration of Emerging Spirit has been greeted with encouragement, helpful, and well-meaning critique combined with holy impatience.

A year of intensive research and development under girds this proposal. We on the Emerging Spirit team are grateful for the opportunity presented to us by the Executive of the General Council to develop this initiative. Among the many deserving of thanks are the members of the Senior Leadership Team, six regional teams who offered support and guidance, and the 26 congregations across the country who tested interest in the project plus some preliminary drafts of educational material. Thanks also must be given for the fine work offered by those firms with which we have specialized contract relationships: Environics Research Group; Terra Nova Market Strategies, Environics Analytics, and Smith & Roberts Advertising Design.

In reviewing this proposal two cautions need to be highlighted.

1. The language of market research and advertising companies assumes the desire and the ability to influence and sell. Upon initial announcement that Emerging Spirit was in development, many began to fear that the gospel and the church would be diminished in an effort to make it more saleable. The image with which many struggled was that of the church becoming akin to a shady used-car salesperson.

The premise of this proposal is that, as a church, we are neither interested in selling the gospel nor the church. **We are interested in developing a relationship** with those Canadians between the ages of 30 and 45 who do not currently have a relationship with a faith group.

2. Emerging Spirit has conducted extensive research. Rachael Smith, Senior Media Strategist at Smith Roberts + Co., has 22 years of experience in planning media for companies like Pepsi-Cola, Proctor and Gamble, and Unilever. She comments that she has never worked with a client that has done as much research as The United Church of Canada.

However, it must be noted that **research results merely constitute the first step in a conversation**. The research was conducted in order to gauge interest and feasibility and to give a clearer picture of those with whom we seek a deeper relationship. There is no assumption or presumption that the church should move simply to “meet the needs” expressed by those between the ages of 30 and 45. If anything, the research has revealed the opposite. What is important and desired is that the church enters into conversation and relationship with something to say that has integrity and authenticity. There is no implication that the church should simply become a spiritual service provider. The call and the relationship are much more nuanced.

The Proposal

This proposal:

- I. Summarizes key research findings (**The Research**);
- II. Offers a framework for the Media Plan (**Reaching Out Through the Media**);
- III. Outlines a series of Regional Training Events to enhance the ability of congregations to express a ministry of welcoming (**Living the Welcome**); and
- IV. Identifies leadership as a significant strategic challenge with respect to welcoming ministries and proposes an initiative in response (**Leadership Support**).

I. The Research

Six major levels of research have been completed.

1. Environics Research Group – two waves; quantitative statistical analysis
2. TerraNova Market Strategies – qualitative analysis
3. Emerging Spirit Questionnaires – anecdotal; relationship building
4. Impact Teams – leadership; proximity based with 26 “lead” congregations
5. Environics Analytics – lifestyle and values focused
6. One-on-one interviews

The Questions

The basic questions to which we sought answers include:

- What degree of interest exists among those between the ages of 30 and 45 years of age in a relationship with The United Church of Canada?
- Which dimensions of the church provoke interest?
- What stands in the way of a great relationship between those between the ages of 30 and 45 and The United Church of Canada?
- What is the best media for the church to use to reach out to them?

Environics Research Group

There is an audience for The United Church of Canada's message.

Emerging Spirit worked with the prominent Canadian firm Environics Research Group to assess whether there exists any interest among the proposed age group in being involved with a church like The United Church of Canada and, if so, which attributes seem most appealing.

Values and Beliefs

Environics found that by far the most important things to those between the ages of 30 and 45 who do not go to church are their children (74%) and family (71%), followed by their friends (34%), their job (27%), and financial situation (27%). Among those in the designated population, 24% said that faith and spiritual beliefs were very important to them.

Sixty-four percent of those in this age group (who, remember, do not go to church) claimed some religious affiliation. (See Reginald W. Bibby, *Restless Churches: How Canada's Churches Can Contribute to the Emerging Religious Renaissance*, Novalis/Wood Lake Press, 2004 for a discussion that complements the Environics findings.)

Environics found that people in this demographic do not identify worship styles or time constraints as the *prime* barriers to joining a faith community. More than anything, it is the attitudes they presume they will find at church that deters them from involvement.

Seventy-three percent of those in the focus population think that “organized religion tells you what you have to believe” and say that they would rather work out these beliefs by themselves or with those close to them. Sixty-two percent believe that “organized religion makes things too black and white,” and a majority (59%) say they believe in God, “but not in the traditional way.” In fact, 59% would also say that “if Jesus were alive today, he would not be associated with an organized religion.” About half of those surveyed (51%) believe that the music, images, and practices they associate with church “are totally alien to my life and style.”

Less than half of the chosen population believe they have nothing to gain by participating in church life (45%), that church leaders lack credibility (44%), and that they are too busy to get themselves and their families to church (36%).

Major Themes and Communication Opportunities

Environics sorted the attributes which have the greatest appeal and which represent the maximum opportunity into three major themes: “achieving personal faith,” “connecting and reaching out,” and “questing and embracing.”

Achieving Personal Faith

- builds deep personal relationships
- offers the possibility of personal transformation
- engages both emotion and the intellect
- offers new ways of looking at faith

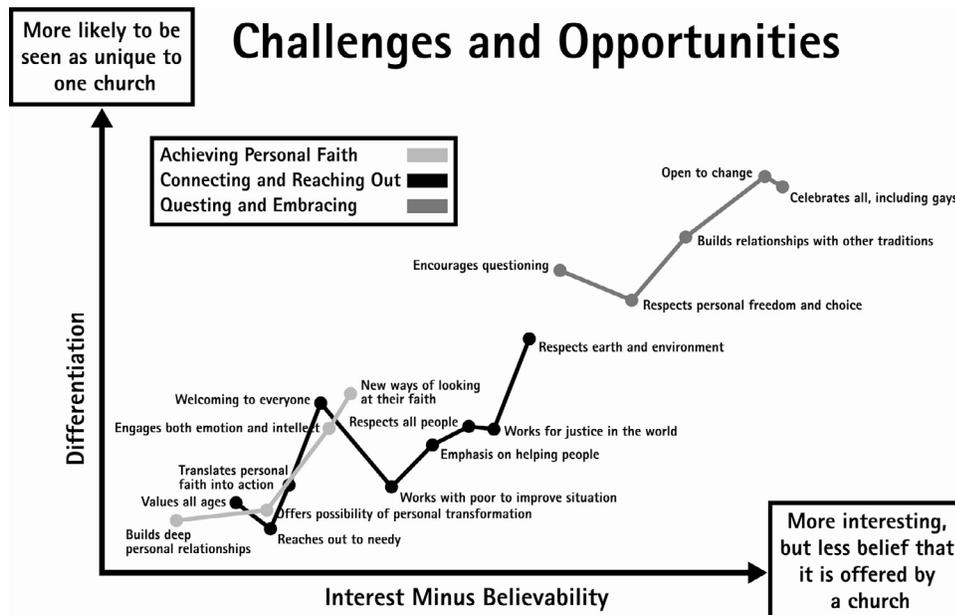
Connecting and Reaching Out

- values all ages
- reaches out to the needy
- translates personal faith into action
- is welcoming to everyone
- works with the poor to improve their situation
- emphasizes helping people
- respects all people
- works for justice in the world
- respects the earth and the environment

Questing and Embracing

- encourages questioning
- respects personal freedom and choice
- builds relationships with other traditions
- is open to change
- celebrates all, including gays and lesbians

To determine the strongest marketing opportunities for The United Church of Canada, Environics measured each of these 18 attributes for its level of interest among people in the focus population, whether or not they believed that such a characteristic could be found in a church (believability), or that the attribute would be unique to a specific church (uniqueness).



Environics concluded that, while people expect churches to have the attributes found within the themes of achieving personal faith and connecting and reaching out, the theme of questing and

embracing represents the best opportunity for The United Church of Canada to distinguish itself from other faith communities. This theme connects with the chosen population's greatest area of interest yet they do not believe these attributes can be found in a church. This combination makes the attributes of this theme the most feasible points of distinction for The United Church of Canada.

Segments of the Focus Population

Environics distinguished three different segments of the focus population (30- to 45-year olds who do not go to church): the Potentials, the Traditionalists, and the Cynics.

The Potentials make up 77% of the chosen population and hold the greatest possibility of building relationships with The United Church of Canada.

Who Are the Potentials? *The Possibilities are Significant*

The Potentials group is made up of slightly more women than men, three-quarters are married and the majority have children. They are slightly more likely to have graduated from a community college than a university. The geographic distribution of those in the Potentials segment is generally representative of the Canadian population as a whole, with four in 10 living in Ontario and three in 10 living in Quebec. Most are Anglophones. One in 10 Potentials claim some affiliation with The United Church of Canada.

The values of the Potentials show that they:

- are postmodern and so more open than others to complexity and ambiguity
- are open to new definitions of family
- place a high value on equality of the sexes
- are early adopters of new technologies
- put happiness before duty
- seek personal autonomy
- are creative and spontaneous
- have an interest in the mysterious

The Potentials also are:

- less likely to see the importance of organized religion
- not active in the community
- concerned about their financial futures

Potentials would be most interested in the message of a church that:

- reaches out to those in need and works for justice in the world
- is welcoming to everyone
- builds relationships between people of different faiths
- is open to questioning, debate, and change
- respects the earth and the environment

Like other Canadians in their age group who do not go to church, Potentials do not see worship style or time as prime barriers to becoming involved in a faith community. Rather, they are most concerned that at church things would be made "too black and white," and that they will be told

what to believe. Most believe in God, but “not in the traditional way,” and think that if Jesus were alive today he would not be associated with organized religion.

The Potentials prefer the complexity and ambiguity associated with a postmodern worldview and would be interested in a church that is provocative in challenging both their intellect and their emotion and provides a stimulating place they can explore the “big questions” of life and faith together with others.

The challenge—and opportunity—for The United Church of Canada is that **most Potentials do not believe a church with these attributes exists**. However, Environics discovered that if Potentials did know about such a church they would be interested in visiting or attending it.

This Environics survey shows that, contrary to what is commonly thought, interest among many adults for a church with the attributes that The United Church of Canada possesses remains strong. Reaching the 30- to 45-year-old age group with a message about the church that is strong enough to overcome the apprehensions that many in this demographic have about organized religion will be a challenge, but certainly worth the effort.

TerraNova Discovery Workshop

Seeing life and faith through a different lens

TerraNova Discovery Workshops are community-based gatherings that bring together 18-30 participants for an active three-hour working session. They are based on collaboration rather than evaluation, and are designed to provide a comfortable environment for naturally sharing thoughts and experiences and for creatively exploring issues and new avenues of opportunity.

Unlike a traditional marketing focus group, there are no one-way observation mirrors; clients are active observer-participants in the session.

Participants were led through a series of questions, exercises, and discussions to determine what they thought about spirituality, religion, and The United Church of Canada.

Life Today

When asked what is important in life, lessons learned, celebrations, and regrets the responses revealed the following attitudes, values, and perspectives.

- Life is complex, often stressful.
- You have to be pragmatic - “That’s the way it is, you have to deal with it ...”
- Personal connections provide the primary source of contentment.
- Improve yourself always.
- Make the most of life, enjoy and celebrate it.

Faith, Spirituality, and God

Those who attend The United Church of Canada connect the words “faith,” “spirituality,” and “God.” Those who do not attend church give these same words distinct and often different meanings. These beliefs emerge:

- Spirituality is rooted in a sense of connection.
- Contemplation and introspection are key factors in spirituality.
- For some, “faith” means having faith in themselves; for others, “faith” represents a test; some think of faith as a highly personal feeling.
- God as a mystery is both appealing and perplexing.
- To church-goers, God has been humanized, while to others God remains a much more abstract concept.

Religion and Going to Church

Discussion about why or why not people might attend church yielded a number of insights.

Going to church has overtones of duty

If they do not attend, there is an uncomfortable feeling of guilt which is very hard to ignore. Lapsed or infrequent attendees cite this as a key reason they find it difficult to return. “Going back again” carries feelings of a student facing a teacher’s reprimand for truancy. One woman said she feared it would be like calling your mother when you hadn’t for a while. You would spend the first 10 minutes being told off before you could actually begin your conversation!

Going to church is a serious pursuit

To most people, church cannot or should not be taken lightly. Missing church is difficult for people to talk about. Some already have a lot of guilt and anxiety about time, schedules, and commitment and adding church attendance to the list of responsibilities that may not be fulfilled well is seen as bringing more stress to an already complicated life. Participation in church life is not viewed as a casual drop-in activity.

Easy excuses!

While participants easily list “reasons” not to go to church they openly acknowledge most are actually excuses.

The question of church attendance makes people defensive

The fact that people feel the need to defend themselves underlines the implication of personal deficiency that church attendance inevitably raises.

When pressed slightly, respondents identify some of the deeper attitudes and perceptions that contribute to their reluctance about organized religion:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - lack of interest | - too controlling |
| - “money grabbing” church | - shy |
| - feel unaccepted | - do not feel I belong |
| - judgmental | - do not like the people there |
| - not single friendly | - not child friendly |
| - children will misbehave | - intolerance |

The church is considered judgmental

In the minds of non-attendees, even asking the question about why they do not attend church can be experienced as judgmental. The perception remains that organized religions teaches that the faithful will be rewarded and the unfaithful damned.

Intimidation/not belonging is a key obstacle

Even for those who are not defensive about church attendance a psychological barrier remains. They worry they won't fit in. The fear of being judged, not by God but by the "regulars," emerged as a big issue for people. The United Church of Canada regulars did not really relate to the reasoning and concerns of the other participants and in some cases were quite dismissive, inadvertently proving the validity of these concerns.

In many ways, people feel they have to prove they are serious about attending before they are welcomed. Initial exposure to church services often provokes a feeling that cliques exist within the church.

The physical space and style of service are daunting to many

Participants comment that churches are usually built to inspire and humble and that the service itself reinforces a feeling of superiority and judgment. As one participant put it, "Churches can be intimidating, they are built to be that way. You're down here, they're up there."

For many, the style of the minister can go a long way to either reinforce or remove these anxieties. A friendly and conversational tone makes all the difference for some people and sends a strong message about the style of the church.

Religion has a "telling" and "controlling" culture

Most feel religion focuses upon telling people how their beliefs, morals and lifestyles can be corrected—it's a one-way and one-sided delivery of a message. There is no room for dialogue, conversation, or questioning. In this time when people are encouraged to express their views, no matter how different or controversial, the "telling" style rarely compels and usually alienates.

"My opinion should matter."

"I do not like feeling 'unworthy.'"

"I'm an adult now. I'm entitled to my own views."

When people speak about what they consider to be the judgmental characteristics of the church, they express this same frustration. "Why are they always right and I'm misguided?" Many of the reasons not to attend relate to the perception of the "controlling" nature of church.

Attendance at church has little to do with their own spirituality

In talking about organized religion and church attendance, **it was rarely the faith-based aspects of the experience that were criticized.** No one took issue with the central philosophies or objectives of those who are committed. Instead, **it was the politics, the posing, the intimidation of the building itself, the structure of the service, the cliques, the sense of being judged, the culture of "telling" and all the attendant "paraphernalia" and ritual that goes along with it that are off-putting.**

Positive themes are community-related; negatives are all to do with dogmatism

Positive words used of the church include caring, sharing, friendship, giving, support, and teaching children good values. Helping others was a consistent undercurrent. Participants felt the need to do this and acknowledged that the church can play a major role in it. Unfortunately, many church functions also carry “do-gooder” overtones.

Negative words include hell, sacrifice, confession, sin, commitment, offerings, holy, Jesus (when considered as judge). The negatives were all rooted in the fear and dislike of dogma and intimidating ritual. Interestingly, both God and Jesus were raised in the context of “bad” words, but only when thought of in the sense of judgment or cult connotations. Several participants mentioned TV evangelists and how “that’s all really terrifying!”

Church can be an important source of comfort

Apart from “default” occasions like weddings, funerals, Christmas and Easter, it is also clear that going to church can be a comfort in times of grief, loss, anxiety or personal sadness. In these cases, church offers something that goes beyond sympathy or the kind words of friends and family. One person described this as the “the time when you are closest to God”. This is an indication of the more profound and often unfulfilled needs of many people, especially in today’s tumultuous and stressful world. When something happens that causes trauma, it is often a “wake-up call.” People realize they have been ignoring or repressing some deeper needs. The sanctuary of the church and the sense of connecting to a greater force can be very compelling.

There is a need for inspirational leadership

Despite all the fears of dogma and entrapment, many voiced the need for spiritual leadership.

They wanted someone not to follow but to be inspired by—someone to challenge them. True leadership is rare in business, politics, or in life in general, and the lack of it leaves some people foundering. The manner in which this leadership is delivered, however, proves critical.

Perceptions of The United Church of Canada**1. The perception is vague, but positive**

The general perception was that The United Church of Canada was more open to new ideas, had fewer “rules,” was more liberal and more forgiving than other churches. It compares very favourably to the perceived strict rules and unpopular doctrine of other denominations. Some spoke about going to The United Church of Canada to be married when they did not meet the criteria demanded by other churches.

2. The United Church of Canada is flexible, willing to listen and open

The United Church of Canada is credited with being open to the ordination of women, to gay marriage, and other issues considered controversial. People believe there is a more relaxed atmosphere and fewer rules. The word “open” came up frequently, as in both “open door” and “open minded.” This key characteristic should not be undervalued. Openness suggests greater tolerance, wider arms, a broader and wiser perspective on life. The reverse is also considered true for other denominations: closed door, closed minded.

3. The United Church of Canada suffers from the general fear of organized religion

Despite its positive attributes, the very fact that it is organized religion and does involve actually going to a church building makes The United Church of Canada a tough sell. The researchers

report with emphasis: **The brand is compromised by the category! The United Church of Canada must establish its own unique positioning, promote its own values, and help people break damaging stereotypes of organized religion.**

In light of this research TerraNova Marketing Strategies offered the following recommendations:

Make it a “coming together” not a “come to us”

It is extremely important that people feel they have something The United Church of Canada would like to engage. Instead of “come and find out what we’re all about,” it should be “we want to know more about what you’re all about – your views, your challenges, your wisdom.” Parting words should be, “Thanks for coming! If you want to know more be in touch ...” not “hope to see you next week.”

Help people to see the bigger picture

The non-church-goers see life on a very immediate and personal level, and often feel stressed out and constrained by day-to-day demands. The United Church of Canada regulars are more philosophical about this. They accept the ups and downs more easily or they are driven to change the world.

Anchor initiatives in connection and sharing

Provide ways for people to connect with others, share thoughts and ideas, a forum where all opinions are welcome and there are no bad ideas.

Let God and the minister be the “guide on the side” not the “sage on the stage”

Recover the role of minister as mentor as opposed to the person in whose presence others are supposed to be humble and receptive. While God is clearly seen as powerful and important, the concept of getting closer to God would be more attractive if God is seen as a guide and mentor rather than primarily a judge.

Position The United Church of Canada as a facilitator, not an end in itself

The United Church of Canada should be the means to an end, the catalyst, the facilitator, the maker of introductions—in short, it should create the environment for more active participation not be the central reason for it.

Part of the challenge with this positioning is the temptation to focus on what The United Church of Canada “stands for.” Actually communicating this, no matter how honourable the intent, risks reinforcing negative attitudes. The philosophy of The United Church of Canada and its objectives should be apparent in the content and the delivery, not the “packaging.”

Communication which reflects the desire to hear the opinions of others and encourages a different kind of participation will say far more about the church than an announcement of its values and points of view.

Ask more questions, encourage collaboration rather than being the one with all the answers

While this may be a part of The United Church of Canada culture, it is not widely perceived to be a skill of religious people. In the marketing world, consumers have moved from being people you talk to, to people you listen to and, now, people you must work with. Inviting participation

and collaboration is a far better way to address issues, solve problems, and make people think differently.

Encourage people to express and explore their own spirituality

The word “spirituality” had the greatest resonance with these participants. Many spoke of being “spiritual but not religious.” Spirituality goes beyond church and beyond religion. It is more personal and signifies a connection, a “oneness” with the world beyond day-to-day life.

Make your space as friendly as possible

The word “open” needs to also apply to the physical surroundings. Friendly, comfortable places to chat, to relax, and to socialize will help people feel a sense of belonging. Also, the energy of children needs to be viewed as a positive factor.

Celebrate life itself and help people dream

The United Church of Canada can help people recognize and appreciate the joys of day to day life, the excitement of the journey, the pleasure of interaction with others, and the comfort of sharing both good and bad experiences.

When asked to provide guiding principles for the ideal church, participants were unanimous, using very enthusiastic, lively words: alive, motivated, uplifting, non-judgmental, relevant and inclusive.

Emerging Spirit Questionnaires

Emerging Spirit emphasizes communication. Asking questions and listening has been at the heart of our questionnaires.

Emerging Spirit launched its on-line questionnaire by asking the question “Where are the 30-45 year olds?” on the back cover of the October 2005 *Observer*. A second ad, asking “Will it be like sex?”, appeared in the November 2005 issue of the *Observer*.

The Audience and the Response

The Emerging Spirit questionnaire was developed with three different audiences with distinct perspectives in mind:

- Those already attending a United Church congregation who are not between the ages of 30-45.
- Those between the ages of 30-45 who already attend a United Church congregation.
- Those between the ages of 30-45 who are not part of any faith community.

A total of 298 individuals filled out the multi-question survey for their category. Those between the ages of 30 and 45 who already attend a United Church were the group with the highest number of responses, with 143.

The next largest number of responses was from those who attend a United Church congregation and who are not between the ages of 30 and 45 (they could be either older or younger than that age range). From this category 101 people offered their responses. The majority of these

respondents were older than 45 (the average age was 52), though several people younger than 30 also filled out the questionnaire.

As might be expected, the group with the fewest number of responses (54) were those between the ages of 30 and 45 who are not part of any faith community.

Initial Findings

The responses received are as wildly diverse as The United Church of Canada itself.

Families and career/finances two prime concerns

Respondents to the questionnaire across all three audience categories agree that the two most important concerns of 30-45 year olds are family (especially children and parents) and career/finances.

Welcoming aspects of a congregation

Those who attend The United Church of Canada, both those within the 30-45 age range and those outside of it, believe that the friendly greetings, nice people, good music, and the ministers of their congregations would be the welcoming aspects to newcomers. Those in the 30-45 age range add that the outreach/social justice work of their church would make it inviting. Those not in the 30-45 age range see vital Sunday school and youth programs as also important to welcoming people to their congregation.

Respondents who do not attend church hope to be welcomed by friendly people, “community,” and good music. They are also very concerned about being accepted for who they are. Among these respondents there is a strong concern about finding hypocrisy, intolerance, and “money-grubbing” in the church.

Will there be “room in the inn” for those 30-45

By a ratio of more than two to one respondents between the ages of 30-45 who already attend a United Church believe there is “space” in their congregation for the ideas and beliefs that newcomers in this demographic might bring. Yet, about half of the respondents who are outside of the 30-45 demographic raise concerns about the ability or willingness of their congregation to “adapt” if more 30 to 45 year olds start to attend in greater numbers.

Will the church change

Respondents outside the target demographic who attend The United Church of Canada believe the denomination should be attractive to those in the 30-45 age range because it is liberal, accepting of all, embraces social justice, and is able to offer the spiritual satisfaction they think people of all ages are seeking. This group also believes that more people between 30-45 will not be motivated to participate in religious life unless the church is open to adaptation and change and makes an intentional effort to become more diverse.

Those in the 30-45 age range who attend a United Church also wonder if the church is open to the level of change they think it will take to attract other 30-45 year olds. The question of flexibility around the time of services came up in many responses, with many thinking that people in this age range were too busy with work and family life to participate regularly during the traditional Sunday morning timeslot. The quality and availability of child care was

mentioned by many of the respondents as a major factor in whether or not people between 30-45 would attend in greater numbers.

Seek the presence of God

Respondents in this age range who attend church were more likely than others to say that people between the ages of 30-45 would be more motivated to participate in church if it were challenging spiritually. Many of the respondents mention that 30-45 year olds want to experience the “active, living presence of God” and find a place where they have access to spiritual mentoring. Some of these respondents felt that The United Church of Canada was not strong enough in this area.

The responses of 30-45 year olds who do not attend church were less consistent, but many answered that their attitude and motivation about attending church might change if they found a church that was open to all people and other religions, had a strong “community,” and was relevant, active, and orientated toward the practical, real issues of life. Many expressed strong concerns about hypocrisy and judgmentalism that they believe is found in organized religion.

Want to share faith

Many of the respondents who attend The United Church of Canada gave passionate, moving answers to the question of how they came to The United Church of Canada and what they wanted to share with others about their faith life. Many expressed that they have found great joy, hope, peace, and meaning through their faith and through The United Church of Canada. Roughly more than half of these people (both those within the 30-45 demographic and those outside of it) first came to The United Church of Canada because their family attended. Some of these respondents drifted away from the church during their teenage or college years, but returned after a death of a loved one or a marriage to a person who attends The United Church of Canada. Several said that they left other denominations and came to The United Church of Canada because it was a church that would accept them. These respondents want to share their faith with others, primarily through sharing their own stories and listening to the stories of others.

Observations

- A vast gap exists between those who attend The United Church of Canada (of whatever age) and those who do not attend. These two groups often do not speak the same language or see life in the same way.
- The perception of the church for those on the outside is negative. Hypocrisy and a tone of judgment are probably the biggest issues they identify with organized religion.
- A very big difference also exists between the responses from 30-45 year olds (both those who attend church and those who do not) and the respondents from The United Church of Canada who are outside of this age range. At times their answers are the exact opposites of each other (i.e. some 30-45 year olds are concerned that if they go to church they will be expected to serve on committees, teach Sunday school, etc. Some of those outside of this age group believe 30-45 year olds will find their congregation welcoming because there are lots of opportunities to “serve.”)
- Among those who attend church, there is a noticeable difference between what those within the age range of 30-45 want from church and what those outside of this age range want.

Many respondents from both categories have a perception that this difference is even greater than the collected responses would indicate.

- The concept of “balance,” especially the balance between work and family life, is very important to many 30-45 year olds who responded, whether they attend church or not. Many mentioned this as something with which they hoped the church could help.
- People of all ages look to the church to provide community and social groups, but they do not have the same expectations about what that would look like.

Emerging Spirit Impact Teams

Emerging Spirit Impact Teams were formed in Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver. Each Impact Team included seven to ten members who tested and developed welcoming resources, sought out and engaged “best practices” of welcoming, and extended the invitation of Emerging Spirit to congregations in their areas.

The Impact Teams spent time engaging in discernment and theological reflection. They brought experience and critique to the many aspects of welcoming ministry.

The collected wisdom of the Impact Team members includes the following thoughts.

Characteristics of Welcoming Congregations

- They respect diversity and affirm in the broadest sense of the word.
- They are open to choice and questioning
- They ask, listen, and invite.
- They offer acceptance.
- They provide a feeling of home.
- They offer the opportunity to do something meaningful.
- They provide multiple points of entry.
- They provide safe space for intimate conversation.
- They encourage laughter.
- They are open to learning new things.
- They are gracious.
- They offer tools to enter the “church culture.”
- They know “who they are” and present that identity as welcoming.
- They provide space for difference.

Beliefs about 30-45 Year Olds

- They are not aware of The United Church of Canada.
- There is a lot of cynicism or malaise among people in this demographic.
- They like to talk and to debate.
- If they come to church they may push for change.
- As those who live in a consumer society, they will move on if they do not like something.
- They come to church mainly for community and not spirituality.
- This very broad demographic contains a wide range of experiences and backgrounds, as well as the very diverse perspectives and expectations of first and second generation Canadians.
- They do not easily trust institutions.

- This demographic is finding ways to gather, to create their own communities, maybe the church needs to find ways to enter these conversational circles.
- Children and raising children is a very high priority for this demographic.

Beliefs about the Church

- What we model on Sunday is not the “18 attributes” the Environics study says we exhibit.
- The United Church of Canada stands against the oppressor.
- The church provides a safe and challenging place.
- The United Church of Canada accepts all.
- There is a lot of uncertainty—if people do come to our door, will we be able to change and will we also be able to challenge them to change?
- The church must remain relevant as it intersects with culture.
- Does the church care enough about 30-45 year olds to change?
- We need to be true to who we are as gospel people.
- We spend a lot of time spinning our wheels in the area of adult education.
- Welcoming will **present a significant challenge for people inside the church**
- The church will need to be prepared for a high level of conflict if it wants to pursue significant change.
- Expressions of faith are more than cultural trappings.
- The United Church of Canada is distinct and this is our strength.
- The image of The United Church of Canada is “loosy goosy”
- The United Church of Canada should not worry too much about competing with other churches, we need to be who we are and represent ourselves as such, we should not change who we are to meet the needs of the demographic.
- The United Church of Canada has gotten far away from using faith-based language
- We need to be very careful of what is a church’s perception and what is an actual reality.
- The language of the church and church people is foreign to those outside of it.
- There are some things that characterize The United Church of Canada and if people do not agree with them then they do not fit in.
- The United Church of Canada accepts a diversity and complexity of opinion

Welcoming Ministries

- We need to remember that it is God’s house to which people are being welcomed.
- We must allow people to be a part of genuine community.
- The strength of the program might be to lift up unique congregations.
- We need to beware of the dangers of buying into a consumer model of church. We must present an alternative model to a consumer culture.
- Use “real life” experiences and give examples of things to do and not to do that help people begin the conversation and to do some self-reflection.
- We really need to know that to which we are welcoming people. It’s good to get them in the door, but we also must prepare for them to come back or keep coming.
- It’s very important to identify the people within a congregation who are committed to or have the “calling” to “transmit” (share the faith) and “transform” (open others to new life).
- The congregational identity work needs to be on-going and well connected to the work of a welcoming ministry.

- Process is extremely important. There are many good resources already available, but not a lot that guide a congregation to helpful outcomes.
- Generations understand “welcoming” differently. It’s important to pay attention to this.
- Different cultures have different expectations and norms around “welcoming.”
- Are we encouraging the church to go after people or do we want people to get something out of the church?
- It’s very important to articulate some kind of a theological statement that guides and governs the program.
- Can we express our faith base without coming off like fundamentalists?
- Worship is an alternative act in itself, it doesn’t meet any of the values expected by the dominant culture.
- Postmodernism may offer the greatest opportunity for the church to preach the gospel than it has had in years.
- The focus in welcoming can not be on targeting but rather must be on “being the body of Christ” – authentic, genuine, and real.
- Theological and biblical resources need to be accessible by people with all levels of “exposure,” but they also need to disturb and challenge.

Environics Analytics

The church faces three distinct challenges in its use and purchase of media:

1. a limited advertising budget.
2. a product that will not be universally available (i.e. not all congregations will be welcoming those between the ages of 30 and 45 years); and
3. Our target market research outlines a demographic, Adults 30-45, that is not a traditional media measured demographic (i.e. Adults 25-54).

As a matter of stewardship we will:

- focus upon the “Potentials” group, as ascertained by Environics Research, and reach them in the media they are most likely to use; and
- match the media to the locations where “Emerging Spirit” churches are located.

Environics Analytics is a separate company within the Environics Group that specializes in demographic and geo-demographic modeling. Emerging Spirit contracted them to:

1. Determine the media that are most appealing to the group upon whom we are focusing.
2. Ascertain the times our selected audience are most receptive to receiving messages.
3. Determine the major areas of the country, defined by postal code, where our audience live.

This research enables specific media usage data and market usage data that can **directly** link our media selection with those who have expressed some interest in a relationship with The United Church of Canada.

The results of this work form the foundation of the Communications Strategy.

II. Reaching Out Through The Media Communications Strategy Summary

Smith Roberts + Co. refined the research data to paint an audience description far richer and deeper than the original broad description of *Adults 30-45 years old*.

General Profile

These people lead busy, interesting lives. While they believe in hard work, they are devoted to their families and make family time a priority. Like most Canadians, they feel varying degrees of stress as the pressures of daily life ebb and flow and they try to juggle their priorities.

They feel a sense of empowerment and believe that they have the power to make the key decisions that affect their lives. They tend to be involved in their communities and have a keen sense of being part of the larger (global) arena. They believe they can make a difference in the world (and in their own neighbourhoods). They are engaged in life – they do not sit around waiting for it to happen to them. Nor do they wish for things they cannot have. It is less about material possessions for these people and more about making the most of what you have. Although life gets to them sometimes, they are generally positive in their outlook – they try to see the bright side. They are open to exploration and learning new things, all to broaden their perspective and enrich the quality of their lives.

They are looking to understand what is going on around them in the world. They have faith and a sense of spirituality although it may not bubble on the surface. They are open to considering worshipping at a church that reflects their values and is relevant to them.

Those who have shown interest in a relationship with The United Church of Canada include: **Young couples** starting out in neighbourhoods that are a mix of very young and old households with singles and widowers, newly married couples and empty-nesting retirees. They are widely scattered throughout the country's older city and suburban neighbourhoods.

Single parents and young singles scattered across English Canada's towns and small cities. They often work at entry-level service jobs. In these low-rise apartment neighbourhoods, visitors find the streets jam-packed with active, young families as well as a few long-time, elderly maintainers. From soccer and football to basketball and curling, there's hardly a sport that isn't pursued at above-average rates in this group. Child-friendly to a fault, \$35,000 household incomes are stretched by thrift shops.

Young parents who work at skilled **blue-collar** jobs. These high school-educated Canadians have secured well-paying positions that allow them to pursue leisure-intensive lifestyles. For these residents of homes and row houses, relaxation means nothing more taxing than watching comedy videos, tuning in to TV sports, or playing video games. They have enough money in their jeans to travel but many of these wage earners are content to go only as far as the local pizza parlour or Chinese restaurant for a night out.

Younger, middle-class households with lots of children who live in the satellite suburbs of older towns and cities where the exurban housing is affordable. The educational levels are typically high school, trade school, or community college.

Young, upwardly mobile, multi-ethnic families who live in single-home and townhouse subdivisions where they have moved in the last five years. Some of these are among the highest-earning families who have expressed an interest in The United Church of Canada. They live an active, child-centered lifestyle.

The Francophone, Ethnic, First Nations and Rural Realities

After conversations with people and staff in Montreal-Ottawa Conference and Ministries in French it became clear that while much of the general thrust of the advertising will be applicable in their contexts, much remains to be done that requires particular sensitivities and a different order of implementation than in many other parts of the country. For example, in Montreal-Ottawa, it may well be that an intensive sequence of training events will occur before any advertising appears in French (although available in English), even though the concepts will be developed in harmony with other advertising.

Contexts of great ethnic diversity will also require a different approach. We have begun conversations and projects are in the formation stage. We anticipate being able to provide clear updates on these at the General Council meeting.

Conversations with First Nations elders and communities have yet to occur on a formal basis but we remain committed to those conversations.

Rural ministry encompasses many different scenarios including the traditional farm community, resource based situations, fishing villages and small towns on the edge of expanding urban centres. Some of the Impact Team and lead congregation members provided insight into ministry in these contexts. We will continue conversation about how Emerging Spirit can be most effective in a variety of settings.

The particular opportunities and challenges presented by each of these have contributed greatly to the selection of media forms outlined below.

The Challenges

The Audience is Large but Relatively Well Defined

From a demographic and psychographic point of view the information is rich but even those who declare interest are fragile with many negative attitudes toward “organized religion.”

Approached in the right way they are more than receptive but they do not want to be “sold.”

Any creative approach must reflect this and media choices must recognize this sensitivity and take into account the deep scepticism and fear of many people.

The Marketing Challenges

- How do we create effective communications that will attract the group’s attention without appearing too slick, too packaged, too evangelical?

- How do we encourage people without appearing to be recruiting them as if to join a cult or fill a labour shortage?
- How do we maximize the opportunities for those interested to be guided to Emerging Spirit-friendly churches in their area?

At the congregational level the task is huge and delicate

Wide variation exists in congregational ministries of welcoming. One clear message from the research is that welcoming needs to be handled carefully since it proves extremely easy to feed into people's perceptions and fears. Subtleties become significant.

Creating a truly welcoming environment is about respect, relevance, listening, and understanding, not only providing the right welcoming "etiquette" and the "correct" physical trappings of greeting.

Within the church these issues emerge

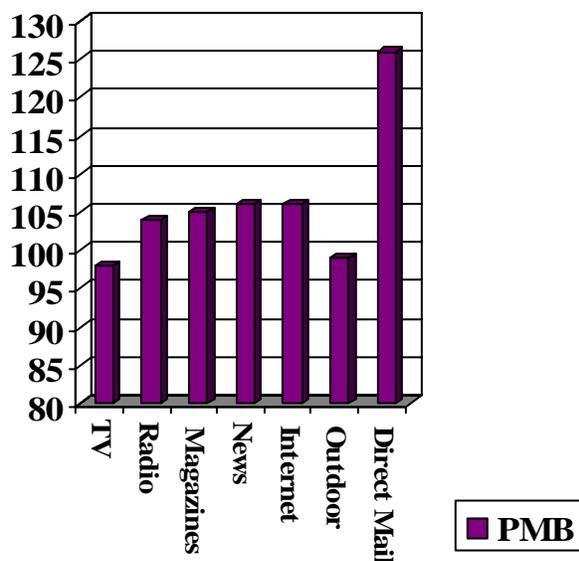
- How do we ensure that we have the maximum possible number of Emerging Spirit-friendly churches trained and ready to go (and in sync with where we know our target audience lives) while at the same time upholding expectations of quality for congregations to ensure that those who come are not disappointed?
- How do we ensure on an ongoing basis that Emerging Spirit churches remain true to their mandate?

The Media Mix

In determining which media vehicles offer the greatest potential we consulted industry sources.

The Print Measurement Bureau (PMB) – a major media analysis firm – indicates an average usage for all media with the exception of direct mail (direct-to-home). Given the extensive data provided by the Environics Research Group, direct-to-home becomes a significant strategic option.

Those who expressed some interest in being associated with a church like The United Church of Canada show high usage of radio and magazines.



Given the other research, strict usage numbers could not be the governing criteria. Intangibles like a sense of intimacy, control, and safety also surfaced as critically important. This led to an examination of and eventual focus upon magazines.

The magazines (full page ads in full colour) recommended include:

Parenting Publications

- Today’s Parent
- Canadian Family

Home & Garden Publications

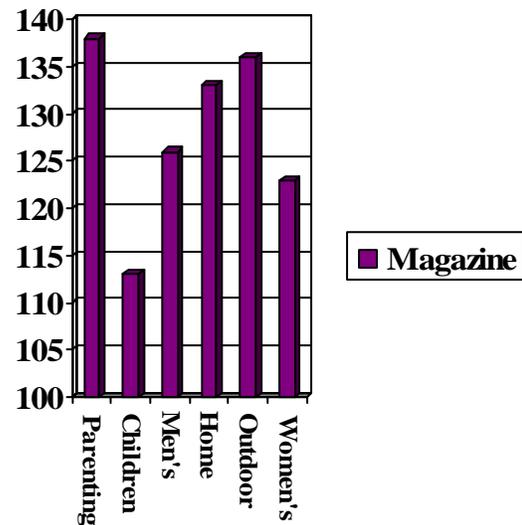
- Style at Home
- Canadian House & Home
- Harrowsmith/Country Life
- Canadian Home & Country
- Gardening Life

Outdoor Publications

- Outdoor Canada
- Canadian Geographic

Women’s Service & General Interest

- Reader’s Digest – Polybag insert to selected groups
- Reader’s Digest
- Canadian Living
- Chatelaine



Also important to Emerging Spirit and the church is the ability to speak with an edge, to raise, when appropriate, a voice critical of such things as consumer culture, and to challenge some of the dominant and simplistic responses to faith, life, and morality that masquerade as religion. This criteria led to the selection of the third major media vehicle – viral video spots.

Based upon the selected group’s bias towards communication, their propensity to use a particular media vehicle, cost constraints, and creative requirements:

The major outreach through the media will be through magazines, direct mail and (viral) video.

Other research also indicates that people between the ages of 30 and 45 feel very comfortable seeking further information and testing ideas and opinions through web sites. We propose the development of a uniquely designed interactive website. This website will play a critical role in the Emerging Spirit initiative. A prototype of the site will be available for exploration at the Emerging Spirit booth and workshop at the General Council meeting.

Core Elements of the Media Outreach Strategy

The media message centers around the words “inspiration,” “exploration” and “respect.”

Basic message Living through and responding to the issues of life in a way that fosters wholeness and joy requires much more than simple answers.

Posture of the church The United Church of Canada is a community that explores the moral and spiritual dimensions of life in a way that welcomes and encourages conversation among different perspectives even while drawing upon its own historic Christian practices and convictions to contribute to the conversation.

The United Church of Canada inspires you to explore in conversation the moral and spiritual dimensions of life on your own terms.

Media Through the use of magazine advertising, direct-to-home mailings and viral video spots, The United Church of Canada will invite people to explore the moral and spiritual dimensions of life through investigation of and participation in a uniquely designed web site.

This web site will model that The United Church of Canada is a safe place to explore the deeper dimensions of life in a way that provokes learning and allows the church to contribute to the conversation with integrity from a Christian perspective.

When people are ready to investigate a congregational affiliation, a search engine will generate a list of United Church congregations in the area who have participated in a Regional Training Event (see below). Each of these congregations will have their own micro-site available on this site where they will describe, using a template provided, the character and ministry emphases of their congregation. Links will also be available to current congregational web sites and to the general church locator on the main national The United Church of Canada's General Council site.

The feel of the ads will be upbeat – with a joie de vivre – down to earth and friendly, flexible and open minded.

Prototypes of the magazine ads, the direct-to-home pieces and the web site will be available for viewing at the Emerging Spirit booth and Learning Options at the General Council meeting.

A Public Relations firm will also help leverage the impact of the advertising initiative.

Benefits of this Media Mix

- It reflects the audience's actual use of media
- Offers more intimacy and control (especially magazines & direct-to-home mailing)
- Allows a variety of uses by different types of congregations, particularly those in rural or "ethnic" communities (e.g. insertion in local weekly community papers, hand delivery, bundling with specific initiatives of the congregation to this age group, etc.)
- Allows for greater partnerships between congregations and the Emerging Spirit process
- Provides the kind of constant exposure, with potential for significant bursts at various times during the year, which allows for the gradual, continual growth of awareness and association that a challenge of this scope requires.

III. Living The Welcome: Congregational Welcoming

Research does not settle every question

The research paints a picture of the people who would be interested, perhaps, in exploring some relationship with the church and assists the church by highlighting some characteristics, traits and fears – on both sides – that could sabotage a conversation.

As a church we are now faced with a number of very important strategic, ethical, theological, political, and spiritual questions. Included in this bundle are questions such as these:

- Even though the identified groups may be potentially the most “productive” field to harvest (Matt 9:37) should we be focusing upon these groups? (ethical/theological question)
- What about segments of the population which do not register strongly because of research and analytical protocols? Can we devise a process that is, where appropriate and chosen, flexible enough to allow education and customization without losing the invitational tone and national impetus? (strategic communication question)
- What is the language we should be using to witness to our faith that is true to our tradition and experience and yet does not block conversation with those not steeped in traditional language? (apologetic question)
- Can we devise a process that identifies emerging leaders who are struggling to scratch the right itch but feel their skills, knowledge and practice of leadership could be more effective? (educational, leadership development question)

These are some of the questions that form the context for the development of **Living the Welcome: Congregational Welcoming**.

Emerging Spirit is about change

Initial formulation of the goals for Emerging Spirit included raising awareness and recognition of the values and beliefs of The United Church of Canada among 30-45 year olds; creating a willingness among non-church-goers to discover a United Church congregation and renewing a sense of positive identity and enthusiasm for mission among United Church congregations. All of these goals are about changing attitudes, beliefs and practices.

Whatever the specific terminology employed, those involved with organizational change identify three different types of change.

Developmental change focuses upon improvement of skills, knowledge, practice and performance.

Transitional change focuses upon redesigning strategy, structures, systems, programs and practices (not culture).

Transformational change deals with a reorientation of organizational culture and can involve an overhaul of strategy, structure, systems, work, behaviours and mindset (a change of culture).

Emerging Spirit can be about each of these types of changes.

For many who approved the project, the assumption was that we would primarily be about Development and Transitional change. At the same time we heard concerns that if the campaign was “only about ads” or “some quick dos and do nots” for congregations the initiative would be a waste of money.

The need – and perhaps even the desire - for change runs much deeper and, in fact, underlies much of the anxiety we hear voiced through such comments as: Will the congregations be ready? Will they be able or willing to change?

The strategic challenges before us include

- deep rooted congregational cultures highly resistant to change; and
- leaders who do not feel equipped or supported in their efforts to lead change.

The Living the Welcome: Congregational Welcoming dimension of Emerging Spirit provides a mechanism for congregations to address the issues and question of change at a variety of levels and to promote skills for congregational leaders to be effective change agents at the level appropriate and possible for them.

Basic Posture

- (i) *We are ready to invest in congregations that demonstrate readiness to engage the process of change.*
- (ii) *We recognize that work is already being conceived and delivered around both congregational transformation and leadership development in a number of places within the church, including: the Support to Local Ministries (SLM), Faith Formation and Education (FFE), Ministries in French, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), Ethnic Ministries, Justice Global & Ecumenical Relations (JGER) Units of General Council; Conferences; presbyteries; theological schools and educational centers. Refinement of this strategy will involve further conversations with many parties to ensure greatest effectiveness and efficiency. Nonetheless, Emerging Spirit does want to signal strongly that we have heard deep and persistent concerns about the need for regional training with respect to change initiatives and leadership development. We offer the following proposal in order to be faithful to our conversations to date and as a way of moving the larger conversation forward.*

Regional Training Events

These events would be for congregational teams that should include a paid, accountable staff person plus other key lay leaders.

Purpose of the Regional Training Events

To allow congregations to engage the research, learning, resources and processes of the Emerging Spirit program in a way that fosters the renewal and practice of the ministry of welcoming in their context (particularly with those between the ages of 30 and 45).

The Goals of the Regional Training Events

- To create an event environment where honest conversations investigate reality, provoke learning and foster the growth of relationships within congregational teams and between the Emerging Spirit team and the congregational teams
- To assist congregational teams
- to discern the contour of their local context and clarify the nature of their congregation's call to ministry and the call of each congregation to promote a ministry of welcoming
- to identify the key conditions necessary for the creation of a safe environment for hospitality/welcoming in this time
- in the identification of key strategies, tactics and resources necessary for them to exercise creative, effective and faithful leadership in a welcoming ministry within their congregations
- To have fun
- To provide opportunities for the congregational teams to leave inspired and with a sense of possibility and joy about the work to which they will commit.

Outcomes of the Regional Training Events

By the end of each Regional Training Event congregational teams will

- be able to identify three things that excite them about encouraging the welcoming ministry of their congregation
- identify the three prime strategic challenges/barriers they face in their context
- understand the main elements of the Emerging Spirit research
- Have intimate familiarity with the resources available within the Emerging Spirit workbook plus know how to acquire resource updates and supplements
- articulate the theological and biblical basis for hospitality and identify some spiritual obstacles to an intentional and persistent ministry of hospitality/welcoming
- articulate the depth of their commitment to this initiative and the spiritual struggles that most tempt them individually and as a team with respect to their participation in this welcoming initiative
- Articulate how they envision the response of their congregation to the national advertising initiative
- identify two implications of the Statistics Canada and Environics Analytics data for their congregation and its (welcoming) ministry
- be able to articulate a basic model of organizational change and how it would apply to their context
- Identify the major type of change that will form the focus of their work during the next six months
- Articulate the successful outcomes they hope to achieve in and with their congregation by June 30, 2007 and December 30, 2007.
- Identify five elements that could be improved in the welcoming etiquette of their congregation during the next six months
- Identify two possible opportunities and challenges of transitional change within their congregation
- Provide a clear, accurate one paragraph description of the current state of their ministry with children and the next steps that are possible in the development of this ministry
- Provide a clear, accurate one paragraph description of the ethnic/Francophone/First Nations composition of their context for ministry and the implications of this for the ministry of their congregation
- Be clear about the purpose, goals and organizational structure of their team, complete with individual responsibilities plus the next step for each member upon return to their congregation
- Identify the person within their team who will serve as the prime contact person with the national Emerging Spirit team and determine two dates to check in with a national team member within the following six months.

During the first year 20-24 Regional Training Events will be held.

A full description of the Regional Training Events, complete with a listing of workshops and their goals, will be available at the General Council meeting.

Congregational Commitment

Cost: TBA

Participation:

Avg. Attendance at Sunday worship	Number in the Emerging Spirit congregational team to attend training event
Up to 80 people	3-5
81 to 150	5-8
151 and above	8-10

IV. Leadership Development

This program will be 12 months long and will seek to increase the level of skill, knowledge, confidence and practice of select emerging leaders within the church. The initiative will involve: attendance at a regional training event; three three-day intensive residential gatherings that focus upon training in certain leadership skill areas (e.g. change management, crucial conversations, etc.); and an intentional Emerging Spirit related project and reading.

A rough timetable would include major gatherings in: June, October, January.

The goal is to train 80 people per year for three years for a total of 240 people.

There will be a fee to participate in the program. Resources and leadership costs for the program will be subsidized by Emerging Spirit.

The expectation is that further development of this initiative will require extensive consultation with various units of the church. A full proposal, including costs, will be brought to the Executive of the General Council. At this point we simply intend to signal that we have heard the many voices which have raised this concern and that we stand committed to pursuing conversations that lead, in a relatively short period of time, to effective strategies that respond to the need.

Selection process: TBA

Cost: TBA (costs of resources, room and board, travel)

Conclusion

Emerging Spirit is about reaching out to establish and nurture relationships between The United Church of Canada and Canadians between the ages of 30 and 45 who are not currently a part of any faith community.

Through the use of a variety of media we will extend the invitation to enter into conversation.

We will prepare ourselves through Regional Training Events and intentional local leadership development to be people who welcome as we have been welcomed by the God we know in and through Jesus Christ.

EXERCISE OF DISCIPLINE OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL (Red)

Origin: General Council Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel

1 Introduction

1.1 Mandate

In August 2000, the Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel was appointed in response to the following motion adopted by 37th General Council 2000 (Resolution 77):

That the 37th General Council 2000 direct the Executive of the General Council to appoint a task group, in consultation with the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education (or appropriate body in the new structure as determined by the General Secretary, General Council) to ensure that the 38th General Council 2003 has before it a report with resolutions for its consideration on the exercise of discipline of Ministry Personnel in the United Church of Canada.

In August 2003, the 38th General Council of the United Church accepted the report of the Task Group. The report outlined a three-year plan to develop standards of practice and ethical standards for ministry personnel, and to evaluate existing practices through which ministry personnel are held accountable.

The 38th General Council 2003 passed the following resolution (Resolution 35):

That the Task Group be mandated to continue its work on the exercise of discipline of Ministry Personnel and report to the 39th General Council 2006, including the following tasks:

- (a) development of draft ethical standards for Ministry Personnel for the consideration of the 39th General Council 2006;
- (b) development of draft standards of practice for Ministry Personnel for the consideration of the 39th General Council 2006; and
- (c) evaluation of the present process for discipline and oversight of Ministry Personnel, with recommendations to be made to the 39th General Council 2006 of any revisions that the Task Group may consider appropriate.

1.2 Background

Following the 38th General Council 2003, the Task Group began to plan the way forward for the development of standards of practice and ethical standards for ministry personnel. After researching the topic using United Church materials, information from other religious organizations, and standards and ethical resources from the private sector, the Task Group elected to ask United Church members, including ministry personnel, for their input.

In March 2004, a questionnaire soliciting input was mailed to all pastoral charges and posted on the United Church web site. By the end of the summer of 2004, the Task Group had heard from more than 140 groups and individuals. The responses contained a wealth of information, advice, anecdotes, admonitions, and thoughtful reflections on the topic of standards of practice and ethical standards.

In September 2004, the reconstituted Task Group met to review and consider these responses and to proceed with the next steps in the development of standards, as authorized by the 38th General Council 2003 – to write standards of practice and ethical standards for Ministry Personnel.

By January 2005, the Task Group had drafted standards of practice and ethical standards based on the responses to the 2004 questionnaire. In March 2005, the standards were posted on the United Church web site and mailed to all pastoral charges, active and retired ministry personnel, theological colleges and other church-related groups. The documents provided background, a rationale, the standards themselves, and in an accompanying document, an invitation for response and commentary. Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire on the draft standards, provide some demographic information about themselves, and to offer additional comments on the standards as they felt necessary.

Results from across the country were compiled during the spring and summer of 2005. The Task Group met again in September 2005 to consider the results, and to finalize a version of the standards for consideration at the 39th General Council 2006.

1.3 Membership of the Task Group

The 2004 reconstituted Task Group consisted of lay members Rick Chambers, Annette Hoare and Bill Rogers, and the following members of the Order of Ministry: John Burton, Roslyn Campbell, Anne Duncan, Don Gillies, Beth Rutherford and Sharon Willis-Whitwell. Don Gillies served as facilitator and chair.

Staff resource and support was provided by the General Secretary, General Council, Jim Sinclair, along with Legal/Judicial Counsel Cynthia Gunn.

1.4 Process followed by the Task Group since 2003

- (a) The Task Group met in January 2004 to implement the mandate from the 38th General Council 2003 – to develop draft ethical standards and standards of practice for ministry personnel, and if possible, to evaluate the present process for discipline and oversight of ministry personnel, with recommendations to be made to the 39th General Council 2006 of any revisions that the Task Group may consider appropriate.
- (b) After the Task Group researched standards of practice and ethical standards, using church documents and standards from the secular world, they decided that soliciting input from ministry personnel and United Church members would inform the development of the standards.
- (c) In March 2004, a questionnaire soliciting information and advice was posted on the United Church web site and mailed to all pastoral charges. It invited ministry personnel, ministry and personnel committees, church boards, groups, and individuals to respond to six questions - the first three on standards of practice and the remaining three on ethical standards:
 - I. Describe the role and work of ministry personnel. You may want to organize your description under some or all of these headings: word, worship, education, service,

- pastoral care, outreach, social justice, leadership, other.
- II. Describe the background that is needed for this work, for example, education, life experience, church experience, other.
 - III. Describe the gifts and skills that ministry personnel need to have in order to do this work, for example, spiritual qualities, personality traits, attitudes, other.
 - IV. List your assumptions about the ways in which ministry personnel should conduct themselves.
 - V. Describe the ethical standards that flow from your list of assumptions. In your description, consider using verbs like clarify, inspire, reflect, encourage, emphasize, demonstrate, model, comply, act, recognize, respect, enable, and others.
 - VI. In what ways and under what circumstances should the Church use ethical standards? Please give examples to illustrate your meaning.

The Task Group received 142 responses from across Canada. Responses from ministry personnel accounted for 35% of the returns. The remaining submissions were from ministry and personnel committees, official boards, presbyteries, other church groups and individuals.

- (d) In September 2004, the Task Group met to consider the responses from the questionnaire. Using the respondents' suggestions, and referring to other standards and codes established by churches and secular organizations, the Task Group began to articulate standards of practice and ethical standards. Over the next few months, the Task Group refined the draft standards into a manageable and representative form.
- (e) In January 2005, the Task Group finalized the draft standards of practice and ethical standards. The document included an introduction to the standards highlighting the Biblical and theological foundations, the principles behind their development, the reasons for having standards, their purposes, a list of definitions of terms, and a bibliography.
- (f) In March 2005, the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel (Draft) were posted on the United Church web site, and mailed to every pastoral charge, all active and retired ministry personnel, theological schools and educational organizations, and other church-related bodies.
- (g) By the end of July 2005, 187 responses had been received representing the input of hundreds of United Church members and ministry personnel. Statistically, 38% of the responses were from active ministry personnel, 19% were from retired ministers, and the remaining 43% were from individuals, Ministry and Personnel Committees, official boards, sessions, Conference and Presbytery groups, United Church Women, *ad hoc* response teams, and so on. All provinces and one territory were represented in the results, with almost half of the responses coming from Ontario, and with substantial numbers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.
- (h) In September 2005, the Task Group re-assembled to consider the results of the national consultation and to adjust the draft standards in response to the input. The consultation responses were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of both the initiative to develop

standards, and the way in which the standards articulated the practice to which Ministry Personnel aspire, and the ethical standards they are expected to maintain. This comment was typical of many which were received:

I want to thank you for the care and energy you have put into creating this important document for our denomination . . . First of all, I appreciate the distinction between Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards. The Standards of Practice are helpful in delineating for both ministry personnel and for those in their congregations the scope of work involved for ministry personnel. This is a good starting place for congregations to begin to define what is realistic to expect from their minister. It is also a good tool for presbyteries and congregations as they work through job descriptions created in the Joint Needs Assessment process . . . [In Section 5 of the introduction] I appreciate the introduction to this section that names things such as “ministry personnel are expected to know and understand the culture of the ministries in which they serve”. This is something that I have come to know as I practice ministry yet was not something for which I was carefully trained in seminary. . . I am affirmed as I read this section to see named the many responsibilities I have in ministry, responsibilities that are not often acknowledged by the congregation. I appreciate that the standards are worded as much as possible in behavioural terms, e.g., participate, facilitate, identify, model, mentor, encourage, etc.

At its September meeting, the Task Group used the data gathered over the summer to clarify some of the language, to augment some standards and to pare others.

2 Principles

2.1 Principles and Assumptions Underpinning the Development of Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards

Ministry personnel engage in challenging leadership roles and assume positions of trust, responsibility and accountability. They strive to conduct themselves with integrity and apply their skills and knowledge to their work. They acknowledge the need for mutual accountability and commitment from all partners in their faith community.

The Task Group has focused on the standards of practice as descriptions of the work of ministry personnel. The ethical standards are expressed as expectations of conduct. As such, the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards for ministry personnel of The United Church of Canada:

- describe what it means to be ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada
- reflect the beliefs and values expressed by the participants in the development of the standards
- acknowledge the aspirations embedded in practice and the expectations of conduct contained in the ethics
- recognize and value the diversity and complexity of the roles played by ministry personnel
- are evolutionary and will need frequent re-visiting for updating, clarifying, and modifying
- recognize the need to explore and examine ministry from the perspective of both policy and practice
- identify and acknowledge the multiple and varied contexts within which ministry personnel

work

- generate frameworks upon which levels of church governance may build
- assume that personal and professional growth are integral to the job
- are interdependent and are not meant to stand alone.

2.2 Biblical and Theological Foundations for Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards

The United Church of Canada believes that all people are children of God, created in the image of God and therefore worthy of respect and love. Living out that belief requires a deep sense of mutuality, trust and accountability. There are, however, times when the church does not live out that commitment. As a result, people suffer - both people within the community and people outside it. We believe that when one suffers, all suffer together. (1 Cor. 12:26)

Theologian Douglas John Hall asks: “What is the *discipline* to which as a disciple community we are called?”¹ Such discipline is not limited [or reducible], he suggests, to such dictionary meanings as punishment or chastisement. Rather, it flows from discipleship and is subordinate to it. For this reason, “it must never be divorced from those who are its practitioners – from their lives, their personal struggles, their social condition, their racial and sexual identities.”²

In contemporary society, discipline, as a verb, has acquired a distinctly negative connotation. All too often, it has been linked to parental, societal and religious practices that are excessively strict. It was not always so. The term has, for the most part, a more positive history. In its root meaning, the word discipline (Latin: *discere*), like its twin disciple, has to do with learning and education, which is why, even today, the various branches of learning are often referred to as disciplines.

Historically, discipline has been closely tied to the concept of punishment. It was assumed that punishment was for the purpose of correction, improvement and education rather than retribution through the infliction of pain and suffering. According to the Epistle to the Hebrews, God’s discipline, which “always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time,” is, in fact, “for our good” and later “yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (12:10, 11). Without it, people are “illegitimate and not God’s children,” (12:8) for God only “disciplines those whom God loves” (12:6).

Within the Torah given to Israel, there were particular codes that were to be followed by Aaron and the Levitical priests. Jesus gave a discipline to his disciples and followers and held them accountable for their actions. The Apostle Paul provided direction for church leaders and held these leaders accountable for their actions. Each expression of faith within the Christian community has had such a discipline or prescription for conduct by those giving leadership that has been used over the years to keep them on the spiritual path and to help inform others about the path of discipleship being followed. The gospel writers shed considerable light on the assumptions and practices of the early church. In Matthew 18, for example, there is clear guidance for the exercise of discipline within that community. (Matt. 18:15f; see also John 20:23) As life in the early Christian community became more complex, the need for regulation

¹ Hall, Douglas John, *Thinking the Faith*, Fortress, 1991, p. 58

² *Ibid*, p. 62

became more urgent. Under the guidance of Tertullian (160-220 CE), exomologesis (that is, the practice of public confession before the congregation coupled with an appropriate act of penance) came into fashion. Discipline began to take on a more public, and sometimes more ominous, character.

At the same time, the emphasis in the early church was on self-discipline. “Examine yourselves,” says the Apostle Paul, “to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.” (2 Cor. 13:5, 10) There is an echo of this in the thought of Zwingli [16th century], who suggests that a believer must “go down into himself...probe the reasons for his acts...and turn to God, begging for mercy. A new life then begins.”³ Here, the task of discipline is assigned to the individual Christian (the disciplinant), though, in the highly structured “Book of Discipline” of a monastic order for example, it takes on a distinctly corporate or communitarian dimension. Even in Reformation times, where radical spirituality required nothing less than direct access to God, “mutual edification and fraternal correction of small groups”⁴ played a significant role.

In our own time, Marie Fortune, who has written and worked extensively in the field of clergy sexual misconduct, approaches the matter of discipline from a theological as well as a practical point of view. “Accountability,” she says, “is the most difficult issue for institutions to face.”⁵ Yet the church must face it because it is bound together by covenants of mutuality and responsibility. To avoid it, either through denial or by handing it over to some civil authority, is to betray the very heart of the faith the church professes.

As Marie Fortune goes on to say, the God in whom we believe is a God of justice, one who “stands with the powerless, who will not let the powerful go unchallenged, who takes sides, who seeks not punishment but repentance for the abuser, who carries the victim through the valley of the shadow.”⁶ To be sure, it will take more than policies and procedures to accomplish this end. However, they are important, in that they “provide the mechanism.”⁷

Underlying all of this is the assumption that the exercise of ministry in the church is a serious and solemn responsibility. It is not to be undertaken lightly or thoughtlessly. Nor is it to be understood in purely secular terms.

Theologically speaking, discipline is an act of faith and needs to be understood and exercised as an expression of faith. As Letty Russell reminds us, “office bearers” within the community of faith have a “responsibility to exercise that gift for the good of others,”⁸ or, as the Apostle Paul

³ McNeill, John T., *A History of the Cure of Souls*, Harper, 1951, p. 195

⁴ Hunter, Rodney J. [gen. ed.] *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Abingdon, 1990, p. 291

⁵ Fortune, M. and Poling, J., *Sexual Abuse by Clergy*, JPCP Monogram #6, 1994, p. 20

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 9

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 26

⁸ Russell, Letty, *Church in the Round*, Westminster/John Knox, 1993, p. 66

puts it, “for building up the church.” (1 Cor. 14:12) When someone fails to do so, they are subject to the discipline of the church. Discipline in this sense has to do with what used to be called the “reclamation of delinquents,”⁹ the restoration and healing of troubled lives. The goal must always be to “restore even the most serious offender to fellowship with God and communion with the church, even when forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be extended to include restoration to public office.”¹⁰

Therefore, discipline is not simply a matter of punishment or chastisement. Discipline has to do with the good of others, with mutual accountability and with the “building up” of the community of faith. As Anne Carr points out, the various structures of the church “are themselves ordered...to an end beyond themselves – to the gospel as the mission of Jesus and the inclusive participation of all in that mission, to one another and to the world.”¹¹

*For the very true beginning of (wisdom) is the desire of discipline;
and the care of discipline is love.*

(The Wisdom of Solomon, Authorized Version, Ch. 6, v. 7)

3 Purposes of Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards

3.1 Why does the church need to have a discipline?

The United Church of Canada is known for seeking after justice. Part of the basis for justice making is the commitment to building up the Body of Christ. Another part of this basis is the faithful, accountable witness of the members of the United Church to the path of Jesus Christ. The United Church has a tradition of holding itself accountable for its actions. This faithful, accountable witness has been called discipleship.

Discipline and discipleship have been part of the Christian way from the beginning. Discipline refers to the practices in which the disciple is engaged to maintain a healthy and focused spiritual life that is reflected in the disciple’s ministry. Through such discipline the disciple holds himself or herself accountable to God through the community to which the disciple belongs.

As mentioned earlier, the words discipline and disciple come from the same Latin root *discere* meaning to learn. The Latin word *disciplina* means instruction. The Discipline Task Group wants to uphold the understanding of discipline that emphasizes learning and instruction. A key element in the learning and instruction of those who exercise ministry in the name of Jesus Christ through the United Church will be standards of practice and ethical standards for Ministry Personnel.

Such standards will inform both the ministry practitioner and the parishioner of the common and agreed upon understandings of the practice of ministry within the United Church. In this way the parishioner can be made aware of what he or she can reasonably expect from Ministry Personnel and Ministry Personnel can be made aware of the boundaries within which he or she may be called upon to act.

⁹ McNeill, p. 253

¹⁰ Fortune, M., *Is Nothing Sacred?*, Harper, 1989, p. 136

¹¹ Carr, Anne E., *Transforming Grace*, Harper, 1988, p. 199

Both Ministry Personnel and parishioner are upheld by the faithful witness of the United Church. The church identifies its standards and will hold its members accountable for their actions within the established and agreed upon covenants. In this way, the practice of ministry is and is also seen to be faithful to the path of Jesus - wanting to be held accountable, to be trustworthy, to be filled with integrity and to be just. Having standards of practice and ethical standards for Ministry Personnel is a faithful and accountable witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ministry personnel engage in a complex network of relationships and interactions that require high levels of commitment, energy and enthusiasm. In many cases, the social contexts are subject to continual change. Ministry Personnel are called upon to exercise the highest levels of individual judgment and skilful decision-making in the challenges of their daily work.

Ministry Personnel live out their faith in community with accountability to self and to others through Presbytery, Conference and General Council. It is the responsibility of the faith community to identify its expectations for ministry and Ministry Personnel and to be clear about what its Ministry Personnel can expect from the faith community. Ministry Personnel must be accountable to their faith community for their conduct.

Accountability based on standards of practice will set out clear descriptions of practice to which Ministry Personnel aspire; accountability based on standards of ethical conduct will set out descriptions of conduct to which Ministry Personnel are expected to adhere. The standards will support Ministry Personnel in their daily lives by providing guidance for behaviour when they are confronted with difficult and ambiguous situations that arise in practice.

Those standards will not, however, replace the need for the exercise of individual judgment. Because of the complexity of the relationships and social contexts that are the environment for ministry, the guidance provided by standards requires that those interpreting them, whether in the midst of the practice of ministry or in the cooler gaze of hindsight, need to do so with prayerful consideration of all that it means to be a minister in Christ's church.

The ethical standards have been written using language that points to this reality. They use the word "call" in introducing each standard to remind readers that ministry is a human activity in response to a divine initiative. Both those undertaking the activity and those looking at it from the outside need to be aware that there can be no formulaic rule book that will tell us what a minister should do in every circumstance. Just as biblical interpretation requires reading each passage through the larger lens provided by all of scripture (as well as other resources), so too determining what a minister is called to do in a particular circumstance requires an awareness of more than can be said in a line, or even a page, of text.

The need to consider wider circumstances in applying the standards is also pointed to by the use of the words "as appropriate" or variations that appear from time to time. This phrasing is not intended to create loopholes or wiggle room, but to recognize that, as Aristotle put it, "a correction of law [is needed] where it is defective owing to its universality."¹² Rules or

¹² *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk.V: Ch.10, McKeon, Richard ed. *Introduction to Aristotle*, The

standards of general application will always need to allow room for interpretation, but this does not mean that interpreters can treat the standards as merely advisory. Balancing the strict rule and the equitable interpretation is how we respond to God's call to seek justice. It is not an invitation to individualistic relativism and absolute autonomy.

3.2 Why Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards Are Important for Ministry Personnel

Standards of practice and ethical standards are intended to clarify and describe the varied and complex work of ministry personnel. They articulate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are expected of ministry personnel.

Standards are a way of communicating to ministry personnel, United Church members and the public what is involved in the work of ministry personnel - what they know, what they are able to do, and how they conduct themselves as they serve God, the church, their congregations and other ministry contexts, and the public. The standards provide the foundation and stability on which ministry personnel may grow, articulating both the values and characteristics that distinguish them as professionals.

It is expected that the standards of practice and ethical standards will continue to evolve over time and will require ongoing updating and modification. One critical question that often accompanies the development of standards is the question of how they will be used in practice. There are questions about whether the standards are absolute requirements or aspirations toward which an individual may strive.

Standards of practice are not measurements. They are descriptions of practice that seek to answer the question, "What does it mean to be ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada?" The standards of practice are intended to describe, rather than prescribe practice. There is a continuum of growth in the life of a professional, and as ministry personnel move through the various stages of their careers, the standards will describe practices to which they might aspire.

Ethical standards are designed to articulate attitudes and behaviours to which ministry personnel adhere. They will not presume to provide the answers to all ethical questions facing ministry personnel, but they will help to set out parameters within which such ethical questions can be discussed and evaluated.

As one respondent wrote in the spring of 2005, "I am glad [the Task Group] is offering a descriptive approach for the standards and an agreed-upon expectation of conduct for ethics. I feel that both are stated with the right amount of detail, allowing for both freedom and boundaries to inform ministerial standards and behaviour."

The standards' criteria must not be so prescriptive as to remove the professional judgment of ministry personnel as they determine how best to serve God in the church and in the world. Within the boundaries of the standards, ministry personnel must exercise their professional

knowledge and skill to make choices that support the church and its mission.

Commentaries for both the standards of practice and ethical standards will be needed. This work will form part of the necessary preparation for the implementation of the standards.

3.3 Purposes of the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards

Ministry personnel need to be able to see the work they do described in the standards of practice and be able to recognize their conduct and behaviour as described in the ethical standards. The standards are not intended to be the criteria for ongoing performance appraisal of staff.

However, their descriptions of both practice aspirations and ethical expectations may serve as starting points for Ministry and Personnel Committees and other groups to discuss performance issues.

The standards of practice and ethical standards:

- focus on the responsibility of ministry personnel to enhance the spiritual life of the ministry in which they serve
- provide a common understanding of what it means to be ministry personnel
- clarify the knowledge, skills, values and ethics that are necessary for the practice of effective ministry
- provide the basis for ongoing personal and professional growth
- represent the aspirations and expectations of ministry personnel
- inspire the quality of behaviour that reflects the honour and integrity of ministry personnel
- encourage and emphasize the positive attributes of conduct which characterize effective ministry
- Enable ministry personnel to declare themselves publicly accountable.

One respondent in 2005 commented on the purposes of the standards:

This document, in both areas, identified many matters which have been a concern at a variety of times in the life of this pastoral charge. To have had such a document to use as a ‘starting point’ for discussion could have led to a much more productive resolution of the matters.

The resolution could have been more focused, and brought about faster, leading to less negative fallout. When we treat this document less as a punishment stick and more as a starting point for discussion, we are pleased with it as it has been presented. This is with the understanding that it will not be a static document (no 10 Commandments written in stone), but will be changed as necessary for clarity, and as a result of learning which results from it being used. We applaud what you are doing. You are on a good track, one which will strengthen both ministry and the overall work of the church.

4 Definitions of Terms

The document makes use of several terms that are used in particular contexts and with particular meanings. The following list clarifies definitions of terms for the purposes of this document.

4.1 Bias

Canadian Courts have said that “bias denotes a state of mind that is in some way predisposed to a particular result, or that is closed with regard to particular issues.” It is a state of mind which

affects the judgment of the individual and makes the person unable to exercise his or her functions impartially in a particular situation.

There may be circumstances where the individual does not consider that he or she is actually biased, but it may be alleged that the individual should not participate in a decision. In those circumstances, when it is alleged that an individual is not impartial, the test that must be applied is whether the particular conduct gives rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias.

The question of whether a reasonable apprehension of bias exists requires that the person considering it must be reasonable, and that the apprehension of bias must also be reasonable in the circumstances. Further, the reasonable person must be an informed person with knowledge of all the relevant circumstances.

4.2 Boundaries

A boundary is “the limit of that which is reasonable or permitted.” Boundaries are necessary to help define and shape the structure within which healthy and appropriate relationships may develop and grow, as well as to manage the power and vulnerability present in the relationship. In ministry, as in other helping relationships, boundaries need to be clearly defined and maintained, primarily for the benefit of those who seek help. Ministry personnel are expected to function in informal, even intimate settings (a home or a hospital bedside) and in multiple roles (pastor, teacher, community leader, social friend), usually without supervision or oversight.

4.3 Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual makes a decision, or is present when a decision is made or participates in making a decision in the carrying out of his or her role that may directly or indirectly confer a benefit on the individual or any person with whom the individual does not deal at arm’s length, and at the same time knows that in the making of the decision there is an opportunity to further his or her private interest, or the private interest of a party with whom the individual does not deal at arm’s length.

4.4 Discipline

The words discipline and disciple share the same Latin root *discere* meaning to learn. Discipline has to do with learning and education (which is why the various branches of learning are often referred to as “disciplines”). Jesus gave a discipline to his disciples and followers and held them accountable for their actions. Discipline refers to the practices in which the disciple is engaged to maintain a healthy and focused spiritual life that is reflected in the disciple’s ministry. Through such discipline, the disciple holds himself or herself accountable to God through the community to which the disciple belongs. Theologically speaking, discipline is an act of faith and needs to be understood and exercised as an expression of faith. Discipline has to do with mutual accountability, with the building up of the community of faith, and with the good of others.

4.5 Ministry

The term ministry includes the following: service in a pastoral charge, staff appointments in Presbyteries/Districts, Conferences or General Council, outreach ministries, teaching and analogous positions.

4.6 Ministry personnel

By ministry personnel, the Task Group means the following persons: ordained and diaconal ministers, designated lay ministers, persons serving under appointment as student supply, intern supply or candidate supply, and ministers from other denominations who are serving the United Church as ordained or diaconal supply. It includes members of the Order of Ministry under appointment to a staff position within the United Church, to the faculty of an educational institution, or an outreach ministry such as a hospital, home, social service centre, community project or chaplaincy. It also includes all ordained and diaconal ministers retained on the roll of Presbytery/District whether they are active or retired.

4.7 Pastoral Care and Pastoral Counselling

Pastoral care refers “to all pastoral work concerned with the support and nurturance of persons and interpersonal relationships, including everyday expressions of care and concern that may occur in the midst of various pastoring activities and relationships. *Pastoral counseling* refers to caring ministries that are more structured and focused on specifically articulated need or concern. Counseling always involves some degree of ‘contract’ in which a request for help is articulated and specific arrangements are agreed upon concerning time and place of meeting; in extended counseling, a fee may also be agreed upon, depending on the institutional setting and other considerations.”

(*Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Abingdon, 1990)

4.8 Polity

The polity of the United Church includes all the policies and procedures for accountability, organizational structure, and decision-making which are followed in the church, as set out in *The Manual* and other church documents.

4.9 Profession

By profession, the Task Group means a calling requiring specialized knowledge, intensive preparation including instruction in skills and methods as well as in the historical and scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods. The Apostle Paul exhorted leaders to “Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves” (2 Cor.13: 5). A profession also maintains by force of organization or concerted opinion, high standards of achievement and conduct. This means that members are accountable to each other as well as to their profession. Members of a profession commit to continued study and to the kind of work which has for its prime purpose the rendering of a public service, or in the case of ministry personnel, service to God.

5 Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel

5.1 Introduction

The standards of practice describe practices to which ministry personnel aspire. They recognize that personal and professional growth is a developmental process and that ministry personnel move through a variety of career and life changes that affect their practice of ministry.

In practice, ministry personnel are expected to know and understand the culture of the ministries in which they serve so that they are responsive to the spiritual needs of those contexts. They take

seriously local traditions of faith and the worship, and share their faith in ways that are relevant and constructive.

Ministry personnel are responsible for leading, guiding and supporting the community of faith in the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. What is more, they touch people's lives at various points of joy, pain, celebration and vulnerability. Ministry personnel do this in a variety of ways - by leading in worship, by providing pastoral care, by standing with those who suffer, and by working for justice and peace.

These standards are not to be viewed as measurements of performance. Rather, they are descriptions of practice to which Ministry Personnel aspire.

5.2 Standards of Practice

The standards are presented alphabetically. Ministry personnel, Ministry and Personnel Committees, and other bodies to which ministry personnel are responsible, may want to order the Standards of Practice according to the priorities of the particular pastoral charge or appointment.

5.2.1 Administration

Ministry personnel have administrative responsibility to:

- a) ensure timely completion of tasks that are their responsibility, delegating such tasks where needed and/or appropriate
- b) ensure that all documents that are the ministry personnel's responsibility, such as marriage, baptismal and funeral records, are complete and that they are safely stored
- c) know the organization, governance and policies of the United Church
- d) know the administrative responsibilities of their positions
- e) encourage and enable the congregation to keep accurate records and to maintain and protect administrative and historical documents in accordance with the policies of the United Church.

5.2.2 Community Outreach and Social Justice

Ministry personnel with The United Church of Canada, a church committed to social justice, and global and community outreach ministries, have responsibility to:

- f) engage people with a vision of gospel that recognizes and responds to needs beyond their own
- g) encourage and support the development and pursuit of social justice and outreach programs
- h) encourage the support of the Mission and Service fund of The United Church of Canada
- i) facilitate knowledge about outreach projects and activities of the United Church
- j) encourage people to know and understand United Church policies as they apply to social justice issues
- k) encourage lay leadership on social justice issues and outreach programs.

5.2.3 Continuing Education

Education is a lifelong and ongoing process. Ministry personnel are responsible for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills. To this end, they:

- a) pursue personal and professional goals for continuing education in conjunction with the appropriate persons or committees related to their ministry

- b) strive to be current with issues in theology, ministerial practice, community and world events.

5.2.4 Denomination and Communities

Ministry personnel have responsibilities as members of The United Church of Canada to the denomination, the wider church, their communities, and the world. As such, they:

- a) honour the organization, governance and policies of the United Church
- b) participate in the courts of the church as set out in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada (session/official board or equivalent, Presbytery/District, Conference, and General Council)
- c) respond in appropriate ways to needs beyond the ministry in which they serve
- d) participate in ecumenical and multi-faith activities as possible and appropriate
- e) maintain an active connection with the wider church
- f) represent the United Church in the larger community.

5.2.5 Faith Formation and Christian Education

Ministry personnel have responsibility for faith formation and Christian education. As part of this responsibility, ministry personnel:

- a) learn about the ministry context in which they serve
- b) serve as teachers, advisors and spiritual resource persons sharing faith stories – formally and informally – with insight and integrity based on their education, life experience, knowledge and background
- c) relate the Gospel to the everyday experience of people
- d) communicate the theology, history and traditions of The United Church of Canada.

5.2.6 Leadership

Ministry personnel are expected to function as leaders in their ministry contexts, recognizing that leadership has many dimensions. Ministry personnel have responsibility to:

- a) encourage and challenge people to assist with or take on leadership roles
- b) employ such means as communication, cooperation, collaboration, consultation, and wise and appropriate use of authority for effective leadership
- c) identify and address conflicts in appropriate ways
- d) work with people in the ministry context to achieve agreed-upon goals.

5.2.7 Pastoral Care

Ministry personnel are responsible for the pastoral care of persons they encounter through the ministry in which they serve. As providers of pastoral care, ministry personnel:

- a) are sensitive to the situation and needs of those to whom they offer pastoral care, and recognize the unique dynamics of the pastoral relationship
- b) provide a supportive presence for, and are accessible to people in times of change and crisis
- c) encourage and facilitate a process to ensure that pastoral care occurs on a regular basis.

5.2.8 Self-care

Ministry personnel are responsible for maintaining a healthy balance in their own lives. Accordingly, they:

- a) maintain their own physical, emotional and spiritual well-being

- b) nurture supportive personal and collegial relationships
- c) manage time for work, family, friends, personal development and renewal.

5.2.9 Worship

Ministry personnel have primary responsibility for the conduct of worship. As worship leaders and facilitators, they:

- a) lead and enable the exploration and celebration of God's presence through preaching, liturgy, prayer, music, drama, dance and other means
- b) inspire, strengthen and challenge the people of God
- c) encourage and support lay participation and leadership in worship
- d) celebrate God's grace, facilitate the community in its prayer and devotion, and help the community to recognize God's presence in the church and the world
- e) relate the good news of our faith to everyday experience
- f) heighten awareness of world events and invite appropriate responses
- g) encourage the exercise of faithful stewardship
- h) conduct special services of worship (such as weddings and funerals) and administer the sacraments of communion and baptism.

6 Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel

6.1 Introduction

The 38th General Council 2003 charged the Task Group with developing standards of practice and ethical standards for ministry personnel and with evaluating existing practices through which ministry personnel are held accountable. The development and implementation of standards represents a first step in the re-thinking and possible development of a broader policy of discipline for ministry personnel. Ethical standards are developed so that ministry personnel may commit to agreed-upon standards of conduct which will guide their practice and behaviour.

Responses to the questionnaire in 2004 and the draft standards document in 2005 contained much support for the development of ethical standards and suggested that they may be used as:

- a common set of values
- a basis for talking openly about ethical issues and concerns
- a foundation for creating a stronger sense of community
- a starting point for productive resolutions
- an operating framework within the church that provides for transparency and principled behaviour
- a set of norms for the education and formation of ministry personnel.

Ethical standards enable the church to attain two goals. They act as a resource for ministry personnel as they struggle with ethical issues and dilemmas in the context of their daily practice. Ethical standards also enable ministry personnel to be accountable to self, church and community.

Among the many questions addressed during the development of the ethical standards was, "How are ethical standards to be articulated?" Clearly, it is not possible to anticipate and specify how one should behave in every circumstance. In many ways, it is easier to be specific about what one should *not* do rather than what one *should* do. However, a list of prohibitions may

imply that everything is allowable unless otherwise prohibited. Rather than focus on the negative, the Task Group has opted to use affirmative language when drafting the ethical standards. The intent is to highlight the expectation rather than identify the prohibition.

6.2 The Ethical Standards

The Ethical Standards are presented alphabetically. The document does not represent an attempt at establishing priority or sequence.

6.2.1 Competence

Ministry personnel come to their work adequately prepared to fulfil the positions to which they are called or appointed. In these positions, they:

- a) represent, truthfully and accurately, their abilities, skills, education, qualifications and experience
- b) acknowledge the limitations of their skills, abilities and competencies and make referrals when necessary and/or appropriate
- c) establish, maintain and communicate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.

6.2.2 Conflicts of Interest and Perceptions of Bias

Conflicts of interest and perceptions of bias may put ministry personnel's integrity and professional conduct in question. Therefore, ministry personnel are called to:

- a) identify and appropriately disclose conflicts of interest or bias, real or perceived
- b) follow, where applicable, guidelines established by the church with respect to conflict of interest
- c) deal appropriately with conflicts of interest, consulting where possible with colleagues and/or the body to which ministry personnel are accountable.

6.2.3 Personal Relationships and Professional Conduct

“God's intention for all human relationships is that they be faithful, responsible, just, loving, health-giving, healing, and sustaining of community and self” (Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality, 1988). Therefore, ministry personnel are called to:

- a) abide by and faithfully live out the explicit policies and procedures on sexual abuse (sexual harassment, pastoral sexual misconduct, sexual assault) and child abuse as outlined by The United Church of Canada
- b) be appropriately open and transparent in all relationships
- c) conduct relationships in ways that honour covenants
- d) conduct relationships, especially those that may be intimate and/or sexual, in ways that seek to maintain the peace and welfare of the community of faith
- e) take steps to ensure that alternate pastoral care is available for any person with whom they have an intimate and/or sexual relationship and for whom they are the sole or primary providers of pastoral care
- f) disclose to, and seek advice from a colleague and/or the appropriate body to which they are accountable, and to take steps to disengage from the pastoral care or professional relationship when that relationship is moving beyond a pastoral or professional level.

6.2.4 Professional Relationships

Ministry personnel are expected to honour the covenantal relationships of other ministry

personnel. Therefore they are called to:

- a) respect the call and placement of other ministry personnel, including colleagues or those with whom they are in team ministry
- b) respect the expertise of members of other professions with whom they work in the church, other institutions or the community
- c) uphold and honour the church's policies on the exercise of the functions of ministry, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms and pastoral care, as outlined in *The Manual*.

6.2.5 Relationship with the Law

Action on behalf of the church in pursuit of social justice may bring ministry personnel into conflict with the law. Ministry personnel are called to:

- a) abide by the law and encourage others to do so
- b) consult with the body to which they are accountable when contemplating any action that they believe to be an ethically justified act of civil disobedience in aid of a greater good
- c) consider—before acting—the consequences to self, church and community of any action that contravenes or appears to contravene the law.

6.2.6 Relationships with Persons Served

Ministry personnel are aware of and attentive to the possible impact of their words and actions in caring for the emotional, mental and spiritual needs of persons who seek their help. In all relationships, ministry personnel are called to:

- a) uphold the integrity of the ministry relationship in which they serve
- b) honour the dignity, culture and faith of all persons
- c) respect personal boundaries such as those of space and touch
- d) use the power and influence of their office appropriately
- e) be sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of all, while clarifying and maintaining the professional nature of the relationship.

6.2.7 Responsibilities of the Role

Ministry personnel are expected to execute faithfully the various responsibilities of their roles.

Thus, ministry personnel are called to:

- a) adhere to the organization, governance and procedures of The United Church of Canada as outlined in *The Manual*
- b) fulfil all the responsibilities of their position description and honour the United Church's Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel
- c) protect the integrity of funds and any property entrusted to their care
- d) use discretion and good judgment and abide by applicable guidelines when accepting favours, honoraria, gifts and other forms of remuneration.

Self-awareness

Ministry personnel are called to exercise good judgment and maintain a level of self-awareness that enables them to:

- a) be accountable to the church, to the ministry in which they serve, and to themselves
- b) be authentic, dependable, trustworthy, compassionate, understanding, and to live with integrity
- c) keep confidences

- d) be open to constructive criticism, guidance and challenge
- e) accept that, at times, they will fail or make mistakes
- f) be aware of the visibility of their position and consider how their conduct may be experienced and perceived by others.

7 Continued Work

7.1 Commentary

If adopted by the 39th General Council 2006, the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards will need an implementation plan. Part of the plan will include commentaries on each of the standards, presenting situations and case studies that ministry personnel and others may use to deepen their understandings of the standards.

As for the evaluation of the present process for discipline and oversight of ministry personnel, the Task Group believed that identifying the standards of practice to which ministry personnel aspire and the ethical standards for which they are held accountable needed to be in place first. The Task Group sees its next step as the evaluation and review the current process for discipline and oversight in light of the standards of practice and ethical standards.

Many respondents to the 2005 consultation inquired about the application and effectiveness of the standards without a monitoring or discipline function as part of the project. At this point, the standards are practical aspirations and behavioural expectations, and are not formally part of a discipline process. However, once adopted, the standards will provide a resource for discussions about practice and ethics. An evaluation of the discipline process will include an examination of how the standards may be used to support discipline.

7.2 Implementation and Education Plan

The implementation plan for the standards of practice and ethical standards will need to be both informative and educative, and happen relatively quickly. The standards will need to underpin theological school programs for aspiring ministry personnel, discernment processes, Ministry and Personnel Committee deliberations, and ministry personnel's practice and conduct.

As such, a national roll-out of the standards may include materials that provide:

- Questions and Answers about the standards including many of those posed by respondents in the consultation in 2005
- Suggestions for use of the standards for ministry personnel, Ministry and Personnel Committees, and other groups and organizations
- Commentaries on each standard, and ways that they might be interpreted or applied
- Workshop materials for Ministry and Personnel Committees, discernment process participants, and other groups to become familiar with the standards.

7.3 Timeline

Fall 2006

- Development of an implementation "kit"
- Initial evaluation of the present process for discipline and oversight of ministry personnel

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Winter and Spring 2007

- Roll-out of standards implementation kit

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September 2007

- Recommendations to Executive of the General Council of present process for discipline and oversight

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LEADERSHIP OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK FOR ORDERED MINISTRY (Red)

Origin: Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry,
Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee,
Leadership Outcomes Task Group

Summary

The Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry (PC-PMM) forwards to the Executive of the General Council the proposed Leadership Outcomes (LO) framework as the new basis on which to negotiate the *Testamur* (the certificate issued upon satisfactory completion of the course of study required for Candidates by the General Council) with United Church-related educational institutions.

In essence, these changes enable The United Church of Canada (UCC) to clearly define its leadership expectations for Ordered Ministry (Diaconal and Ordained). Until now, the denomination has only given a list of course requirements that lead to the *Testamur*. The proposed revision to the *Testamur* would require minimum standards of faith, knowledge, skills, and values in the four Leadership Outcomes:

1. Spiritual and Personal Formation,
2. Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian faith,
3. Cultural and Contextual Sensitivities and Analyses,
4. Leadership within the Faith Community and wider Community.

For a Candidate to successfully achieve these Leadership Outcomes, the Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee (ECL-CC) is recommending an integrated curriculum that would blend theory and practice throughout the educational experience. An integrated curriculum would have students developing the skills for ministry in conjunction with their intellectual investigation into the Bible, theology, ethics, pastoral theology, and so on. For example, a student would gain knowledge of the Bible and be able to lead an effective Bible study at the end of a course. This kind of integrated curriculum is used by many other professional faculties (medicine, social work, etc) to ensure that graduates have the both the knowledge and skills to do their professional work.

To implement this new educational direction over the next number of years there will need to be serious negotiations with the Education for Church Leadership (ECL) Network (11 theological schools and programs, 4 education centres) about an integrated curriculum. If the Executive and General Council agree to the new *Testamur* requirements (based on Leadership Outcomes framework), then Faith Formation and Education Unit will move to realign the discernment, supervised ministry education (including internships) and educational programs to meet these requirements. The hope is for reinvigorated discernment and educational programs that will be transparent to all involved (student, church, schools) and be a draw to suitable persons interested in United Church ministry.

Overarching Value Statement

In response to God's call, leaders of The United Church of Canada will seek to live in faithful communion within the living body of Christ. Leadership in the church will seek to equip the people of God to participate in God's mission and ministry in the world today.

This statement of leadership requirements for the 21st Century is rooted in the social gospel-social engagement ethos of The United Church of Canada. Cognizant of who we have been, The United Church of Canada now seeks to educate church leaders to be faithfully engaged in the life of their faith communities, the broader community, and in meeting the global socio-ecological/economic challenges ahead.

Background and Purpose

The education and training of Ordered Ministers (Diaconal and Ordained) must be situated within The United Church of Canada's commitment to the holistic development of a learning culture within the church. This is based on the understanding of the ministry of the whole people

of God. A key element of providing education for the whole people of God is the education and preparation of Ordered Ministers for church leadership. The Strengthening and Consolidation Task Group report of October 2004 describes the need for the church to be clearer about its leadership expectations for current and future ministry personnel and to change the funding relationship with educational institutions to meet these leadership outcomes.

The Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee (ECL-CC) is dedicated to equipping The United Church of Canada with leaders who have a sense of call and appropriate faith, knowledge, skills and values, and who can face the complexities and challenges of proclaiming the gospel in the 21st Century.

The Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee established the Leadership Outcomes Task Group (LOTG) to review United Church leadership preparation programs in order to become clearer about the sense of call and appropriate faith, knowledge, skills, and values that church leaders require.¹³ Leadership outcomes express what students should know and be able to do at the end of a course of study.¹⁴ While the Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee's mandate encompasses leadership education for ordered and lay ministry, the task group came to the conclusion early in its work that the Leadership Outcomes Task Group needed to focus directly on the outcomes related to ordered ministry (Diaconal and Ordained).

The determination of these outcomes began with the January 14th, 2005 meeting of the Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee. The Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee members were asked to brainstorm what they thought were essential knowledge, skills, and values for church leadership. The results of the process were analyzed by the Leadership Outcomes Task Group and a set of outcomes were developed from this list. These outcomes were then checked against the principles for the Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee, as approved by the 37th General Council 2000 to ensure consistency.

These leadership outcomes have been reviewed by focus groups from across the country, Principals and Deans of the Theological Schools, Directors of the Education Centers, and related General Council committees (including the committee preparing Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel).

The feedback from these consultations has been reviewed and integrated into this document. The outcomes are organized into four goal areas:

1. Spiritual and Personal Formation
2. Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian faith

¹³ As reported to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry in February 2005 and September 2005 and the Executive of the General Council in November 2005.

¹⁴ "Learning outcomes are the essential and enduring knowledge, abilities (skills) and attitudes (values, dispositions) that constitute the integrated learning needed by a graduate of a course or program. ... The learning outcomes approach to education means basing program and curriculum design, content, delivery, and assessment on an analysis of the integrated knowledge, skills and values needed by both students and society." Mark E. Battersby, Capilano College, North Vancouver, BC. "So, What's A Learning Outcome Anyway? Learning Outcomes and the Learning Paradigm" See: <http://merlin.capcollege.bc.ca/mbatters/whatsalearningoutcome.htm>.

3. Cultural and Contextual Sensitivities and Analyses
4. Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

These areas are consistent with the four overarching accreditation standards of the Association of Theological Schools. It is intended that the Spiritual and Personal Formation outcome be the foundation around which the other outcomes are woven. Under each area, there are broad outcomes statements that set the learning goals for each heading. There is a progression from personal development through community development. The second column of sub-elements describes the principles, facts, concepts, procedures, and processes that make-up the outcome. Each outcome consists of an action verb and a learning statement. (See section 7. Leadership Outcomes Framework)

Process

Phase 1 (January – August 2005)

Phase 1 was an extensive process of determining what the United Church expects of ordered ministers as they begin their ministry (See Leadership Outcomes Framework). This process included focus group testing across the country; cross-checking with different General Council committees, task groups and Units; a two-day consultation at Emmanuel College, Toronto (June 16-17, 2005), which included Deans and Principals of the Theological Schools, Education Centre Directors, committee members from the Committee on Ministry Vocations, Ministry and Employment Policy and Services, the Task group on Ethics and Standards, the Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee, and two Directors from the Association of Theological Schools of the United States and Canada (ATS). One result of this meeting was agreement by the Leadership Outcomes Task Group to generally adopt the ATS outcomes categories but give special emphasis to United Church values and practices.

Phase 2 (September 2005 – January 2006)

In Phase 2, the Leadership Outcomes Task Group continued to refine the Leadership Outcomes as well as consider how to move the Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee Network to embrace a comprehensive Leadership Outcomes pedagogy. It was recognized that both the curriculum used by educational institutions and the church's discernment process that accompanies and evaluates a person's readiness for ordered ministry would need reconfiguring. (See Recommendations, below) The recommendations of the Leadership Outcomes Framework were brought to the Education for Church Leadership Co-ordinating Committee in January 2006 and presented to the PC-PMM in February 2006.

Recommendations

"Education is being, becoming, belonging," Roby Kidd.

This quote from Canadian educator, Roby Kidd, is an apt description of a lifelong educational journey of spiritual development. All of us residing in God's grace, are called to recognize and use our God-given potential, and do so in relationships of mutuality and just living. Paying attention to *being, becoming, and belonging* is especially true of those called to church leadership.

Education for church leadership is an engagement of these three educational interactions. A person developing their leadership abilities is called (1) to be with God/Christ/Spirit, and the

church, in discovering their authentic self; (2) to engage in a lifelong educational journey to develop their faith, knowledge, skills, and values for church leadership in light of a sense of call; and (3) into a committed relationship with their community of faith. For those seeking to be in ordered ministry, these interactions involve programs of study that foster dialogical engagement between self, the church, and educational institutions. By intentionally being, becoming, and belonging in these educational processes, a person may grow in faith and leadership.

The adoption of a Leadership Outcomes framework is an important step in transforming education for ordered ministry from an “institutional paradigm” (traditional academic model) to a “learning paradigm” (learner-centred).¹⁵ The principles of this new paradigm are a learner-centred program that is open and transparent to all (student, faculty, and church) and has clear benchmarks. It is recognized that these Leadership Outcomes will not articulate all the faith, knowledge, skills, and values that a candidate for church leadership may ultimately require but they offer a minimum that enables the person to begin ordered ministry. Many candidates will have faith, knowledge, skills, and values beyond, and above, those described in this document.

With these principles in mind, the Leadership Outcomes Task Group recommends a number of changes to the educational processes for preparation for ordered ministry.

Request to Educational Institutions

To adopt the Leadership Outcomes framework, educational institutions will be invited to submit proposals as to how students can successfully finish their courses of study with the required faith, skills, knowledge, and values in the four Leadership Outcomes areas to function in United Church leadership. While the task group recognizes that many of the schools are already engaged in some form of outcomes methodology, to move to a national denominational partnership in this work may involve faculty education in outcomes pedagogy, the redesign of curriculum to be more practice-oriented, and the encouragement of faculty to use hybrid educational technologies and pedagogies.

Request to Change Church Discernment Processes

All levels of the church that are involved in discerning and evaluating the capabilities of those moving toward church leadership will be asked to use the Leadership Outcomes as their point of reference. With clear definition of what is expected at the end of a course of study it becomes possible to mark clearly progress towards those goals.

Request to Change Supervised Ministry Education

The Supervised Ministry Education (SME) programs will need adjustment (including Internships). Supervisors will need training and support to help students as they engage in action-reflection pedagogy related to the four Leadership Outcomes. High quality learning sites that provide students and supervisors with opportunities to develop these outcomes will be vital.

Request to Change *the Manual's* Testamur Requirements

The Manual of The United Church of Canada currently describes the requirements for ordination and commissioning under the certificate, known as the *Testamur*. Historically, the *Testamur* has

¹⁵ Many UCC-related schools already embrace learner-centred pedagogies. Adopting this pedagogy by the UCC makes it a preferred methodology across the ECL-CC Network.

only stated broad parameters of theological education required by candidates. The schools have interpreted these according to their own curriculum designs. On behalf of The United Church of Canada, schools have granted the *Testamur* upon satisfactory completion of the church-mandated course of study.

The Leadership Outcomes Task Group is requesting a change to *The Manual's* definition of Testamur to concur with the Leadership Outcomes categories. The United Church of Canada will then use the new definition of Testamur to negotiate with its educational institutions to prepare people for ordered ministry.

By becoming explicit in its leadership outcomes expectations, the denomination makes the whole educational experience more transparent to church committees, the educational institutions, supervisors, and students. It allows for flexibility in determining a course of study for each student and yet establishes the possibility of clear benchmarks in attaining competency. If problems arise in a particular student's program, they can be determined early rather than at the point of final assessment.

Request to Improve Continuing Education

The United Church of Canada seeks to provide continuous, lifelong learning opportunities for the whole people of God, both lay and ordered. To encourage ordered church leaders to do this, the Leadership Outcomes Task Group is suggesting new methods of accountability be established. These might include having ordered ministers establish learning goals or covenants and having salary increases tied to their completion. Perhaps facilitated peer learning groups, similar to those established during their schooling would help.

United Church related schools and centers could be encouraged to provide appropriate courses for both ordered and lay leaders. These courses would benefit the schools and centers as well as those pursuing lifelong learning.

Leadership Outcomes Framework

Note: In the following Leadership Outcomes each Sub-element and Principles, Facts, etc. move from individual learning to the ability to work with others. One needs to look at all the elements together and not assume that each principle, fact, etc. can represent the whole learning.

1. Spiritual and Personal Formation

At the completion of the program, the graduate will be able to demonstrate their personal faith and display their emotional maturity and moral integrity in her/himself and in relation to others. It is understood that personal faith is inherently relational as one interacts with the Divine and Others (both human and the cosmos).

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
1.1.a Discern one's own process of spiritual health and growth (use of spiritual direction, spiritual formation,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about one's sense of call and be able to continually discern and articulate it. • Know and have experience with diverse forms of prayer and spiritual practice. • Develop practices of regular spiritual discipline.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
discipline, prayer life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the works of the main spiritual disciplines. • Develop personal habits that support mental, physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and spiritual health. • Understands the implications for ministry of one's own race, class, age, sexual orientation, gender, culture, language, and religion. • Acknowledge one's own strengths and weaknesses.
1.1.b Nurture personal and professional relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally develop and maintain personal relationships that are supportive to one's emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual health and growth. • Develop supportive professional relationships with ministry personnel and others. • Develop skills for critical analysis. • Monitor time to ensure balance of work, recreation, spiritual discipline, family, and friends.
1.1.c Risk Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and accept one's own personal and role privilege, power, and vulnerability. • Develop confidence in one's own personhood (self-differentiate) in order to be authentic and open to difference in others.
1.1.d Articulate clearly the role of God, Jesus Christ and the Spirit in one's spiritual life and the life of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State one's own Theology, Christology, and Pneumatology (study of the Holy Spirit) within the context of the faith tradition. • Describe the experience of the Spirit in one's life and in others. • Reflect on the lives of those who exemplify a faith filled life

2. Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian Faith

At the completion of the program, the graduate will be able to implement a continuous learning plan for her/his own development in the faith, and to work with the faith community to establish a learning community to enable the community's growth in understanding of their personal and collective faith.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
2.1.a Appreciate one's own learning style and commitment to life long learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate one's learning through various learning methods and styles of research. • Use the knowledge of one's own learning style to develop a plan for personal growth and continuing education. • Give and receive feedback appropriately in one's personal learning. • Demonstrates an ability to integrate and use feedback through the experience of supervision. • Facilitate one's own learning using a variety of formal and informal methods including formal and informal.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice a variety of methods of self-directed study. • Incorporate scholarly activity into one's practice of ministry.
2.2.a Be committed to the learning of the faith community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the learning needs and goals of one's faith community. • Provide a variety of learning opportunities. • Practice a process for establishing personal and community learning covenants.
2.2.b Apply educational theories to learning situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use current educational theory to design specific programs that are sensitive to learning styles, situations, and ages and stages of moral and spiritual development. • Determine which methods are appropriate to the learning situation. • Develop and plan learning experiences, including feedback and evaluation. • Teach and facilitate learning for a variety of groups in a variety of contexts, including worship. • Apply adult education theories when developing learning opportunities.
2.2.c Interpret the Bible and make it accessible to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model significant, relevant, and thorough ways to engage the Bible • Present the Bible as the foundational text for Christian engagement with God. • Apply interpretive methodologies to the biblical witness. • Contrast and compare various historical interpretations and structures of the Bible.
2.2.d Provide training and support for leadership and participation in church governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know The United Church of Canada structures and communicate their relationship to the mission and ministry of the church. • Understand and communicate the significance of actions taken by the courts of the church. • Utilize current The United Church of Canada study documents and resources in educational ministry.
2.3.a Value the heritage of the Christian traditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the core historical doctrines of the Christian Church. • Develop an ability to identify operative doctrine of the Church in current and historical situations – e.g. the wide consensus and declaration about apartheid being a heresy. • Articulate his/her relationship to the historical and current doctrines of the Church and identify what influences that relationship. • Appreciate that the heritage of the Christian church and its practice is continually in flux. • Empower the faith community to develop its own theology within its current socio-ecological context (social, political, economic and ecological), within United Church ethos. • Recognize that increased diversity brings a variety of faith

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
	traditions into The United Church of Canada, which has the potential to enrich and renew the church
2.3. b Teach the heritage of the Christian traditions and The United Church of Canada tradition in particular in the context of world ecumenism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the faith traditions of The United Church of Canada. • Know and teach the significance of historic documents, policy statements and actions of The United Church of Canada. • Demonstrate a basic understanding and respect for other major world religions. • Demonstrate a basic understanding of the historic documents and debates of the Christian faith. • Understand the importance and implication of mission history.
2.3.c Respect traditions of non-Christian faiths and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehend the essential tenets of the major faith traditions of the world. • Recognize the interconnections of all major faith traditions. • Encourage the faith community in the study of other faith traditions. • Dialogue with the significant faith traditions within the faith community's context.

3. Cultural and Contextual Sensitivities and Analyses

At the completion of the program, the graduate will be able to understand and relate to the cultural and systemic realities of the environment in which The United Church of Canada lives and carries out its mission.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
3.1.a Conduct contextual/critical analysis to inform/guide participation in God's mission in the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display effective observation and analytical skills when interacting with others. • Demonstrate an ability to discern current reality of one's faith community. • Demonstrate an ability to articulate a clear understanding of the vision and mission of a community of faith • Design a process to help a faith community live out its vision and find the needed resources.
3.1.b Provide theological insight, guidance, and wisdom to church committees and Boards in respect to their mandate and God's mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower and enable committees and Boards to see all of their work within the context of the community... • Articulate theological issues that impact upon or arise from the decision making process from a cultural-contextual perspective... • Facilitate and lead, where appropriate, an effective meeting. • Know the policies of The United Church of Canada regarding current theological, social, and economic issues and advise accordingly.
3.1.c Engage the community with a gospel vision to recognize and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower the development and pursuit of social justice, advocacy, and outreach programs consistent with the United Church ethos.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
respond to needs beyond their own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower the development and pursuit of eco-sustainable ways of living a life of faith. • Empower lay participation and leadership in developing and articulating its vision.
3.1.d Engage with the church and the broader ecumenical and inter-faith community. (Whole world ecumenism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in ecumenical and inter-faith activities for one's own spiritual development and the development of the community. • Demonstrate an ability to engage in respectful dialogue with other faith traditions.

4. Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

At the completion of the program, the graduate will be able to practice ministry and provide leadership in both ecclesial and public contexts.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
4.1.a Bear witness of one's faith for the encouragement of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open about one's own faith journey and ongoing discernment. • Share faith stories that inspire and challenge. • Preach and teach with passion, compassion, sensitivity, insight, biblical, and contextual relevance. • Seek feedback from those with whom one witnesses.
4.1.b Encourage discernment of the role of God, Jesus Christ and Spirit in the life of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the faith stories of others. • Describe how the teachings and presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit influence his/her life. • Recognize, respect, and articulate the different understandings of Jesus in the faith community. • Enable the faith community to articulate the roles of God, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit in their lives. • Encourage the emergence of faith stories.
4.1.c Actively participate in the life of the faith community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in activities within a faith community or other ministry settings. • Encourage and facilitate the faith community's activities. • Theologically reflect on and participate in community activities outside of the faith community. • Encourage opportunities for the faith community to connect to the wider United Church. • Participate in and understand the life function of the Presbytery, Conference, and General Council.
4.2.a Articulate and apply an ethical framework to personal decision making and action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a level of self-awareness that enables working for the greater good of others. • Be intentional about one's accountability to self, God, and church. • Identify conflicts of interest or bias, real or perceived. • Behave with personal integrity that seeks to act within the law.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know, understand, and respect personal boundaries. • Know, understand, and respect the role of professionals and professional boundaries. • Be aware of the consequences to self, church, and community of any action(s) that contravenes or appears to contravene the law. • Acknowledge one's own limitations and skills. • Know and practice the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel within The United Church of Canada.
4.2.b Enable the faith community to design and apply an ethical decision making process to community issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate theological reflection and exploration of ethical frameworks to current issues. • Discern and make connections between sociological issues that impact and arise from ethical decision making. • Empower the community to design ethical decision-making processes/practices for the life of the community. • Articulate one's own understanding of the impact of the gospel on daily life and engage the community in examining current issues in light of the gospel. • Discern in the community when leadership requires prophetic action and risk.
4.2.c Participate in the ethical decision making of the wider community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to a variety of ethical decision making decision-making frameworks. • Articulate a faith-based understanding of justice and how it relates to the wider community.
4.3.a Communicate effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of communication methods (including silence) with competence. • Listen actively. • Speak clearly and concisely. • Reframe comments to elicit meaning. • Write with clarity for a variety of purposes.
4.3.b Demonstrate sensitivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use The United Church of Canada guidelines on inclusivity to insure communication that is culturally sensitive and avoids ageism, heterosexism, sexism, classism, religious, and cultural discrimination and racism.
4.4. a Lead worship consistent with traditions and guidelines of The United Church of Canada.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate the history, liturgy, and preaching of the church into worship. • Use The United Church of Canada and other appropriate worship resources. • Describe the role of ministry personnel in enabling worship. • Demonstrate openness to learning through feedback. • Design worship that is sensitive, responsive, and contextual. • Facilitate the faith community's efforts to identify and shape worship that is faithful and meaningful for their context. • Create appropriate prayers and liturgical elements.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support lay participation and leadership in worship. • Design worship that is creative and will engage the passion and creativity of the participants.
4.5.a Design and facilitate a program (process) for on-going pastoral care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and receive pastoral care. • Engage the faith community in identifying the components of pastoral care required by the community. • Enable and support the faith community to be a community of pastoral care. • Facilitate lay involvement in receiving and offering pastoral care.
4.5.b Provide pastoral care and give assistance to people within the faith community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate pastoral care to sick, elderly in institutions or in their home. • Provide pastoral care to children and youth that recognizes their unique needs. • Know, understand, and respect personal boundaries. • Know, understand, and respect the ministerial role and professional boundaries. • Consider and respect cultural values and practices when providing pastoral care. • Practice accepted counselling processes and know when to refer to other professionals. • Exercise pastoral care within The United Church of Canada's guidelines for ethical behaviour.
4.5.c Seek justice and equity in all relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand issues of discrimination and inequity. • Represent one's skills, knowledge, and abilities truthfully and accurately to others. • Be clear and transparent about the nature of relationships. • Self disclose appropriately. • Be aware of the needs and vulnerabilities of others. • Seek to provide ministry to all regardless of personal bias and know when to refer to other professionals.
4.5.d Encourage an openness to the leading of the spirit towards the transformation of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model ongoing spiritual growth and transformation within oneself. • Respond appropriately to the spiritual needs of others. • Encourage spiritual growth in others.
4.6.a Model effective leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an ability to offer leadership that is visionary, prophetic, and pastoral. • Assess and apply appropriate leadership theories. • Delegate appropriately. • Build relationships of respect with other ministry personnel and members/adherents of the faith community/mission unit. • Respect the call and placement of other ministry personnel. • Manage time effectively including time for self-care.

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behave ethically according to the standards of The United Church of Canada.
4.6.b Evaluate and enable the leadership gifts in the faith community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the faith community to identify its leadership needs. • Encourage and enable the leadership gifts of the laity. • Examine the relationship of the ministry personnel and the lay leadership. • Nurture a healthy ministry of the whole people of God. • Facilitate a process for developing leadership in the faith community.
4.6.c Work in and with teams effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work effectively and appropriately with volunteer Boards. • Give and receive feedback respectfully. • See ministry leadership as a shared experience among all the leaders and participants. • Develop, articulate, and practice effective methodologies for teams. • Work in a collegial way with other ministry personnel.
4.6.d Respond to and manage conflict constructively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify one's own instinctive response(s) to conflict and how that may impact a situation. • Understand conflict as an engaged process that can lead to effective change. • Be prepared to name it when conflict is present and model that working with conflict is a necessary part of the leadership. • Understand and have the ability to practice various methods of dealing with conflict and reconciliation.
4.6.e Carry out administrative responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and accept the legal responsibilities of ministry personnel in both the secular and church context. • Understand the role and responsibilities of the Courts of the Church. • Understand the role and responsibilities of officers of the Courts (chair, secretary, etc.). • Describe and locate required legal documents. • Complete and file documentation in a timely manner. • Demonstrate understanding in how to develop, and implement process and committee structures where gaps exist. • Be able to read and interpret financial statements and budgets, and relate them to the mission of the church.
4.7.a Offer one's gifts of theological reflection and wisdom to the process of discerning the ways in which the faith community will live out God's mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and enable committees and Boards to consider all of their work as a spiritual process. • Discern and make connections amongst theological issues that impact upon or arise from the decision making process. • Facilitate and lead, when appropriate, an effective meeting. • Articulate the role of Boards and committees in the management of a faith community. • Engage the faith community in their own discernment process of

Learning Outcome Sub-elements	Principles, Facts, Concepts, Procedures, Processes
	their call to serve. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the polity and policies of The United Church of Canada.
4.7.b Engage the community with a gospel vision to recognize and respond to needs beyond their own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate knowledge of the relationship between Christianity and other world religions in order to interpret, and empower present and future mission. • Interpret the needs, hopes, and concerns of the world to the church.

Assessment

An essential part of adopting an outcome-based framework is the creation of authentic experiences and the development of assessment tools. Potential tools and experiences that would be used for evaluating each area are taken from “Twenty Frequently Used Master of Divinity Student Assessment/Evaluation Tools from ATS Schools” by Bill Myers. Professor Myers notes that most programs have three obligatory gateways or comprehensive assessment periods – after one year, in the middle of the program and at the end of the program.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autobiographical statements • Psychological Tests • Portfolios • S.M.E (Supervised Ministry Education) • Mentor/Apprenticeship programs • Journals • Clinical pastoral education units • Integrative seminars • Capstone courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small groups • Courses • Retreats • Field Education • Globalization /Cultural Immersion Experiences • Critical Instance in Ministry report (case study) • Parish/Congregational Exams • Position in Ministry Exams (oral)
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**DESIGNATED LAY MINISTRY/CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATED MINISTRY
(Red)**

Ministry Together – Establishing the Designated Lay Ministry Policy

Origin: General Secretary, General Council

The 37th General Council 2000 received a report from the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education entitled *Ministry Together*.

The *Ministry Together* report presented a model for paid, accountable lay ministry for congregations and other ministries, which would be known as “Designated Lay Ministry.” The model envisioned a set of common competency requirements for all positions, with specialized competencies for particular types of ministry. Individuals would qualify to fill these ministry positions based on the completion of an educational program, or satisfactory evidence of prior learning and experience.

The *Ministry Together* report also referred to the threshold between congregational-accountable ministry and Presbytery-accountable ministry. It did not elaborate on paid congregational-accountable ministry, but included this reference:

Among the issues to be clarified for a congregational-accountable ministry position will be criteria about United Church membership, educational expectations, screening procedures, liability, and accountability. If the recommendations of this report are approved, then these guidelines will be developed by the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education and ratified by the Executive of the General Council in a timely fashion.

The *Ministry Together* report was not adopted as a whole, although several of the resolutions were passed. In summary, the 37th General Council 2000 agreed to:

1. Establish a category of ministry to be called Designated Lay Ministry which would subsume the current categories of Lay Pastoral Minister, and Staff Associate.
2. Establish that all those in positions of Designated Lay Ministry would be members of, and accountable to, the Presbytery.
3. Recognize “Congregational Accountable Ministry”, now defined in *The Manual* as: any paid accountable ministry of less than eight (8) hours per week, exercised by a lay person within and for a Pastoral Charge, in the areas of education, outreach, pastoral care, worship, or service, for which the person is accountable to the Pastoral Charge through its Official Board or Church Board or Church Council.

The establishment of Designated Lay Ministers as a new presbytery membership status required a change to the Basis of Union; therefore, a remit was required. Remit 5A asked:

Do you agree that:

- (a) the new collective term for lay persons appointed by a Presbytery to a Presbytery/District recognized ministry should be “Designated Lay Ministers”;
- (b) membership in the Presbytery and the Conference be extended to such lay persons...

Since Remit 5A passed and was enacted by the 38th General Council 2003, the term “Designated Lay Ministers” is the term that must be used to refer to lay persons appointed by a Presbytery to a Presbytery/District recognized ministry.

Designated Lay Ministry policy – proposed changes to policy

Following enactment of the Remit in 2003, a Task Group was established under the Permanent Committee – Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, which included representation from the Education for Church Leadership Committee and the Committee on Ministry Vocations. The Task Group was mandated with the implementation of the Designated Lay Ministry policy, including the work of included the development of criteria and guidelines for paid congregational lay ministry as contemplated by the *Ministry Together* report.

Congregations often wish to provide compensation to lay persons called to specific and time limited ministries. For example, a member of a congregation who is a student may be available on a part time basis to give leadership in the area of youth ministry during the final year of a university degree. The Task Group was in agreement that the church needs to enable the possibility of such positions while retaining a reasonable level of supervision, oversight and support. The demand of additional education, a long discernment period, and Presbytery obligations often prevent the establishment of such paid lay ministries.

The Task Group affirmed the practice of creating paid ministry positions that are directly accountable to the congregation or ministry. It further proposed that these positions demand a higher level of competency and accountability than the current category of Congregational Accountable Ministry, but not as rigorous as Presbytery Accountable lay ministries. Such positions could be responsive to changing needs and priorities, and adaptive to changing contexts.

As the Task Group addressed issues of implementation, some concerns were noted with the policy adopted by the 37th General Council (2000). In order to address those concerns, the Task Group proposed certain changes to the policy. In essence, those changes address the following issues:

1. When considering the various possibilities for Designated Lay Ministry, the policy focused on the issues of function and educational requirements. However, it did not address the issues of accountability, oversight, and supervision. The Task Group developed more fully the concept of Congregational Designated Ministry to more clearly differentiate between ministry positions that could function under the oversight of a pastoral charge, and those which would warrant accountability to the wider church.
2. As with any position of accountability, the higher the level of training and preparation, the lower the need for direct oversight and supervision. In the case the paid lay ministries with minimal training requirements, functional supervision and oversight needs to be more immediate and direct, i.e. at the congregational level rather than the Presbytery level.
3. There continues to be a need in the United Church for paid ministry that is contextual, responsive, often short term, and draws on the existing skills, competencies and education of local lay members. Including Congregational Designated Ministry within the broader spectrum of paid lay ministry addresses this need.

The Task Group proposed that the church adopt a comprehensive model of paid lay ministry under the broader status of “Designated Ministry” with “Presbytery Designated Ministry” for those lay ministries that include accountability and membership with presbytery, and “Congregational Designated Ministry” for those ministries with accountability and membership with the congregation.

The following table illustrates the Task Group’s proposed changes to the outcomes of the previous two General Councils:

	Decisions of GC37/38		Designated Ministry Report to GC39	
	Congregational Accountable Ministry	Designated Lay Ministry	Congregational Designated Ministry	Presbytery Designated Ministry (or Designated Lay Ministry)
Position Created by	Congregation	Presbytery	Congregation, approved by Presbytery	JNAC/JSC
Hours/week	<14 (2001) <8 (2004)	>14 (2001) >8 (2004)	Any	Any
Accountability	Pastoral Charge	Presbytery	Congregation, position approved by Presbytery	Presbytery
Membership	Not specified	Presbytery	Congregation	Presbytery
Who Designates	Not specified	Presbytery	Presbytery	Presbytery
Duration of Designation	Not specified	While in appointment	While in appointment	While in appointment
Appointment Criteria	Not specified	United Church member Discernment Educational Program / Prior Learning Assessment	United Church Member (2 years) Discernment (at least 6 months, can be concurrent with appointment) Education and experience appropriate for position and consistent with core competencies	United Church Member (2 years) Discernment (12 months prior to appointment) includes Conference Interview Board and Presbytery Education and Students Committee Designated Ministry Training Program

Previous categories encompassed	None	Staff Associates, Lay Pastoral Ministers	Congregational Accountable Ministers, Some Staff Associates	Some Staff Associates, Lay Pastoral Ministers
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The Task Group made a preliminary report to the Executive of the General Council in April 2006, which included both a plan for implementation and the proposed changes to the policy as outlined above.

Proposed changes to policy – for consideration of General Council

It should be noted that when policy has been adopted by the General Council, the implementation of that policy does not require any further action by the General Council. It is the responsibility of the Executive of the General Council to ensure that the policy decisions of the General Council are carried out.

While the Executive of the General Council has the power to *implement* policy, it does not have a general power to *change* policy that has been adopted by a General Council. Only the General Council may do so.

For this reason, the Sub-Executive of the General Council directed the General Secretary, General Council to submit a proposal to the 39th General Council 2006 to enable the General Council to give consideration to the policy changes proposed by the Task Group.

The General Secretary's proposal reflects all the changes proposed by the Task Group, with one exception. The Task Group proposed that the term "Presbytery Designated Minister" be substituted for "Designated Lay Minister". However, the term "Designated Lay Minister" has been approved under Remit 5A and it must be used for laypersons appointed to a Presbytery Recognized Ministry. No other term may be used unless approved through the remit process. There is no proposal for another remit at this time.

While the General Secretary is proposing changes to the policy adopted by the 37th General Council 2000, those changes are still within the parameters of Remit 5A. No new remit would be required to adopt this proposal.

Transitional provisions for revised Designated Lay Ministry policy

If the General Council adopts the General Secretary's proposal, there will be a transition period for implementing the new policy.

Under remit 5A, all laypersons currently serving under Presbytery appointment to a Presbytery Recognized Ministry would become Designated Lay Ministers and hold Presbytery membership. That would include Staff Associates as well as Lay Pastoral Ministers and Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training. The positions that they currently fill would become Designated Lay Ministry positions.

Under the proposed changes, the Presbytery would need to adjudicate all lay ministry positions as they become available for appointment to determine whether they should be accountable to a

Congregation (Congregational Designated Ministry) or to a Presbytery (Designated Lay Ministry). As each incumbent Designated Lay Minister left a position, the Presbytery would decide either to re-categorize it as a Congregational Designated Ministry or to continue it as a Designated Lay Ministry. If the position were re-categorized as a Congregational Designated Ministry, it would be filled by a person appointed by the Congregation as a Congregational Designated Minister. That would be true even if the position had previously been held by a Designated Lay Minister, or if the person appointed to fill it had previously served as a Designated Lay Minister in a Designated Lay Ministry.

Under the proposed changes, the title of the layperson serving in a ministry position would be determined by the categorization of the position: Congregational Designated Ministry/Minister or Designated Lay Ministry/Minister. The layperson would not hold a designation independent of that position, and would not be eligible for ex-officio Presbytery membership except while serving in a Designated Lay Ministry position. However, eligibility to be appointed to a Designated Ministry position, based on discernment and educational qualifications, would be retained, and recognized throughout the denomination.

REPORT OF THE ANGLICAN – UNITED CHURCH DIALOGUE (Green)

Origin: Permanent Committee, Programs on Mission and Ministry,
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee,
Interchurch Interfaith Committee

Preamble

This is an interim report on the ongoing work of the Anglican – United Church Dialogue. Amidst challenge, laughter, pain and deep sharing we have journeyed faithfully together. This report represents a brief summary of our understandings of our context, some of our discussions and findings, and recommendations.

It is offered in prayer and respect.

The Context of this Dialogue

1. Histories Shaping our Dialogue

Our religious and spiritual journeys, as people of faith, can never be separated from our political, social and economic context either in the past or present. The United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada share many things in common due to our roots in the British Empire. The British ancestors brought with them the baggage of a common patriarchal, dominant culture and significant divisions in theology and church polity, which both helped and hindered the sense of the mission of the church in a new land. Thus, our journeys on this continent as mission churches have often been difficult. One crucial result of the Euro-centric churches' zeal in the proclaiming of the gospel to all nations was to blind the immigrants to seeing the presence of God amongst First Nations people when these two cultures encountered each other. The understanding of First Nations people that all people,

rooted in a shared community, have a relationship with all of creation, was overshadowed by the understanding of an individual relationship with God alone and not God's creation. Residential schools operated by churches and government were both a symptom and a tool of that colonial oppression and mindset. It is imperative for the churches to let the transforming power of the Spirit cleanse and heal the wounds and brokenness that have been inflicted upon all, and the gospel that has been proclaimed, albeit imperfectly, might also be the gospel that is lived.

Our shared history as churches also includes contributions to shaping the Canadian social fabric. Churches gave leadership in establishing systems and institutions for education and health care. Energized by the Social Gospel vision of 'a kingdom of justice on earth', Canadian churches joined in the Social Service Council of Canada (1907-1939), the Canadian Council of Churches (established in 1944), and other ecumenical initiatives, to work for economic justice. These efforts have included advocating for the rights of labour, national pensions, medicare, family allowance and other aspects of the Canadian social safety net. As well, the Anglican and United Church have participated significantly in global Christian mission and witness, including in the establishment of the World Council of Churches.

Anglican-United Church Dialogue History

The Anglican and United Churches began conversations in the 1940's, and by the early 1970's, were seriously working towards an organic union. This organic union was formally proposed in *The Plan of Union* (1972). From 1974 until 1983, conversations continued, leading to the 'Report of the Task Force on the Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministry (United/Anglican)', which was received but never acted upon by the two communities. That path was not chosen, causing a great disappointment for many. This previous work continues to be instructive for the present dialogue. The present dialogue, which began in February, 2003, began as a result of conversations between the ecumenical officers of our churches in 1999. In 2002, the dialogue was approved by the appropriate bodies of the United Church and the Anglican Church.

International and regional ecumenical dialogues have brought us to quite a different place from where we were in the early 1970's. The World Council of Churches (WCC), in 1982, published the important document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) has identified a foundation that our churches can work from; agreement on baptism and welcome at the table. These are things we can build upon. One advantage that our churches have is that agreement on Anglican, Reformed, and Methodist international dialogues have forged new commitments and possibilities for conversation in our own churches. The model of "full communion," as agreed to by the Anglican Church and the ELCIC, has provided ecumenical dialogues with viable alternatives to organic union. Partnerships with other Canadian churches, including shared ministries, military chaplaincies, and KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives also shape our ecumenical commitments and understandings. We want to strengthen these commitments and understandings.

Significant changes have also taken place within our churches. Breaking the silence about residential school abuse, and the first steps in repentance, have taken place. The All Native Circle Conference of the United Church has been formed, and the Anglican Indigenous Covenant has been affirmed and is moving toward implementation. The Anglican Church began ordaining

women in 1976. For various reasons, cooperation in theological education has taken place. Diversities of views, both theologically and socially, have continued to arise in our churches, even as we struggle to learn how to include the diversity of voices speaking out. Our faith has been challenged and enriched by an explosion of theologies that address our context from different perspectives. A deepening awareness of the richness of liturgical practices and some changes in worship have taken place. The growth and diversity of religions and personal spirituality, away from institutional connections for people, have posed new challenges. We live in a society that increasingly presents itself as secular, while at the same time welcoming people from many and varied vibrant faith communities into our common life. There has also been a rising influence and awareness of religious fundamentalism in various faith traditions.

2. Social context

The social context in which we live has also changed in the past thirty years. Issues of human sexuality, sexual orientation, ordination and marriage have emerged, challenging the churches to examine themselves and their self-understandings. The growing gap between the rich and poor, both within nations and among nations, calls for justice and redress. As Canadians, we have failed to address the issues of homelessness and child poverty. The social safety net for which the Canadian churches worked diligently is being undermined. Withdrawal from commitment to the world is sometimes regarded as a viable alternative to mutual responsibility and interdependence. The world has been confronted with the explosion of AIDS and varieties of “super viruses”. Political realities have also shifted. The cold war has ended, but recent wars and a different expression of militarism are dominating the planet. Ecological pressures and globalization have come to the forefront of our consciences. The technology we are accustomed to today was not even created when *The Plan of Union* was written.

3. Role of the Dialogue Group

The task assigned to the Dialogue was to explore themes that will enable members of the two churches to understand each other better; to encourage and strengthen shared ministry and mission, particularly at the local level, and to foster other circles of dialogue, regionally and locally, between the two churches.

The present members of the Dialogue recognize that we do not represent the diversity of our churches; for example, missing or underrepresented are: First Nations, out gay or lesbian people, youth, and laity.

The Progress of the Dialogue

The Anglican-United Church Dialogue has met six times between February 2003 and September 2005. The work that we have done to date is largely exploratory. We have reviewed our common history, with particular attention to events surrounding the Plan of Union (1972). We have examined statements-of-agreement from ecumenical dialogues world-wide. We have explored various models of ecumenical theological education in places where Anglican Church and United Church people teach and study together. We have discussed practical governance issues regarding shared ministries, and are endeavouring to communicate learnings from shared ministries more widely across the church.

1. Revisiting our History

We acknowledge the pain caused by the failure of attempts at organic union which were manifested in *The Plan of Union*. We recognize especially the hurt felt by many in the UCC as a result of the perceived rejection by the Anglican Church. We also acknowledge the various initiatives which were birthed in this era such as: the development of The Hymn Book; the Canadian Church Calendar; and a variety of shared ministries, including the development of joint ventures in theological education. This era also saw the affirmation of mutual recognition of baptism among a number of Canadian churches, and a change in Anglican practice inviting all baptized Christians to the table (a policy already in effect in the United Church).

2. Common Mission

From the review of our common history has come recognition of the centrality of unity-in-mission to the life of the Christian church and, therefore, the ecumenical endeavour. We have found this to be especially exciting because of our existing common commitment to, and work on, mission. This is reflected in joint efforts such as chaplaincies, institutions of theological education, social justice ministries (KAIROS, Canadian Council of Churches Justice and Peace Commission, and many local initiatives) and shared ministries.

The Anglican and United Churches have a long history of working together on mission-related tasks. Our mutual commitment to Christian mission reflects a commonality in theology. Our respective understandings of the Reign of God are similar, as are the issues which we face in our ecclesial communities. We listen to each other and employ one another's resources on complex issues with social and political dimensions.

3. Initial Exploration of Ecclesiology

The Dialogue has begun an investigation into issues of ecclesiology and sacramental theology and practice, where we are discovering both differences and common threads. For example, in relation to the ministry of oversight (*episkope*), we have noted a range of views and practices in both denominations.

The Dialogue discussed a number of ecumenical agreed statements, including the following: *God's Reign and Our Unity* – Anglican Reformed International Commission (1984); *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*; *Scottish Initiative for Union*; *Church Unity Commission* (South Africa); *Churches Uniting in Christ* (USA); Roman Catholic-Lutheran *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999); *Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue* (USA). We uncovered a number of strategies in these statements, which we believe could prove fruitful for relations between the Anglican and the United Churches. We also have benefited from the experience of the establishment of the Churches of North India, South India and Pakistan.

These ecumenical agreed statements and experiences are a major source of our emphasis on unity-in-mission. Other ideas we have found helpful include: 1) “differentiated consensus” and 2) “penultimate” theological statements, from the Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue, and 3) “unity in coordinated diversity,” from the *Scottish Initiative for Union*.

4. Theological Education

The degree to which we are able to do theological education together is a further demonstration of the extent of our common life. United Church and Anglican people teach and study together, learning from one another. This is an important aid to mutual understanding and common mission.

Anglican and United Church faculties work together in a variety of different ways. Perhaps the most tightly integrated model is that followed by Atlantic School of Theology (AST) and Vancouver School of Theology (VST), where students follow a common curriculum with denominational components. Probably the least integrated model is that followed by the Toronto School of Theology (TST), where students function largely within their own denominational seminaries but are able to cross-register for courses at other institutions. The Saskatoon Theological Union, University of Winnipeg Consortium and the Montreal School of Theology exist at different places on a continuum between the AST/VST model, at one end, and the TST model, at the other end. All of these models have strengths and weaknesses; the variety is beneficial to the church.

The seminaries are to be applauded for their commitment to working together. They have demonstrated a strong awareness of the need for mutual understanding and common work for the Reign of God. Many courses have students working with faculty of other denominations. In a number of places, solid efforts have been made to have faculty of different denominations in the classroom together.

The Dialogue recognizes the need for theological faculties to do more to prepare students to live and work in an ecumenical environment. Students need more opportunities to develop an awareness of their own denominational perspectives in relation to perspectives rooted in other Christian heritages. This need is particularly urgent for those who will serve in shared ministry contexts. Shared ministry situations demand a strong awareness of denominational histories, languages and meanings; preparation in these things must begin at seminary.

5. Shared Ministries

Shared or collaborative ministries have become for various reasons a more common option in Canada in the last thirty years. It may be a commitment to an ecumenical model of ministry, declining membership and resources, or geographical isolation which is the impetus for establishing a shared ministry. The Dialogue used the *Shared Ministry Resource Kit* prepared by participants in shared ministries as the basis for a new *Shared Ministries Handbook*. In exploring various models of shared ministry we have discovered a wide range of approaches to worshiping, living and working together in faith. In our meeting with members of shared ministry communities and through the participation of several members of the Dialogue in the Collaborative Ministries Conference, we have seen that many communities are able to establish a common identity while still maintaining denominational connections and denominational identities. There are different means of achieving that diversity in unity as illustrated in the *Shared Ministries Handbook*.

What has surfaced in our consideration of both theological faculties and shared ministries is the difficulty caused by the inability to recognize fully and completely the ministries of those who

serve in them. For example, where liturgical forms are restricted according to the denomination of the ordained minister, members of that denomination in that congregation are deprived of those liturgies. As ‘the very celebration of the eucharist is an instance of the Church’s participation in God’s mission to the world’ (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry 15*), an impairment of the eucharistic practices of these shared ministries is a serious matter. Shared ministries have brought the issue of mutual recognition of ministries to a focus for us, but it is a question that is not merely a pragmatic one; these ministries merely demonstrate concretely what is at stake in living out our faith as communities of God’s people.

This Dialogue has begun to explore the Anglican – United Church history and relationship. In the midst of this exploration we have recognized failures and successes in our denominational attempts to flourish in faith. As we meet, we are uncovering, and more clearly defining, our self-identities and passions. Ecumenical statements of agreement from various parts of the world witness to the many creative possibilities of Christians collaboratively sharing the gospel. Discussions with theological educators revealed that there are and may be future possibilities to aiding mutual understanding. In shared ministries we witness these mutual understandings lived out in communities of faith.

Where Are We Going?

Continuation of the Dialogue

Because we have learned from one another and have come to believe that there are possibilities for collaboration and further developments in our relationship, we recommend that The United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada authorize the continuation of this Dialogue. The mandate for the next stage would be:

- To continue to pursue an understanding of one another and the contribution that each of our churches makes to the work of Christ in Canada
- To ensure that the Dialogue is enlivened by the vision and values of the Anglican Indigenous Covenant and the United Church Aboriginal Justice and Right Relationship process; to give increased attention to the effects of colonization on First Nations peoples and the wider church, and the changes that the churches need to make in light of that history
- To continue to address our theological similarities and differences and their significance for our relationship
- To explore the possibilities for resolving outstanding issues relating to the sacraments and ministries
- To continue work on a study guide and process for our churches (see Recommendation 2)

Study Guide and Process

Because the Dialogue has encountered a remarkable degree of growth in understanding, and wants to be accountable to the churches and include them in this process, we recommend that the Dialogue continue work on a study guide and process for our churches. Among the aims of the study guide would be:

- To share with the churches what the Dialogue has discovered about one another and the possibilities for future developments in our relationship
- To seek response from the churches to these discoveries and possibilities
- To raise awareness in our churches of colonialism and its consequences

- To enable neighbouring Anglican and United Church congregations to explore their mutual understandings and differences, and possibilities for common mission

Wider Participation

Because we have benefited greatly from the presence of a Lutheran partner/observer to the Dialogue, we recommend

- that the Dialogue continue to have a partner/observer from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Theological Education

Because theological faculties prepare students to live and work in an ecumenical environment and have demonstrated a strong awareness of the need for mutual understanding and common work for the Reign of God, we call on the Anglican and United Church to make solid financial commitments to professional theological faculties, so that the work of ecumenical theological education may continue and expand.

We challenge theological faculties to teach North American indigenous theologies, to be more welcoming places for First Nations people as students and faculty.

We challenge theological faculties to do more to prepare students to live and work in an ecumenical environment, to provide students with more opportunities to develop an awareness of their own denominational perspectives in relation to perspectives rooted in other Christian heritages, and to equip those who will serve in shared ministry contexts with a strong awareness of denominational histories, languages and meanings.

Appendix: List of Topics at Each Meeting

Vancouver:

Met with VST faculty; set the Agenda; talked about how we would move forward, issues and priorities; material from regional gatherings.

Discussed mandates

Talked about history since 1943 including the failed Plan of Union

Agenda for Dialogue including methodology

Winnipeg:

Shared Ministry

Resource Kit

Attended the Pinawa Christian Fellowship

Gerald gave an overview of the Anglican-United

Church relationship over four time periods

Work arising: Handbook for Shared Ministries

Montreal:

Met with Montreal Diocesan College and United Theological College faculty

Handbook for Shared Ministry revisions

Fred Krieger – Responses to BEM

Toronto:

Met with TST faculty

Sacraments

Models of Church

Models of ecumenical theological education

Lay Presidency of sacraments (United Church)

Halifax:

Met with military chaplains

Met with AST faculty

Saskatoon:

Some attended Collaborative Ministries Conference

Met with Saskatoon Theological Union faculty

Handbook for Shared Ministry draft

Ecumenical Agreements and Statements

Preparation of Report

Members of the Anglican-United Church Dialogue:

Anglican Church

Rt. Rev. David Ashdown

Ms. Heather Labrie

Dr. Bill Harrison

Dr. Nancie Erhard

Rev. Barbara Shoomski

Staff: Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan

The United Church of Canada

Rev. Gerald Hobbs

Rev. Bob Mills

Rev. Nobuko Iwai

Rev. John Haas

Rev. Margaret Sagar

Staff: Dr. Gail Allan

Lutheran Partner:

Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen

THAT WE MAY KNOW EACH OTHER:

STATEMENT ON CHRISTIAN–MUSLIM RELATIONS (Green)

Origin:

Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry,
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee,
Interchurch Interfaith Committee,
That We May Know Each Other Task Group and Steering Committee

The United Church of Canada is called continually in all courts of the church to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the midst of our neighbours and in the world. In accordance with that call, the 36th General Council 1997 authorized for study across the church a document on United Church–Jewish relations. As part of its report to the Council, the sessional committee commended the Committee on Interchurch and Interfaith Relations (since 2004 the Interchurch Interfaith Committee of the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit) for the process it developed for *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church–Jewish Relations Today* (final report approved by the 38th General Council 2003) and asked that similar studies be undertaken with other faith traditions, in particular Islam and Aboriginal Spirituality.

These studies are part of the commitment expressed in the Interchurch and Interfaith Committee’s 1997 report, *Mending the World: An Ecumenical Vision for Healing and Reconciliation*, which names the search for justice for God’s creatures and healing for God’s creation as the church’s first priority. In approving the vision of “whole world ecumenism” in the *Mending the World* report, the 36th General Council 1997 committed itself both “to continue to nurture and foster faithful relationships with others in the Christian family,” and “to seek conversations and partnerships in mission with other sisters and brothers in God’s wider human family.” Joining “with other persons of good will in the search for justice, wholeness and love” (p. 5) is vital to our faith.

In 1999 the Committee on Interchurch and Interfaith Relations established a task group to begin discussions leading to a study on United Church–Muslim relations. As part of its process the task group held a consultation in October 2002 with Muslim and Christian participants committed to interfaith dialogue. The task group also received input from the National Muslim

Christian Liaison Committee, a committee of representatives from Canadian Muslim and Christian groups working together for Muslim–Christian understanding and co-operation. A proposed statement and study document, *That We May Know Each Other*, on the relationship of the United Church to Islam, was subsequently approved for study across the church by the 38th General Council 2003 meeting in Wolfville. This concluded the work of the task group. In 2004, a steering committee, including both United Church and Muslim members, was appointed to receive and process responses to the study, with the aim of reporting to the 39th General Council 2006 with a revised statement on United Church relations with Islam.

People of the United Church have responded thoughtfully and prayerfully to the study document and to the proposed policy statement. The responses represented over 750 study participants, from 53 study groups and 5 sessions/boards as well as 28 individuals. Responses came from 12 Conferences. While many responses identified themselves as coming from urban areas or small cities, a significant percentage came from towns and rural areas. Members of the steering committee read every response and considered each in the context of all the comments received. The comments were also reviewed in light of the responses of interfaith partners and the experience and expertise of those on the steering committee. The attached, revised, statement encompasses that response and seeks to be a faithful expression of our understanding of United Church–Muslim relations.

The study document and statement were written for the Canadian context. Many of our global partners find themselves in situations of much greater complexity than what is represented in the study document. The Interchurch Interfaith Committee hopes, nevertheless, that congregational engagement with this statement and study document has contributed in some small way toward the larger exploration of Muslim–Christian relations underway throughout the world.

Responses were overwhelmingly supportive of the draft statement. Often they indicated the desire to continue to study and do interfaith work. The responses also indicated some common issues, to which the steering committee wishes to offer a brief response:

- Use of the term “redemptively” in the statement reflects the 1966 *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, presented to the 22nd General Council 1966, which stated that “while maintaining the primacy of Christ, the Church should recognize that God is creatively and redemptively at work in the religious life of all [hu]mankind” (R.O.P. 22nd General Council, 1966, p. 435). However, responses reflected some difficulties in understanding the meaning of the word “redemptively.” The concept of redemption needed to be explained. In the context of *That We May Know Each Other*, redemption is mending the brokenness in relationship with God, each other, and creation. As the 36th General Council 1997 affirmed in the *Mending the World* report: “we are called to set as priority for The United Church of Canada God’s work of earth healing, sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and making common cause with all people of good will, whether they be people of faith or not, for the creation of a world that is just, participatory and sustainable.”
- Concern was expressed about a failure of the study document to deal adequately with the role of women in Islam. While the steering committee acknowledges that this has been an issue in Muslim–Christian dialogue, we also recognize that understanding the role of women in Islam involves the study of a large body of literature and historic perspectives. In order to understand the role of women in all its complexity, further study of and dialogue with

Muslim women from all different walks of life must be engaged. We would encourage such dialogue to be undertaken in the framework of our concern for gender justice in all of society including the church as well as other faith groups.

- Some concern was expressed about the need for inclusion of Judaism in the statement's mention of our heritage through Abraham. The steering committee has chosen to maintain the emphasis on United Church–Muslim relations, recognizing that through *Bearing Faithful Witness* we have clearly affirmed our shared roots with Judaism.
- Many responses recognized the importance of building trust and relationship through dialogical encounter that enables us to deal with difficult and challenging issues. In an atmosphere of respect we open ourselves to challenge and to be challenged, acknowledging that there are also differences and tensions within each faith community.

The Interchurch Interfaith Committee was pleased to note that for many participants the study was a catalyst for entering into dialogue with Muslims in their community. We received numerous accounts of visits to mosques, Muslim neighbours who joined in the study, or resource persons who were invited to enlarge on the information contained in the study. As the *That We May Know Each Other* document stated, we believe that this study with the proposed policy statement is just the beginning of the journey toward reconciliation, understanding, and co-operation between people of The United Church of Canada and our Muslim neighbours.

The Interchurch Interfaith Committee expresses its appreciation to members of the *That We May Know Each Other* Task Group and Steering Committee:

Task Group: Rivkah Unland (Chair), Peter Abbott, Andreas D'Souza, Sheila McDonough, John C. Robertson, Peter Wyatt, and Bruce Gregersen (staff).

Steering Committee: Maria Mindszenty (Chair), Peter Abbott, Brenda Anderson, Ivan Gregan, Talat Muinuddin, Barbara Siddiqui, Karen Teasdale, and Gail Allan (staff).

LAY PRESIDENCY AT THE SACRAMENTS (Green)

Origin: Permanent Committee Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
Task Group on Lay Presidency at Sacraments

Summary

Task

The Executive of the General Council mandated a task group “to review, consider and make recommendations related to The Sacraments in *Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*, taking particular note of concerns raised at the Council, namely, the implications

of the report's recommendations for ecumenical relations, and the implications of the report's recommendations for the United Church's understanding of ministry (Ordered, Designated, Laity)." The Task Group, in the process, considered the petitions bearing on this matter which were submitted to the 38th General Council 2003, namely petitions 97, 102, 103, 104, 105 and 107.

Scope

This report attends to matters that bear upon The United Church of Canada polity, a practise of ministry and the administration of the sacraments. It keeps in mind the ongoing discussion within the United Church about forms of recognized ministry and brings it to focus on the issue of presidency at the sacraments.

Process

The Task Group considered the following items: Resolution 9 from the 37th General Council 2000, an Opinion from the General Secretary February 16, 2005, responses from questions posed to Conference Executives, and relevant Petitions received at 38th General Council 2003. It asked for and received the views of Conference Executives and our ecumenical partners. Finally it pondered what the United Church needs to discern about polity, ministry and sacramental presidency, concluding its study with recommendations for a course of action.

Conclusions

Ministry is shared throughout the United Church. Upon the baptized and those received into full communion rests a commitment to ministry that informs the discipleship of the *laos*, the whole people of God. The United Church acknowledges two sacraments: Baptism and The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). Many conditions obtain for the sacraments to be rightly administered. Among them is the requirement of a presider, one who officiates. There is prevailing support for a policy whereby, under certain conditions, laypersons would be authorized to preside at the sacraments. The United Church has traditions both of setting persons apart for distinctive assignments and of setting sacraments apart as distinguishing ordinances. The Task Group proposed the establishment of such an office. It further proposed that this office be called Sacraments Elder.

The Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services recommends that:

1. General Council establish an office to be known as Sacraments Elder;
2. Presbyteries identify Pastoral Charges warranting an appointment of a Sacraments Elder, invite the commendation of an individual so to serve for up to twelve months (renewable), and assess those so named for their formation and accountability.
3. The General Secretary create a standard set of outcomes for the course for Sacraments Elders to be shared with Conferences for their use on their request.
4. General Council examine its policies for recruiting and retaining paid accountable ministers with a view to supplying sufficient ministry resources ordinarily licensed to administer the sacraments.

Focus of Report

This report attends to matters that bear upon United Church of Canada polity, a practise of ministry and the administration of the sacraments. It keeps in mind the ongoing discussion

within the United Church about forms of recognized ministry and brings it to focus on the issue of presidency at the sacraments. It responds to an identified challenge. There are congregations which do not regularly have the opportunity to receive the sacraments because those ordered or licensed to administer sacraments are not positioned to do so. Recognizing presbytery's responsibility to deal with this need, it is proposed that lay persons be designated to preside at the sacraments in places where presidency cannot otherwise be provided. It is to this proposal and its resolution that this report seeks to speak.

Terms of Reference

Following initial work in the former Division of Ministry Personnel and Education (including the mandating of a working group in 2001), the Executive of the General Council in 2002 created a Task Group to deliberate on Resolution 9 from the 37th General Council 2000 – the outcome of discussion on “Sacraments in Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century”. The first part of the resolution requests that congregations intentionally recognize the ministry of laypersons. The second part is specific to the sacraments declaring or requesting that:

1. “the responsibility for congregational members to preside at the sacraments should rest with the Session or its equivalent;
2. the responsibility for granting permission to lay leaders of Presbytery or Conference to preside at the sacraments should rest with the Presbytery or Conference; and
3. the General Council provide or identify resource materials for Sessions regarding the administration of the sacraments similar to the resources provided for Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training.”

The Terms of Reference which the Executive of the General Council gave the Task Group were “to review, consider and make recommendations related to The Sacraments in *Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*, taking particular note of concerns raised at the Council, namely, the implications of the reports recommendations for ecumenical relations, and the implications of the report's recommendations for the United Church's understanding of ministry (Ordered, Designated, Laity).” The Task Group, in the process, considered the petitions bearing on this matter which were submitted to the 38th General Council 2003.

The Task Group

Originally constituted by the General Council Pastoral Relations Committee with additional membership drawn from the Theology and Faith Committee, the Task Group's complement changed slightly over its three years. Its members, apart from General Council staff, came from those regions bounded by the Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta and Northwest Conferences. In 2003 it came under the authority of the Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Permanent Committee and met regularly two to three times a year in Winnipeg. The Task Group considered the material contained in the documents listed in the Appendix. It asked for and received the views of Conference Executives and our ecumenical partners. Finally it pondered what the United Church needs to discern about polity, ministry and sacramental presidency, concluding its study with recommendations for a course of action.

Polity

The United Church of Canada is conciliar, meaning that its structural constitution belongs to councils that complement each other in governing the Church. Authority and responsibility

reside in the General Council for determining doctrine and polity, in the Conferences for ordering and designating ministry, in the Presbyteries for ensuring accountability in ministry and in the Sessions (or comparable congregational courts) for overseeing the administration of the sacraments.

Ministry

Ministry is shared throughout the United Church. Upon the baptized and those received into full communion rests a commitment to ministry that informs the discipleship of the *laos*, the whole people of God. Diverse gifts are offered and recognized for the upbuilding of the local community of faith, for the church universal and for the world in which the church is set. Amidst the *laos*, the United Church, through call, discernment and preparation, identifies those whom it sets apart variously by ordination (to Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care), commissioning (to Education, Service and Pastoral Care) and designation to particular functions. Ordained, Diaconal and Lay Pastoral Ministers comprise this group which is augmented by Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training, Student Interns, Candidate Supplies, Intern Supplies, Student Supplies and Diaconal Supplies.

Sacraments

The United Church acknowledges two sacraments: Baptism and The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). A range of theological images undergird the perception of the sacraments in the United Church. Baptism signifies God's grace by incorporating souls into a covenanted community to which they belong. Holy Communion variously quickens and mediates the dynamics of remembrance, celebration, covenant, renewal, atonement, pledge of the Messianic banquet, community and a political act. They are signs and seals of the covenant created by the life, death and resurrection of Christ. They are means of grace by which Christ quickens, strengthens and comforts faith. They are ordinances by which the United Church confesses Christ and is "visibly distinguished from the rest of the world". (Basis of Union). Their administration and observance call for signs of that distinction.

Presidency

Many conditions obtain for the sacraments to be rightly administered. Among them is the requirement of a presider, one who officiates. It is for the sake of order that the United Church grants authority to persons to preside. The presider signifies the ministries of Christ, the church universal and the assembled community.

Authority and Accountability

Authority to preside at sacraments in the United Church is granted ex officio to Ordained Ministers. Conferences regularly give licenses to administer the sacraments to Diaconal and Lay Pastoral Ministers and exceptionally to the other designated ministries. Conditions for the granting of such license are usually some form of covenanted ministry and engagement in paid accountable ministry and appropriate training. In the opinion of the General Secretary of the General Council: "The Session and Conference have separate and distinct responsibilities in relation to the Sacraments under our Polity... While the Conference determines who may administer the Sacraments, the Session determines when and how the Sacraments are to be administered within the Congregation."

Availability of Ministry Personnel

The question of lay presidency at the sacraments arises when two expectations are not met:

1. That there will be sufficient ministry personnel available and positioned to administer the sacraments to all congregations.
2. That congregations shall according to need, i.e., regularly and frequently, have access to the administration of the sacraments.

It is evident that the United Church has either not recruited or not distributed ministry personnel to an extent sufficient to meet expressed needs. Ongoing reflection is necessary as the United Church continues to assess what is at stake in the matter of accessibility to the sacraments.

Response from Conference Executives

The Task Group met (through the presence of one or other of its members) with each Conference Executive or a committee delegated to speak for it. The questions discussed are found in the Appendix of this report. The burden of the responses can be summarized in what follows:

All agree that in speaking about presidency we are dealing with both sacraments: Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

There is prevailing support for a policy whereby, under certain conditions, laypersons would be authorized to preside at the sacraments. If such a policy is adopted, a number of considerations need to be kept in mind. Some strongly articulated the view that, except in special and well-defined circumstances, it is the role of the ordained to preside. Discernment, training and support would be essential for lay presidency. Geography and related circumstance, i.e., practical necessity, rather than theological warrant move us in this direction. The qualifications and attributes of the presider need to be clearly defined. The way in which the presider was representative of and accountable to both the local community and the wider church would need to be articulated.

The expressed need for accessibility to the sacraments exists in every community of faith and the United Church is responsible to see that this need is met. There is concern not to erode the ordering of ministry or to become indiscriminate in altering sacramental practice.

The presider would be expected to be educated about and prepare persons for the sacraments, especially with reference to baptism where follow-up could also be required.

There is an historical link between sacrament and office. The office requires call, discernment with the community, training and designation by the appropriate court. The office of elder is part of our tradition and should be examined as a model. The name of the office is open to decision, Lay Presider being one of the options.

In several Conferences the question of lay presidency is a priority. In others it is not but reckoned likely to become so. The discussion of the question will have educational value and its resolution, for some, will likely be divisive.

Ecumenical Relations

The Task Group issued invitations to the Presbyterian, Evangelical Lutheran and Anglican Churches in Canada to share the response of their denominations to the idea of lay presidency. The Rev. Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan, Director of Faith and Worship of the Anglican Church and The Rev. Susan Shaffer, Associate Secretary for Ministry and Church Vocations of the Presbyterian Church were able to answer the invitation. Each brought a response to the draft report, shared the present practice of their denomination and reflected on the relations between their denomination and the United Church as the recommendations of the draft report would affect them.

Both denominations share with the United Church the dilemma of providing sacraments to congregations geographically isolated and without ordained clergy. In both denominations “ordination” remains a prerequisite for the presider at the Eucharist. Neither denomination sees at this time a necessity for empowering lay presidency at the sacraments. Apostolic tradition and good order are key. The promotion of shared ministries is seen as one solution to the shortage of ordained personnel.

An Anglican Congregation may “raise up” a local person deemed suitable and able to be prepared theologically to lead in word and sacrament in his or her own parish and to be “ordained” by the local bishop to this non-stipendiary position. It is not usually transferable to another parish. There is also the option of the reserved sacrament. A layperson can preside at baptism.

In Presbyterian congregations without covenanted ordained clergy the sacraments are presided over by retired ordained clergy or by the interim moderator (the supervising ordained clergy) “Ordained” is the only category of ordered ministry in the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church considered the question of lay presidency at its annual General Assembly two or three years ago at which time the proposal was defeated.

A recommendation for lay presidency in the United Church would not be detrimental to ecumenical relations with the Presbyterian Church. It would likely add to the theological gap in the recently revived Anglican/United Church dialogue and would not be an acceptable arrangement in shared ministries. The use of the term ‘elder’ for the proposed office would have no corresponding referent in the Anglican Church. In the Presbyterian Church elders are ordained to leadership in worship (not including presidency at the sacraments) and in the governance of the local church.

As well as this face to face consultation the Task Group had researched through readings the practices of other denominations. In the Presbyterian Church in Canada (as has been noted), Scotland and Ireland only the ordained have this authority. In the Presbyterian Church and the United Church of Christ in the United States, local elders and lay members preside at the sacraments. Methodists in the United States and the United Kingdom have ordained elders and have granted dispensations to deacons to preside in circumstances where an ordained minister is not available. If the United Church authorizes lay presidency, it will conform to ecclesial practice in some sister denominations and depart from it in others.

Task Group Perspectives

The practice of sacramental rites is a discipline critical to the identity of the United Church. It is incumbent on the United Church to see to the ordinary and regular provision of them. Through a lack of authorized persons, under current dispensations, so situated as to provide the sacraments, an apparently increasing number of congregations are constrained either to go without sacramental observance or to find it infrequently granted. A way of meeting this want is to authorize laypersons, under specified conditions, to preside at these rites. The United Church has traditions both of setting persons apart for distinctive assignments and of setting sacraments apart as distinguishing ordinances. It would constructively act on this heritage in finding a way to establish an extraordinary office which would at once signify the sanctity of the sacraments and meet the pressing need to provide them where otherwise they would of necessity go without administration.

The Task Group proposed the establishment of such an office. It further proposed that this office be called Sacraments Elder. The term elder belongs to the Reformed tradition and to the history of the United Church, signifying a role that bears responsibility in matters of spiritual care and governance. The term *sacraments* refers to the particular function to which this office will be called to attend.

Elders walk with a wisdom, spiritual stature and compassion that guide a community. The biblical elders of Israel held authority to make decisions and to lead. New Testament elders distributed relief and directed young communities. In our Reformed Church history Elders were elected to the Session, and often cared for a district of the congregation for life. Elders visited church households to extend spiritual care and were highly regarded for their confidentiality. They distributed cards for the quarterly observance of communion at which they stood with the ordained minister. In First Nations' heritage, elders are those invested with governance, community memory and moral leadership. In all cases, elders are by character open to spiritual growth personally and in their communities, and are expected to give stability and guidance in times of change.

Elders are defined in *The Manual* as persons chosen for their wisdom, caring, spiritual discernment, and other gifts of the Spirit. Currently most congregations specify the duration of a term of commitment. This proposed extraordinary office of Sacraments Elder calls upon those graces to inform a function, that of the careful ordering of sacraments, for a time-limited period. We offer this term confident in an historical characterization that will inform this purpose and carry the responsibility with justice, kindness and walking humbly with our God.

Lay Presider, another candidate as a name for the office, was reckoned to be imprecise as to function and more problematic in terms of ecumenical sensibilities. It remains to be recognized, nevertheless, that the proposed office and function does not have precedent in our tradition and that its creation will not remove from us the responsibility to continue to consider whether the challenge of making the sacraments more accessible can be met in a more appropriate way.

Recommendations

The Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services recommends that:

1. General Council establish an office to be known as Sacraments Elder;

2. Presbyteries:
 - a. identify Pastoral Charges without a regularly settled or appointed member of the Order of Ministry or an appointed Lay Pastoral Minister;
 - b. may invite such Pastoral Charges to commend a person for the office of Sacraments Elder;
 - c. assess those so named and provide for their formation and accountability;
 - d. direct such Pastoral Charges to apply to the appropriate Conference for a license to administer the sacraments to be granted to those named as a Sacraments Elder;
3. Pastoral Charges, upon invitation by a Presbytery, may discern those who are perceived suitable from within their membership for the office of Sacraments Elder and commend them to Presbytery to be so designated;
4. Conferences consider applications from Presbyteries to grant a license to a Sacraments Elder to preside at the sacraments within a particular Pastoral Charge.
5. The General Secretary create a standard set of outcomes for the course for Sacraments Elders to be shared with Conferences for their use on their request.

Implementation Recommendations

In order to implement the foregoing recommendations, the PC-MEPS further recommends that:

1. Those eligible to be discerned will demonstrate the characteristics of an elder as outlined in section 30 of *The Manual* and, if not a member of the Session, Church Council, Church Board or Official Board, will be so appointed to the appropriate body; (See Appendix E - Section 130, *The Manual* and Appendix F - Who May Preside)
2. Presbyteries require any person they intend to designate as a Sacraments Elder to undertake a course of preparation as indicated in A Course of Preparation for a Sacraments Elder; (See Appendix G)
3. Presbyteries:
 - a. designate a Sacraments Elder to this office for twelve months or until an ordinarily licensed minister is covenanted with the Pastoral Charge;
 - b. at their discretion and according to need, renew the designation;
4. General Council examine its policies for recruiting and retaining paid accountable ministers with a view to supplying sufficient ministry resources ordinarily licensed to administer the sacraments.

Appendix A

Resolution 9, 37th General Council 2000

Resolution #9 – Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century – Actions

The Reading and Reporting Group #4 recommended that the recommendations contained in the Resolution be dealt with as separate resolutions.

Motion: Paul Currie/ Ken Jones

That the 37th General Council 2000 ~~approve~~ *receive* the report of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, entitled *Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*, ~~including~~ *and approve* the following actions:

Motion to postpone: duly moved and seconded

That the motion be postponed definitely.

Carried

Resolution #9.1 – Ministries of the laity**Motion: Jeri Bjornson/BJ Klassen**

- a. that Congregations intentionally recognize ministries conducted by lay people (members and adherents)
- b. that The United Church of Canada, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide resource materials and guidelines for developing congregational programs that will enable Congregations and members to discern the ministries of the laity and to devise methods of accountability for those ministries
- c. that The United Church of Canada provide worship resources for rituals celebrating the relationship between faith and life.

Motion to Amend: Tressa Brotsky/Adel Compton

That the wording of part a) of Resolution #9.1 be changed to read as follows:

- a. that Congregations intentionally recognize ministries conducted by lay people (~~members and adherents~~) *of all ages*

Carried

Motion to Amend: Bill Richardson/Marion Carr

That the wording of part c) of Resolution #9.1 be changed to read as follows:

- c. that The United Church of Canada provide worship resources *honouring and dedicating the various ministries of the laity*, for rituals celebrating the relationship between faith and life.

Defeated

Motion to Amend: Kathy Kyle/Ruth Noble

That the wording of part b) of Resolution #9.1 be changed to read:

- b. that The United Church of Canada, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide resource materials and guidelines for developing congregational programs that will enable Congregations and members to discern the ministries of the laity. ~~and to devise methods of accountability for those ministries~~

Defeated

Motion as Amended:

- b. a. that Congregations intentionally recognize ministries conducted by lay people (~~members and adherents~~) *of all ages*
- d. that The United Church of Canada, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide resource materials and guidelines for developing congregational programs that will enable

Congregations and members to discern the ministries of the laity and to devise methods of accountability for those ministries

- e. that The United Church of Canada provide worship resources for rituals celebrating the relationship between faith and life.

Carried

Resolution #9.2 – The Sacraments

Motion: Jeri Bjornson/BJ Klassen

- a. that the responsibility for granting permission for congregational leaders to preside at the sacraments of communion and baptism should rest with the Session (or its equivalent) in a Pastoral Charge as an extension of its responsibility to have oversight of ‘the administration of the sacraments’ [*Basis of Union*, Section 5.10.1(3)]
- b. that the responsibility for granting permission for Presbytery/District or Conference leaders to preside at the sacraments should rest with the Presbytery/District or Conference for those under its responsibility and authority.
- c. That the General Council, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide or identify resource materials for Sessions re: the administration of the sacraments similar to those currently available to Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training.

Motion to Refer: Ian Richardson/Marjorie Kent

That the motion be referred to the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education for further work in conjunction with the Committee on Theology and Faith, for presentation to the 38th General Council 2003.

Carried

Resolution #9.3 – Guidelines for Courts of the church when considering those to administer the sacraments

Motion: Jeri Bjornson/BJ Klassen

That the person who is granted permission to administer the sacraments shall be someone who:

- a. is a member of The United Church of Canada and a member in good standing of the Pastoral Charge, Presbytery/District, or Conference that is granting the responsibility
- b. has the respect of the community and has been proven trustworthy in leadership
- c. has a faith that they can articulate and that has been demonstrated in the community
- d. understands that the responsibility that they are undertaking is to fulfil a role in serving the community, is bringing access to the table, not excluding people from it
- e. is willing to be accountable to the Court that is entrusting them with this responsibility, and will act within the policies and guidelines of the Congregation and wider church
- f. is familiar with the polity and practices of The United Church of Canada, particularly regarding sacraments
- g. is willing to engage in reflection and education on the sacraments and the role and meaning of sacrament within the community of faith.

Motion to Amend: David Lambie/Greg Smith-Young

to add the word “*and*” at the end of part a) through to part f)

Carried

Appendix B

Task Group Members:

Mary Anderson, Lay, Saskatchewan Conference
Carolyn Conarroe, LPM, Saskatchewan Conference
Martha Dawson, Lay, Alberta & Northwest Conference
Gordon MacDermid, Ordained, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference (Chair)
Catherine MacLean, Ordained, Alberta & Northwest Conference
Deborah Vitt, Diaconal, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference
Alison West (MEPS), Ordained, Saskatchewan Conference
Debra Schweyer (until 2004), Diaconal, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference
Alison Norberg (until 2003), Staff Associate, Saskatchewan Conference

Staff Support:

Carol Gierak, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit
Judith Hare, Conference Personnel Minister, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
Mark MacLean, Support to Local Ministries Unit
Joe Ramsay, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit
Julie Cameron Gray, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit

Appendix C

Opinion from Jim Sinclair, General Secretary, General Council

February 16, 2005

Re: Sacraments

You asked for my opinion as to who holds the authority for the administration of the Sacraments within our Polity.

As you point out, Section 153(a) of *The Manual* provides:

(a) It shall be the duty of the Session to have oversight of:

.....

iii. the administration of the sacraments; (Basis 5.10.1(3)).

Section 427.1 of *The Manual* provides that it is the duty of the Conference to consider an application from the Presbytery to grant a licence to a Diaconal Minister [427.1(a)] and to other designated categories of Ministry Personnel [427.1(b)].

In my opinion, the Session and Conference have separate and distinct responsibilities in relation to the Sacraments under our Polity.

It is the Conference's right and responsibility to decide who, within certain categories of Ministry Personnel, is eligible to administer the Sacraments. The Sacraments may only be administered by an ordained minister or by Ministry Personnel holding a licence which has been granted by the Conference.

The oversight of administration of the Sacraments is the responsibility of the Session. While the Conference determines *who* may administer the Sacraments, the Session determines *when and*

how the Sacraments are to be administered within the Congregation. For example, the Session has the right of approval of all Baptisms conducted in the Congregation [Section 10 of *The Manual*]. The Session is entitled to decide how frequently the Sacrament of Communion is to be celebrated within the Congregation, and the specific manner in which it is to be observed. As part of its oversight function, the Session is responsible for ensuring that an ordained minister or other eligible person presides over the Baptism or Communion.

The Session will normally work in close consultation with the settled or appointed Ministry Personnel on all matters related to the administration of the Sacraments, but the actual decisions around administration of the Sacraments rest with the Session.

Yours very truly,

Jim Sinclair
General Secretary, General Council

Cc: Conference Executive Secretaries
Carol Gierak, Ministry Personnel Policy Specialist

Appendix D

Questions for Conference Executives

- a. Do you agree or disagree with our understanding that we are dealing with both sacraments: baptism and Holy Communion?
- b. In your conference would there be support for lay persons to preside at the sacraments? Why or why not?
- c. How do we honour the theology and polity of the United Church and also creatively meet the current needs of the church regarding the sacraments?
- d. Do we expect the lay person who is presiding at the sacraments to also preach, and do preparation for the sacraments and follow up, especially in relation to baptism?
- e. What is the relationship of sacrament to office?
- f. What is the priority of this question of presidency in your conference?

Appendix E

Section 130, *The Manual*

Elders. Elders are those persons of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation who are chosen by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation for their wisdom, caring, spiritual discernment, and other gifts of the Spirit, and to whom the responsibility of leadership amongst the whole people is entrusted as appropriate by and within a particular community of faith.

Appendix F

Who May Preside

That the person granted permission to preside:

- is a member in good standing in the United Church
- has the respect of the community
- has a faith which can be articulated
- is in essential agreement with the Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada
- understands the responsibility being undertaken
- is willing to be accountable and will act within the policies and the guidelines of the congregation and of the United Church
- is familiar with the polity and the practice of The United Church of Canada
- has engaged in reflections and education on the meaning of sacraments within the community as deemed appropriate (Appendix 14A of the Record of Proceedings 2000, GC 37)

Appendix G

A Course of Preparation for a Sacraments Elder

This course will be appropriate to the candidate's background and experience, and will as far as possible include:

- the Biblical witness to the sacraments
- theologies of sacrament, worship and polity
- the United Church's teachings on baptism and Holy Communion
- the structure of worship in the United Church, with attention to 'A Sunday Liturgy' and 'Celebrate God's Presence'
- practical reflection on the art of presiding in consultation with an approved supervisor
- reflection on the above issues in the context of the Sacraments Elder's own community

* (This course is a modified version of Guidelines on Lay Presidency at the Sacraments observed by the Uniting Church in Australia)

Appendix H

Petitions Received at 38th General Council 2003

Petition 97: Administration of the Sacraments

Petition 100: Proposal for the Licensing for Celebration of Sacraments by Lay Pastoral Ministers

Petition 103: Lay Administration of the Sacraments

Petition 104: Administration of the Sacraments

Petition 105: License to Preside At the Sacraments

Petition 107: Licence for Sacraments

Petition 108: Licensing for Celebration of Sacraments

Petition 110: Licence to Administer the Sacraments

Petition 111: License to Administer Sacraments

Petition 112: Licences to Administer the Sacraments

Appendix I

Resources

- Ministry Together : A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century (37th General Council 2000)

- Theological, Historical and Contextual Considerations Regarding Presidency at the Sacraments – Rob Fennell
- Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry – WCC Faith and Order Papers #111
- Conference Policies Regarding Sacraments
- Eager for Worship – Charlotte Caron
- The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith – James F. White

CIRCLE AND CROSS: THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA TO ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY (Green)

Origin: Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee
Interchurch Interfaith Committee
Task Group on the Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality

Task

The Task Group on the Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality was created by the 36th General Council 1997. We were to research the topic, discuss it, and present our findings to the next gathering. After some discussion, we felt it would be best to develop a *process* that would provide a model for sharing our spiritualities instead of writing a report that might be filed away with little impact.

Apology

The United Church apologized to First Nations in 1986 for being “closed to the value of your spirituality.” This gesture was acknowledged by the Elders but not accepted. Many Native people are still waiting to see evidence of it being lived out.

Challenge

In the task group meetings, it quickly became evident that our cultural differences and the imbalance of power created by racism and colonialism were major stumbling blocks to our conversations.

Vision

Evelyn Broadfoot, a task group member, had a vision that helped us see what we were up against. Instead of allowing the cross (a Christian symbol) to dominate the circle (a First Nations symbol) as history had taught us to, she saw the two as equal in size, equal in value. We changed our name to “Circle and Cross.”

Process

Talking Circles with teachings by an Elder on the Four Directions provided the context for listening to each other so that dialogue for healing might begin. We refined this process as we took it across the country. It was a powerful experience—those of us used to talking got the

chance to learn to listen, and those more used to being silenced had a familiar forum in which to be heard. A more heartfelt dialogue had begun. And for some, the apology was finally being brought to life.

Future

This process could contribute to, as well as integrate, the work of a number of programs and initiatives in the United Church, including

- the implementation of the anti-racism policy, adopted by the 37th General Council 2000, which commits us to act justly by “working to create or maintain just relations with Aboriginal and First Nations peoples”
- *Mending the World*, adopted by the 36th General Council 1997, which affirms “whole world ecumenism...joining with individuals and institutions of good will who are committed to compassion, peace and justice in the world”
- living into justice and right relationship in response to the apology and commitments made by the General Council in response to the legacy of residential schools, currently facilitated by the Residential Schools Steering Committee and the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit

The Circle and Cross process has the potential to shape the future of The United Church of Canada.

Evelyn Broadfoot’s Circle and Cross Vision

In the spring of 1988, I had a vision that had a profound impact on me. I was a student at the Dr. Jesse Saulteaux Centre and was asked to attend a course on Native Spirituality and Christianity offered by St. John’s College at the University of Manitoba. While I waited to register for the course, a pamphlet caught my eye. On the cover was a picture of a big cross and a small circle. This troubled me as an Aboriginal woman—how were we supposed to have a balanced discussion about these two spiritualities when the image used was a cross that clearly dominated the circle?

This picture continued to concern me until one day when I was driving to my ministry location. I was thinking and praying and asking for clarity about why I found it so troubling, when suddenly it became clear to me—the images were out of balance.

Since I was a young child, I was taught to walk in balance in my life. I learned that there is only one God, the Creator, and that there is only one faith and one baptism. In our Cree language the word for God is *Manitoo*—he or she who creates. We, who are created, believe in many forms and many ways. But all of us worship God, one God, the Creator. One belief about God is not superior to another.

At the centre of the Medicine Wheel is the Creator; at the centre of the Christian faith is God. One faith expression cannot overwhelm the other. If we are going to talk about spirituality, we have to talk as equals.

I believe that if we all respect each other, no matter what our faith is or how we worship, we wouldn’t be hearing about the killing of innocent children and Elders in the name of God, the

Creator. I believe that if we all respected each other, we wouldn't think of one faith as superior and ourselves as better than the other. Perhaps this is only a dream, but I think and believe this is the only way we can have peace in the world today.

Without the Creator, there would be nothing. As Genesis 1:1–2 tells us, all would be in void. God the Creator brings all things into existence and can show us how to bring all things into balance.

Today I wear a necklace that I had specially made with a circle and cross together. Both are the same size. To me, both have equal value. Whenever I am asked about this special necklace, I retell the story of my vision of the circle and cross.

May God the Creator hold the holy light in front of us to follow as we walk together as brothers and sisters in all faiths.

History

Colonial Contact

Prior to first contact, Aboriginal territory covered the whole of present-day Canada. With the coming of the Europeans, there was a change in the traditional pattern of life, which was based on the idea that “you only take what you need.” As Stan McKay puts it, “Traditionally a family might take a dozen beaver from its trap line for food and for skins to use in clothing. Each season the extended family would very carefully manage all the animals within its territory. The fur trade changed that—when you learned that it took sixty beaver to buy a rifle” (Stan McKay and Janet Silman, “The First Nations: A Christian Experience of the Gospel Culture Encounter,” Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1995, 3).

It was the fur trade that brought in the missionaries with the first trickle of White settlers. The European Christian church sent out its missionaries with the understanding that they were under God's direction to civilize and save the Aboriginals from their evil practices and beliefs—their traditional spirituality and culture. Stan McKay summarizes: “The church has been single-minded throughout most of this story, which has been one of constant cultural genocide. This has not been true of every missionary, but in terms of general policy the imperialist attitude prevailed” (McKay and Silman, 1995, xi). So the missionaries came and baptized and formed congregations with the goal of changing Aboriginals from their own culture and spirituality into “European Christians.”

The Government of Canada joined this process with its funding of residential schools, operated by the churches from the late 1880s to the 1970s. Young children were taken away from their families and placed in these boarding schools. The effect was devastating, resulting in a loss of language, culture, spirituality, and family.

Stan McKay recalls, “The missionaries recruited children for the residential schools in the period when my grandparents were very young. They would put the children into the boat for the trip to school, and once they were on the boat, they might be away from home for ten years. They were conditioned in the church school to speak English, and they were trained to be the kind of Christian expected by their denomination....The residential schools were usually a place of

incarceration, and they were run like a prison.... Their purpose was to separate children from the influence of their family, culture and language” (McKay and Silman, 1995, 12, 14). The result was a residential school generation who were Christian but had lost their Aboriginal spiritual, cultural, and family identity. The following non-residential school generations were marked by agnosticism and increasing chaos manifested in violence, alcoholism, and drug use.

In response to all of this, Aboriginal renewal movements arose aimed at a recovery of Aboriginal spirituality and self-identity. In addition, evangelical churches launched a missionary drive to save those lost in meaninglessness. Both of these responses awakened the United Church to the need for an apology to its own Aboriginal communities. The 1986 General Council Apology read in part: “We did not hear you when you shared your vision. In our zeal to tell you of the good news of Jesus Christ we were closed to the value of your spirituality.” The apology was acknowledged but not accepted. A Healing Fund was established by the United Church in response to the legacy of residential schools.

In 1998, a further apology was made for complicity in the residential schools. However, these insights and actions have not registered for many Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals at the local level. Thus the Circle and Cross Task Group saw a need to help the church (both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals) to actualize the apology.

History of the Task Group on the Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality (now called “Circle and Cross”)

The 36th General Council 1997, in receiving the study document on Jewish–United Church Relationships, *Bearing Faith Witness*, asked that the model of *Bearing Faith Witness* be used to explore relationships with Islam and Aboriginal spirituality. Subsequently the Interchurch Interfaith Committee appointed two groups, one dealing with Islam and the second with Aboriginal spirituality. The Task Group on United Church–Muslim Relations produced a study document entitled *That We May Know Each Other*. Results of that study are also before this General Council.

The Task Group on the Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality began its work in March 2000. The task group recognized a substantially different dynamic in its work than in the other two processes. The task group first saw its task as a continuation of the work begun in the 1986 apology. It acknowledged, therefore, the apology as a foundation and a starting place for its deliberations. It also recognized that Aboriginal spiritual traditions were not separate from or outside of the church but integral to the lives of many First Nations people within the church. The relationship was therefore both interfaith and intrafaith. Because of this it became clear that a significant focus would have to be on an internal process within the church.

The task group learned in its early meetings that careful attention must be paid to how the conversation between our communities is entered into and structured. There was concern that the process of the meetings value and honour the participation of all members of the group. With this in mind, the task group decided to meet as much as possible in future meetings in a Talking Circle. The task group also sought a broad participation of First Nations people involved in the United Church, with a specific focus on coastal B.C. and Six Nations. However, the group recognizes a need to continue to widen the conversation, particularly in relation to the work of

the Maritime Conference Task Group on Aboriginal Concerns and Relationships. There was also agreement that we needed to invite an Elder to join with us in the journey, as one who would have special care for the Circle and provide teaching on the Four Directions.

It was agreed that the church's work on its relationship with traditional spirituality could not be separated from the need for healing of relationships within the church between First Nations peoples and non-First Nations peoples. What was needed first, the task group agreed, was careful attention to how we listen to each other, to the processes of interaction between communities. In this sense the group saw its task as overlapping with the justice and reconciliation work presently underway.

The task group also saw the deep connection between respect in relationships and traditional spirituality. The teachings of the Four Directions emphasize this connectivity, lifting up the interrelatedness of all of creation. The interconnection of all circles point to the core of traditional spirituality of respect, that everything is alive, and that the Creator's presence is known everywhere. This is mirrored in the respectful listening of the Talking Circle. It was felt therefore that the teachings of the Four Directions and the experience of the Talking Circle provide a significant foundation for the awareness of and honouring of Traditional spirituality.

The task group thus developed a program of Talking Circles in Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, described below. The primary purpose of these gatherings was to develop a model of respectful listening and learning between our communities.

The Manitoba Circle, at the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, had strong leadership from a traditional Elder who provided smudging and Four Directions worship and teaching. However, participants were not given sufficient preparation and the Circle of 26 people proved to be too large. Breaking into male and female Talking Circles proved more effective.

At the Ontario Circle at the Five Oaks Centre, the presentation of Four Directions teaching and Talking Circle leadership by an Elder did not pose problems. However, the full range of Aboriginal spiritual practice was not represented.

In Alberta at the Rundle's Mission Conference Centre, exceptional leadership was provided by the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Elders who integrated spiritual teaching into the Talking Circle in a most effective way. Again the male and female Circles proved effective. The Circle felt safe enough for people to speak and sing in their own languages, which communicated at a depth beyond the rational. However, again the size of 25 people proved too large.

In British Columbia at the Wilp Si'Satxw Healing Centre, circumstances produced a Circle that was smaller (15 people), composed mainly of representatives of two (Gitskan) communities. This gave more time for relaxed sharing and created an element of trust. This trust was also strongly fostered by the Circle taking place in the Wilp Si'Satxw Healing Centre and Gitskan Territory and resulted in sharing at a very deep level, including oration in the Gitskan language. The separate groupings into Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Circles proved most significant in allowing the local Aboriginal community to give attention to language and spiritual teaching in

their own community. This led to the Circle being taken to the Gitskan sacred places and the sharing of their cultural history as present on their Totem Poles.

A Circle and Cross Process

The meetings of the task group and the pilot Circles showed the importance of meeting in carefully planned Talking Circles with Four Directions teachings offered by an Elder. This section of the report outlines principles for organizing a Circle and Cross gathering (Appendices I and II provide sample agendas). The process may need to be modified in particular contexts and situations and we hope congregations, presbyteries, districts, and Conferences may have ideas to improve the process that will be reported to the Executive of the General Council in 2009 (As well, in addition to the following guidelines for the Circle and Cross process, additional protocols are available from the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit for relationship building between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in response to the legacy of residential schools).

Planning

1. Invitations from the planning group asking for participants to dialogue and explore Aboriginal and Christian spiritualities need to be sent out well in advance, first to local contacts and then to the people to be invited. The invitations should clearly state the purpose and include information on Circle and Cross, resources, guidelines for respectful listening, and an agenda.
2. The number of people in a Circle should be no more than 15 to 20.
3. An Aboriginal Elder should be engaged as the Circle Keeper and should be involved as early as possible in the planning process.
4. A community-to-community conversation works best (involving an Aboriginal pastoral charge/congregation or community and a non-Aboriginal pastoral charge/congregation or community/communities). The pairing of an Aboriginal church with a non-Aboriginal church may not be possible in some areas, and exploration of other options is encouraged (see Appendix IV for some suggested engagement options).
5. Make arrangements for one Aboriginal and one non-Aboriginal person to function in the group as “listeners.” These people don’t take formal notes of the content of the Circles, instead they record (after the sessions) their observations of the process, mood, concerns, and dynamics of the Circle. These observations will be compiled into a report that goes to presbyteries, districts, Conferences, and the General Council Office.
6. Keep scheduled agenda events to a minimum. Allow plenty of time for breaks—encourage walks and informal conversations.
7. Plan to have a social evening the last night your group is together (or end your day-long meeting with a meal).
8. If possible, schedule informal exposure events where participants can tour the community and learn more about the people, history, culture, foods, etc.
9. Attempt to make numbers of men and women, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants roughly equal.
10. Try to encourage youth Circles in your area or include youth with the adult Circles.

Location

11. A Circle and Cross gathering works best in a residential setting such as a three-day retreat.

12. The process works best in territory and a space where non-Aboriginals are guests.
13. If you are meeting in a northern community, plan the event during optimal traveling months.

Process

14. The discussions should happen in a Talking Circle with teachings on the Four Directions by an Elder.
15. The Circle Keeper should be prepared to introduce and provide some teachings on Aboriginal symbols and rituals to be used in the Circle. Allow people the freedom to choose whether they want to participate in new rituals or to respectfully observe them in practice.
16. Use a video or DVD resource early in the gathering to focus the attention of the group. Resources such as *The Spirit in the Circle* or *The Dumont Brothers: Paths of the Spirit* (available through AVEL) can help focus the discussion.
17. Carefully craft discussion questions and keep them to a minimum. This will help to keep the focus on the mandate. However, be aware that the group may need to take the discussion into a new area (see Appendices I and II for sample questions).
18. Leadership needs to be prepared to help keep the focus of the Circle on United Church–Aboriginal dialogue and on sharing our spiritualities.
19. Invite people to pray and sing in their own languages and to incorporate meaningful symbols into the group’s worship.
20. Encourage the “listeners” to interview different participants throughout the retreat to get their insights to include in their report.
21. The planning committee (along with the “listeners”) should meet at the end of each day to debrief and monitor the process.

There is no room in this report to relate all the failures and successes that contributed to developing these guidelines. The partners in the dialogue had very different cultures and experiences. The predominantly White non-Aboriginal participants were often uncomfortable speaking from the heart about their own spirituality, tended to assume the universality of their culture, and were largely unaware of White privilege. The Aboriginal participants continue to be told by some Christian groups that their Traditional spirituality is evil, and to experience colonialism and racism in Canadian society.

Careful planning of Talking Circles with teachings on the Four Directions by an Aboriginal Elder was necessary so that both sides could begin a dialogue. The experience of the Talking Circles for participants was often profound. The task group recommends the Circle and Cross process as a way to actualize the apology that would integrate various initiatives and work toward the healing of the United Church. Toward that end, we offer the following recommendations, involving a three-phase process for engaging Conferences, congregations, and presbyteries in the Circle and Cross process, to be implemented from 2006 through 2012, with feedback on Phase I coming to the Executive of the General Council by March 2009.

Financial and Staff Implications for Phase I

1. That seed money be provided to fund the implementation of Phase I of this project through priorities set by presbyteries. (The task group suggests \$20,000 per Conference for two years: total \$260,000).

2. That the Program Coordinator, Interchurch Interfaith, continue to be the lead staff for this project, with assistance and support from the Coordinator of Aboriginal Ministries, and the General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice, as appropriate.

Task Group Members

The Interchurch Interfaith Committee expresses its appreciation to members of the Circle and Cross Task Group: Aileen Urquhart, Stan McKay, Murray Still (Anglican representative), Gladys Cook (Circle Keeper), Harold Coward, Charlotte Sanpare (2000–), Evelyn Broadfoot, Arthur Walker-Jones, Melody McKellar, Margret Kristjansson, Sandy Hill, Toby Howard (2004–2006).

Staff: Interchurch Interfaith Committee: Bruce Gregersen, Margaret Sumadh, Gail Allan; Racial Justice: Omega Bula, Wenh-In Ng; Aboriginal Ministries: Laverne Jacobs

Appendix A

MODEL CIRCLE AND CROSS PROCESS THREE-DAY GATHERING

Thursday

- 5:30 p.m. *Supper*
Opening worship (with teaching by Circle Keeper and/or Elders on the Talking Circle; Four Directions, etc.)
Introduction of participants; introduction to Circle and Cross
Video: *The Spirit in the Circle* (or regional Circle and Cross DVD)
Time for silent reflection
- 8:30 p.m. Closing prayer
Refreshments and conversation

Friday

- 8:00 a.m. *Breakfast*
- 9:00 a.m. Worship (opportunity for teachings by Elders)
Talking Circle (with sample questions)
Q: How does the video relate to your spiritual journey?
Q: In what ways does it connect?
Q: In what ways does it challenge you?
- 12:00 p.m. *Lunch*
- 1:30 p.m. Video: *The Dumont Brothers: Paths of the Spirit* (or another section of regional DVD)
Divide into Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Circles (with sample questions)
Non-Aboriginal:
Q: What changes do I/we need to make to be answerable to our own history?
Q: What changes are we already working on?
Aboriginal:
Q: What do we as Aboriginal people need to change or to reclaim to become the people and communities the Creator intended us to be?
Both groups:
Q: What spiritual and political choices am I being called to make?

5:00 p.m. Each group may be invited to prepare a message that they would want to offer to the other group.

5:30 p.m. *Supper*
Free evening with optional community event or exposure (this could also be a time for separate gender groups to meet—see question below).

Saturday

8:00 a.m. *Breakfast*

9:00 a.m. *Worship*

Talking Circle (sample questions on our learning and relationship-building)

Q: What thoughts, feelings, images, or learnings would you like to share based on the weekend so far?

Q: What helps and hinders relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people?

12:00 p.m. *Lunch*

1:30 p.m. Continue the Circle

Divide into male and female Circles (with sample questions)

Male:

Q: Are there issues in our relationships with one another that are particular to our experiences as men?

Female:

Q: Are there issues in our relationships with one another that are particular to our experiences as women?

Alternatively, a community exposure field trip could be planned.

5:30 p.m. *Supper* (may be planned as a special feast time)

Free evening with social or community event or exposure (where appropriate, this could include teaching on the Sweat Lodge with the option to participate in a Sweat).

Alternatively, this could be an opportunity to reflect individually, or in informal conversations, on ideas for future action.

Sunday

8:00 a.m. *Breakfast*

9:00 a.m. *Opening prayer*

Closing Circle (with sample questions)

Q: What gift do you take with you from your experience this weekend?

Q: What ideas do you have for follow-up in your community?

Closing worship ceremony

Lunch

Appendix B

MODEL CIRCLE AND CROSS GATHERING DAY-LONG PROCESS

Please Note: We recommend that a daylong process involve no more than 15 participants.

9:00 a.m. Registration, coffee and muffins, introductions

9:30 a.m.	Introduction to the Circle and Cross process
9:45 a.m.	Opening worship (could include teaching about the Talking Circle and Four Directions)
10:15 a.m.	Video (<i>Spirit in the Circle, Dumont Brothers</i> , Circle and Cross DVD)
10:45 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m.	Talking Circle (with sample questions) Q: How does the video relate to your spiritual journey? Q: In what ways does it connect? Q: In what ways does it challenge you?
12:30 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>
2:00 p.m.	Continue on with the morning Circle questions or use this sample question Q: What spiritual and political choices and changes are we being called to make, to be accountable in the context of our history?
4:00 p.m.	Final Talking Circle (with sample question) Q: What will we do to continue the process begun here today?
5:00 p.m.	Closing prayer/worship <i>Supper or feast</i> (optional) Departures

Appendix C

CIRCLE AND CROSS GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTFUL LISTENING

When we come together from different backgrounds, faiths, cultures, customs, and values, to share from our hearts the things that matter, let us come with the greatest of respect for each other.

We have valuable teachings that come from both the Aboriginal and the Christian traditions—from both the circle and the cross. Barriers that have existed in faith, gender, race and class are to be removed. Aboriginal teachings remind us that, gathered in the Circle, we are all equal—no one is better or higher than another. Christian teachings also invite us to see each other as equal. Our history, however, shows us the damage done when one group of people fail to honour and value the culture and traditions of another. We come together in this time with remnants of fear and anger, with suspicion and anxiety, and with guilt and shame.

- Let us be gentle with ourselves.
- Let us be gentle with each other.

Because of the history of discrimination by race, gender, class, age, orientation, education, and wealth, today's society still tends to value some things higher than others. In our gatherings, not only do we need to remember that all are equal, but we need to give extra time, space, and attention for the thoughts, words, and feelings of those from groups who in the past have been silenced and ignored.

In our gatherings, we will encounter thoughts and experiences different from our own. An Elder's wisdom reminds us that, "my truth does not deny your truth." Indeed, "truth" may be

larger and greater than anything each of us may offer. In the Circle, we are all teachers and we are all learners.

- *Let us listen*—with open hearts and soul as well as minds.
- *Let us wait*—for greater understanding, for the coming of wisdom before we ask more questions, jump to conclusions, pass judgment.
- *Let us respect*—what each of us offers as a gift from the Creator.

In the Circle, we invite people to speak—one at a time. The rest of us listen without interrupting. We realize that for those unused to this way of listening and learning, this can be hard and we ask your patience. The Circle is a place for listening rather than debate. Since the Circle is a time for listening, we ask those who are used to writing notes, to put away pen and paper and just listen. We invite people to speak out of their own experience, of both life and of the sacred. This may be a very different experience from others' and we ask that we honour people's experience. We ask that everyone try to honour the time together and that, barring emergencies, we will attend as fully to the Circle as we are able. We also recognize that at times the Circle may be hard emotionally and spiritually and that people may need to leave for a while. We ask that you do not book any appointments or activities during our gathering time so that we may all be fully present.

Some practical considerations: the leaders of the gathering will try to explain as best they can what will be happening during worship and ceremonies. Questions are always welcome. You are invited to take part in all of the gathering. But, if you feel unable to participate in particular parts, please let the leaders know.

As part of the Circle and Cross process, there may be opportunities to participate in Traditional ceremonies. When such opportunities arise, please ask your leaders about local traditions. In some traditions, women who are menstruating (on their moon time) do not take part in some ceremonies. The moon time is a very sacred time for them. Some gatherings will respectfully ask women to bring a skirt or dress to wear during traditional ceremonial times.

Appendix D

ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

We recommend that the following options of engagement of the Circle and Cross process be eligible for Conference funding/subsidies:

1. Dialogue between an Aboriginal pastoral charge, congregation, or community and a non-Aboriginal pastoral charge, congregation, or community or communities using or adapting the process suggested in the report
2. Inclusion of a Circle and Cross component or focus in an existing Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal dialogue such as "Towards Justice and Right Relationship"
3. Dialogue between an Aboriginal resource person or persons with a non-Aboriginal pastoral charge or congregation, presbytery, or community using or adapting the Circle and Cross process as suggested
4. Local ecumenical engagement in Aboriginal communities/faith communities using or adapting the Circle and Cross process

Appendix E

Contact list

Sofia Jamieson
Evelyn Broadfoot
Margret Kristjansson
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Stan McKay
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Guy Frigon

A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION FOR THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA (Green)

Origin: Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry
Ethnic Ministries Re-visioning Task Group

Summary

In the company of God and one another, our community can be transformative. Ethnic Ministries believes that God is calling us to transformation as individuals, as communities, and as church, with all the life-giving traditions, faiths, and cultures we have been gifted with for God's mission.

From 2005-2006, Ethnic Ministries conducted extensive re-visioning processes to reflect on a transformative vision for The United Church of Canada. To facilitate shaping this vision for the whole Church, Ethnic Ministries conducted several focus groups across the country; consulted with ethnic minority and ethnic majority constituents; conferred with leaders from both Aboriginal and Francophone communities; met with leaders involved with urban ministries; gathered insights from senior staff in the General Council Offices, Conferences, and presbyteries; collected information from Statistics Canada; and consulted with many individuals and congregations in Church with varying degrees of connection to Ethnic Ministries or none at all, including those in rural contexts. Through these conversations and consultations, a vision emerged of a national church where the intercultural¹⁶ dimension of ministries is emphasized as a denominational priority.

In sharing this renewed vision for God's mission in this time, Ethnic Ministries recalls our denomination's historical involvement in "social betterment", from the time of our founding denominations, through to our most recent efforts. The United Church of Canada has always strived to be a justice-seeking, responsive, and inclusive church, and has responded to changing societal times through the ordination of women, participation in global ecumenical coalitions, the fight against apartheid, the creation of the All Native Circle Conference, the apology to First

¹⁶ Intercultural: referring to mutually reciprocal relationships among and between cultures (Canadian Oxford English Dictionary).

Nations peoples, the ordination of gay and lesbian peoples, the creation of Ethnic Ministries, the adoption of an anti-racism policy, and the creation of Ministries in French. Each of these actions was and is in keeping with the tradition of a responsive church striving towards inclusivity and racial justice in its time.

The United Church of Canada has also historically recognized that it is often people on the margins who offer leadership as gifts for the whole church: women have offered leadership in dismantling the injustice of patriarchy; gay and lesbian peoples have offered leadership in dismantling the invisible privileges of heterosexism; Aboriginal peoples have offered leadership in dismantling the injustice of colonialism. In the early Christian church there was also insightful leadership from those on the margins for those in their diverse community. As The United Church of Canada moves towards a denominational priority on intercultural ministries in culturally diverse contexts, ethnic minority peoples—as people on the margins—can offer guidance, wisdom, and insightful leadership as gifts for the wholeness of the church. This insightful leadership offered by people on the margins is consistent with the biblical precedent, a racial justice perspective, and the vision offered in the Future Directions document (2001) where “The General Council Offices need to move ... to a place of deep listening to, and engagement with those who have been called ‘others’”.

Cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity were the context of the early Christian church, and remain the context of the church today. In keeping with the United Church’s justice-seeking and inclusive history, it is imperative for the Church to respond to today’s intercultural reality.

The United Church of Canada has always strived to be a justice-seeking, responsive, and inclusive church. Ethnic Ministries therefore recommends to the 39th General Council 2006 that The United Church of Canada declare itself to become an intercultural church, and that intercultural dimension of ministries be a denominational priority in its commitment to racial justice, where there is mutually respectful diversity and full and equitable participation of all Aboriginal, Francophone, ethnic minority, and ethnic majority constituencies in the total life, mission, and practices of the whole Church. A number of specific strategies accompany this recommendation.

As the Ethnic Ministries Unit offers leadership in shaping this mutually inclusive vision of ethnic ministries and intercultural ministries for the whole Church, Ethnic¹⁷ Ministries also recommends that the name of the Unit be changed to suit its expanding work, and that the new name of the unit be Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry.

Preamble

This report is written with deep respect and in recognition of the primacy of Aboriginal peoples, who are the First Peoples of the land on which we live, as we strive towards walking together in justice and right relations with each other. This report is also written with deep respect for Francophone peoples, whose language and culture in an officially bilingual country are an

¹⁷ The term *ethnic* has Greek origins meaning heathen, (*ethnikos*) i.e. neither Jew nor Christian, and nation (*ethnos*) and *ethnic* is presently understood as non-Western cultural traditions; it has been used to further marginalize minority groups which differ from the main population in racial origin or ethnic cultural background.

integral part of the land that we live on, as we strive together to proclaim God's word in French, English, and many other languages.

This report strives to live out the vision that was shared in the Future Directions document (2001), where "our traditional structure is conciliar—that is, we believe that we need to speak and act with one another, empowered by the Spirit, rather than as individuals, and that each Court has its appropriate authority and jurisdiction... we need to serve and minister from an attitude of equality and respect... This respect must extend beyond the human family to the environment and to the whole of God's creation."

Thus, in sharing a renewed vision of God's mission for the whole church in this time, this report continues conversations that have already begun with Aboriginal Ministries, Ministries in French, and Ethnic Ministries; and is not a competition for resources among these groups of peoples. Ethnic Ministries is not proposing that these three constituencies become absorbed into the Ethnic Ministries mandate; rather this report is about collaboration, accompaniment, and partnership among distinct cultural communities. The United Church of Canada has sought to be a justice-seeking, responsive, and inclusive church, and this report seeks to faithfully respond to the changing Canadian context today.

A denominational emphasis on intercultural ministries would deepen the relationships among and between the peoples that make up this country and church, including Aboriginal peoples, Francophone peoples, ethnic minority peoples, and ethnic majority peoples. It is in nurturing these relational spaces between and among cultures that we move closer to becoming a racially just church.

This report is also presented as a gift, whereby The United Church of Canada can expand ministries for cultural diversity, and where there is a racial justice context for considering how these ministries manifest themselves both inside and outside of the church. The lead unit for these ministries would, in collaboration with others, work towards the transformation of the whole church.

Introduction

From September 2005 to March 2006, Ethnic Ministries conducted extensive re-visioning processes to reflect on a transformative vision for The United Church of Canada. The first phase of the re-visioning processes included several focus groups, which were held across the country with a diversity of participants. The gathered groups evaluated the original goals and mandate of the Ethnic Ministries Unit, and visualized new areas of ministry for the Unit and for the whole church.

More than half of the focus groups participants included people who were connected to Ethnic Ministries' mission over the past ten years: members of Ethnic Ministries congregations, people who had participated in Ethnic Ministries conferences and events but who were not members of Ethnic Ministries congregations, and church staff whose responsibilities included Ethnic Ministries work. The rest of the focus group participants included ethnic minority and ethnic majority peoples; people who had very little or no connection with Ethnic Ministries over the past ten years; people from other denominations; and new immigrants who were members of an

English speaking ethnic majority congregation but whose first language was not English. All of the focus groups included male and female, clergy and lay, rural and urban communities, and people from a variety of ages and racial backgrounds.

The second phase of the re-visioning process included additional consultations with ethnic minority and ethnic majority constituents; discussions with leaders from both Aboriginal and Francophone communities; meetings with leaders involved with urban ministries; interviews with senior staff in the General Council Offices, Conferences, and presbyteries; collection of information from Statistics Canada; and consultations with many individuals and congregations in Church with varying degrees of connection to Ethnic Ministries or none at all, including those in rural contexts.

From these different groups of peoples, a clear vision of ministry in cultural diversity began to emerge. Focus group participants, and interviewees, overwhelmingly affirmed that the original goals and directions for the Ethnic Ministries Council—approved by the 35th General Council 1994—are still very relevant and critical at this time. Participants shared that the future mandate for Ethnic Ministries should give particular emphasis to the focus areas of diverse cultural communities, communication and relationship building, and education. Participants also stressed that ministries in these areas—particularly those ministries with culturally diverse communities—must be built on a foundation of racial justice.

Many of those consulted during the re-visioning process shared that in light of Canada's culturally diverse context, The United Church of Canada is called to respond faithfully to ministry and mission in culturally diverse contexts, and from a racially just perspective. Focus group participants were also clear that a denominational emphasis on intercultural ministries needs to include ethno-specific or language-specific congregations as well as culturally diverse congregations; a variety of congregational models are needed to meet the challenge of transformation and to help congregations move towards becoming mutually welcoming, anti-racist, intercultural communities in a culturally diverse society. According to The Right Rev. Peter Short, the Moderator of The United Church of Canada, "genuine unity is made of diverse constituents; otherwise our unity degenerates into uniformity by assimilation" (*The United Church Observer*, March 2006). A transformative vision for intercultural ministries must allow for diverse ways of being church together.

Many focus group participants and interviewees identified the complexities of a vision of an intercultural church but noted that this vision will require new paradigms of mutuality. The superficial multiculturalism of the 1970s no longer fits the Church. As a "federal policy in Canada since 1971, multiculturalism endorses equal status for all cultures and encourages Canadians to recognize contributions made by the diversity of Canadian residents. However, the concept does not explain racism or its role in preventing equal participation in society by racialized groups."¹⁸

Maintaining or continuing to build a new hierarchy of "exoticized" gifts, raising up one ethnic group over another to be closer to the ethnic majority colour or culture, has not, and will not be constructive, for the Church's mission and ministry. The 21st century call is for an intercultural

¹⁸ Lopes, Tina and Barb Thomas, "Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations". Toronto, 2006.

inclusivity that is a celebration of wholeness of life; one that also includes pain and suffering, contradictions, and mutual care for the fragility of trust and respect.

“We live in a diverse world. The migration of people has meant that all of our societies have become multi-cultural.

(Yet) we draw lines between ourselves and others in ways that are hurtful.

One way of enriching our fellowship of sharing is by transforming the way we relate to each other

—a horizontal sharing of the gifts of grace.”

- Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, General Secretary, World Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, shares his vision of a transformative “horizontal sharing of the gifts of grace” in the ways we relate to each other. In this time, The United Church of Canada is called to recognize the gifts of grace in its midst and outside its doors, unearned gifts of grace to be shared in multiple ways.

In sharing this renewed vision for God’s mission in this time, The United Church has historically responded to changing times through the ordination of women, the creation of the All Native Circle Conference, participation in global ecumenical coalitions, the apology to First Nations peoples, the ordination of gay and lesbian peoples, the fight against apartheid, the creation of Ethnic Ministries, the adoption of an anti-racism policy, and the creation of Ministries in French. Each of these actions was in keeping with the tradition of a responsive church striving towards inclusivity and racial justice in its time.

Cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity were the context of the early Christian church, and remain the context of the church today. In keeping with the United Church’s justice-seeking and inclusive history, it is imperative for the Church to respond to today’s intercultural reality.

Background

“It shall be the policy of the United Church

to foster the spirit of unity in the hope that this sentiment of unity may (in due time, so far as Canada is concerned),

take shape in a Church which may fittingly be described as national.”

- *Basis of Union, 1925*

In a continuing spirit of unity in the national church, Ethnic Ministries has been dreaming of a vision of a transformed United Church of Canada. It is a vision of a national church that openly identifies itself as a church that is welcoming and inclusive of racial and ethnic cultural diversity in an evolving Canada that is now uniquely intercultural. It is a vision of a national church that neither devalues urban or small town or rural realities nor unfairly favours one over another. It is a vision of a church that acts upon its commitment to grow in faith to Jesus Christ and to join with others in living out its commitment to racial justice in all places to create a national church: “...where all are welcome, where all feel welcome, and where diversity is as natural as breathing” (*The United Church of Canada’s Anti-Racism Policy Statement, 2000*).

It is a vision of a United Church of Canada that we want to become but are not yet.

Racial and ethnic cultural diversity is understood presently to be limited to a numerical and visible plurality of different cultural appearances and practices. Celebrating these differences neither removes nor solves the unwelcoming and discriminatory barriers that are real in the church. At the same time, many racial ethnic minority peoples are not first-generation immigrants and have been in Canada for many generations, as have people of European ancestry. Ethnic Ministries constituencies need more partners in the church to be actively engaged in the systemic transformational work that racial justice requires.

“Multicultural ministries is not just part of the ministry of the United Church; it is the ministry of the whole church.”

- Pastor Bayani Baybay, Lakeview Multicultural United Church

Why Ethnic Ministries is Re-Visioning

The 35th General Council 1994 voted overwhelmingly in favour of establishing the Ethnic Ministries Council (EMC) recognizing that. *“Canadian society is experiencing a rapid and substantial change in its ‘racial-ethnic’ and cultural composition, (and) The United Church of Canada is challenged by this change and called to ministry for the whole people of God in Canada, and the world” (Report on the Proposed Model for the Ethnic Ministries Council of The United Church of Canada to the 35th General Council, August 19-28, 1994).*

After more than 80 years of mission and ministry with ethnic minorities and ethnic minority congregations in The United Church of Canada, the Ethnic Ministries Council was inaugurated in 1996. It became the sixth national Division of the General Council Office, gaining structural presence, budget resources, program staffing, and greater access to decision making and participation. Following the restructuring of the General Council Offices in 2001, Ethnic Ministries is now one of 10 program units.

Since 1996, demographic and cultural transformations in Canadian society have continued to escalate dramatically, and present unrelenting challenges to the church. It is clear that the church has not adequately faced or addressed the trends and issues that these changes will bring. A growing number of formerly thriving congregations are dwindling, amalgamating or closing. Yet, 20 per cent of Canada’s population will be racial ethnic minority peoples by the year 2010 (Statistics Canada), and the number of non-European peoples in Canada is expected to double by 2017 (March 23, 2005, Globe and Mail). Studies and surveys show that systemic obstacles and barriers continue to block racial ethnic minority peoples and Aboriginal peoples from participating fully in the life of both church and society.

*“It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to ...
(b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism
is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity
and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada’s future.”*

- Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1971

Over the years Ethnic Ministries has heard the growing cry in the church at large for more support for the intercultural church that we are and should be becoming. Celebration of diversity

is only the beginning. The term “multicultural” church is problematic and loaded with political baggage. Ethnic Ministries is working to create a mutually safe space where “multicultural” can be expanded to include any congregation or group of people with monocultural similarities, and to begin to de-construct the benevolent assimilation of minorities into the dominant culture.

The United Church of Canada was created on Native land, where over 56 Aboriginal First Nations spoke more than 30 languages. Ethnic Ministries has worked hard to understand what First Nations peoples have lost and the gifts they continue to give, even as many ethnic minorities have joined the United Church more recently.

“...we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors, and therefore, we must also bear their burdens.”

“...we commit ourselves to work toward ensuring that we will never again use our power as a Church to hurt others with attitudes of racial and spiritual superiority” (Apology to Former Students of United Church Indian Residential Schools, and to their Families and Communities, 1998).

Biblical Imperative

*“If we change the stories we live by,
quite possibly we change our lives.”*

- Ben Okri, Nigerian storyteller

There was never a time when this land was not a moving diaspora of diverse creation and peoples; where all lived both in harmony and tension; where some lived in the same culture and some in different cultures; where cultural differences of peoples meant an asymmetry of one culture’s power over others and often served as a fortification of the Christian empire. But when White Nation¹⁹ memories recall a tradition severed from its diasporic tradition, God reminds us of the immigrant heritage of all newcomers, “Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel? Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt?” (Amos 9: 7). For, “you shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19).

White Nations²⁰ peoples were also once strangers loved by God. There are now new strangers outside the United Church, loved by God but not by us. There are even those within the United Church, also loved by God, yet whom we consider strangers and do not love. If God indeed “shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34-35), then we are challenged to humble ourselves.

“We don’t see things as they are, we see things as we are.”

- Anais Nin

Diversity is not a special new gift of God in this 21st century. The Bible is itself a testament to the intercultural world of multiple faiths. Jesus, with his own cultural prejudices, was challenged to embrace all the peoples he did not think his vision was meant to include. The early church did not have a special multicultural mission apart from its “real” mission. Its mission context *was* culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse:

¹⁹ The term *White Nation* comes from First Nations communities, as a way of identifying people who have come to their Native lands from other places.

²⁰ *Ibid*

“From the beginning the disciple community was surrounded by different cultures and faiths. This community made its way in that multicultural world and grew through its life and witness. From that life, the early Christians were empowered to serve God’s world and to love their neighbours as they had been loved by Jesus Christ” (Reconciling and Making New: Who is Jesus for the World Today? 2000).

In sharing this renewed vision for God’s mission in this time, Ethnic Ministries recalls our denomination’s historical involvement in “social betterment”, from the time of our founding denominations, through to our most recent efforts. The United Church of Canada has always strived to be a justice-seeking, responsive, and inclusive church, and has responded to changing societal times through the ordination of women, participation in global ecumenical coalitions, the fight against apartheid, the creation of the All Native Circle Conference, the apology to First Nations peoples, the ordination of gay and lesbian peoples, the creation of Ethnic Ministries, the adoption of an anti-racism policy, and the creation of Ministries in French. Each of these actions was and is in keeping with the tradition of a responsive church striving towards inclusivity and racial justice in its time.

The cultural diversities of the early church were laden with complex cross-cultural differences between the dominant culture and the cultures dominated over. Yet, the end time also has a vision of diversity:

“And there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” “Then one of the elders addressed me saying, ‘who are these, ...and where have they come from?’... ‘These are they who have come out of the great ordeal...’” (Revelations 7:9-17).

From its location on the margins of the United Church, Ethnic Ministries looks not to the one centre but to a multiplicity of centres beyond the margins.

The United Church of Canada has historically recognized that it is often people on the margins who offer leadership as gifts for the whole church: women have taught others about patriarchy; gay and lesbian people have taught others about heterosexism. In the early Christian church there was also insightful leadership from those on the margins for those in their diverse community. As The United Church of Canada moves towards a denominational priority on intercultural ministries in a culturally diverse context, ethnic minority peoples can offer guidance, wisdom, and insightful leadership as gifts for the wholeness of the church. This insightful leadership offered by people on the margins is consistent with the biblical precedent, a racial justice perspective, and the vision offered in the Future Directions document (2001) where “The General Council Offices need to move ... to a place of deep listening to, and engagement with those who have been called ‘others’”.

In the early Christian church there was also leadership from the margins. In one such story, a simple offering of food from a marginalized member of the community turns into a feast for all; “they ate and were filled” (Luke 8:8). Jesus reflects that he has “compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me...” (Luke 8:2a). In today’s time, ethnic minority peoples—who

have been with the church for generations—offer and share gifts of leadership as people from the margins so that all may feast together, and that all may be filled as we strive together towards the transformation of the whole church.

In sharing this vision for the whole church, Ethnic Ministries recalls the vision that is shared in Ephesians 2:17-22: “So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.”

Task Group Members:

Bayani Baybay, Hazel Bigby (Past Chair, Ethnic Ministries), Diana Sung, George Takashima (Chair, Ethnic Ministries), Jean Ward, Steve Willey, Richard Choe (Executive Minister, Ethnic Ministries), Wenh-In Ng (Interim General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice), Kim Uyede-Kai (General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice)

Staff Support:

Adele Halliday, Karl Lam, Sofia Murillo

Vision

We are the living body of Christ—a faithful call to be church and join Christ’s mission in love and compassion;

We are dying in the body of Christ—to exclusivity that creates and maintains alienation, barriers and obstacles to access for racial and ethnic minorities in the church;

We are the body of Christ rising on Native land, rising in humbling respect for First Peoples—to a resurrection hope for respectful diversity, differences, and an openness to God doing a new thing in The United Church of Canada.

The time has come for the United Church to be seriously challenged by the potential gifts of Canadian demographic trends and to revisit the challenge of the 1994 theological statement made by the Feasibility Task Group on Ethnic Ministries:

“We, the peoples of racial and ethnic minorities within The United Church of Canada, come from diverse civilizations, birth places, cultures, languages, faiths, and life contexts.

We are sojourners who experience exodus and exile ... continue to be nameless ... where God has different names ... where cultural diversity is not yet a reality.

The Church is not whole; the Church is broken. This is sin. ...

We, the racial and ethnic minorities of The United Church of Canada invite the whole church to join us as we pursue this vision.”

It is a theological challenge of the sinned against, the dominated over, not a theology of the sinner, the dominator. A theology from the underside. A theology of mutual invitation. The time has come to *live* the vision, not simply pursue it.

“The Gospel calls us all to transformation. My culture is not exempt.”

- Uncredited. First International Network Forum on Multicultural Ministry, World Council of Churches, Sydney, Australia, 1999

Transformation is a priority of God’s dynamic agenda. God wants us to be agents of transformation in partnership with Godself, for in God, “all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). Cross-cultural diversity, with its agenda of cultural difference and the tensions and anxieties they elicit, must also address justice issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Ethnic Ministries believes that God is calling us to transformation as individuals, as communities, as church, with all the traditions and cultures we have been gifted with. Not one thing will be left untouched in God’s transformative power, including our culture that is the intersection of our beliefs, our values, our worldviews, our language(s), our customs, our traditions, our ethnic heritages, our memories. Are we willing to risk letting go of our hold on our cultures to God’s transformation and grieve the passing of old structures and unearned privileges?

“The new community in Jesus Christ invites its members into the risk of creating new relationships of mutual assistance and life shared with others” (Reconciling and Making New: Who is Jesus for the World Today? 2000).

*“Vision without action is a daydream.
Action without vision is a nightmare.”*
- Japanese proverb

As The United Church of Canada struggles to embrace the “changed” realities of the ministry contexts of Canada, the Task Group believes that the imposition of structural uniformity—such as structural sameness—on Ethnic Ministries like the rest of the program units is going to be detrimental to its future ministry. Ethnic Ministries needs creative freedom so that it could exercise and practice ministries in ways that the dominant White ethnic group has not yet been able to envision and/or live out thus far.

Thus, in sharing a renewed vision of God’s mission for the whole church in this time, this report continues conversations that have already begun with Aboriginal Ministries, Ministries in French, and Ethnic Ministries; and is not a competition for resources among these groups of peoples. The Re-Visioning Task Group believes that the currency of mutuality allows for creative freedom to be different and still be in interdependent relationship with the whole church, and that transformative vision for intercultural ministries must allow for diverse ways of being church together. The Re-Visioning Task Group also believes that a close working relationship with Aboriginal Ministries and Ministries in French is one way of expanding the margin and continuing the process of horizontal sharing of the gifts of grace with whole church.

Willingness to live in a culturally diverse society in mutuality requires the United Church’s commitment for transformation of itself into a space where new paradigms of mutuality, decolonization, polycentric power and cultures, and openness to God’s possibilities are practiced.

Such commitment, the Re-Visioning Task Group believes, is what God calls us to envision as the United Church faithfully responds to God's mission in this time.

APPENDIX A

A. Proposed Financial Breakdown (for information)

- Task Group on Intercultural Ministries: \$50,000

National consultation on intercultural ministries with representatives from Aboriginal Ministries, Ministries in French, and Ethnic Ministries, and the General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice: \$40,000

- National consultation on intercultural ministries with representatives from Ethnic Ministries, other appropriate units, and the General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice: \$40,000
- Three-year salary for one contract program staff lodged in Ethnic Ministries to coordinate the work of the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries: \$180,000
- Three-year travel budget for one contract program staff: \$20,000

Total: \$330,000.00

B. Timeframe from 2006-2009:

Following General Council:

- Recruitment and hiring of contract program staff for intercultural ministries
- Begin planning for the national consultation on intercultural ministries with representatives from Aboriginal Ministries, Ministries in French, and Ethnic Ministries, and General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice

Year 1:

- Inter-unit staff teams begin work on intercultural ministries
- National consultation on intercultural ministries, with representatives from Aboriginal Ministries, Ministries in French, and Ethnic Ministries, and General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice, with membership as follows:
 - volunteers from Aboriginal Ministries
 - volunteers from Ministries in French
 - volunteers from Ethnic Ministries
 - staff (Executive Minister of Ethnic Ministries, General Council Minister: Racial Justice and Gender Justice, contract program staff on intercultural ministries)
- Members of Task Group on Intercultural Ministries are identified, with membership as follows:
 - volunteers, who are named by representatives at the 1st national consultation on intercultural ministries
 - staff (Executive Minister of Ethnic Ministries, General Council Minister: Racial Justice and Gender Justice, contract program staff on intercultural ministries)

Year 2:

- Task Group on Intercultural Ministries continues to do research and compile information about contemporary models of intercultural ministries
- First national consultation on intercultural ministries reports to Task Group on Intercultural Ministries

- Inter-unit staff teams report back to the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries
- National consultation on intercultural ministries with representatives from Ethnic Ministries, other appropriate units, and the General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice, with membership as follows:
 - volunteers from the first national consultation
 - volunteers from ethnic majority heritages
 - volunteers at large (which would include Aboriginal, Francophone, ethnic minority, and ethnic majority peoples)
 - members of the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries
 - staff (Executive Minister of Ethnic Ministries, General Council Minister, Racial Justice and Gender Justice, contract program staff on intercultural ministries)

Year 3:

- Task Group on Intercultural Ministries continues to do research and compile information about contemporary models of intercultural ministries
- Results of the second national consultation on intercultural ministries be reported to the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries
- Task Group on Intercultural Ministries report through unit channels to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry to go to the Executive of the General Council by March 2009 on recommendations from the research, analysis, results of the consultations, and inter-unit staff teams.

MANUAL COMMITTEE REPORT (Green)

Origin: John H. Young, Chairperson, Manual Committee

The Manual Committee is not located within any of the Permanent Committees of the General Council. It serves the Church at the pleasure of, and through the office of, the General Secretary. Its responsibilities are to propose wording for the amendment of existing by-laws or the creation of new ones in light of policy changes enacted by the General Council, to address gaps or inconsistencies in existing by-laws, and, when requested, to offer advice about by-laws to the General Secretary.

The Committee welcomed a new member, Michael Hare, at the beginning of the triennium. Another new member, whose nomination had been approved by the 38th General Council 2003, proved unable to join the Committee.

The Committee met on four occasions during the triennium—in the fall of each of 2003, 2004, and 2005, and during the winter of 2006. The primary agenda item for the meeting in the fall of 2003 was drafting Proposals for new or amended by-laws to take account of Decisions made by the 38th General Council that had met in Wolfville in August, 2003. Drafting Proposals for the 39th General Council 2006 took much of our time during the meetings of the fall of 2005 and the winter of 2006. One change in the pattern of meeting agenda that we introduced this triennium, and a change we plan to continue, was to devote a significant portion of time during the fall

meeting in the middle of the triennium to consider gaps or inconsistencies or problematic areas in our governance, gaps, inconsistencies, and problems that arise from the way the provisions of the by-laws are lived out in the Church. Members of the Manual Committee raised some of these issues from their own experience of the Church; others came to us via questions or correspondence. Devoting this block of time has allowed us to discuss and to address some of these issues in a proactive way that we believe will prove helpful for the Church. We continue to be grateful to persons who write to us with questions or concerns about the functioning of particular by-laws in the life of the Church.

The current (2004) edition of *The Manual* was made available on line in a “print only” format. Response to having *The Manual* available in this way has been positive. Over the past several triennia we have been asked to consider indicating in some way which by-laws have been amended or added when a new edition of *The Manual* is published. The next edition of *The Manual* will indicate, probably via a notation in the margin, which sections have changed from the previous edition. It is our intention to maintain this practice for future editions beyond the one that will be published in 2007.

We received, via correspondence from a Presbytery Secretary, the suggestion that future editions of *The Manual* contain all rulings and opinions that relate to particular by-laws. The Committee considered this suggestion carefully, but decided not to include ruling and opinions in the printed text of future editions of *The Manual* for two reasons. First, a ruling could be appealed and therefore changed after an edition of *The Manual* had gone to print. Second, such a “rulings and opinions” section printed in *The Manual* would quickly be out of date as the “current edition” would not include any opinions and rulings issued subsequent to its publication. What we have recommended, however, is that rulings and opinions be made available on the Church’s web site along with the “on line” version of *The Manual*; in that way, interested parties would have access to a list that was regularly updated.

In addition to drafting proposed language for some new or amended by-laws in light of Decisions made by the 38th General Council 2003, two matters came to us from that General Council. One was a request to draft a definition for the term “Active Member.” The Committee discussed this matter at length. This term “active” as a modifier of “member” is used only in § 22(b)i as one of the requirements for a person to become an Inquirer. In that instance the current wording indicates that the Session or Church Board or Church Council should determine “what constitutes requisite activity.” The Manual Committee judges that this practice is much preferable to the Committee drafting a definition so that the United Church has yet one more term describing what it means to be a “member” of the United Church. The Manual Committee will continue in the next triennium to discuss the different terms found in *The Manual* to describe membership in the United Church with a view to determining whether greater consistency could be achieved.

The other matter referred to us by the Executive of the General Council was a motion passed at the 38th General Council 2003 concerning “deficiencies” in the appeal process. Both because of this motion and because of some concerns with the way the “Appeals” process is currently being lived out in our denomination, we spent significant time on this subject. Several resolutions being presented to this General Council by the General Secretary endeavour to deal with these

concerns, both by revising the “Appeals” section itself for greater clarity around the grounds for appeal and by changing other sections of *The Manual* that have inadvertently worked against what would be perceived as natural justice.

In the course of producing the current edition [33rd Revised Edition, 2004], the words “of a routine or emergency nature” were inappropriately deleted from § 524(c) as an editorial change. That section, in describing the powers of the Executive of the General Council, should have read: “to do any thing of a routine or emergency nature which the General Council has power to do, except in any case in which the General Council has decided it should not exercise such powers.” When the matter was called to the attention of the General Secretary by a member of the United Church, the matter was discussed again by the Manual Committee. It became clear, in this subsequent discussion, that the words “of a routine or emergency nature” were intended to describe ends of a continuum or range of possible actions. The Executive of the General Council has power only to act at the ends of that range of possible actions (i.e., when a matter is either “routine” or when an “emergency” exists). The General Secretary, in response to the expressed concern, agreed that the inappropriately deleted words would be restored in the next edition of *The Manual* and that § 524(c) would be read between now and the publication of the next edition of *The Manual* as though the deleted words were present.

Correspondence to the Manual Committee alerted the Committee of the need to ascertain whether a section of the Basis of Union under the heading of “The Settlement Committee” had inadvertently been modified when that portion of the Basis of Union was re-organized following a remit authorized by the 32nd General Council 1988 and approved by a majority of the Presbyteries in 1989. The text of the remit sent out to Presbyteries in 1989 makes clear that a section that had clearly been intended to be phrased one way had somehow been altered when the revised text of the Basis of Union was presented to the 33rd General Council 1990 and subsequently printed in the 28th Revised Edition [1991] of *The Manual*. The altered section, which had been in § 9 of the Basis of Union in the 27th revised edition (1989) of *The Manual*, was relocated to § 6.4.13 in the 28th revised edition (1991) and in subsequent editions of *The Manual*. Since the remit circulated to Presbyteries in 1989 indicated different wording for this section, the next edition of *The Manual* will need to rectify the matter.

At its meeting in the fall of 2004 and again in its meeting of the fall of 2005, the Manual Committee engaged in substantial discussion concerning the remit formula. This formula is the means by which it is determined whether a proposed change to the Basis of Union, which requires a vote by Presbyteries (and, in some instances, Pastoral Charges also), has received sufficient support from the Presbyteries (and, if they are polled, the Pastoral Charges also) to be enacted. At the conclusion of those discussions in the fall of 2005, the Committee had come to the view that the change to the remit formula initiated via remit by the 32nd General Council 1988 and ratified by the 33rd General Council 1990 was *ultra vires*. The Committee concluded that the remit formula was one of three “conditions and safeguards” named in The United Church of Canada Act (1924) [and in the concomitant legislation passed in all nine provincial legislatures, in Newfoundland, and in Bermuda], as the only restrictions on the General Council’s broad powers to pass any necessary by-laws and to amend the Basis of Union. Given the potential seriousness of this conclusion, the Manual Committee decided to ask for an outside legal opinion concerning whether the General Council had the authority to change the remit

formula or whether such a change could be done only by legislative statute. The legal opinion we received stated the “General Council did not have the power to alter the remit formula set out in section 24 of the Basis of Union” [as found in The United Church of Canada Act (1924)]. The result of this conclusion would be that we would revert to the remit formula as it existed from 1925 to the 33rd General Council 1990 and that remits passed since 1990 under the new formula that would not have passed under the old formula were void.

The original remit formula required 50% + 1 of the Presbyteries to vote in favour of a change of the Basis of Union before the proposed change could be enacted. In effect, a non-response was a “no” vote in this formula. In order for a change to the Basis of Union to be enacted, it required the expressed approval of a majority of the Presbyteries.

In 1988, the General Council passed a motion to change the remit formula so that, provided at least two-thirds of the Presbyteries responded, a majority vote of those responding was sufficient to pass a remit and thereby make possible a change to the Basis of Union. This proposed change was approved by a majority of the Presbyteries and the 33rd General Council 1990 ratified this change to the remit formula. The effect of the change was to make it possible for a change to the Basis of Union to be enacted with fewer than 50% of all the Presbyteries expressing approval; theoretically, it would be possible, under the revised formula, to have a change in the Basis of Union approved with the support of only 34% of all the Presbyteries. In other words, General Council, via these changes in the remit formula, intended to make it easier to change the Basis of Union. A straightforward reading of the Record of Proceedings from the 32nd General Council 1988 makes clear that such was purpose of the proposed change to the remit formula.

Given the Manual Committee’s view that the remit formula was one of the three “conditions and safeguards” that the United Church did not, under The United Church of Canada Act, have the power to change, a view buttressed by the legal opinion the Manual Committee had received, the Manual Committee reported its conclusions to the meeting of the Executive of the General Council held April 28-May 1, 2006, and proposed to the Executive of the General Council that the General Secretary be asked to issue a ruling as to whether the General Council had acted *ultra vires* in 1990 when it altered the remit formula. The Executive of the General Council did ask the General Secretary to issue a ruling on the matter, and the General Secretary ruled that the General Council, in altering the remit formula in 1990, had acted beyond its powers. The effect, as already noted, is that only remits voted upon since 1990 that would have passed under the original remit formula of an affirmative vote by 50% + 1 of the Presbyteries would be valid.

Of the remits voted upon since 1990 that passed under the revised formula, only one would not have passed under the earlier remit formula. That remit was the one authorized by the 37th General Council 2000, and ratified by the 38th General Council 2003, that allowed for the possibility of alternative wording from what is found in the Basis of Union for the questions asked of those who wish to be ordained, commissioned, or received into the Order of Ministry. Such alternative questions were to be prescribed by General Council in the by-laws. The vote in the Presbyteries on that remit was as follows: Yes—39, No—37, Not voting—15. An absolute majority of the Presbyteries would have been 46, as there were 91 Presbyteries. Therefore, this remit is not valid as it failed to receive the support of a majority of the Presbyteries at the time of the remit. The revised wording added to § 11.3 of the Basis of Union as a result of the belief that the remit had been ratified by the 38th General Council 2003—“or such other questions as may

be prescribed by General Council in the By-Laws”—will consequently be removed in the next edition of *The Manual*. Since General Council did not prescribe any alternative questions, even though it believed this particular remit had been ratified, we need have no anxiety about ordinations, commissionings, or receptions done with alternative questions; no authorization was given for any questions other than those currently found in § 11.3 of the Basis of Union.

I want to conclude by expressing my personal gratitude to those who have done this work during the triennium—Gail Christy, Cynthia Gunn, John Hamilton, Michael Hare, Alan MacLean, Jim Sinclair, and Don Willmer. These persons, who are either members of the Manual Committee or resource persons to it, have done much work both at and between meetings. Their presence, good humour, and capacity for logical thinking and precision in the use of words have made meetings of the Manual Committee occasions to which I look forward.

APPENDIX IV OF *THE MANUAL* (Blue)

Origin: Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry

Whereas Appendix IV of *The Manual* deals with the formation, reporting requirements and oversight of approximately 209 corporations carrying out activities in the name of The United Church of Canada. A major revision of Appendix IV is being proposed for consideration by General Council.

Problems

Why? A number of problems have been identified by some United Church of Canada corporations with provisions of Appendix IV that seem to be hindering their governance and operations. Significant changes also have taken place since 1998 in the operating environment for non-profit organizations in Canada related to due diligence and vicarious liability.

Significant changes in the operating environment for non-profit corporations have increased the requirement for The United Church of Canada to exercise a duty of care in supervising related corporations to meet the increased risks posed by programs, including:

- the application of vicarious liability to non-profit organizations, and
- legal and regulatory changes affecting all non-profit organizations.

Specific problems with the provisions of Appendix IV and their applications have been identified:

- the availability of a majority of United Church directors to be appointed to boards, including the required expertise,
- borrowing and indebtedness limits considered to be too low,
- the requirement for a majority of United Church directors, even in partnership situations,
- inadequate supervision by the courts of the church,
- corporations that are operating in the name of The United Church of Canada but are not known to the church or were incorporated outside of Appendix IV,

- inadequate communication to corporations of the content of amendments to Appendix IV,
- non-compliance of corporations with the provisions of Appendix IV,
- the distance that has grown between some corporations and the courts of The United Church of Canada,
- the apparent lack of Appendix IV supervision of congregation-sponsored corporations, and
- Appendix IV corporations creating their own non-profit or for-profit corporations such as foundations without the approval of the appropriate courts of the church.

Finally, the supervision of The United Church of Canada corporations, as currently described in Appendix IV, presents a major challenge to Conferences, Presbyteries, and Congregations, many of which do not have the capacity to do this work adequately.

Appendix IV Currently

Appendix IV currently offers one model for structuring the relationship between The United Church of Canada and its related corporations. This may have been appropriate in the past, but the changes and problems identified above indicate the need to review the underlying policy of Appendix IV.

In a superficial sense, Appendix IV is a method for licensing the use of the name of The United Church of Canada for non-congregational ministries. Separate incorporation according to Provincial, Territorial, or Federal registration takes place creating a separate legal entity, but Appendix IV stipulates the conditions to be met if that corporation is to be publicly identified or named as a United Church of Canada-related corporation. When the appropriate court of The United Church of Canada does not fulfill its requirements to supervise these corporations, or, when a corporation by choice or by chance fails to fulfill its requirements according to Appendix IV, the licensing agreement for the use of the name has been violated.

Where a corporation does not comply with Appendix IV, a process should be put in place to bring it into compliance. Failure to come into compliance after reasonable steps have been taken by all sides should result in the corporation no longer being able to publicly present itself as being associated with the United Church. Unfortunately, there are a number of corporations that are not in compliance but continue to function as United Church-related corporations. Compounding this unfortunate situation is the fact that the supervisory mechanism for corporations is not working in many Conferences, Presbyteries and Congregations.

As a result, some corporations identifying themselves with The United Church of Canada are benefiting from the public recognition and trustworthiness afforded The United Church of Canada without adequate supervision. This situation potentially puts the name and the assets of The United Church of Canada at risk if things were to go terribly wrong.

Consultation

Extensive consultation within the General Council office resulted in a discussion paper in spring 2004 outlining the problems, and a proposal for revising Appendix IV. The Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry (PC-PMM) approved the distribution of this discussion paper in September 2004 to all United Church of Canada non-congregational

ministries, Conference offices, and Presbyteries, with the hope that the wisdom of the entire church could be brought to bear on formulating an appropriate policy for revising Appendix IV.

This report to the General Council with recommendations intends to clarify the relationships between the various incorporated ministries, with the intention of providing a responsible context for the effective continuation of the valued ministries carried out by these corporations.

The report reflects the comments received from the consultation process as well as consideration by the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry in both September 2005 and February 2006, and the affirmation of the direction of the report by the Executive of the General Council in November 2005 and its recommendation in May 2006 that the General Council approve the proposed changes to Appendix IV.

New Directions—Recommended Policy Changes

The Executive of the General Council endorsed the recommended policy changes and proposes that the 39th General Council 2006 approve these revisions to Appendix IV of The Manual of The United Church of Canada and allow for a process of implementation to be completed by December 31, 2011.

Implementation

The implementation process for the revised Appendix IV will require funding to ensure that appropriate reporting systems for compliance are put in place and that corporations currently associated with The United Church of Canada are identified and assigned to Category 1, 2 or 3. For those corporations moving to Category 3, appropriate processes will be developed and funded to ensure that the interests of the corporation and The United Church of Canada—including ownership of capital assets—are protected.

LIVING FAITHFULLY IN THE MIDST OF EMPIRE (Blue)

Origin: Permanent Committee Programs on Mission and Ministry
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee, Empire Task Group

Summary

The 37th General Council 2000 of The United Church of Canada approved the report *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil: Towards a Global Economy for All God's People*. The report described, analyzed, and denounced “the global reality of systemic economic injustice” (neo-liberal economic globalization) and called the church “to seek justice and resist evil so that together in mission we can build a global economy for all God's people.” It was both critical of the global economic status quo and its exclusionary tendencies, and filled with hope for the fulfillment of God's promise of justice for all people and creation.

Tragically, in this world of extraordinary abundance and potential, the pain and misery experienced by the vast majority of God's people is worsening. Year after year reports by major

global institutions, like UNICEF²¹ and the United Nations Development Programme,²² tell dreadful statistical tales of growing poverty, rising rates of mortality, and escalating environmental destruction. One of the most alarming barometers of this deepening crisis is UNICEF's annual report on the state of the world's children. In announcing the 2005 report²³ David Agnew, president and CEO of UNICEF Canada, made these sobering comments:

More than half of all children in the world are suffering extreme deprivations from poverty, armed conflict and AIDS....For every child enjoying what we [in the developed world] consider to be a normal childhood, there is a child going to bed hungry, watching a parent die from AIDS, or living in a refugee camp after being forced to flee from home by war and violence...we are continuing to deny one billion girls and boys the opportunity to grow up healthy and safe.²⁴

United Church partners in Africa, Asia, Canada, Latin America, and the Middle East confirm this appalling situation and put a vivid human face on the numerical data with stories of intensifying suffering among their peoples and increasing environmental ruin.

To Seek Justice and Resist Evil described how neo-liberal economic globalization and unlimited market capitalism lie at the root of this crisis. Increasingly, however, we are realizing how complex the injustice of systemic economic globalization really is. More and more the term "empire" is being coined to characterize this complexity. It is a system that is causing creation to groan, in bondage, waiting for its liberation (Romans 8:22).

At its General Assembly in 2004, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) said that neo-liberal economic globalization is no longer an adequate term to describe the appalling plight befalling God's creation (Accra Statement). "As we look at the negative consequences of globalization for the most vulnerable and for the earth community as a whole," WARC said, "we have begun to rediscover the evangelical significance of the Biblical teaching about Empire."²⁵ Similar concerns were expressed by the Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE) project, a process initiated by the World Council of Churches in 1998. AGAPE asks the question, "How do we live our faith in the context of globalization" and in a time of "empire"? Like WARC, AGAPE calls empire "...a system of global domination directed by powerful nations and organizations"²⁶ that are the Caesars of our time. AGAPE calls the worldwide church to commit itself "to reflect on the question of power and empire from a biblical and theological perspective, and take a firm faith stance against hegemonic powers because all power is accountable to God."²⁷

The Executive of the General Council affirmed the Accra Statement and its concern about empire at its autumn 2004 meeting. It also urged the Permanent Committee, Programs for

²¹ "UNICEF" is the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

²² For example, see the United Nations Human Development Report 2005, "International cooperation at a crossroads: Aid, trade and security in an unequal world," <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/>.

²³ The State of the World's Children 2005: Childhood Under Threat, UNICEF, December 2004.

²⁴ "UNICEF releases The State of the World's Children 2005," media release, UNICEF Canada, Dec 09, 2004.

²⁵ "Mission Section Plenary Report," 24th General Assembly of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), Accra, Ghana, October 2004.²⁵

²⁶ "AGAPE, A Background Document," World Council of Churches. Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth, or AGAPE, is a process initiated at the 8th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The process examines "the project of economic globalization that is led by the ideology of unfettered market forces and serves the dominant political and economic interests."

²⁷ Assembly Documents, 9th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2006.

Ministry and Mission, “to develop a process to engage the United Church, including the courts of the church, in study and action.”²⁸ Also, the draft Statement of Faith, placed before the 39th General Council 2006 by the Theology and Faith Committee, acknowledges empire as a complex system to which all God’s people are captive. The statement makes reference to “the domination of economic, political, and military empires; rampant consumerism and unchecked accumulation of wealth; limitless growth and damage to creation.”

In response to these concerns, the Empire Task Group was formed to begin to reflect upon “empire” and to make a preliminary report to the 39th General Council 2006. This report offers glimpses of the experiences named as “empire” and foresees a follow-up report on the subject for the Executive of the General Council by March 2009, following a three-year period of engagement and consultation with United Church members. Members of the task group include The Very Rev. Dr. Robert Smith, the Rev. Dr. Martin Rumscheidt, the Rev. Nanette McKay, Geegee Mills, the Rev. Brian Perkins-McIntosh, and Melissa Creasy.²⁹

Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire follows a liturgical movement of Witness, Confession, Call, and Commitment.

Witness: Empire in Jesus’ Time and Ours is divided into three sub-sections:

“Understanding Empire” defines the complex idea of “empire” as a system of global domination. “Empire” is directed by powerful nations, global economic institutions, and transnational corporations. We participate, knowingly and unknowingly, in “empire” primarily through our role as consumers in the global capitalist market system.

“Stories of Empire as a Threat to Life and Creation” consists of testimonies from United Church global and Canadian partners. The stories help put a human face on the experiences of empire. The powerful observations and insights they contain leave no doubt as to empire’s devastating impact on God’s wondrous creation.

“Theological Reflection on Empire” is a summary based on three theological reflections written especially for the report by the Rev. Dr. Douglas John Hall, Professor Emeritus, McGill University; the Rev. Dr. Ofelia Ortega, Principal, Evangelical Theological Seminary, Matanzas, Cuba; and the Rev. Dr. Nestor O. Miguez, Professor of New Testament Studies, Instituto Universitario ISEDET, Buenos Aires, Argentina. It analyzes the context of empire in Jesus’ day and its impact on his ministry and the early church. It discusses how the life-threatening and oppressive dynamics of empire in the first and 21st centuries are essentially the same. The expanding threat to life that contemporary empire represents means we are at a critical time, a *kairos*³⁰ time, for the discernment of the gospel.

Confession: Church and World in the Midst of Empire acknowledges and analyzes the church’s complicity in empire. “Complicity” refers to our participation as individuals, institutions, and

²⁸ Minutes, The Executive of the General Council, October 29–November 1, 2004, Toronto.

²⁹ Staff members who provided support for the Empire Task Group were Omega Bula, Bern Jagunos, Gary Kenny, Jim Marshall, Christie Neufeldt, and Choice Okoro.

³⁰ The New Testament offers several but similar perspectives on *kairos*, which translated from the Greek means “the right or opportune time.” For example: Luke 12:54–56—*Kairos* is extraordinary time, requiring interpretation. The capacity to read the signs of the times—the *kairos*—and respond is an issue of faith; Romans 13:11–13—*Kairos* time is here. It calls for action, conversion and transformation—a change of life; 11 Corinthians 6:1–2—*Kairos* is not just crisis but opportunity and favour. God assists us in discerning the *kairos*—a moment of grace. (Source: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/e/network/KairosBibleStudy.pdf>)

nations in empire's systems of domination and control. We are only able to begin to name our complicity and to begin to turn around (to repent) through honest and faithful confession.

Call: Living God's Reign in the Midst of Empire encourages all United Church members to take up the challenge of our collective confession by seeking to be a responsive and transformed people of faith, hope, and love at every level of our being and of the church. This section calls the church to recognize signs of hope and transformation, and gives some examples.

Commitment: Actions and Recommendations calls the church and its members to support specific actions for the next three years, including learning more about empire and our complicity in it through engagement and consultation. It envisions the development of an "empire lens," an animation, education, and action tool to assist all courts of the church to discern more about empire and their place within it. It also calls the whole church to engage in acting with renewed vigour upon past resolutions that challenge imperial forms and forces, especially in the program areas of economic justice, human rights, peace, and the environment.

Drawing on the theme of the World Social Forum, "another world is possible," this report lifts up sources of hope. The theme of the World Council of Churches (WCC) 2006 Assembly in Porto Alegre earlier this year is also key to this report: "God, in your grace, transform the world."³¹

Transformation for the sake of abundant life for all peoples and the earth means making difficult choices. In the 21st century world of empire, Caesar commands, God calls. Whom will we serve?

Witness: Empire in Jesus' Time and Ours

Understanding Empire

The context of the Roman Empire defined much of the life and ministry of some of the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, and the early church, as the theological reflections in this report and other sources show.³² Similarly, contemporary empire frames much of the experience, struggle, and witness of many United Church global partners and the United Church's own life and ministry. In first-century Palestine (Galilee, Samaria, and Judea), the imperial power was clearly Rome and its local rulers and allies. At its territorial peak, the Roman Empire controlled nearly six million square kilometres of land in the greater Mediterranean region. It was the largest of all empires during classical antiquity. The context of Jesus' time was the brutal oppression of occupied Palestine under the Roman Empire.³³

What makes up empire in the early 21st century? How does it shape our world and how we live our lives? Since the events of September 11, 2001, "empire" is increasingly being used to describe global systemic injustice. It is the subject of articles, books, and events, including major global ecumenical conferences. Emerging from these discussions has been a growing understanding of contemporary empire with striking similarities to the empire of Jesus' day.

³¹ "God, in your grace, transform the world" was the theme of the World Council of Churches' 9th Assembly held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January/February 2006.

³² For a clear and powerful discussion of empire in Jesus' time see Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God in the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2002).

³³ Christopher Ferguson, *The Reign of God and Empire: The covenant community in the midst of the kingdom of death* (London Colney, February 8-11, 2004).

While empire in Jesus' time consisted of distinct forms of oppression including military occupation, violence, unjust taxation, and slavery, in 2006 we have to look deeper and wider to put a recognizable face on empire. Some, especially after September 11 and the United States government's declaration of the War on Terror, point to the U.S., the most powerful economic and military power in the world, as the principal power of modern-day imperialism. The U.S. doctrine of preventive war,³⁴ aggressive unilateralism,³⁵ violations of international law, and maintenance of hundreds of military bases around the world have prompted comparisons to Imperial Rome. But while the U.S. may have much to answer for—and indeed, millions of Americans are holding their government accountable—empire has more than one location. As stated in *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil*, contemporary “empire is not dominated by any single state but by a network of powerful economic interests held together by the ideology of neo-liberalism,”³⁶ and furthermore, is a system in which most of us play some role, wittingly or unwittingly.

To Seek Justice and Resist Evil defined neo-liberalism largely in economic terms. Neo-liberalism, it said, upholds and promotes the market as the judge of the common good. It is a market that enshrines competition as the supreme good. In the marketplace of neo-liberalism, everything is viewed as a commodity that can be bought or sold.³⁷

At its General Assembly in 2004, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) reflected with alarm on the signs of the times. “We live in a scandalous world that denies God’s call to life for all,” WARC said.³⁸ The annual income of the richest 1 percent is equal to that of the poorest 57 percent. Some 24,000 people die each day from poverty and malnutrition. The debt of poor countries continues to increase despite having repaid the principal on their loans several times over. Wars over resources such as oil and gold are on the rise and claim the lives of millions, while millions more die of preventable diseases. The HIV/AIDS pandemic afflicts life in all parts of the world but especially in the impoverished global South where anti-retroviral drugs are too expensive to buy. The majority of those living in poverty are women and children, and the number of people living in absolute poverty (less than U.S. \$1/day) continues to increase.³⁹

WARC also asserted that policies of unlimited growth among industrialized countries and the drive for profit among transnational corporations have plundered the earth and severely damaged the natural environment. In 1989, one species disappeared each day, and by 2000 it was one every hour. Climate change, the depletion of fish stocks, deforestation, soil erosion, and threats to fresh water are also among neo-liberal economic globalization’s devastating consequences.

³⁴ A “preventive war” is the term given to a kind of war whose public justification is proclaimed as “self-defense.” The concepts of preventive war and preemptive war differ only in the certainty of an attack—the latter concerns an imminent attack, while the former requires no military provocation. The rationale for preventive war is the claimed prevention of a *possible* future attack, which international law considers to be indistinguishable from a forbidden war of aggression.

³⁵ “Unilateralism,” in a foreign policy context, refers to the practice of a single country acting alone outside of the parameters of international law to which that country is obligated.

³⁶ The United Church of Canada, *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil: Towards a Global Economy for All God’s People* (2001), page 24.

³⁷ For a more extensive discussion of neo-liberal ideology and economic globalization, see *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil: Towards a Global Economy for All God’s People*, The United Church of Canada, 2001.

³⁸ *Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth*, 24th General Assembly of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), Accra, Ghana, October 2004.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Communities are disrupted, livelihoods are lost, coastal regions and Pacific islands are threatened with inundation, and cataclysmic storms increase. Life forms and cultural knowledge, part of the global commons, are being patented for financial gain.⁴⁰

Neo-liberal economic globalization, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) said, is no longer an adequate term to describe the scope and inherent characteristics of this appalling plight befalling God's creation. A more accurate term is "empire." Recognizing that there is no easy definition of empire, WARC offered the following:

[Empire is] the convergence of economic, political, cultural, geographic and military imperial interests, systems and networks that seek to dominate political power and economic wealth. It typically forces and facilitates the flow of wealth and power from vulnerable persons, communities and countries to the more powerful. Empire today crosses all boundaries, strips and reconstructs identities, subverts cultures, subordinates nation states and either marginalizes or co-opts religious communities.⁴¹

Using WARC's definition as a point of reference, the Empire Task Group sought to understand early 21st century empire in a more contextual and identifiable manner. In addition to the WARC statement, the World Council of Churches' AGAPE initiative,⁴² theological scholars, United Church elected members and others have helped us in this process. The assistance of United Church global partners has been immeasurable. In early 2005 the Empire Task Group conducted a survey of partners asking for their views on empire. Significantly, 35 partners from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, as well as some ecumenical partners based in the North, responded. All spoke of the imperial nature of neo-liberal economic globalization, calling it a significant threat to life. For example, The Caribbean Council of Churches said: As third world peoples, ours is the constant plight and recurring experience of standing helplessly in various 'Praetoria'⁴³ (John 18:28) of the powerful contemporary Pontius Pilates—be it the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, or otherwise—and being reminded who has "power to release" us and "power to condemn" us (John 19:10).⁴⁴

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, adopting a similar point of view, also affirmed the obligation of Christians to resist empire:

Empire has been sustained by the unbridled capitalist system backed by military force. Therefore the most effective way to resist it is to render the production base of Empire impotent. When we resist the consumptive lifestyle of Empire, the production base will gradually lose ground to a non-capitalist lifestyle (or economic system) based on the spirit of justice, sharing and cooperation which can be termed a 'divine economy.'⁴⁵

Partners in Canada, Aboriginal peoples in particular, have also provided compelling testimony on the subject of empire. For example George Erasmus, former Grand Chief of the Assembly of

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² "AGAPE, A Background Document," World Council of Churches. ^Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth, or AGAPE, is a process initiated at the 8th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The process examines "the project of economic globalization that is led by the ideology of unfettered market forces and serves the dominant political and economic interests."

⁴³ "Praetoria" was the name given to the elite bodyguard of a Roman emperor, approximately the size of a legion, or to a member of this bodyguard. The term is sometimes applied to the inner circle of advisers to a major political figure.

⁴⁴ A Partner Perspective on Empire: Synthesis Report of United Church of Canada Partners Survey, Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit, 2005.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

First Nations, has described the naming by Europeans of landmarks, communities, and even people in terms foreign to their understanding. Aboriginal peoples became the acted upon, not the actors, named from the outside as “Indian,” “status or non-status Indian,” or “Métis.”⁴⁶

It is through the eyes and experience of partners, global and Canadian, that we can best gain insight into the empire phenomenon and its destructive impact on God’s people and the earth.

Through the survey, partners helped the task group break down “empire” into seven forms or forces that are united in their will to control and dominate: political, economic, military, cultural, religious, environmental, and patriarchal. The stories from or about partners contained in this report exemplify these inter-connected forces. The following section is a commentary on the stories that demonstrates how these forces converge to create a dynamic that negates other forms of power and alternatives to empire. It is intended to assist readers to derive the most from the stories that follow.

Commentary on the Stories from Global and Canadian Partners

The stories “Empire and the Privatization of Water Is ‘Killing My People’” and “Empire, Militarism, and Human Rights in the Philippines” demonstrate how governments in the global South, already weak from crushing external debts, are forced to acquiesce to Western political influence and development schemes shaped by neo-liberal economic policies. The results are often damaging social cost-cutting and the cynical exploitation of their natural resources, water in the case of Lesotho and minerals including gold in the Philippines. Creditors like the World Bank use the debts as leverage to force these countries to cede public ownership, operation, distribution, and management of their most valuable resources and social services and place them into private, often foreign, hands. Once privatized, water, health care, education, and other vital services are made unaffordable for millions of people.

The result of such stringent economic policies and political pressure to adopt them has created a host of life-threatening socio-economic and health-related problems. Governments in countries like Lesotho and the Philippines have become almost powerless to change a global trade system that treats them unfairly, creates unrestrained rights for foreign capital investment within their borders, and increases and perpetuates their external debts. While elites in these countries stand to benefit, the majority of people, although promised prosperity, are left in deeper poverty.

“Empire, Militarism, and Human Rights in the Philippines” illustrates how militarization, employed as a strategy to advance a political and economic agenda, can impair a nation’s ability to exercise its sovereignty in a manner that has not only life-threatening, but mortal, consequences for its citizens. In the last four years more than 500 civilians, including church workers, lawyers, and human rights advocates, have been summarily executed by military death squads in the Philippines. Their “crime” has been speaking out against systemic injustice including unfair wages, inequitable access to land and the adverse impacts of economic globalization. As the story explains, the victims “[were] killed because their activities threaten the economic and political interests of the elite.”

⁴⁶ George Erasmus in “We the Dene” in *Dene Nation—The Colony Within*, Toronto University Press 1977.

But who are the elite? The presence on Filipino soil of foreign mining interests and U.S. military bases underscores the reality that those who commit or are complicit in such crimes are not only Filipino. They also originate among transnational corporations and other powerful nation states. The Philippines has become a regional staging point in the War on Terror, and U.S. military aid to the Philippines has increased ten-fold since September 11. The War on Terror and U.S. military support, the story asserts, has given the Filipino military licence to target social justice advocates as “terrorists” and “enemies of the state.” It has exacerbated the culture of violence in the country. As the story states, economic globalization, global geo-politics and empire “ensures that political, economic and military power...penetrates the internal political, cultural and social structures of a particular country...” as it has in the Philippines.

Empire also carries with it beliefs and value systems, usually Western in origin, which countries weakened by external political, economic and military policies are forced to accept or do so willingly. These include materialism, consumerism, and individualism. Often the main vehicle for transmission of these beliefs and values is Western technology and popular culture. “Baywatch and Cell Phone Cameras: Middle Eastern Youth and the Culture of Empire” is a story that demonstrates the impact Western culture can have especially on youth. Frustrated by poverty, unemployment, and other adverse social conditions caused or exacerbated by economic globalization, youth, in both the global South and North, sometimes resort to anti-social and violent forms of behaviour to bring into their lives a false sense of meaning and purpose. But as the story attests, governments wary of the potential of youth to rise up and challenge their authority and power “want people’s minds driven away from the horrific hazards of politics and economics.” Western TV, movies, music, and other forms of entertainment, and their pervasive promotion of materialism and consumerism, provide just the right balm. They can “anaesthetize an increasingly restless and angry generation of youth” and, for a time anyway, remove the threat of civil disobedience or worse.

Canada is complicit in empire in various ways. For example, our support of neo-liberal economic globalization, through participation in free trade agreements and global financial institutions like the World Bank, links us with contemporary empire, at least in the minds of many United Church global partners. The story “Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Looking into the Eyes of Empire” provides another glimpse of how Canada has engaged in imperial behaviour in the past, but on the home front. As one writer quoted in the story says, while Canadian imperial treatment of Aboriginal peoples may have “lacked the pomp and ceremony of the British Raj, or the status-enhancing experience of a handful of officials ruling over millions in tropical Africa, Ceylon, or the Dutch East Indies,” it was nonetheless connected to the global phenomenon of empire at that time.

First Nations peoples in Canada today continue to struggle with the effects of this imperial legacy, fighting in the courts to regain land that was unjustly taken, demanding compensation for what some call “cultural genocide,” and battling alcohol and substance abuse in their communities, a tragic consequence of loss of identity and the impoverished conditions in which many Aboriginal communities live. The United Church is confronting its own complicity in the imperial subjugation of First Nations peoples by addressing its role in the former residential schools system.

As the story “Empire and Environmental Destruction in Haiti” shows, in some countries in the global South, 19th century colonialism has evolved into a form of unchecked global capitalism that exploits, and in the case of Haiti, decimates, what was once a paradise of natural riches. To supply the industrialized North with raw materials to meet the ever-growing demands of large commodity markets, crops are monocultured and mineral resources mined with little regard for the impact these activities have on the natural environment. As the story narrates, monoculture of sisal and rubber, bankrolled by foreign companies with the collusion of Haitian elites, has rendered much of Haiti’s soil infertile. Mining activities undertaken in similar circumstances have created veritable deserts through large-scale excavation and failure to replant vast tracts of deforested land. These predatory practices have caused massive erosion and loss of soil, leaving much of the country a wasteland.

In the process of “development,” indigenous farmers were displaced and forced into poorly paid jobs for foreign companies, and a sustainable, communal way of life that thrived for generations was reduced to ruin. Today, in a tragic twist, impoverished farmers are forced to participate in the ruination of their own local natural environments through the over-cutting of trees to make charcoal for income and energy purposes. Relegated to living on barren land, they and their families are often the first victims of flash floods and landslides. They are blamed for Haiti’s environmental degradation when the real cause is “a historical process that flows from the venality of Western powers in concert with local dominant classes.”

Massive human displacement and migration, within and beyond borders, especially from rural to urban areas, is a major and tragic consequence of economic globalization and empire. “Empire and Environmental Destruction in Haiti,” “Empire and Privatization of Water Is ‘Killing My People,’” *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Looking into the Eyes of Empire*,” and “Empire and Patriarchy: Violence against Women in Guatemala” are all stories that involve displacement or migration as a result of national or international policies that are imperial in nature. Aboriginal peoples in Canada were uprooted from their traditional lands by Europeans who placed their own rapacious desire for land above the rights of the people who had settled it first. Mining and deforestation have ruined land traditionally cultivated by Haitian farmers, forcing them to migrate to cities where they can’t find jobs. Mega-dams in Lesotho have flooded the traditional lands of thousands of people who, displaced to urban areas, have seen few of the dividends promised from the sale of their water to South Africa. Families in Guatemala have been forced to relocate to urban areas in search of work because international trade rules have rendered their traditional farming practices, around which their lives and culture were built, redundant. In each of these cases, and so many more like them, human beings have been effectively re-conceptualized as commodities—objects considered superfluous or valued only for their potential to help the world’s imperial principalities and powers to turn a profit.

Some partners surveyed on the subject of empire said empire and patriarchy are mutually reinforcing. As the story “Empire and Patriarchy: Violence against Women in Guatemala” attests, patterns of imperial, patriarchal power and violence, a partial consequence of decades of civil war and poverty that has left men in particular frustrated and angry, undergird the brutal violence against women that is endemic in Guatemala today. Over the past five years some 2,000 women have been murdered, most of the cases involving firearms, torture, and rape. Women of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry are particularly targeted, suggesting that

ethnic discrimination and racism are coinciding motives. That bodies are often mutilated suggests virulent misogynous resentment. This “femicide,” as it is called in the story, “is carried out largely because of the simple fact of the victim being a woman and as a demonstration of power and domination.”

Economic globalization and the negative impact of free trade agreements have aggravated the crisis, the story asserts. Families have been forced to migrate to urban areas in search of work because free trade has made farm-based production no longer viable. Families that are displaced into social conditions that create insecurity and even deeper poverty face growing tensions, eventual domestic conflict, and finally, family disintegration. A society already stoked and smouldering with “machismo” culture bursts into flames of misogynous violence when fanned with the systemic economic exploitation of empire.

“Empire, For or Against: Make Every Dollar Count” reminds us what empire seeks to eradicate: the creation of alternative ways of living that are rooted in enduring hope and assert gospel values of community, interdependence, love, generosity, and stewardship of the earth. The “story within the story” of farmer Stuart Dermott’s unhurried day of cultivation is in poignant contrast to our fast-paced consumer culture that is fixated on the bottom line: “It’s a great day,” Stuart replied to a passing neighbour curious about his slow-moving tractor. “I enjoy cultivating, and I just want to make it last.” For Stuart, and many United Church people, “life is about stewardship, in every sense of the word, something to be enjoyed and treasured, not a competition for individual gain.”

Partners surveyed on the topic of empire identified religion as playing a sometimes central role. The linkage between religion and empire in the early church, in the form of Christendom, is well known and discussed elsewhere in this report. What about contemporary empire? Some partners associate religion with cultural hegemony, saying religion is used to promote neo-liberal economic ideology and to inculcate, especially among impoverished and vulnerable people in the global South, a so-called “gospel of prosperity.” By adopting the culture of consumerism, these religions teach, you can be “saved.” So-called fundamentalist Christian churches based in Northern countries and increasingly in countries in the global South preach this “gospel.”

Religion can also play a positive role in challenging the power of empire as illustrated in all the stories from or about partners contained in this report. The Middle East Council of Churches, Christian Council of Lesotho, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and others are resisting empire in a variety of thoughtful and courageous ways and offering alternatives that accord, not with Caesar’s, but with God’s reign in the world. The story of the Dermotts is a shining testament to how unadulterated gospel values can be rooted deeper in the soil of our selves, families, communities, institutions, and nations.

As theologian Nestor O. Miguez says, empire reduces the rich diversity of the world to a question of economic management. All peoples, expectations, cultures, and nations are required by empire to submit to this logic.⁴⁷ Others have followed another path, as the stories will show.

⁴⁷ “Jesus and Empire: Then and Now” by The Rev. Dr. Nestor O. Miguez, 2006. See Appendix A.

The definition of empire offered by WARC, and the testimony of partners, highlight the notion that empire is a particular arrangement of power characterized by the joining together of economic forces, government structures, some political organizations, and some classes of society. In an empire, writes Miguez, these forces join to meet a single objective: the elimination of other forms of power and social and economic alternatives, such as those we might obtain from the life and teachings of Jesus. Says Miguez, “We are now witnessing a time of imperial consolidation... The whole world is under pressure to mould itself [into] a single economic system and way of conceiving politics and managing power...”⁴⁸ and it will only bring death. But there is hope, which lies in the creation of life-giving alternatives.

Stories of Empire as a Threat to Life and Creation

Following is a series of stories written by or about United Church global partners on their experience of empire, and stories that comment on empire and resistance to empire in the Canadian context. They witness both to the impact of empire, in its various but inter-connected manifestations, but also to what resisting empire or living more fully into God’s reign might look like.

Empire and the Privatization of Water Is “Killing My People”

(Christian Council of Lesotho, Maseru, Lesotho/JGER Empire Task Group)

“How can anyone own the earth’s water?” Mamosa Nts’aba asks, adding, “Water belongs to God.” But in Nts’aba’s country of Lesotho, water appears God’s no longer. Increasingly it is being privatized and turned into a commodity for sale and profit. “My people used to collect clean water for free at communal water sources,” Nts’aba says. “Now they must pay for it.”

Lesotho is known as the “roof-top of Africa” and is a small mountainous, landlocked country completely surrounded by South Africa. Of its 1.8 million people, 90 percent are subsistence farmers and livestock herders who dwell and toil in the country’s fertile mountain valleys. Most Basotho⁴⁹ are poor and live on less than US\$2/day.

Water is Lesotho’s greatest natural resource. Runoff from two mountain ranges, the Maluti and Thaba Putsoa, feeds many rivers, streams and aquifers. But Nts’aba, who works on gender and women’s programming at the Christian Council of Lesotho, says, “Water and its sale for profit is killing my people.”

Over the past 20 years, Basotho have seen their country’s rich heritage in water increasingly sold off to private interests and to South Africa, a regional economic colossus. The shift from public ownership and management of water and water services to private ownership is increasing throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and the global South. The key actors are the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. They are able to impose these changes on indebted countries like Lesotho by using their leverage as creditors. These international financial institutions, sometimes called modern-day brokers of empire, argue that private management of natural resources will be more cost-effective and efficient, and will reduce poverty and conserve the environment. They view water not as a communal resource for sharing, Nts’aba says, but as

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ “Basotho,” in Lesotho’s Sesotho language, means “people of Lesotho.”

“a commodity and an economic good to generate profit.” She adds, “This is what the World Bank calls ‘people-centred’ development.”

In 1986, the government of South Africa made a deal with Lesotho government officials for a multi-billion dollar water diversion project. The World Bank initiated and financed the scheme to provide water to apartheid-era industries while avoiding international sanctions. The agreement allows South Africa to redirect more than 2 million cubic metres of water from Lesotho’s Orange River system annually. When complete, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project will consist of five major dams, 200 kilometres of mountain tunnels, and a 72-megawatt hydroelectric power plant. It is Sub-Saharan Africa’s biggest ever infrastructure initiative. In return for water, the Lesotho government receives royalties and hydroelectric power.

Ordinary Basotho, however, get mostly broken promises and misery. Some 27,000 Basotho were displaced when the new Mohale Dam and Reservoir flooded 22,000 acres of their traditional lands. Their houses, fields, graveyards, grazing lands, and other private and communal resources disappeared under water. Gone forever is a modest but dignified and sustainable way of life that had flourished for generations. The uprooted were relocated to urban areas and were promised clean water, new housing, job training, and financial compensation. But standards for applying for compensation are impossibly high, resulting in long bureaucratic delays and inadequate payment. Most of the schools, clinics and clean water sources that were pledged are yet to materialize. The “trickle-down” of wealth from the highlands water project to grassroots Basotho, promised by the World Bank and the Lesotho government, hasn’t significantly happened.

Safe, adequate, and sustainable access to water for all peoples is one of the main social goals named at the global level in recent years. Privatization of water has the opposite effect. Many Basotho are unable to pay for water and are forced to rely on unsafe sources such as unprotected wells and open streams. Water-borne diseases such as cholera have increased as a result. With no access to affordable health care, more and more poor people, especially children, are dying needlessly. Maternal mortality has increased from 282 per 100,000 live births in the 1990s to 550 in 2003.⁵⁰ Reasons include poverty and poor nutrition, but also lack of access to clean water. Women are perilously affected by water privatization. Traditionally the gatherers of water, many women in rural areas have to walk vast distances, 10 kilometres or more, and often in the dark, to a spring or stream to collect free water. Along the way they are vulnerable to theft and rape.

Lesotho’s water woes are exacerbated by HIV/AIDS. The rate of prevalence among adults in Lesotho is 29 percent, making it one of the countries most affected by the AIDS pandemic.⁵¹ Some 320,000 Basotho are HIV positive.⁵² Inadequate water and sanitation service exacerbate the condition of people suffering from immune deficiencies such as HIV/AIDS and severely limits Lesotho’s capacity to fight the disease.

People-centred? Not so, Nts’aba says of privatization. Farmland has disappeared, people are

⁵⁰ World Health Organization.

⁵¹ UNAIDS 2004 Report on the global AIDS pandemic.

⁵² “Summary Country Profile for HIV/AIDS Treatment Scale-Up,” World Health Organization, June 2005.

poorer, children more easily succumb to preventable diseases, and the fabric of family life is fraying under increasing social and economic pressures. The water that God has given Basotho is being sold from under them, Nts'aba tells us. "How in God's name is that 'people-centred' development?" she asks.

Empire, Militarism, and Human Rights in the Philippines

(From the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines)

In the spring of 2005 in Central Luzon (north of Manila), hardly a week passed without the sight of mourners in a funeral procession to bury someone. On March 13, 2005, that someone was Fr. William Tadena, a priest of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Philippine Independent Church). Two days later, it was 67-year-old Victor Concepcion. Ten days earlier, it was Aberlardo Ladera, a member of the city council of Tarlac. All three were brutally murdered. All three had supported the strike of the farm workers at Hacienda Luisita where security forces violently broke up their rally and massacred seven striking farm workers on November 16, 2004.

Across the country, a similar pattern and practice of killings have been taking place. In the islands of Eastern Visayas, the Rev. Edison Lapuz was brutally killed on May 11, 2005. He was the Conference Minister of Northeastern Leyte Conference of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), a United Church partner. As chair of a regional human rights group called Karapatan and active member of the ecumenical advocacy group, Promotion of Church People's Response, he spearheaded a campaign for the prosecution of those responsible for the murder of Attorney Felidido Dacut, a human rights lawyer, on March 10, 2005.

In Northern Luzon, Jose Manegdeg was shot dead on November 28, 2005. He was a lay member of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines and past Coordinator of the Regional Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Cordilleras, also a United Church partner, which led the Save the Abra River Movement, a campaign to save the river from destruction caused by corporate mining and large-scale commercial activities. A week before, in the province of Leyte, seven farmers, two of them women, were massacred. They were preparing to return to their farms on disputed land granted them by the Department of Agrarian Reform, when military troops attacked them with guns and grenade bombs.

The dead are not victims of ordinary crimes. They are killed for demanding fair wages or a small piece of land to farm, for protesting human rights violations, for speaking about the negative impacts of economic globalization policies, for supporting community resistance to mining companies, or for opposing the continuing war games between government and U.S. forces that have displaced hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. They are killed because their activities threaten the economic and political interests of the elite. The victims include church people, human rights advocates, lawyers, leaders and members of social movements, and organizers and members of grassroots political parties.

A document of the Philippine Armed Forces, "Knowing the Enemy: Are We Missing the Point?" released in April 2005 named several progressive organizations, including the UCCP and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, as "terrorists" that should be neutralized. In military terms, "neutralize" means to silence or, if this does not work, to physically eliminate them. Under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, more than 500 civilians have been executed in four years by

suspected state security forces and paramilitary elements. Over 150 people were murdered in 2005.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo launched the “war on terror” immediately after the Bush administration declared the Philippines as the second front in the U.S.-led “war on terror.” The U.S. sent 1,200 troops to Basilan in the island of Mindanao to eradicate a small group of terrorists, Abu Sayyaf. In exchange for Macapagal-Arroyo’s support of the U.S. “war on terror,” the Bush administration has increased military aid to the Philippine government ten-fold. It has committed at least US\$356 million in military aid to the Philippines, up from pre-9/11 annual military assistance of US\$30–\$40 million.

The “War on Terror” opened the opportunity for the U.S. to re-assert its military presence and intervention in the Philippines. The U.S. had to withdraw its troops in 1992 after the Philippine senate decided to end the Military Bases Agreement. However, since 9/11, American special operation forces have been allowed entry to provide special warfare training to the armed forces of the Philippines. The U.S. and the Philippines conduct annually at least 18 joint war exercises involving a rotating presence of around 2,000 troops. The military trainings have now focused on counter-insurgency.

The people of Mindanao, where the Moro people (Muslim Filipinos) have waged the oldest and longest self-determination struggle in Asia, have born the heaviest cost of this war. President Macapagal-Arroyo abandoned the ongoing peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Indiscriminate bombings and strafing operations in civilian areas have resulted in massive forced evacuations, brutal killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, and destruction of property and religious sites. Since 2002, there have been 33 bombing incidents in Mindanao that killed 85 people and injured more than 450 others.

It is no coincidence that the targeted killing of activists that has been going on since 2001 started in Mindoro where local officials, non-governmental organizations, workers, farmers, professionals, church people, and ordinary citizens joined together in broad and strong opposition to a mining project of a Canadian company. In the Moro province of Sulu, weeks after the government declared that the war against the MNLF was “over,” a subsidiary of U.S.-based energy company UNOCAL led a consortium to conduct an oil and gas exploration project in nearby Sulu Sea. Mindanao provides strategic access and control over the South China Sea, a critical trade route for oil. Eastern Visayas has abundant marine resources, which are controlled by foreign and local fishing companies, and mineral deposits that are a major interest and attraction to foreign mining corporations.

The church leaders who visited Eastern Visayas in July as a part of the Pastoral Ecumenical Delegation of the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia made this observation in their report: “The military protects ‘economic investments’ and not the people of the land. It is critical for our analysis to name the ideology behind this market-focused economic development as rooted in the neo-liberal economic thinking, which claims to be without alternative, demanding an endless flow of sacrifices from the poor and from creation. We see here...the impact of economic globalization and its global geo-politics backed by the dominant

ideology of globalization. This ideology also referred to as Empire ensures that political, economic and military is power vested in one center and that this power penetrates the internal political, cultural and social structures of a particular country such as the Philippines. Today's dominant leaders will not hesitate to use whatever power and force to suppress the people and the world when their objectives of economic exploitation are threatened and hindered."

Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Looking into the Eyes of Empire

(JGER Empire Task Group)

The Mi'Kmaq First Nations peoples of Canada's Maritime region have fished in Miramichi Bay, in what is now New Brunswick, for centuries and long before the arrival of European colonizers and immigrants. Despite the constraints of colonization, the Mi'Kmaq were allowed to continue their traditions of hunting and fishing, an important source of livelihood. These rights were enshrined in a Treaty signed in 1760 by the King of England and the Mi'kmaq bands in present-day Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In the early 1950s, however, the Treaty was violated by British colonial authorities when they introduced a new law prohibiting fishing outside regulated seasons.

In 1999 Donald Marshall Jr., an activist Mi'Kmaq, disagreed with the new law and decided to honour the old Treaty (thereby breaking the new law) by fishing out of season. He was arrested for his efforts. Marshall filed a legal claim with the Supreme Court of Canada arguing that the 1760 Treaty was still in force. The Court ruled in Marshall's favour. It interpreted the Treaty in practical, contemporary terms and ruled that Aboriginal bands who are party to the Treaty have a right to hunt and fish out of season but only for consumption and not for profit.

In view of the ruling, the First Nations of Esqenoopetitj (Burnt Church) resumed their traditional lobster fishing activities in Miramichi Bay. But regional non-Aboriginal fishers disagreed with the Supreme Court ruling, saying out-of-season lobster trapping by Aboriginals was a direct threat to their own livelihoods. Violence erupted and attacks were launched on Aboriginals when they tried to resume lobster fishing. In an effort to address the concerns of both communities, the Supreme Court has since adjusted the Marshall ruling. The hunting and fishing activities of the Mi'Kmaq will now be regulated by the provincial government.

The Cross Lake First Nation in Northern Manitoba is also currently struggling with the legacy of "empire." Located about 600 kilometres north of Winnipeg, it has grappled with the effects of flooding caused by a hydroelectric generation mega-project in the early 1970s. Only after 10 years of long and arduous negotiations was compensation provided to the affected First Nations.

The experiences of the Mi'Kmaq and Cross Lake First Nations illustrate the realities of Aboriginal communities that are currently negotiating their autonomy, rights to self-determination, and access to land and natural resources. There are hundreds of First Nations groups like these struggling to find practical solutions to the problems associated with the imperial colonization of the past.

Many Aboriginal activists, writers, and researchers who contributed to the 1995 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples used the word "colonial" frequently in reference to the historical and present-day treatment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Alan C. Cairns, in

Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State, observes that the usage of this term is in contrast to the majority of non-Aboriginal Canadians who did not in the past and do not now regard Canada as ruling imperially over the Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Until very recently, Cairns explains, Aboriginal peoples, in a typical colonial fashion, were the subjects of policy. “Status Indians, the only Aboriginal people to have a separate branch of government to their affairs, were an administered people. They were in a colonial situation. Indeed, the very language used to describe them for the first century after Confederation could equally have been used in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). They were described as wards, likened to children, and assumed to be unready for full citizenship.”⁵³

When Canadians speak about their experience of “empire,” some are referring to the perceived threat of living next door to the “American Empire.” For other Canadians, “empire” was and is something associated with Canada’s British heritage. But in linking empire at home (Canada) and abroad, Cairns explains that while Canadian imperial treatment of Aboriginal peoples may have “lacked the pomp and ceremony of the British Raj, or the status-enhancing experience of a handful of officials ruling over millions in tropical Africa, Ceylon, or the Dutch East Indies,” it was nonetheless connected to the global phenomenon of empire at that time.⁵⁴

Canada, Cairn’s writes:

*...sent missionaries to Christianize, anthropologists to analyze, and Indian agents—our version of district officers—to administer. Indian children were taught wounding versions of history; sacred practices and revered customs were forbidden or mocked; the use of Aboriginal languages was discouraged; customary forms of governance were bypassed; traditional healing arts were displaced; and treaties were accorded lesser significance by governments than by the descendants of the Indian leaders who had signed them. In general, Aboriginal ways of life, and thus their bearers, were stigmatized.*⁵⁵

The ideology that supported the spread of the British Empire was and is the same that drives empire in Canada today. The difference is that in Canada, the majority non-Aboriginal population cannot “go home” or simply give up their colonial power like Britain, France, Portugal, and other colonial powers did in Africa, Asia, and other regions of the world. As Cairns explains, “This crucial fact that the Aboriginal nations will be in the minority in Canada even after the maximum degree of self-government has been realized, differentiates the Canadian—and the New Zealand, Australian, and American—and the situations of many Latin American countries—from the decolonization process in most of Africa and Asia. In no case does the relationship between the formerly imperialist and the formerly colonized completely end with independence.”⁵⁶

Many Aboriginal communities in Canada know this. The process and strategy for negotiating the rights and self-determination of First Nations in Canada is proving to be a long and onerous task.

⁵³ *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State*, Alan C. Cairns, Vancouver UBC Press, 2000.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Empire and Environmental Destruction in Haiti

(By Marc-Arthur Fils-Aimé, Karl Lévêque Cultural Institute, Haiti)

Haiti means “High Ground” or “Mountainous Land” in the language of the two aboriginal nations that lived here prior to the arrival of the European invaders in 1492. At that time, Haiti was covered with forests. The two indigenous groups lived together peaceably—contrary to all the allegations of cannibalism promoted by Western racists—and in their cosmological vision believed that the zone of Abricot (*apricot*) in Grand-Anse (part of Haiti’s south-west peninsula) sheltered their paradise. Christopher Columbus and his crew were so enchanted by this green island that they called it Hispaniola, or little Spain.

Today, only 2 percent of the national soil is still covered by vegetation that could be called a forest. The country is so deforested that in regions such as the North-West, the people scratch the earth to remove what remains of the roots of trees to satisfy their energy needs. How is it that Haiti, once called “the Pearl of the Antilles,” has come to be like this?

Generally, small farmers are accused of being the origin of this destruction. This accusation ignores the demands of globalization, which are effectively responsible for their behaviour. The great majority of these producers possess less than a hectare of land, often unsuitable for agriculture, or no land at all. For their domestic needs, they gather twigs and branches. The unjust land tenure system forces them to practices such as the cutting of trees, for survival. First of all, such cutting allows them to survive by making wood charcoal and, though less frequently now, quicklime. In turn, this charcoal is used by people selling goods in small markets and by the working masses in the urban areas who use the charcoal for energy. The small farmers end up having to cut down fruit trees that might have brought some income with each harvest, in order to survive in the immediate future. Can they really be held responsible for their own destruction?

Environmental destruction in Haiti began with colonization. The colonists destroyed vast green surfaces for the sake of profits from cane sugar, indigo, cotton, and other products. By 1770, they were attacking the mountainous zones to make coffee plantations, since the value of the coffee bean was increasing in the international market. After our first Independence in 1804, the new leaders did not divorce themselves from the colonial modes of production, and continued to strip the soil. In 1887, log wood (*campeachy*) was Haiti’s most valuable export, ahead even of coffee exports. Log wood, wood for carpentry (mahogany), and wood for construction (pine) became increasingly large parts of export production. But to whom did these ships belong? They did not belong to the small farmers. Who was exporting these varieties to Europe and the United States? Not the small farmers.

During the American occupation that began in 1915, U.S. capitalists took thousands of hectares, expelling small farmers in collaboration with some Haitian leaders. By 1929, 266,600 acres were in the hands of American capitalists. In the North-East and elsewhere, these new investors introduced the growth of sisal and rubber plants in large areas. These two plants suck the moisture from the earth and render it infertile. By the 1980s, the Haitian subsidiary of the U.S.-based Reynolds mining company that extracted bauxite in the Miragoâne region, and a Canada–U.S. company called SEDREN that extracted copper outside Gonaïves, withdrew from Haiti and left behind deserts. With the complicity of different Haitian governments, these companies (like

many others) did not respect clauses in their contracts that required reforestation of damaged surfaces.

Government policies go against the welfare of small farmers. Economic globalization has also demanded policies that go against the welfare of small farmers. Small growers are often forced to grow “cash crops” of cereal, in order to survive. Growing cereal crops means uprooting coffee trees—trees that had prevented erosion of hills and bluffs.

In spite of the fragility of this situation, the rich continue to build their castles in areas around the capital city, while the peasants have been forced to migrate to the cities. But the peasants do not find a better life. They live in subhuman conditions. They build their homes on the hillsides and even within the ravines and thus they are the first victims of the floods and slides that happen regularly after a few millimetres of rain. A good part of national and international public opinion blames them for environmental degradation instead of seeking the causes in the anti-social distribution of goods that is an element of capitalism and empire.

In Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital, the rich draw extraordinary volumes of water that is sold throughout the capital. This region once contained some of Haiti’s largest underground water reserves. It is now threatened with contamination by seawater.

Water contamination, drought, and flood all threaten the poorest citizens of Haiti. Once fertile, Haiti has become a mostly arid country with a few oases. Those who have the least security feel the effects of environmental destruction the most. The threat to small farmers and to the environment is a result of a long historical process, begun with colonization, and continuing today with economic globalization and imperialism.

Empire, For or Against: Make Every Dollar Count

(JGER Empire Task Group)

Stuart and Luella Dermott had a farm outside Alliston, Ontario. It was a mixed farm of cattle, pigs, and chickens. They grew various grains. Children of the Depression, they knew what poverty and lack of economic security meant, but their farm prospered through the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s, partially because they remembered the Dirty Thirties, and knew how to make every dollar count. Faithful members of Burns United Church, they knew that community was more important than individual gain. They also knew that farming was about interdependence, not the domination of creation, and that the very security of our children and the planet are at stake in how we use every dollar.

Of course Stuart and Luella never actually said much about these things, though their actions spoke volumes. They never spent lavishly or bought into a consumer lifestyle. Neighbours recount stories of the Dermotts putting community and love of the land first. Once a neighbour pulled over to inquire if Stuart’s slow-moving pace on a tractor meant there was some type of problem in the field. “No,” he replied, “It’s a great day, I enjoy cultivating, and I just want to make it last.” No race to the financial bottom line for the Dermotts. Life was about stewardship, in every sense of the word, something to be enjoyed and treasured, not a competition for individual gain. Unfortunately others have embraced industrial agriculture, contributing to larger farms and rural depopulation. When Stuart and Luella died childless in the late 1990s they left

almost one million dollars to their local United Church congregation in part to keep rural communities strong.

Here and there many United Church congregations have seen an increase in the number of financial gifts being left to them in bequests and wills of longstanding members born before the Second World War. David Foote, University of Toronto demographer, and author of the best selling book *Boom, Bust and Echo*, describes those born in the first half of the 20th century as builders, and the postwar babies have come to be known as boomers. Foote notes that we are now in the midst of the biggest transfer of intergenerational personal wealth between builders and boomers that Canada has ever known or is likely to see for some time. Many United Church congregations receive these financial gifts. The question of how to use these gifts is a question of how we live out our faith. Do we see building projects or investment in mission as our first priority? How do we use the money to benefit the wider community, and communities around the world? The faithful congregation that inherited the Dermott's gift has established a community foundation. The congregation resisted the neo-liberal cultural command to invest without thought as to who benefits or who is harmed. Rather, the congregation chose to take social and environmental well-being seriously. Today the Dermott's love of the land and community has found new expression and new life in United Church camps, the local hospital, and education initiatives in Africa and Canada.

Whether as individuals or institutions, managing our daily finances, RRSP contributions, or a new gift, the financial choices we make have social consequences. Church organizations in Canada have been among the leaders of the socially responsible or "ethical" investment movement that promotes the integration of social criteria in financial decision-making. As noted in the 2002 book, *Mission and Investing: A Guide for The United Church of Canada Congregations and Organizations*, many of the characteristics of the socially responsible investment movement can be seen in the activities of people working to alleviate poverty, in the field of international development assistance, and in the co-operative movement, all of which also have strong ties to Canadian churches. Now, more than ever, as we experience a global intersection of neo-liberal economic interests and military might for the benefit of a few, we are called to seek out alternative economic choices, ones that will uphold the common good.

Empire and Patriarchy: Violence against Women in Guatemala⁵⁷

(By Nora Coloma, Ecumenical Network of Women, Guatemala)

Violence against women and children, together with the increase of youth gangs linked to organized crime, are the results of family disintegration and youth alienation in civil society in past and present decades. These in turn cause a crisis of frustration and social and domestic violence where the moral values and ethical norms of our common lives as human beings are being lost. Inevitably, these phenomena have an impact on religious culture.

The problem of violence affects all of Guatemala. In this context, murders of women have grown substantially. This reality calls into question the capability of the government institutions to guarantee the right to security for all people, and especially those who are most vulnerable,

⁵⁷ Sources: Adrian Reyes, "Brutal Killings of Women Recall Counter-insurgency Techniques," IPS News Service, June 22, 2005: <http://www.ipsnews.org/news.asp?idnews=29187>

"Report on Violent Deaths of Women during 2004," Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos.

"Some Reflections on Femicide in Guatemala", Centro de Acción Legal de los Derechos Humanos (CALDH), October 2005.

including women. This concern is expressed even from within official agencies, including a pamphlet published by the office of the government's prosecutor for human rights entitled "Violent Deaths of Women during 2004."

Violent deaths of women in Guatemala are another form of social discrimination and intimidation. Generalized violence has a negative effect on participation in social movements, and aids in the development of a culture of fear.

Over the past five years, about 2,000 women have been brutally murdered in Guatemala. Year-to-year, this represents between 12 and 18 percent of all the murders in Guatemala. The numbers are not entirely precise, as government authorities do not provide exact statistics.

Forms of murder vary and include use of firearms, torture, and rape. Many women are found having been tied hand and foot, or placed in canvas or plastic bags; they are often mutilated and appear to have been thrown from automobiles. The victims usually range in age from 14 to 35 years of age. Among the most dangerous places are the capital city and surrounding municipalities, as well as the cities along the southern coast.

An important element to note is that in these statistics, it is very difficult to discern the ethnicity of the women. Most of the murdered women are described as *mestiza* (mixed Indigenous and European ancestry); few are described as Indigenous. But it is necessary to point out that because of racism, many Indigenous women have abandoned the use of traditional clothing.

Various groups of women and social movements call these murders "femicide"—the misogynist murder of women. The Mexican activist Ester Chávez (of Casa Amiga in Ciudad Juárez in northern Mexico) speaks of the extermination of women. Femicide, together with rape, torture, and other violence, is carried out largely because the victim is a woman; violence is a demonstration of power and domination. The results of various studies indicate patterns in the ways and locations that bodies are placed. The authorities allege that the women were involved in the street gangs known as "maras." These allegations fail to respect what the murdered women have suffered. In this way, the authorities seem to justify the ways that the women have been murdered. The allegations also hide the inability of the authorities to investigate fully the murders.

In lively debates and analysis among women's organizations and movements, many ideas about the causes and responses to violence against women and patriarchal systems and structures are discussed. One hypothesis that is debated, with many reservations, is the idea that the economic empowerment of women has placed men at an economic disadvantage, because women have proven that they can generate their own incomes and no longer need to depend on men.

Baywatch and Cell Phone Cameras: Middle Eastern Youth and the Culture of Empire (Middle East Council of Churches, Beirut, Lebanon/ JGER Empire Task Group)

It's not the sort of thing that the Western media would lead us to believe possible, yet in March 2005, twenty-five Muslim and Christian youth gathered in Teheran, Iran, for a three-day seminar, one of a series sponsored by the Middle East Council of Churches, with the theme "Christian and Muslim Youth: Toward Developing Their Common Future." One of the key

issues to emerge from the series of seminars concerned the impact of modern media, and the Western-dominated global culture of empire on the lives of young people, Christian and Muslim, in the Middle East.

Young people under 30 make up about 60 percent of the population of the Arab world, with youth unemployment running at 30 percent. Such symbols of modern life as satellite TV, Internet, cell phones, consumer electronics, and music videos are connecting them to a world their parents never knew. In many parts of the region, they are the first generation to live through the era of oil-generated wealth and rapid social change. Rather than accepting and absorbing the cultural identity of their community, they are being influenced by Western media to define their own *individual* identity.

“Tens of millions of young men and women, constrained by lack of employment opportunities, are constantly and increasingly exposed to the lavish lifestyles portrayed by music video clips—huge houses, beautiful gardens, posh cars, cool clothes, and seductive semi-naked girls jumping about everywhere, says one Christian participant. This is viewed as “a product of the Christian West,” she continues. “We Arab Christians want to say, no, it is not Christian. We are Christian and we are appalled by this onslaught just like you!”

Other participants were open about the ambivalence within Arab society toward the mass culture of empire. One young Egyptian man recalls breaking the fast with Muslim friends during Ramadan recently. “After the meal the television came on, with a popular music program. The singer appeared singing on top of an open bus, wearing leather trousers and a skin-tight tube shirt. Her movements, her song, and her interview following her set all proclaimed sex. I learned she was Lebanese. I was embarrassed, and yet my friend’s sisters were eagerly singing along, while dressed very conservatively, their heads veiled.” The pressure of the culture of empire on changing gender roles in the region was a source of much animated conversation over meals.

One of the presenters at the seminar quotes the South African liberation leader Steve Biko to sustained applause: “The most powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.” Yes, several participants energetically agree. “We even begin to absorb the negative stereotypes in Western media about Arabs, Iranians, Middle Easterners, and Muslims, and we forget the rich diversity of Arab cultures.” As a representative of the Middle East Council of Churches remarks, “We have been seduced into letting the West tell our story, shape our identity.”

A Muslim Lebanese university student notes that in many countries in the region, power is wielded in authoritarian ways, without accountability. People are restricted from expressing their social, ethnic, and political identities, and wealth is frequently distributed in grossly unjust ways. “The resulting tensions that build up are released, or postponed, through consumerism and materialism—enjoying Baywatch, or a Batman movie on TV, while denouncing American and British imperialism. This lasts for a while, but one day the human spirit snaps. Baywatch and Batman and cell phones with cameras and MP3 music players no longer compensate for the deep frustrations, disappointments, and fears that haunt young people in our societies.”

At the same time, some participants wonder if governments in countries throughout the Middle East are not quietly grateful for the “superficial, empty, distractions of the culture of empire.” A young Armenian Christian participant from Iran suggests, “governments want people’s minds driven away from the horrific hazards of politics and economics.” As a result, young people—both Christian and Muslim—are forced to find ways of claiming their identity in the face not only of the culture of empire, but with the complicity of governments “wanting to anaesthetize an increasingly restless and angry generation of youth.”

Is there a good side to the culture of empire, its commodification⁵⁸ of youth and beauty and its consumer technology, for the tens of millions of educated, unemployed young urban men and women across the Middle East? Yes, says a 24-year old Lebanese woman. “After the murder of Lebanon’s Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005, we mobilized mass protests in Beirut through cell phones and text messaging, and sent digital pictures and video out around the world to swing global opinion over this outrage—and it worked!” Another participant observes ironically that of all the issues facing young Christians and Muslims in the Middle East, the toxic encroachment of the culture and media of empire have proved to be the most effective at building common cause across faith communities toward building a common future.

Theological Reflection

(When references to Douglas John Hall, Ofelia Ortega and Nestor Miguez are made in this reflection, see Appendix A, B, and C) respectively.)

Our study of empire, in particular through how empire is experienced by our global ecumenical partners, has led to the conclusion that empire—what theologian Ofelia Ortega and others have called a “civilization of inequality”—threatens and destroys the faith we confess and profess as followers of Jesus. The destruction of, and continuing threat to, all life means that we are at a critical time for the discernment of the gospel. At issue is the liberating good news the church professes. Empire has lured and co-opted the church into theologies contrary to the gospel alternative, which is centred on freedom *for* God, *for* the world, *for* the neighbour (see Mark 12:28–34). Yet through the gift of the Spirit we may again be made free to be the church, to risk living a life for and with the other and for this world God created and recreates (see John 8:31–36; Galatians 5:13–14; etc.).

To explore how empire has captured our loyalty, we survey scripture, concentrating on the New Testament and its imperial context. The imperium, and imperial theology, historically belongs to Rome and its political organization at the time of the Caesars—though the Jews had suffered under Egyptian and Babylonian domination throughout their history. Emperors were considered divine beings and given the titles of Lord, Saviour, and Son of God. They were honoured and celebrated as bringers of a salvation that had peace and security, the *Pax Romana*, as its cornerstone. This so-called peace, namely the security of protection from enemies, was grounded in war and victory with the sword, and since there was no distinction between politics and religion, victorious rulers were considered to have divine approval and status. For faithful Jews this meant worship of a false god (Exodus 20:3–5a).

⁵⁸ “Commodification” is a process that renders something, for example a material good or an idea, into an object for sale and profit.

It is in the context of the Roman Empire of the first century C.E. that Jesus was born, lived, taught, healed, and was crucified. The brutal oppression of occupied Palestine under Roman rule was his and his people's daily experience. Scholar Richard Horsley puts the importance of understanding Jesus' historical context in perspective: "Trying to understand Jesus' speech and action without knowing how Roman imperialism determined the conditions of life in Galilee and Jerusalem would be like trying to understand Martin Luther King without knowing how slavery, reconstruction, and segregation determined the lives of African Americans in the United States."⁵⁹ Theologian Nestor Miguez also speaks of empire as "the historical backdrop for Jesus' ministry."

In story and parable, in healing and exorcism, in meal and miracle, Jesus provided an alternative to the reality of empire in his time, an alternative grounded in the covenantal and prophetic traditions of Israel. Jesus reminded those who bore the oppression of Rome and who were his primary audience that God sought their liberation by calling them to covenant for the communal living of the justice and righteousness portrayed in the Torah (see, for example, Matthew 5–7; Luke 6:17–49). To be bound to God through the Torah was for Jews a matter of ultimate allegiance that ruled out loyalty to the Emperor as a divinity, that is, a false god (see Matthew 22:15–22; Luke 20:20–26). Jesus the Jew and a child of Judaism drew upon the prophetic and apocalyptic tradition (see Isaiah 14:4–20; Micah 4:1–4; Daniel 3; Revelation 18; etc.) and its criticism of the kind of injustice and exploitation that marked imperial Rome and also announced God's promised future of inclusive freedom (see Luke 7:36–50; Mark 5:1–20; etc.) and an "economy of grace" (see Mark 8:1–10). He also drew upon the Jubilee and Sabbath traditions, calling those once enslaved to create a society where liberation from slavery (see Luke 4:16–21; etc.), debt (see Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:1–4), and other inequities was the divine order of the day.

Jesus drew on the metaphor of the "realm of God," taken from the Hebrew prophets. He proclaimed God's covenantal reign of peace, compassion, justice, healing, reconciliation, and non-violence, as being opposite to empire. According to Jesus, God's reign was freely and graciously given to all, especially to the poor, marginalized, and diseased (see Luke 14:12–14; Matthew 11:2–5; etc.), to women and children (see Mark 1:29–31; Mark 5:21–43; Matthew 18:1–5; etc.). Such proclamation led to his crucifixion, which was imperial Rome's way of dealing with those whom it regarded as a threat to its absolute rule. The cross, the central symbol of our faith, is full of historically tragic and terrible irony, as his Jewish brothers and sisters have, over the intervening centuries of imperial Christendom, suffered pain, pogroms, and holocaust from those who called themselves Christians, wearing crosses and wielding swords and guns in their hands to crucify his fellow Jews.

After his experience of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, the Apostle Paul spent his days visiting, establishing, sustaining and teaching communities where the alternative that Jesus proclaimed was lived out as much as possible. Paul too knew the oppression of empire. In his letter to the church in Rome (7:24) he cries out: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" "Body of death" means living under the coercion of this world's imperial principalities and powers, and not being able to fulfill the Torah, to do God's will. The slavery he speaks of is such that even when we will to do God's commandments, we cannot. But

⁵⁹ Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, p. 13.

when in the next verse he cries out, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” he rejoices in the Christ-given gift of freedom for God, for the neighbour and for the world, the freedom to fulfill the Torah. When those early church communities called Jesus “Lord” they made it plain that Caesar was not to be worshiped and that ultimate loyalty belonged to God and to God alone.

Using provocative and political language, such as that of slavery and freedom (see Romans 7:24; Galatians 5:1; etc.) and clearly building on the gospel of Jesus, Paul laid the foundations of the church as local communities, initially house churches where social, spiritual, and economic mutuality was to reign. It was this agenda of congregational development that was a key factor in the spread and growth of the early Christian movement, since equality (women were leaders—see Galatians 3:26–28; Acts 16:14–15; etc.), inclusivity (Gentiles and Jews together—see Galatians 3:26–28; Acts 17:26; etc.), sustenance (goods, resources, Eucharist were shared—see Acts 2:42–47; Acts 4:32–35; etc.), and healing (liberation—see Acts 16:16–34; etc.) were hope-filled and life-altering. Conversion and baptism then meant incorporation into this body’s healthy and holistic way of living, which was contrary to empire. A Jew like Jesus, but also a Roman citizen, Paul too was executed by Rome as a politically dangerous figure.

The church was persecuted by imperial powers and martyrdom was widespread in its early life. But over time a theological drift from the core teachings of Jesus and Paul, particularly on the question of economic equality and the rejection of violence, paved the way for the greatest upheaval in Christian history—the conversion of Emperor Constantine! United Church theologian Douglas John Hall states that the emperor “invited the Christians to become...chaplain to his imperium,” as Constantine (and emperors since!) saw the potential for religion to lend unifying force, triumphalist power, personalizing morality, and authoritative deference to his imperial regime. This meant that the church that became triumphant and dominant alongside the state, had in fact become empire itself in the form of Christendom. The militant globalizing mission of the church followed, including the devastation of the crusades, the dramatic expansion of wealth and property ownership of the church, the conflicting realignment of church and various states in the Reformation period, and the horror of the Holocaust in Germany and elsewhere during World War II.

Without going further into the history, we see a series of short steps to move from the dominance and power of the Roman Empire to the dominance and power of Christendom to the contemporary dominance and power of the neo-liberal capitalist empire. While it is true, as Douglas Hall states, that “western Christendom is in its final stages of decay”—thus providing us with a providential opportunity to recapture the original modesty of the gospel through the use of such metaphors for the church as salt, light, seed, yeast (see Matthew 5:13–16; Matthew 13:31–33; etc.) —empire itself continues in full force. Over the centuries, empire has co-opted religion and divorced itself from its explicit religious roots. Nestor Miguez identifies global imperial consolidation as a very real likelihood. Empire will be grounded in an economic axis in which “Mammon is God” and “everything must be adapted to the framework of capitalist commerce and consumerist society,” with a drive toward privatization in which “Individual satisfaction dissolves...solidarity...(and) generate(s) an imperialized subjectivity.” Ofelia Ortega has named nine characteristics, while we have named seven factors in our understanding of contemporary empire—political, economic, military, cultural, religious, environmental, patriarchal—which join

in such interconnected ways that they form a unified system of oppression, destruction, and threat of death to marginalized people and the planet's ecosystems as a whole.

We are thus called anew to a prophetic faith that is oriented to real truth, holds ultimate hope and trust in God, and yet remains close to the negations of history, and is aware of the people and places where contemporary suffering is most acutely known (Douglas Hall). It is this prophetic faith that has led South African Christians, after the devastation of decades of apartheid, to build goodwill for the future—through the inspiring process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission led by Desmond Tutu and others—upon an understanding of “ubuntu” theology, which asserts that “I am human when you also are human.”

It is also this prophetic faith that leads Ofelia Ortega to write: “We are called to be nonconformist and transformative communities, because life is not possible unless we do transformation that addresses the roots of injustice. We are called...to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2) from the dominating and egoistic imperial mindset, thus doing the will of God which is fulfilled in love, solidarity and grace.... We as churches are called to create spaces for, and become agents of, transformation, even as we are entangled in and complicit with the very system we are called to change.” In offering a prophetic affirmation of “the creative power of God,” that another world and another resurrected church is possible, Nestor Miguez states: “To locate ourselves in spaces of hope is to begin working beyond Empire. It is to create life-giving alternatives for everyone.... But for this faith to become reality we cannot wait for time to pass and for the governing powers to fall by themselves. It is necessary to begin to demonstrate in our perceptions, relationships, and communities that another world is possible; that other ways of living bring dignity and plenitude...through the extension of alternate symbols and lifeways, of which we are heirs.”

It seems clear that God calls us to a bold confession and renewed profession and practice of our faith—God's gospel alternative to empire—in word and deed with our various ecumenical and interfaith partners. Ofelia Ortega says, “the conflict with...empire is the theological place that makes us know who our God is.” With her and others, it is our conviction that nothing less than the contemporary theological integrity of the church is at stake. We therefore remind the church of God's call to be the church of Jesus Christ, to be set free by grace, at all levels and in all ways, to reclaim our loyalty to the gospel rather than to be enslaved by the continuing imperial theology of our day.

Confession: Church and World in the Midst of Empire

The understanding of empire expressed in this report is primarily based upon the witness of our ecumenical, inter-faith, and societal partners, both overseas and in Canada. It is also deeply informed by the witness of scripture, in both Old and New Testaments, and by the reflections of theologians and members of the Empire Task Group. The imperial threats to life in various dimensions in our current global context lead us to acknowledge the divided loyalties and deep involvement, or complicity, of The United Church of Canada and the larger worldwide Christian church, with the forces and forms of empire in both church and world. Our acknowledgment of such complicity leads us to new and bold confession.

Acts of confession are absolutely critical to the integrity of our faith. Confessing our complicity with empire is a crucial first step, in order to turn in another direction (to repent). Our unique and oft-quoted Affirmation of Faith (“A New Creed”)—that we are not alone, that we live in God’s world, and that we are called to be the church—is deeply compromised if we fail to take into account the breadth and depth of our complicity in imperial violence. All subjects of empire are indoctrinated by falsehoods, lies, distortions, and misrepresentations that give rise to both overt and covert forms of violent power over ourselves, others, and God’s creation. Empire challenges faith communities such as ours to examine the very truth of their confession. Remaining silent in the face of our acknowledged complicity is not an option for a church such as ours who profess Jesus Christ as Lord of our time and our history. We understand confession to be an act of acknowledging wrongs and injustices. Confession thus also becomes a way for the church to imagine and discern a new future, a new way of being church, as a faithful response to God’s grace and call to new life.

The need to acknowledge our complicity with the imperial powers, and to confess the same, is shared by other reports. The draft Statement of Faith, which the Theology and Faith Committee has placed before the 39th General Council 2006, states in its preamble that “separated as we now are from the centre of power, the United Church has become aware of its complicity with historic oppressions and abuses,” and it notes the pervasive economic worldview of contemporary people, such that “our spiritual hunger is co-opted by the culture of consumption.” The statement itself notes that “by the tragic subversion of our potential, we are in bondage to and complacent within a matrix of false desires and wrong choices. In these are manifest the tragic outcomes of sin—the evil that is hatred, violence, greed, and selfishness; the domination of economic, political, and military empires; rampant consumerism and unchecked accumulation of wealth; limitless growth and damage to creation.” Finally the statement says that the church after Constantine “grew in number and power, allying with great cities and empires, silencing by force diverse expressions of faith, harming rather than caring for God’s children.... We carry sorrow, grief, and shame for our wounding actions across this whole beloved and beleaguered world.... We have often failed to be the church.”

We also acknowledge previous sincere attempts to confess our collective complicity in imperial forces, not the least of which has been the United Church’s 1986 Apology to Native Peoples, and our 1998 Statement of Repentance. We are also more aware, in part because the above apology and statement were received but not accepted, that mere words of sorrow and repentance are not enough. We are called by the Spirit to confess our sins and to live into our repentance, as faithful disciples of Jesus in our time and place.

Another challenge to transformation is what we call our “revolutionary theology.” We have been prolific as the United Church in addressing, over time, major social issues of injustice, greed, exploitation, etc. by passing resolutions, petitions, and reports at various levels (General Council, Conference, presbytery/district, congregational). Yet such statements have not instilled in us a real change of heart and institution, in which we no longer presume to have all the answers, whether in the forms of doctrine or methods of social action. We are called, at all levels of the church, to live into the complex questions and concerns of our time, in solidarity with ecumenical, interfaith, and societal partners. We suffer widespread hesitancy regarding our needed conversion to new forms of mission and ministry. If newly energized by the Spirit,

however, we may undertake a sustained new re-formation of the church, in part by working with renewed vigour in our carrying out of previous resolutions throughout the church and in lives.

Confession can evoke fear, and it seems that we are a fearful people, fearful of dying as individuals and as churches. Such fear, however, merely plays into the hands of empire. We need to confess our emphasis on maintenance rather than mission. We also need to confess our confusion of the authentic evangelism of the gospel (which is the sharing of God's good news as known in the witness, ministry, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus), with church growth, which is a by-product of the gospel rather than the gospel in and of itself!

This confession will require a new degree of humbleness and risk-taking of us all, as we seek to overcome specific sins of imperial complicity with regard to race, class, gender, age, clericalism, ecological destruction, discrimination, and the like. Over the next triennium and beyond we are called to ask ourselves difficult questions about living in the midst of empire, at every level of the church, about our goals and methods, focusing on

- our education and faith formation methods and models
- our mission and social action agendas
- our interfaith assumptions
- our expectations for lay and ordered ministry training
- the emphasis of our youth and children's ministries
- our pension and investment fund portfolios
- our spending, consumption and budgeting habits
- our environmental standards
- our stewardship patterns
- our methods of governance and decision-making
- our means of conflict resolution
- our forms of worship
- and a host of other practices of church life

Continued and renewed advocacy among the principalities and powers, including government and corporations, who are among the primary builders of empire, is important. But we are also called to re-examine our hearts and actions, as the principal architects and purveyors of empire count on our complicity to maintain their dominance.

We are only beginning to understand the depth of confession necessary within the church to recapture a dynamic and passionate faithfulness to the vision, gospel, and mission of Jesus. Because we benefit in so many ways from the imperial forces at work in our world (economically, socially, ecclesiastically, individually, and otherwise) we may even resist the call to confession that this report, and its attached proposal, represents. Nonetheless scripture, our various partners, and the Spirit beckon, calling us to a broad analysis of our complicity in empire, as a first step toward renewed integrity and faithfulness within all levels of The United Church of Canada. We need to examine our collective conscience, to name our sin, to ask ourselves how we are linked with the destructive forms and forces of empire in our time. Then and only then, having confessed in word and deed, can we begin to take up the challenge of God's call to renewed discipleship of Jesus Christ through the transforming and renewing power of God's Spirit of freedom and truth.

Call: Living God's Reign in the Midst of Empire

In making our confession, we seek to be a responsive and transformed people of faith, hope, and love. God calls us to fresh discernment about the shape of our mission and ministry in the imperial context of our time. This is a critical kairós time for the church. We must sharpen our attentiveness to God's call to us, as individuals, families, congregations/pastoral charges, mission units, presbyteries/districts, Conferences, and General Council. We seek to be in solidarity with God's mission in and for this world that God created and loves, and for the creatures of all kinds who have life and breath from God's life and breath. This section of our report, without presuming to speak for all within this diverse church of ours, seeks to express hints and glimpses of what that solidarity might look like in the midst of the destructive imperial forces of our day.

Discernment is an ongoing tradition for those in the church. Fortunately, we have sources of inspiration to guide us in this new context. For instance, our Affirmation of Faith, "A New Creed," reminds us that we are called by the God we trust "to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope." And we know "God is with us. We are not alone."

But such faith is in danger of becoming nothing more than pious words if it is separated from the nitty-gritty of worldly engagements and entanglements. To move from confession to call is to move from the ideas, intentions, and actions that we resist as sinful, to those ideas, intentions, and actions to which God leads us. We seek a shift within the broad life of the church from a primary concern about preservation and maintenance toward a fresh vocation of vision, mission engagement, justice seeking, and transformative ministry.

The 39th General Council 2006 offers significant time for discernment about our just-beginning third generation of mission and ministry. Once again, the draft Statement of Faith offers points of convergence, as it states: "With God's help we turn from our sin and seek to be agents of God's healing and reconciliation.... We choose to listen to our neighbours in faith...to work together for a whole earth of peace and justice. We participate in God's work of healing and mending creation expressed in both personal and communal dimensions."

Becoming more specific, the statement says: "Christian communal responsibility in our day especially includes: attending to the well-being of our home the earth; repenting of European-Canadian hostility toward Aboriginal peoples; resisting economic exploitation, the idolatry of the market economy, and the marginalization of people because of gender, ethnicity, or sexuality; challenging the misuse of Christian language to promote hatred rather than love, and war rather than peace; fostering a climate of faithful hope in opposition to a culture of covert despair; and constructively recreating our identity and role in the community of the earth." While this is an exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, vocation for us as individuals, it is far less difficult as people of various gifts within diverse communities of faith, at all levels of the church, and among people of conscience everywhere.

Inklings of God's contemporary call to the church have been discerned here and there, among diverse people of faith in various contexts. The United Church has a rich history of prophetic

and pastoral involvement, and has over the last few decades addressed numerous specific issues of injustice, exploitation, and greed. Nonetheless, far too few of us have transformed our habits and our patterns of behaviour. Rather, we have conformed ourselves more to imperial practices of efficiency and success, rather than to the radical, alternative, and anti-imperial gospel of good news, which has unselfish love at its heart. Among a host of potential actions we may consider, it is time to revisit, in a systematic fashion, the practical implications for our future church, at all levels, of the various resolutions and petitions that have guided our policy and program making in the past.

We are invited to return to the core questions of our faith tradition if we are to discern God's will in the midst of the daily lies, deceptions, and lures of empire. This invitation has been extended by various sources and most recently by the World Council of Churches Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE) initiative. It invites member churches "to recommit themselves to reflect on the question of power and empire from a biblical and theological perspective, and take a firm faith stance against hegemonic powers because all power is accountable to God." The fundamental questions we need to ask are these:

- What is the gospel?
- Is God's mission primarily about this world or the next?
- What is a church for?
- Is faithfulness as much about right practices as it is about right beliefs, and if so, what are they?

A core conviction of many in our church is that it exists for the transformation, mending, and new life of the world. The church is called to live in trust, grace, and risk and to live out the gospel of God's reign of justice, peace, reconciliation, and healing. Of course it is difficult to say what this looks like concretely in the variety of contexts—personal, communal, social, cultural, ecclesial, regional, ecological, etc.—in which we find ourselves.

Nonetheless, some broad hints exist. Clearly we are called to a primary emphasis on mission, rather than on maintenance or survival. That means we are called to personal, congregational, and ecclesiastical transformation. We must tune our hearts, lifestyles, and structures to the profession, in word and deed, of good news in the midst of ever-present imperial bad news. We are called to a deeper discipleship as individuals and as church. That means an emphasis on committed faith formation and re-formation, on learning again who we are as followers of Jesus, rather than as followers of Caesar. We are called to speak gospel truth to the imperial powers, to challenge systemic injustice, exploitation, violence, and death wherever we find it, including in the church! Through it all, we are called to trust God.

We receive inspiration from the World Council of Churches' 2006 Assembly in Porto Alegre, and this thematic affirmation: "God, in your grace, transform the world." How can another world, and a different and transformed church, become possible? We know that solidarity with our various partners—ecumenical, interfaith, and all people of goodwill—is a key component in forging a new future. There are some hopeful church and community models for transformation, which can ground and sustain us. Such stories of God's grace-filled transformation, if shared, will help us live into the gospel in our time and place with integrity and hope. Resources for sharing these models and stories will need to be developed.

Without a doubt, this discernment of God's call to live the gospel in the midst of contemporary imperial powers will require our boldest and most passionate humanity, as God sets before us nothing less than a daily choice between life and death, blessings and curses (Deut 30:19). The implications of God's call to us for all mission and ministry areas of our church life is staggering and daunting, as we go deep to get in touch once again with the Spirit's risky Pentecostal adventure. Our various ecumenical and interfaith partners, in Canada and globally, will be our companions on the way, as we develop tools over the next triennium and beyond to help us. This is a long-term process of discernment, as the imperial powers will not stop luring us, inevitably changing in order to tempt us and to attempt to weaken the gospel. May we all live deeply and joyfully into the call to live God's reign in the midst of empire in our time and place.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

AGAPE	Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth
Basotho	People of Lesotho in the Sesotho language
Commodification	The transformation of what is normally a non-commodity into a commodity, to assign economic value to something that traditionally would not be considered in economic terms, for example, an idea, identity, gender
Complicity	Association or participation in or as if in a wrongful or unjust act or system
Counter-insurgency	The combating of insurgency, by the government (or allies) of the territory in which the insurgency takes place
Empire	The convergence of economic, political, cultural, geographic, and military imperial interests, systems, and networks that seek to dominate political power and economic wealth. It typically forces and facilitates the flow of wealth and power from vulnerable persons, communities, and countries to the more powerful. Empire today crosses all boundaries, strips and reconstructs identities, subverts cultures, subordinates nation states, and either marginalizes or co-opts religious communities (World Alliance of Reformed Churches)
ICIF	Inter-Church Inter-Faith Advisory Committee
International Monetary Fund	The international organization entrusted with overseeing the global financial system by monitoring exchange rates and balance of payments, as well as offering technical and financial assistance when asked
Imperium	A Latin term can be translated as power. In Antiquity this concept could apply to people, and mean something like "power status" or "authority," or could be used with a geographical connotation and mean something like "territory"
Interdependence	The dynamic of being mutually responsible to and dependent on others
JGER	Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit
Kairos	A Greek term meaning literally "the right or opportune time"

Neo-liberalism

In its dominant international use, neo-liberalism refers to a political-economic philosophy that de-emphasizes or rejects government intervention in the domestic economy. It focuses on free-market methods, fewer restrictions on business operations, and property rights. It upholds and promotes the market as the judge of the common good and enshrines competition as the supreme good

Market capitalism

In common usage, an economic system in which the means of production are overwhelmingly privately owned and operated for profit, decisions regarding investment of capital are made privately, and where production, distribution, and the prices of goods, services, and labour are affected by the forces of supply and demand in a largely free market

Praetoria

The name given to the elite bodyguard of a Roman emperor (approximately the size of a legion) or to a member of this bodyguard. The term is sometimes applied to the inner circle of advisers to a major political figure

Preventive war

A kind of war whose public justification is proclaimed as “self-defense”

Privatization

The process of transferring property from public ownership to private ownership and/or transferring the management of a service or activity from the government to the private sector

Transnational corporations

Corporations with investments or that operate in more than one country and that regularly transfer capital across national borders

U.S.

United States of America

UNICEF

United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

Unilateralism

The practice of a single country acting alone outside of the parameters of international law to which that country is obligated

WARC

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

WCC

World Council of Churches

World Bank

A group of five international organizations responsible for providing finance to countries for purposes of development and poverty reduction, and for encouraging and safeguarding international investment

Theological Reflections

“Christianity and Empire” by the Rev. Dr. Douglas John Hall, Professor Emeritus, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

“Where the Empire Lies, People Suffer, They Are Exploited and Life Becomes Death” by the Rev. Dr. Ofelia Ortega, Professor of Systematic Theology, Evangelical Theological Seminary, Matanzas, Cuba

“Jesus and Empire: Then and Now” by the Rev. Dr. Nestor O. Miguez, Professor of New Testament Studies, Instituto Universitario ISEDET, Buenos Aires, Argentina

“Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth,” 24th General Assembly of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), Accra, Ghana, October 2004.

“A Call to Love and Action,” AGAPE—Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth, World Council of Churches, September 2005.

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Appendix A

Christianity and Empire⁶⁰

By Douglas John Hall

*‘Age after age their tragic Empires rise,
Built while they dream, and in that dreaming weep. . .’⁶¹*

Christianity came into the world half a century after the founding of one of history’s greatest empires, the Roman⁶², and throughout most of its own 2000-year history the Christian religion has functioned as the cultus of imperial peoples. Yet at its biblical and doctrinal roots Christianity is fundamentally incommensurate with the concept of empire. There is indeed something almost ludicrous about a faith at whose very centre stands the cross of one executed by Rome becoming, in the short space of three centuries, the official religion of the Roman Empire. Empires, whether ancient or modern, do not adopt crucified criminals as their principal symbols—and especially not when they are themselves the crucifiers. As they regularly are! Empires want symbols of power, triumph, superiority. The eagle, a powerful, flesh-eating bird of prey, has long been a favourite with empires. How, then, is this centuries-old association of the Christian religion with imperial peoples of the Western world to be explained?

There is, I think, no simple, straightforward answer to that question. History does not answer to logic. Life, whether corporate or individual, is full of contradictory elements and incompatible combinations. Certain observations about the nature of the *modus vivendi* [working arrangement] between Christianity and Empire may help us, nevertheless, both to understand this relation and to clarify for ourselves ways in which *today*, as precisely this relation comes unraveled, we may as Christian persons and institutions think and act faithfully.

⁶⁰ By Douglas John Hall, C.M., Emeritus Professor of Christian Theology, McGill University, Montreal. December, 2005 (By request the Empire Task Group, United Church of Canada).

⁶¹ Clifford Bax, 1919

⁶² As empire, Rome dates to 31 BC

(1) Empire Needs Religion. There is nothing particularly mysterious about the fact that religion – some religion or other – has been a prominent aspect of nearly every empire.⁶³ From the first intentional *imperium*, that of Sargon of Akkad in Mesopotamia, to the greatest contemporary ‘superpower’ (the American), empire has manifested a vested interest in religion. Superficially considered, this may be attributed to the fact that the bulk of humanity is inherently ‘religious’, and political schemes always need as much popular support as they can get. We all know, for instance, how greatly the present Republican administration of the U.S.A. relies on the vote of the ‘Christian’ Right.

But imperial interest in religion has a deeper explanation than the quantitative. Beneath the rhetoric and the bravado of empire, there is a profound if repressed undercurrent of doubt – as there is whenever human beings set themselves up as bearers of extraordinary power, authority, and permanence. Empires are “tragic” in the same way that the protagonists of Shakespeare’s plays are tragic: they court a state of transcendent significance that, subconsciously, they know they’re incapable of attaining. Empires are the fruit of human dreaming, but there is a hidden ‘weeping’ in such dreaming because the fragility of what is dreamt of is darkly sensed by the dreamer. Human beings, individually and collectively, are capable of great things; but there is a limit to our greatness, and when our pride (*hubris*) tempts us beyond that limit we know, at some deep level of awareness, that we are courting the “fall” that pride “goeth before.”

The quest for religious under-girding and legitimation on the part of empire-builders is born of that inner knowledge. They seek in religion the security that they know they cannot assume as mere human enterprises. The builders of that mythic city, Babel (Genesis 11), knew intuitively that the kind of ultimacy and certitude they craved for their state required a Guarantor more reliable than themselves or the fortunes of history; thus the *tower* they erected, a specifically religious venture without much *practical* use, became the most important part of their project. They needed access to God, or what they imagined God to be: they needed to control the Controller.

When the Emperor Constantine invited the Christians to become, as it were, chaplain to his imperium, he was not just doing a favour to his mother’s religion. The diverse and quarrelling old religions of the classical period had failed, and so had the contrived new ‘state religion’ of emperor-worship. The empire of the Caesars was beginning to collapse. Constantine saw in the Christian religion some of the ingredients he needed to ward off Rome’s decline.

(2) What Empires Find Attractive about the Christian Religion. One of those ingredients—perhaps the most attractive of them—was the Christian emphasis upon unity. The unity of the deity.⁶⁴ The unity of all things ‘under God.’ The perceived unity and intelligibility of God’s historical purposes (*providentia Dei*). After all, empires are rather artificial and usually enforced collectivities of very diverse elements—diverse historically, racially, ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and religiously. The ‘natural’ tendency of such immense collectivities is for their

⁶³ Including the USSR. For, as many have observed, the ideology of history’s inevitable progress towards the classless society is as much a religious faith as any explicit theism.

⁶⁴ A decisive factor in the evolution of the doctrine of the Trinity, which was ‘settled’ only after the Constantinian beginnings of the Establishment of the Christian religion, was the need of Rome to combat the existing polytheism of its territories, and therefore to accentuate the principle of *unity* in the discussion of the triune God. Particularly in the West, the unity principle practically ruled out the notion of distinctive ‘persons’ in the godhead.

various components to maintain a stubborn distinctiveness or, having been forced into conformity, continually to resist its constrictions. It is not enough to have conquered other tribes and territories, they must be governed—kept in the fold! Like empires before and after it, Rome, we know, expended immense energy and resources on the maintenance of the unification it imposed upon subject peoples. How desirable, then, is a faith which, working *within*, motivates divergent groupings to believe that the greatest good is unity and not distinctiveness.⁶⁵

A second attractive element of Christianity, from the perspective of empire-builders, is its potentiality for triumphalism. I say “potentiality”, because, in order to actualize this potential, a certain ideological sleight-of-hand must be performed: that is, those elements of the Christian account of reality which are apparently consistent with the mandatory power-and-glory rhetoric of empire must be accentuated, and those elements of the biblical message that remind us of the vulnerability of the human condition and the ambiguity of all our victories must be de-emphasized. A *crucified* Messiah is an embarrassment to empire (as Paul suggests in I Corinthians 1-2), but a crucified Messiah *resurrected to ultimate and universal sovereignty* could be a positive boon! Can there be any doubt why Easter Sunday and not Good Friday constitutes *the* religious feast day of the United States of America? Or for that matter why Christmas could be so easily incorporated into the bourgeois triumphalism of the consumer-driven West?

A third advantage that empires have found in Christianity (as in some other religions) is its tendency to foster *personal* morality and to downplay or neglect social ethics. This too, of course, requires a generous application of the aforementioned ideological sleight-of-hand. Yet the transformation is not so drastic as in the previous point; for in the first place the biblical (explicitly the newer Testamental) ethic itself tends to stress the personal and ecclesial, and the ‘religious impulse’ in humans generally manifests itself in a no-doubt-understandable concern for the self—which is why Marx could call religion “opiate of the people.” The Christian faith has been mistrusted (and sometimes persecuted) by worldly powers only where it has led to radical concern for or interference in social and political conditions—that is, concern for *the world as such*.

Fourthly, empire, having once embraced the Christian religion, could almost always count on that religion to support, encourage or even enthusiastically promote imperial authority. Indeed, the *potentiality* for such support is already to be found in the New Testament. Not only its concentration on the personal and the ecclesial, but in some explicit directives (notably Romans 13), the New Testament seems to assume, if not positive support of the “governing authorities,” a certain political passivity. So much of the spiritual focus of the earliest church was centered in faith’s eschatological expectation of the *Parousia* [the inauguration of the Reign of God] that the glory and power of “the kingdoms of this world” could seem ephemeral indeed. Why raise questions? Their prominence was strictly transient, their fate was already sealed.

From such observations, we can appreciate the attractions of Christianity, not only for the *Roman* Empire but for every subsequent imperium with which the Christian religion has co-mingled.

⁶⁵ I am tempted here to comment on the Canada crisis. A forgotten element in the discussion of Canadian unity and the threatened ‘breakup of the country’ is the role that the Christian religion played in the maintenance of confederation. It is not accidental, surely, that the separatist movement has achieved its greatest influence in a post-Catholic, highly secularized Quebec. In this situation, there is no longer an internal, ‘spiritual’ influence quietly at work persuading people to suppress their long-cherished distinctiveness in order that the greater good of human harmony might prevail.

But by the same token we can also notice something of what Christianity had—and has still—to relinquish and de-emphasize in order to function in the role of imperial religion. What should astonish us today is not how appealing Christianity could be to empire, but rather how uncritically the dominant forms of the Christian religion have adapted themselves to the roles that successive empires have recruited them to play. Whether in its various *de jure* [legal] expressions or in the *de facto* cultural forms of North America and elsewhere, Christian ‘Establishment’ has meant that the whole *prophetic* side of the Judeo-Christian tradition has been greatly reduced where it was not dispensed with altogether.

(3) Empire and Prophetic Faith. By prophetic faith is meant the faith that is exemplified especially by the prophets of ancient Israel as they are testified to in the Hebrew Bible, and in the New Testament’s witness to John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. Contrary to the tendency of conventional Christianity to relegate prophecy to the past,⁶⁶ however, responsible Christian theology today insists that the prophetic calling is essential to the very being and mission of the church.⁶⁷ Jesus Christ, especially in the classical Protestant theological tradition, is understood to be the inheritor and (for Christians) supreme exemplar of the *three* Old Testament ‘offices’ of prophet, priest and king.⁶⁸ From its fourth century inception onwards, Christendom was prone to covet for itself both the priestly and the kingly aspects of its Christological foundation, though often in questionable forms; but, precisely on account of its close ties with “the governing authorities” (Rom. 13), established Christianity found it awkward if not impossible consistently to take up the prophetic office that belongs to the church’s participation in the being and work of the Christ. For that vocation presupposes an exceptional spiritual and intellectual independence of existing structures and a courageous readiness to critique the *status quo*.

Prophetic faith clashes with empire almost inevitably because of the priorities inherent in it. Without exhausting these, we may name some of the most elementary: First, prophetic faith is oriented towards truth.⁶⁹ The prophetic community does not claim to *possess* the Truth (for Truth biblically understood is a *living* reality and does not admit of possession), but prophetic faith is driven by an insatiable *thirst* for truth that cannot be satisfied with half-truth or comforting fictions any more than with deliberate falsehood. As suggested earlier, the dream of empire as such involves a certain suppression of truth, or at least a willing suspension of disbelief. Questions about the desirability and even the feasibility of such extensive power, or the potential for evil within it, or the worthiness of those who wield it, or the discrepancy between its rhetoric and its reality must always be repressed. The propaganda of empire (for instance the incessant use of the word “freedom” in present-day America!) invariably cloaks reality. Prophetic faith cannot maintain silence in the face of such distortions of actuality. From Amos to John the Baptist, prophetic consciousness is impelled to name deception, even when it seems innocent or unintentional—and especially when it finds echoes in the religious community

⁶⁶ This tendency can be noted already in the New Testament, which values Old Testament prophecy for its (real or imagined) ‘predictions’ of the events on which the Christian message is based, and their meanings, but does not sufficiently stress the prophetic vocation of the church as participant in the same work of witness as that to which Israel was called.

⁶⁷ This is true not only of Liberation and other explicitly ‘political’ theologies; it belongs to the Social Gospel of the late 19th and early 20th Century and (what is often overlooked today) the so-called ‘Neo-Orthodox’ renewal of Christianity spearheaded by Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr and others, all of whom confronted ‘the powers’ of the turbulent mid-20th Century.

⁶⁸ The ‘threefold office’ [*Munus Triplex*] of the Christ—prophet, priest and king—was a particularly important teaching in the Reformed tradition.

⁶⁹ There is a German word for this: *Wahrheitsorientierung*.

itself. Jesus was crucified not only because he threatened the oppressive hegemony of Rome but also because he named the hypocrisy of the religious who made an easy alliance with Rome.

Secondly, the prophetic tradition never allows its hope in the ultimately benevolent purposes of God to blind it to the actual negations that mar existence under the conditions of history. Not only in Jeremiah and the so-called pessimistic Wisdom literature (Job, Ecclesiastes) but in the Psalms, 2nd Isaiah, the Pauline letters and most of the other biblical writings, there is a remarkable and sustained testimony to the suffering, evil, finitude, death and despair to which human life is heir. Overtly optimistic Christianity, which empire invariably prefers, has characteristically neglected or expunged whole sections of the Bible for this very reason. (They do not sing the hymns of Passiontide at the Crystal Cathedral!) But prophetic faith knows that when the depth of creaturely vulnerability is denied expression, the gospel that speaks to it will also be cheapened. The great problematic of imperial peoples, especially visible in our time, is their psychic imprisonment in ideologies of success. They cannot face the data of despair, and therefore it plays havoc with them all the more—for instance making it necessary for them to locate the sources of their fear and insecurity outside themselves. In contrast, prophetic faith gives open expression to all forms of human and creaturely pain; the language of lament is not only allowed, it is nurtured; for prophetic faith locates its hope precisely in the belief that God *participates* in this suffering and is redemptively at work within it.

Thirdly, it follows that prophetic faith manifests a particular awareness of and concern for those whose suffering is greatest: the poor, the excluded, the infirm and all whose condition is at least partly a consequence of their victimization by the dominant culture. The Liberationist motto that the biblical God has “a preferential option for the poor” is the other side of the truth that the biblical God has an abiding *suspicion* of the rich and powerful. (“He hath put down the might from their seats and exalted the humble and weak...”)

(4) Living on the Edge of Empire. For these and similar reasons, prophetic faith has always recognized that it cannot be part of the human fascination and experimentation with empire. ‘*Christendom*’, namely the alliance of the Christian religion and imperial cultures, was always something of a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron!⁷⁰ But throughout the fifteen or sixteen centuries of Christendom in the Western world there were also Christian individuals and movements that recognized this fundamental incompatibility. They include not only martyrs and saints, but theologians, activists, and ordinary folk who sensed, in the gospel of the cross, a Way radically different from the way of power and glory.⁷¹ This recognition meant that they would have to live on the edge of empire—even when, as was the case with many of them, they were citizens of some imperium.

Today, and in consequence of a transformation that has been occurring in the West for two centuries or more, Western Christendom is in its final stages of decay. Predictably enough, this prompts some to make extraordinary – and even frantic – attempts to reinstate Christianity as the dominant religion of our civilization. But those who have taken seriously both biblical and traditional warnings against the assumptions of imperial *religion* experience the end of

⁷⁰ On ‘Christendom’ see my *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity*, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2002; also my *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context (vol.i)*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989; pp. 200ff.

⁷¹ Luther named these two ways *theologia crucis* (theology of the cross) and *theologia gloriae* (theology of glory, i.e. religious triumphalism). For details, see my *The Cross in Our Context: Jesus and the Suffering World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003)

Christendom as opportunity, and not defeat. From now on, all serious Christians will know themselves to be living on the edge of empire. This is not a positioning they shun or resent: it is the stance that prophetic faith finds most natural. It is not accidental that the prophetic consciousness of the biblical tradition evolved precisely in a small nation that found itself on the edge of one empire after another.

In this new, post-Christendom situation, the question arises—as it did for the early Christians and for many at the time of the Protestant Reformation—what attitude ought to be taken by Christians towards empire generally, and specifically towards the empires on whose edges they actually find themselves. From what I have said heretofore, it will be obvious to the reader that I am among those who believe that Christians cannot embrace the ideology of empire as an acceptable way of organizing public life. I believe that Christian faith engenders in one a deep suspicion of the dream of empire, including an informed awareness of empire's inherent weaknesses and contradictions, and (especially) an active vigilance in behalf of empire's victims.

But precisely as natural critics of the ideology of imperialism, Christians should be careful to avoid ideology themselves—the ideology of an *a priori* anti-imperialism, that is, a rejection of empire at the level of abstract theory that is not sufficiently grounded in existing conditions. There is an ideological component in all human thought, including theology; but Christian theology differs from ideology specifically in its commitment to *this world*, that is, to actual *contexts*. Because of its inherent contextuality, this theology constantly involves the submission of its theoretical ideas, doctrines, concerns and ‘hunches’ to the realities of the ‘here and now’. Therefore it is ready to make distinctions and to entertain paradox and nuance.⁷² It knows that thought, however impressive and compelling, must be tempered and corrected by history.

Thus, with respect to the discussion of empire, this theology recognizes that not all empires are the same, nor is the activity of empires—from the perspective of Christian faith—always only evil or unacceptable. Rome, by comparison with some other empires, manifested a surprisingly liberal tolerance of most religious and ethnic groupings, and often prevented their wrathful treatment of one another. Important distinctions are being made today between the British Empire, which at its best evidenced a certain maturity of world-citizenship, and the American Empire as presently governed, which by comparison many believe to be impulsive and naïve. Yet few would deny that even the American Empire serves humane and far-reaching global needs—needs for aid and order that cannot be met by less powerful nations.

The dream of empire is a dangerous dream—dangerous not only to the conquered but to the conqueror. But there are degrees of danger. The well-known aphorism of the 19th Century history, John Lord Acton, is instructive here too: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Empires always *court* imperialism; but the degree to which powerful nations are swayed by imperialistic ambition is not predetermined or fixed. Even though the *tendency* to pursue power excessively is always present in the dream of empire, there may be countervailing forces at work. For instance, in the history of the United States of America there has always been (and continues to be) a persistent protest against imperial ambition on the part of

⁷² Perhaps the most ‘telling’ statement of George W. Bush was his quip, “I don’t do nuance.” Interestingly, a recent biography of Abraham Lincoln pointed out that Lincoln, on the contrary, was “comfortable with ambiguity.” Ideology knows what is there in the world before it actually takes a look. It functions in the same way that religious fundamental functions, namely, to keep its adherents from the unsettling experience of realizing that life is far more complicated than their theories about life.

an articulate and significant segment of the population that remembers the *republican* (small ‘r’!) intentions of the architects of the Union.⁷³ And while the media make much of the ‘Christian Right’ in that country, there is a much older and much deeper form of Christian influence in the U.S.A. that is keeping alive that particularly classical-Protestant witness which ‘protests’ against the identification of purely finite institutions and philosophies with the infinite, and draws attention daily to the hypocrisies, failures and corruptions perpetrated by government, business, industry and the military.

Indeed, if I were asked to illustrate what I mean by Christians living ‘on the edge of empire today’, I think that I would be more apt to point to American than to European or Canadian examples. Serious Christians in the United States know themselves to be ‘on the edge’ of their dominant culture today, in a way that Europeans and Canadians, whose nations are certainly on the periphery of power physically-speaking, on the whole do not. For it is too easy for Europeans and Canadians self-righteously to attribute innocence and wisdom to our own less prominent, less powerful societies—which, however, are most of them as deeply implicated in the injustices and vulgarities of the possessing peoples of the Earth as are the Americans. It would speak more appropriately of Christian contextual responsibility in such a world if Canadian Christians spent less of their time and energy pointing the finger of guilt at the United States and devoted more of it to the support of their fellow-Christians in the USA who must live spiritually and intellectually ‘on the edge of Empire’ whilst being physically and as citizens part of it.

There have been at least sixty intentional empires in recorded history; no period has been free of them, and it is unlikely that the quest for empire will disappear in future. The task of prophetic faith is to capitulate neither to a fatalism that bows to the inevitability of imperialism, nor to a utopianism that imagines that the dream of empire will vanish from the earth. Our task is rather to continue faithfully to name the evils which unchecked power regularly evokes, while encouraging the good that power trained and corrected by virtues nobler than itself sometimes makes possible.

Douglas John Hall, December 2005

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Appendix B

“Where the empire lies, people suffer, they are exploited and life becomes death”

By Ofelia Ortega

I. Introduction: “Vocation as Empire”

From Sept. 18 to Nov. 10, 2000, I had the opportunity to participate in the “Campbell Seminar” at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia under the leadership of Dr. Walter Brueggemann. The theme of the seminar was: “Mission as Hope in Action”.

In this meeting, almost a year before the World Trade Center towers were destroyed by terrorist forces (Sept. 11, 2001), the dangerous convergence of political hegemony, military superiority, economic near-monopoly and an ideology of exceptionalism was observed. World powers could

⁷³ A fascinating treatment of this theme in US history is found in Gore Vidal’s historical novel, *Empire* (New York: Random House, 1987).

produce a political-economic-military-ideological force in the world that seemed to proceed almost unchallenged and with impunity to have its way in the world.

At this gathering, we referred to this agenda of the powers as “vocation as empire.” Walter Brueggemann affirmed in the book *Hope for the World* that:

“Vocation as empire has its roots in the Monroe Doctrine that was redefined at the end of the twentieth century, when policy-makers together with image makers set the United States on a course of expansionism and domination. The interplay of policy and ideology through the twentieth century has come to dramatic fruition with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, the emergence of the United States as ‘the last superpower’ and an uncritical claim that we have reached ‘the end of history,’ history that culminates in the perfect hegemony of the United States, which lies beyond challenge. This political–military conviction is powerfully linked to the unanticipated globalization of the economy that has been powered by new technical competences but that was perhaps already implicitly present in the Dumbarton Oaks agreements that led to the formation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.”⁷⁴

To have “vocation as empire” means that we are not in front of a simple economic fact but rather an ideology that reaches all the levels of social relations. For this reason, there are authors who have described it as a civil crisis and called it a “civilization of inequality.” Therefore we should reject the myth of the “termination of the bipolar order.” The bipolar order, in fact, has not vanished, but the orientation of the poles has been changed. The centrality of the East-West relationship has gone, turning the centrality into the North-South relationship, to name it in geographical terms. This is not a rhetorical shift: it is a fact that we have not become either a multi-polar or uni-polar world, but a world in which the poles are marked by poverty and wealth with signs of irreversible division.

II. Characteristics of the “Inequality Civilization”

Within the Cuban Council of Churches’ Centre of Study, we have a group known as ARA (the Current Reality Analysis). Here, we identified some of the characteristics of that “inequality civilization”.

- a) The appearance of new agreements: associations among the hegemony of trans-nationalized capital and the states of the central capitalist countries, and with the subordinate bourgeoisies of the outlying countries and their states.
- b) The subordination of investment for production to investment for speculation in the cycles of capital distribution and reproduction.
- c) The subordination of the relationship between the centre and periphery to the relationship between debtors and creditors (we speak of the “debtor countries”, as if it were a natural condition). This is another of the great myths of the neo-liberal ideology, thus the richest are the greatest debtors, in financial terms and historical terms. The important thing now is that the indebtedness has become the main way of bleeding the Southern economies and the main instrument to exert economic and political power by the North over the South.

⁷⁴ Walter Brueggemann, “Communities of Hope midst Engines for Despair” in *Hope for the World: Mission in a Global Context* edited by Walter Brueggemann, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S., 2001, p. 152.

- d) A new conception of war, in which the winner is known beforehand. The opinion of the defeated, of course, known beforehand as well, means nothing. Again war becomes the safety valve for growing economic tensions, and a way of strengthening domination interests (gas resources, for instance).
- e) The weakening of the nation-state in peripheral countries in subordination to the transnationalized capital and the international economic institutions: loss of economic power through privatizations, management of natural resources, responsiveness and resistance capabilities, and sovereignty.
- f) Today, there is not a “free market”, but a managed market. There is not a world market since this only includes between 15% and 20% of the commercial transactions. The other 80-85% is under the management of the trans-nationals, decided through central planning and not through the law of supply and demand.
- g) The dynamics of impoverishment in the world population, as well as the differences among nations that show the asymmetry with great harshness, cannot be reversed through the logic of capitalism. We have to analyze the concepts of structural poverty (behind the entrenchment of current poverty), marginalization (linked to a concentration that favours ownership over labour in the production network) and exclusion (which sees the population as a disposable remainder).
- h) The technological revolution of the 20th century, that should have been used to enrich and educate every human being, has become a maintenance structure, creating inertia, the widespread diffusion of myths, and support for desensitization within a capitalist market economy.
- i) Desensitization continues to grow: society becomes dehumanized. The image of the child that dies of starvation has lost its impact among the inhabitants of the first world. The tragedy of the sub-Saharan African population, year after year being swept away by AIDS, escapes the sensibility of the Northern populations. It is not human solidarity that caused the enthusiastic reaction to the speeches of the antiterrorist crusaders after Sept. 11, 2001, but panic, insecurity and distrust. What matters is not the answer to the question: How was it possible it happened? What matters are other questions: What do we do to avoid this happening again? How can I prevent this happening to me? In other words, what worries me does not have to do with those who died, but rather that I might be the next victim.

III. Prophets Confront the Empire

According to José Luis Sicre “the imperialism phenomenon could not go unnoticed by prophets.”⁷⁵ Every prophet heard “the boots of the tramping warriors” and saw “the garments rolled in blood” (Is. 9:5). They were witnesses of military invasions that Joel compared with a plague of locusts. The best text in the whole Bible about the problem of imperialism is Isaiah 14:4-20. The poem highlights, in the central section, the pride of the emperor, who thinks about climbing up to the sky and matching the Almighty (vs. 13-14).

However, the sin of the tyrant does not only lie in pride. There is something more important that the introductory verses highlight. The perspective is ethical and universal, as Judah and Israel are not mentioned in the passage. What concerns the prophet are the people, the nations, beaten

⁷⁵ José Luis Sicre, “Profetismo y Ética”, en *Conceptos fundamentales de ética teológica*, editado por Marciano Vidal, Editorial Trotta, Madrid, 1992, p.62

and oppressed by the tyrant. The final verses repeat the idea, talking about who made the earth shake and makes the kingdoms shudder, who made the world deserted and devastated cities and who did not let the prisoners loose (vs. 16a). The prophet ends with this magnificent reflection: “you destroyed your land, you have killed your people” (v. 20). From the prophet’s perspective, imperialism is an ill from which not only vassal countries suffer, but also the dominant peoples, victims of the ambition of their rulers, decimated by continuous campaigns.

We have to analyze the world situation today in the light of this biblical message. Invasions, wars, the impoverishment of victimized people by imperial power must be a concern of our churches. The prophet poetically outlines the future reality of a world in peace, where they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Micah 4:3).

IV. Fall of the Empire

Revelation (chapter 18) is built on the model of Ezekiel 27-28. This late prophetic text is a lamentation due to the fall of Tyre. Most of Revelation 18 is a lamentation because of the fall of Babylon/Rome, announced by its own party members, who are presented in a way that shows the influence of Ezekiel 27: in fact, it is about sailors (Ezekiel 27, 29 ff.), traders and kings of lands who are mentioned in Ezekiel 27 as well.

The international market (Rev. 18:11) degrades and destroys human lives (at the end of verse 11). The blood of the martyr-prophets and saints was the result of imperial force. Revelation is a strong answer to oppressive imperialism. The emphasis on the economic field is prevalent in chapter 18. As Ricardo Foulkes affirms: “John wants to explain why Babylon apparently has irresistible charms: Because all the nations got drunk on the wine of their immoral passion; the kings of the world committed sexual immoralities with it, and the traders of the world became rich with its exaggerated wastefulness. There the secret lies: the enormous fortune is made by trafficking with it, and the empire brings prosperity even beyond its frontiers. The delight of it, that captivates the magnates and presidents of the countries, was a financial motive, but it necessarily involved them in an idolatry cult to Mammon (Luke 16:13), a cult that only deserves the name fornication. It looks like this chapter describes our current situation: the economic system, built on competition and exploitation, until the open market becomes harsher still. It has caused deep division between the rich and the poor and strives to increase the gap even more. The promise of technology that could contribute to solving the problems of the third world, remains in the grip of the rich. Thus there is no solidarity among people, not even those that call themselves allies.”⁷⁶

The figure of Babylon not only represents the city of Rome, but the whole Roman Empire. We have to metaphorically understand the “call of leaving it” (18:4) as a call to abandon injustice, idolatry and the crimes of the Empire. As Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza says, “...in the midst of tribulations, those who have remained faithful until the Judgment Day are encouraged to take up the scatological exodus.”⁷⁷ We have to interpret “getting out of the Empire” as the search for alternatives, realizing that the alternative is not in a system that dominates, but in one that

⁷⁶ Ricardo Foulkes, *El Apocalipsis de San Juan; una lectura desde América Latina*, Nueva Creación, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1989, p. 189.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Apocalipsis: Visión de un mundo justo*, Verbo Divino, Navarra, España, 1991, pag 141.

achieves equity and social justice from its differences. So to pursue alternatives leaves people no other choice but to go in a direction against the hegemony of the imperial power.

It is true that the empire is always present in the biblical pages, from Genesis to Revelation. In Latin America we believe that the conflict with the empire is the theological place that makes us know who our God is.⁷⁸

The Biblical text is outstanding (Rev. 18)

- ***Murders have been committed:*** (18:3a). The Empire has built its wealth on foundations of blood. What should be a source of life has become a death dealer.
- ***There has been political manipulation:*** The kings of the earth prostituted themselves with the Empire (18:3b). They have turned the policy into a deception, destroying the poorest.
- ***There has been economic injustice:*** The city has made the traders of the earth rich (18:3c). It has not been a bread-sharing table, a home in which human beings are equally well received, but rather a place of favour for rich traders who live on the blood of the poor.

That is how John has condensed the history. The Romans were proud to expand their “divine” peace throughout the Empire. John knows that the imperial peace is an intoxication of blood, political deception and economic injustice.

The Christians leaving the Empire (18:4-8) are called to a positive creativity: they do not leave in a geographical sense; it is not an exodus to a new land. They are still in the Empire, but seek to create an alternative community to express a purer social and political order on the earth.

The city falls easily into an abyss from which it will not escape (18:20-21). Life stops, as the Empire has also destroyed the beautiful cultural works of the people (18:22-23). The signs of full city life – the world conceived as a household (*oikos*) where there is joy (music and work, light of love, engagement and hope) for all – has ended. God has not destroyed it, but the three powers of violence in history:

- Traders (18:23c) - the selfish economy of a few who oppress others;
- Sorcerers (18:23d) - the Empire has its religion and religious language as well;
- Murderers (18:24) - responsible for the death of prophets and saints, and all the murders on the earth.

When reading Revelation chapter 18 it is evident that Yahweh and the Empire cannot live together.

The conflict with the Empire makes us know who our God is, which side of history God is on and what God wants us to do. Thus we do not have to be afraid of the imperial forces because we have the affirmation of Psalm 73: “Nevertheless, God.”

- For that reason our churches are against the establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas;

⁷⁸ See: the article of Sandro Galazzi, “Otro Imaginario es Posible” in RIBLA Magazine N. 48, *Los pueblos confrontan el imperio*, Quito Ecuador, 2004.

- That is why we march along with Asian people against the plans and programs of the World Trade Organization;
- That is why we accompany the voices of the social forums and support the alternatives that are emerging beneath the imperial powers of our time;
- That is why we are in solidarity with all the efforts of the churches to respond, from our faith, to inhumane projects of the globalizing economy and the neo-liberal ideology that progressively impoverish our people. For instance:
 - The declaration of Accra of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches;
 - The call of the Lutheran World Federation to participate in transforming globalization;
 - World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Association of Ecumenical Development Agencies in Europe (APRODEV) document on Christianity, Poverty and Wealth in the 21st Century;
 - The Pacific churches’ initiatives on the concepts of the Island of Hope as an alternative to globalization;
 - The proposals of the churches in Eastern and Central Europe on Serving God, not Mammon;
 - The call by churches in Latin America and the Caribbean to globalize the fullness of life;
 - The call by U.S., Canadian and Mexican churches – “What Does God Require of Us? A Declaration for Just Trade in the Service of an Economy of Life”;
 - The program of The United Church of Canada on Education for Justice: A partnership approach to global education;
 - The AGAPE document of the World Council of Churches (Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth);
 - Any other initiatives that are directed at looking for alternatives to the neo-liberal globalization agenda.

The prophetic hope of Revelation is manifested in the double oracles (18:4-8) and the call to joy (18:20). As Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza affirms; “the symbolic narrative of Revelation should be read as an attempt to sow the seeds of hope and encouragement in those who struggle for economic survival and the liberation from persecution and murder.”⁷⁹

Néstor Míguez reminds us of the “fetishism” that the Empire makes out of the fullness of life (vs. 23), because the fullness of life does not need the products of luxury, outlined in this eighteenth chapter, but rather the capacity of enjoying laughter, working, creating, listening to music and dancing. This chapter compels us to claim that the economy should not be at the service of the enrichment of some, but for the right of all to have a full life.⁸⁰

V. The Crisis of Life Today

In the 2003 South-South Forum held in Buenos Aires we witnessed the untold sufferings caused by the economic crisis. We were shocked at hearing that 25 years ago Argentina’s population was 22 million people, but only 2 million were poor, while today, out of a population of 37 million, 21 million are poor. The people of Argentina, as in other parts of the world, have been led by illusion. In the last 25 years the growing number of poor people has advanced faster than

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *op cit*, p. 141.

⁸⁰ Néstor Míguez, “Economía y vida plena en la apocalíptica neotestamentaria en la economía y vida plena”, *Revista Ribla* No. 30, San José, Costa Rica, 1998, p. 146,147.

the population growth. The middle class, that represented 50% of the population in the past, has now diminished dramatically. Only 30% of the population has steady jobs.

It is obvious that we are undergoing a new phase of capitalism and that it uses all the different forms of power and affects every aspect of life. The capitalist system of production has become a totalizing financial system. Its far-reaching and all-embracing strategy has also changed, and the global financial market is its empire and its god. The empire is a global financial empire that rests on military, political, and ideological power, and it has an impact on the survival of the countries of the periphery. The market empire and the military forces oppress at every level – the social, political, economic, ecological and spiritual – generating crisis for all the people and all the countries of the world.

In this gathering the experience of the member churches' representatives of the South was heard as they expressed the realities of their current crisis. Argentina and South Korea were used as examples of the depth and extent that can be reached by the neo-liberal strategy of submitting the whole world to the privatization laws and the unchallenged expansion of the capitalist markets.

The Latin American churches represented there spoke about the way in which economic globalization has provoked the debt crisis, marginalization, insecurity, economic inequality, unemployment and the destruction of the environment. The lie that the free market was and is the solution to all economic and social problems has been unmasked. Likewise, it has not fulfilled its promise of health and prosperity (investment-growth-employment). In its place the neo-liberal economic policies have resulted in economic crises, especially for the middle class and the poor.

The threats posed by economic globalization in the Caribbean reflect what is happening in the rest of the world. But of course the problems there are even more dramatic due to the small population and fragile nature of the islands' economies and ecosystems. Economic globalization has promoted loss of jobs and extreme poverty, an unprecedented growth of crime and violence, ecologic degradation and the spread of HIV/AIDS. All this has degraded life.

The Asian countries have also felt the negative effects of neo-liberal strategy. It all started with the unexpected and serious economic crisis of 1997. In South Korea, for example, when the western banks stopped giving loans to Korean corporations overnight, the equivalence of the Korean Won as compared to the U.S. dollar changed, from 800 Won to 2,400 Won for a dollar. In other words, the scarcity of foreign currency pushed the fall of the Korean Won till it was lowered to a third of its value. Thousands of companies and enterprises went bankrupt and hundreds of financial institutions, mercantile banks and credit unions were closed. Millions of employees were laid off. As to the social consequences there was a tremendous growth of homeless people, disrupted families, suicide and violence. Five years later, in spite of the Korean Government and the International Monetary Fund assertions that there was a sound economic recovery, the structural crisis got worse and the suffering of the poor people, the unemployed and the underemployed has increased. More than 600 important banks and industries have been sold to the multinationals, which are controlling more than 30% of the stock market. It is believed that the Korean economy may be on the verge of a new impending crisis as a result of the loans and debts both at home and abroad. The IMF program of structural

adjustment increased structural injustice, widening the gap between the rich and the poor. In Indonesia the IMF intervention failed completely. It has removed the mask of the neo-liberal system.

The crisis experienced in Africa reveals the systemic exclusion of Africa from the world economy, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, social disintegration, hunger and diseases. The effects of the free market system are evident in the way the HIV/AIDS epidemic has been faced and treated. The policies and operations of the trans-national pharmaceutical companies have put earnings on top of the agenda over the people's health, and the high costs of the HIV/AIDS medicines and the commercial treaties exclude the poor from effective treatment and prevention plans.

The economic and ecological problems of the island nations of the Pacific are closely interrelated. The ecological problems are real and dangerous. Global warming jeopardizes the low-land islands, nuclear tests contaminate the sea, the earth, the people and every living organism. This is especially true for the people of the Marshall Islands and Tahiti. Mining extraction and the cutting of trees increase deforestation, damaging the forests and waters of the islands. Economically the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. At a social level there is increased violence and suicide.

The most significant characteristic of these reports is the dramatic crises' convergence in the countries of the South. We are quite aware of the new signs of our time: the unparalleled integration of economic globalization and of global geo-politics. We unanimously agreed in recognizing the negative effects of the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization regarding their domination and exclusion of the countries of the South. We are sharing the negative and destructive effects of deregulation and of speculative investments on our national economies. We recognize the current trend of militarization as a total war strategy for guaranteeing the global market. We realize the way in which our hearts and minds are controlled by the press and electronic media through "consciousness colonization." We are convinced that the neo-liberal model cannot be transformed or adapted. It has inherent contradictions and it has failed over and over again in the attempt at leading the countries, the people and the environment of the South towards life. We are united in the rejection of this model. We are not alone in our rejection. Significant movements of the global civil society, including the global peace movement, are resisting and rejecting a model that is destructive of creation.

Visions and Alternative Projects for Life

The system tells us: "there is no alternative." Jesus helped the poor and hungry multitudes, guiding them to share what they had at hand. In this way he wanted to build what we call "the economy of the grace of God" (Marc 6:35 and 8:1). The early Church challenged the system of private property and emphasized the necessity to share all possible resources. This allowed those early Christian communities to become a witness to the full life of God – that is to say the resurrection – since they sought to have no poor among them (Acts 4: 32). This implies that there are local and regional alternatives that can be implemented and supported by the churches and the congregations.

We would like to finish with the proposals of Franz I. Hinkelammert and Henry M. Mora in *Coordinación Social del Trabajo, Mercado y Reproducción de la Vida Humana*, a book in which they say there is a necessity that we have a fair ethic of the common good.⁸¹ This ethics of the common good has to be of resistance, of intervention and of transformation. This ethics introduces values to which any calculation of utility (or of interest) has to be subjected. They are the values of respect for the human being, for life in all its dimensions, and for the life of nature. They are the values of mutual recognition among human beings, including the recognition of the nature of all human beings and the recognition on behalf of the human beings toward the nature external to them. They are values that are not justified for calculable advantages in terms of utility or of personal interest. Nevertheless, they are the basic values of humanity, without which human life is destroyed in the most elementary sense of the word. Its principle is: Nobody can live, if the other can not live.

These values question the imperial system, and on their behalf we are called to exercise resistance to intervene and transform it. The common good is this process in which these values face the system to question it, to intervene and transform it.

We have to actively work together on concrete and feasible alternatives to the neo-liberal pattern of economic integration in service of the great trans-national corporations. The time of the social movements will come, strengthening the great dream to which we, all the people of Latin Americans and the Caribbean, aspire – that we are able to live in a society where we all fit, in a humanized society in which the values of life, peace, solidarity and coexistence are always stronger than the values of war, power, vanity and vengeance.

Conclusion

We are called to be nonconformist and transformative communities, because life is not possible unless we undertake transformation that addresses the roots of injustice. We are called to be transformed by the renewing of our minds from the dominating and egoistic imperial mindset, thus doing the will of God which is fulfilled in love, solidarity (Romans 13:10) and grace (Isaiah 55). Transformative communities are transformed by God's living grace and the practice of an economy of solidarity and sharing. We as churches are called to create spaces for, and become agents of, transformation, even as we are entangled in and complicit with the very system we are called to change.⁸²

Prayer

God in your grace, help us to obey your call to be agents of transformation.

“Be not conformed to the structures of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2).

Ofelia Ortega, January 2006

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⁸¹ Hinkelammert, Franz I; Mora M. Henry, *Coordinación Social del Trabajo, Mercado y Reproducción de la Vida Humana*, DEI, San José, Costa Rica, 2001. pp. 327-331.

⁸² From the AGAPE document of The World Council of Churches

Appendix C

Jesus and Empire: Then and Now

By Nestor O. Miguez

What Do We Understand by the Term “Empire”?

Many have tried to establish the characteristics of what constitutes Empire. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) proposes a definition where Empire is the convergence of economic, political, cultural, military and religious power, in a system of domination that imposes the flow of benefits from the vulnerable to the powerful. Empire crosses all boundaries, distorts identities, subverts cultures, subordinates nations-states, and either marginalizes or co-opts religious communities.

This understanding of Empire highlights the idea that it is a particular configuration of power characterized by the confluence of economic forces, government structures, and some political organizations and segments of civil society. While these forces normally hold each other in check, in an empire, they align together and are subordinated to a single objective, creating a dynamic that negates other forms of power and alternatives. Although these forces may retain some secondary conflicts and contradictions among them, within Empire, they are united in their will to control and dominate. The public space is subjugated to the coercion of cohesive power determined to control everything, to impose order, and to limit access to decision making power. In short, it converts what is public into the restricted purview of the interests that dominate it.

Of course, no human power is capable of totally achieving this...that is our hope. But there can be historical circumstances under which, in some regions and for some period of time, this configuration of power manifests itself with such strength that it conditions all human action within its sphere of influence. Some authors distinguish “Empire” from “imperialism,” reserving this second term to the territorial or economic expansion that happens in the context of conflict among nations. It is possible for a country to maintain “participative” governmental institutions of a republic, but act in an imperialist way in its foreign policy. As a matter of fact, the Roman Empire, where the term empire was coined, and which provided the historical backdrop for Jesus’ ministry, was formally a republic during its existence.

While institutional forms of government are not always modified in the transition from Republic to Empire, they are forced to operate according to a new correlation of forces. In Rome, for example, the institutions of the Republic formally functioned, but they all responded to the same economic interests; they were aligned to achieve the same governmental objectives, and were subordinated to the mandate of the imperial elite. The wealth of the landed patricians presiding over the Senatus, the tribunes that represented the plebs, the military power, the official artists protected by Mecenas, the different schools of philosophy that dominated the intellectual world of the time, the spectacles that were offered to the masses, and even the architecture and statues of the cities, as well as the circulation of the Roman currency itself all served to reinforce a configuration of power that sought to deny all other alternatives. Even religion was not left

untouched by Empire: the Roman pantheon included all gods, and while all of them were tolerated, they were subordinate to the only God that truly mattered: the Divus Caesar⁸³.

Aspirations of a Global Empire

We are now witnessing a time of imperial consolidation, with the variant that this empire aspires to be global (in fact every empire aspired to this, but historical and technical conditions did not allow it). The whole world is under pressure to mold itself to a single economic system and way of conceiving politics of managing power, as well as to a supreme military force. As in the Roman pantheon, the diversity of cultures and religions are accommodated as long as they live within the parameters imposed by the Empire. Perhaps the best metaphor to illustrate this is the food court in a shopping mall where it is possible to find all of the diversity cultures have to offer: from Thai food to Italian pizza, Chinese rice, German chucrut, Mexican tacos, Argentinean churrasco and Japanese sushi. All of these are allowed on the condition that they are served as fast food, which is what the globalized model of consumption demands. And the dominant aroma will be the one imposed by air conditioning.

In the end everything must fit inside the shopping mall; in other words, everything must be adapted to the framework of capitalist commerce and consumerist society. Because this global Empire is the empire of mature financial capitalism, the economic axis is the one that turns the other forces: political, military, and cultural. The rich diversity of the world is thus reduced to a question of economic management. The real scaffolding behind the empire is the international financial network, and it is to this logic that all peoples, expectations, cultures and nations must submit.

The most visible consequence of this arrangement is that those who do not have financial capital are left out of the system; but the system proposes and needs to command all of the economic, energy and technological resources of the world. In brief, those without money do not have the right to exist. On the other hand, where resources exist, they ought to be at the disposition, not of the imperial state (this differentiates it from the classic imperialism), but of those private interests that constitute the economic essence of the Empire. This is true even if in this case, one nation-state, the United States of America, constitutes the Empire's political-military centre. Thus, Bolivian gas is important, but not Bolivian people. Therefore, Bolivia's energy resources must be privatized. Iraqi oil is important, even if it has to be extracted from underneath the cadavers of Iraqis who do not want to give it up. In summary, the small global class (the elite composed of financial groups that also directly or indirectly controls productive enterprises) reserves the right to own the world. Everything becomes precarious before the power of Empire, yet in the end, Empire itself becomes precarious in relation to human law and the design of Creation. A sane theology of Creation should recognize that the ecological problem does not reside in a static conservatism, but in recovering the meaning of the first line of Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it."

One of the multiple consequences of Empire's financial rationale is the transfer of rights of human being to things and financial fictions. In this manner, capital can travel throughout the

⁸³ Míguez, Nestor O.: El tiempo del principado Romano [*The era of the Roman Principality*]. Mimeo, ISEDET, 1998. I ask for my readers indulgence; most of the references in this text are from my own writings because its purpose is to outline my personal understanding of this topic. References to other authors will be limited.

world without any borders, and products must be bought and sold without obstacles (especially those that favour the most powerful sectors); but people's mobility is ever more restricted, particularly if they are poor. The Berlin Wall has fallen, but a wall is built to exclude poor Mexicans from accessing jobs. The war of ideologies is transformed into a war against the poor. People's right to health is subordinated to the patent rights of legal entities and to "registered trademarks" that do not even recognize the scientist who contributed to their creation. In other words, the world of the virtual takes proprietorship of the rights of living human beings. By placing the love of money at the centre of its value system, the financial empire distorts and reverses the meaning and sense of human life as we used to conceive it outside the Empire. Everything must be subordinated to the law of profit: Mammon is God.

Finally, although we are still far from exhausting the analysis of the reality of Empire, we must mention the role of communication. Communications media with global reach are manipulated by imperial interests to create the perception that they are the only valid ones, the only possible ones, the only way. Whether in the news or in soap operas, reality becomes virtual and is reduced to nonsense. Private lives are exhibited in public like spectacles, while public resources are privatized. Desire is shaped and oriented in function of commercial interests. The message is "just do it." Immediacy is the norm, primitive impulse becomes the only engine, and appearance is everything. "What's new?" "Where can I get some?" "How much does it cost?" These are the questions most frequently asked by our colonized youth. Individual satisfaction dissolves any sense of solidarity. This is how different forces come together to generate an imperialized subjectivity where the room for freedom is erased, and where human beings are either subordinate to the dominant interests or marginalized.

Empires and the Biblical Tradition

The Hebrew and Christian sections of the Bible were written in the context of imperial enterprises that are recorded in their pages. When the people gathered together after the great flood (Genesis 10 and 11), Babel was established by Nimrod, the first potentate of the Earth (Genesis 10:10)⁸⁴. With his city and his tower, Nimrod aspires to dominate everything, to impose only one language (in contradiction with Genesis 10:5, 20, 31), and to make a name for himself. However, his imperial project is stopped by the liberating action of God who allows for a diversity of languages, cultures, and forms of life to flourish again. Nevertheless, imperial powers consolidate themselves over and over until the end of Apocalypse (18-19) when Babel/Babylon is destroyed forever and is replaced by the Kingdom of God and God's people which includes all languages, races and nations.

It is not possible in this brief document to develop a detailed account of all the forms and visions of Empire directly or indirectly described in the biblical pages. Nor is it possible to outline all of the consequences of Empire (in opposition to God's will) for humans and the rest of Creation. It is possible to find prophetic denunciations, even of Israel itself, when it tries to be an imperialist nation, or when it makes alliances with the empires of the day (this is mentioned even in Psalms, for example Psalm 146).

⁸⁴ For my interpretation of this text see "Comparative Bible Study, Genesis 10-11: an Approach from Argentine," in P. Wickeri (ed), *Scripture, Community and Mission: A Festschrift in Honor of D. Preman Niles*. (Hong Kong: the Christian Conference of Asia and the Council of World Mission, 2002.)

Whether it is Egypt, Assyria, or Babylon in the case of ancient Israel, or the Hellenic monarchs of the deuteronomic period, or the Rome of the Christian pages, Empire is always seen as destruction, blasphemy and pain. When it is tolerated or accepted it is to serve as a lesson or as punishment or consequence for ambition or a lack of justice. In opposition to the power of Empire and attempts to make it absolute, there finally appears in the last pages of Isaiah the idea of a renewed creation (65:17)⁸⁵.

It is necessary to recreate life after the destruction of Empire. In his visions, the prophet Daniel sees how empires are born and follow one another, but also how they fall in the face of divine power, which initially only presents itself as something small. This is also the hallmark of the final vision in the Apocalypse. It is precisely in the definitive chapters of the apocalyptic drama, with all its strong and ambiguous metaphors, that the author sees the powerful of the earth come together in an alliance that seeks total domination of the world, but that in the end is confronted with its Creator. However, the power of the redeemer of the world appears in the figure of a sacrificed lamb still standing.

It is worthwhile mentioning the spectacle of the fall of Babylon (Revelation 18)⁸⁶, because there, along with the moans of the corrupt kings, appear the cries of the merchants who see the source of their wealth disappear once Empire falls. Their wares included “slaves and human lives: (Revelation 18:13). For this reason, happiness does not exist in Babylon: “and the sound of harpists and minstrels and of flautists and trumpeters will be heard in you no more; and an artisan of any trade will be found in you no more; and the sound of the millstone will be heard in you no more; and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more; and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more; for your merchants were the magnates of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery” (Revelation 18:22-23)⁸⁷.

Although he uses a different language, Paul also criticizes imperial practices. Already in his first letter he announces the sudden end of those who proclaim “peace and security” (1 Thessalonians 5:3), the motto of the Roman Legion which was inscribed in standards and in money – curiously, this is the same motto used by NATO. Paul’s strongest words on the subject appear in his epistle to Romans. The second half of the first chapter begins by announcing that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth” (Romans 1:18). These, claiming to be wise became foolish, and honoured creatures before honouring the Creator, and so became filled with the will to injustice, homicides, greedy and deceitful, among other wickedness. These know the will of God and nonetheless rejoice in these things. In this way, “creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free

⁸⁵ On the topic of Empire and new creation see my work in “The New Creation in the Old, the Old Creation in the New,” in D. Meeks (ed.) *Wesleyan Perspectives on the New Creation*, (Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2004).

⁸⁶ A detailed study of the interpretation of these texts appears in my article: “Revelation and the victims of economic exclusion: Reading Rev. 18 from a Latin American context,” in Segovia, A. and Tolbert, M.A. (eds.): *Reading from this Place: The Global Scene, Social Location and Biblical Interpretation*, Fortress Press, 1995.

⁸⁷ In his speech to give courage to the population of New Orleans following hurricane Katrina, President G.W. Bush said that he could envision the city rebuilt, “with all its shops open, and people doing business as usual.” New Orleans is known worldwide for its music, its carnival, and the happiness of its population, however, [for Bush], these were not the things to recover; rather it was the possibility to conduct commerce. This neatly illustrates the mentality of the managers of the global empire.

from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Romans 8:20-21)⁸⁸.

Jesus and the Empire

According to Mathew, Jesus’ first encounter with the forces of Empire occurred right at birth, when he escaped the massacre of the children of Bethlehem⁸⁹. He lived his life under imperial governments, which is reflected in the dates set in the gospel of Luke. Jesus also dies at the hands of Empire’s soldiers, even if they were assisted by local clients. The control that Empire exercised is not necessarily made explicit throughout the gospels, but the careful reader can identify its practices as their background (this also applies to John).

Nonetheless, there are points at which Empire is clearly singled out. For example in the gospel of John, Jesus offers his disciples peace but “not in the way of the world,” in this way making clear reference to a contradiction of the Pax Romana. Further on, he points out to Pontius Pilate, Empire’s representative that he may govern the world but that he still does not know what truth is. Pilate becomes panic-stricken when his Jewish interlocutors tell him that the one who pretends to be the Son of God must die (Son of Jupiter was one of the titles of the Emperor), and then threaten to denounce him before Caesar⁹⁰.

The Synoptic Gospels contrast the imperial government with what is expected of Jesus’ followers. For example in his answer to the question of power: “So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them’” (Mark 10:42). Luke adds to this by denouncing the clientelist practices of the Roman Empire “and those in authority over them are called benefactors” (Luke 22:25). None of their contemporaries would have been able to ignore their references (nor can we...). Our interpretations, which have taken these commentaries as de-contextualized “universals,” often miss the dimension of prophetic condemnation of Empire they contain.

A similar de-contextualization has occurred to one of the texts that speak most clearly of the confrontation with the Empire: the well known passage of the taxes and the coin, which in our interpretations is often called “the question of paying taxes,” is really the place where the issue of the authority of the Empire is resolved. We have already established that the imposition of a national currency as the international standard is an imperial practice, and one its tools for domination. All of this passage breathes the imperial atmosphere. At the opening we are told that they sought “to trap him by what he said, so as to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor”, a clear reference to the power of the empire (Luke 20:20). When Jesus requests a coin and then asks about its image and inscription, his question is not an innocent one. He does not have coins; it is those who have them that have already included themselves in the orbit of Empire. The response given by the spies is “the emperor’s,” which hides a fact that Jesus will reveal in his own answer: most Roman coins bear in their inscription the phrase: *divus Caesar*, of Caesar elevated to the level of deity. To give unto God what is

⁸⁸ A study of Paul’s theology as theology in confrontation with empire can also be seen in my commentary on Galatians “Paul to the Galatians: When Liberty is not (neo)Liberalism,” *Global Bible Commentary* (D. Patte, ed.), Abingdon Press, 2004.

⁸⁹ Néstor O. Míguez: “*Los Santos Inocentes*” [*The Innocent Saints*], in *Página 12* newspaper, Buenos Aires, December 28, 2005. Available at www.pagina12.com.ar

⁹⁰ See: Hinkelammert, F.: *El Grito del Sujeto* [*The Scream of the Subject*]. Pp. 11-91. DEI, San José de Costa Rica, 1998.

God's means to deny the divinity of Caesar, and thereby deny the ideological sources of imperial power. We are thus not witnessing discussion on "theology of kingdoms" here, but rather witnessing a repudiation of the deification of earthly power. God become human confronting the human that aspires to become God.

Beyond Empire

Human history is full of surprises. Both good and bad take place many times unexpectedly. The current Empire began to encounter unforeseen sources of resistance some months back. Its existence is producing ever stronger responses. This does not mean that we can now predict with certitude the date when the Empire will fall; but it is now much less thinkable that its presence is permanent and definitive, and that we find ourselves at the "end of [a] history" which concludes not with the Kingdom of God, but with neo-liberal exclusion. The actions of the people and the Spirit of God will condition the development of life. Otherwise, human life on our planet may be extinguished as our current model of consumption and development is unsustainable.

However, the consequences of this global empire must not only be measured in economic and military terms. Taken together, its political forces and cultural ethos, its technological structures and means seek to impose what may be its most lasting legacy: the shaping of a deep-seated, individualist and selfish subjectivity. The Empire and the globalized consumerist market model with its totalizing tendencies, destroys local networks of solidarity, the collective sense, and social contracts of cooperation. It replaces them with power as the only principle, personal satisfaction as its motto, immediacy as its only time, and precariousness in human relations as the only norm. Everything is disposable, from pop drink containers to "unproductive" human beings, or even worse, those who have been deprived of the capacity to produce and live by the only laws that must be obeyed: the laws of the market.

It is here that the power of the Christian symbols and narratives can once again demonstrate their relevance: in the struggle against the imperial world-view; in the decolonization of the minds (Romans 12:2); in the reconstruction of the *afecto societatis*; and in the need to locate real and concrete human beings (with their needs, hopes, loves, poverty and current condition, and with their creative participation in the world we have been asked to steward), as the final receivers of the love and will of God.

Although some speak of the excessive anthropocentrism inherent in modernity, all that the post-modern empire proposes as an alternative is a "crematocentrism" (money as the ultimate end of all activities, and as the centre and source of life and power). In light of this, we are called to affirm the creative power of God: no human being is "disposable." We are called to find again the sense of unity/connection of what is created in an economy – not of accumulation (in the final analysis what is primarily accumulated in our economy of consumerism is garbage⁹¹), but of justice and life for all.

To locate ourselves in spaces of hope is to begin working beyond Empire. It is to create life-giving alternatives for everyone, because the Empire is a source of death. But for this faith to become reality we cannot wait for time to pass and for the governing powers to fall by

⁹¹ Refer to the works of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman on globalization, especially *Wasted Lives*. (Polity Press, Cambridge, GB: 2004), where he shows how the consumerist economy produces the continuous waste of human lives, as well as of natural resources and energy.

themselves. It is necessary to begin to demonstrate in our perceptions, relationships, and communities that another world is possible; that other ways of living bring dignity and plenitude; at least to a greater degree than the devastation of empire. This was the hallmark and means of struggle used by the first Christian communities against Empire. It was not through the opposition of power against power which would have meant their annihilation, but rather through the extension of alternate symbols and lifeways, of which we are heirs. This struggle has been imperfect, it is true, we cannot deny the weaknesses and failures that are part of our human ambiguity. However, the Christian message will be relevant if it is able to pronounce and take part in realizing a vision of “life beyond empire.”

Néstor O. Míguez

Buenos Aires, January 2006.

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Appendix D

Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

24th General Council, Accra, Ghana

July 30 – August 13 2004

Introduction

1. In response to the urgent call of the Southern African constituency which met in Kitwe in 1995 and in recognition of the increasing urgency of global economic injustice and ecological destruction, the 23rd General Council (Debrecen, Hungary, 1997) invited the member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to enter into a process of “recognition, education, and confession (*processus confessionis*)”. The churches reflected on the text of Isaiah 58.6 “...break the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free,” as they heard the cries of brothers and sisters around the world and witnessed God’s gift of creation under threat.
2. Since then, nine member churches have committed themselves to a faith stance; some are in the process of covenanting; and others have studied the issues and come to a recognition of the depth of the crisis. Further, in partnership with the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and regional ecumenical organizations, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches has engaged in consultations in all regions of the world, from Seoul/Bangkok (1999) to Stony Point (2004). Additional consultations took place with churches from the South in Buenos Aires (2003) and with churches from South and North in London Colney (2004).
3. Gathered in Accra, Ghana, for the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, we visited the slave dungeons of Elmina and Cape Coast where millions of Africans were commodified, sold and subjected to the horrors of repression and death. The cries of “never again” are put to the lie by the ongoing realities of human trafficking and the oppression of the global economic system.

4. Today we come to take a decision of faith commitment.

Reading the Signs of the Times

1. We have heard that creation continues to groan, in bondage, waiting for its liberation (Romans 8.22). We are challenged by the cries of the people who suffer and by the woundedness of creation itself. We see a dramatic convergence between the suffering of the people and the damage done to the rest of creation.
2. The signs of the times have become more alarming and must be interpreted. The root causes of massive threats to life are above all the product of an unjust economic system defended and protected by political and military might. Economic systems are a matter of life or death.
3. We live in a scandalous world that denies God's call to life for all. The annual income of the richest 1% is equal to that of the poorest 57%, and 24,000 people die each day from poverty and malnutrition. The debt of poor countries continues to increase despite paying back their original borrowing many times over. Resource-driven wars claim the lives of millions, while millions more die of preventable diseases. The HIV and AIDS global pandemic afflicts life in all parts of the world, affecting the poorest where generic drugs are not available. The majority of those in poverty are women and children and the number of people living in absolute poverty on less than one US dollar per day continues to increase.
4. The policy of unlimited growth among industrialized countries and the drive for profit of transnational corporations have plundered the earth and severely damaged the environment. In 1989, one species disappeared each day, and by 2000 it was one every hour. Climate change, the depletion of fish stocks, deforestation, soil erosion, and threats to fresh water are among the devastating consequences. Communities are disrupted, livelihoods are lost, coastal regions and Pacific islands are threatened with inundation, and storms increase. High levels of radioactivity threaten health and ecology. Life forms and cultural knowledge are being patented for financial gain.
5. This crisis is directly related to the development of neoliberal economic globalization, which is based on the following beliefs:
 - unrestrained competition, consumerism, and the unlimited economic growth and accumulation of wealth is the best for the whole world;
 - the ownership of private property has no social obligation;
 - capital speculation, liberalization and deregulation of the market, privatization of public utilities and national resources, unrestricted access for foreign investments and imports, lower taxes, and the unrestricted movement of capital will achieve wealth for all;
 - social obligations, protection of the poor and the weak, trade unions, and relationships between people, are subordinate to the processes of economic growth and capital accumulation.
6. This is an ideology that claims to be without alternative, demanding an endless flow of sacrifices from the poor and creation. It makes the false promise that it can save the world

through the creation of wealth and prosperity, claiming sovereignty over life and demanding total allegiance, which amounts to idolatry.

7. We recognize the enormity and complexity of the situation. We do not seek simple answers. As seekers of truth and justice and looking through the eyes of powerless and suffering people, we see that the current world (dis)order is rooted in an extremely complex and immoral economic system defended by empire. In using the term “empire” we mean the coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power that constitutes a system of domination led by powerful nations to protect and defend their own interests.
8. In classical liberal economics, the state exists to protect private property and contracts in the competitive market. Through the struggles of the labour movement, states began to regulate markets and provide for the welfare of people. Since the 1980s, through the transnationalization of capital, neoliberalism has set out to dismantle the welfare functions of the state. Under neoliberalism the purpose of the economy is to increase profits and return for the owners of production and financial capital, while excluding the majority of the people and treating nature as a commodity.
9. As markets have become global, so have the political and legal institutions which protect them. The government of the United States of America and its allies, together with international finance and trade institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization) use political, economic, or military alliances to protect and advance the interest of capital owners.
10. We see the dramatic convergence of the economic crisis with the integration of economic globalization and geopolitics backed by neoliberal ideology. This is a global system that defends and protects the interests of the powerful. It affects and captivates us all. Further, in biblical terms such a system of wealth accumulation at the expense of the poor is seen as unfaithful to God and responsible for preventable human suffering and is called Mammon. Jesus has told us that we cannot serve both God and Mammon (Lk 16.13).

Confession of Faith in the Face of Economic Injustice and Ecological Destruction

1. Faith commitment may be expressed in various ways according to regional and theological traditions: as confession, as confessing together, as faith stance, as being faithful to the covenant of God. We choose confession, not meaning a classical doctrinal confession, because the World Alliance of Reformed Churches cannot make such a confession, but to show the necessity and urgency of an active response to the challenges of our time and the call of Debrecen. We invite member churches to receive and respond to our common witness.
2. Speaking from our Reformed tradition and having read the signs of the times, the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches affirms that global economic justice is essential to the integrity of our faith in God and our discipleship as Christians. We believe that the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neoliberal economic globalization and therefore **we confess** before God and one another.

3. **We believe** in God, Creator and Sustainer of all life, who calls us as partners in the creation and redemption of the world. We live under the promise that Jesus Christ came so that all might have life in fullness (Jn 10.10). Guided and upheld by the Holy Spirit we open ourselves to the reality of our world.
4. **We believe** that God is sovereign over all creation. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24.1).
5. **Therefore, we reject** the current world economic order imposed by global neoliberal capitalism and any other economic system, including absolute planned economies, which defy God’s covenant by excluding the poor, the vulnerable and the whole of creation from the fullness of life. We reject any claim of economic, political, and military empire which subverts God’s sovereignty over life and acts contrary to God’s just rule.
6. **We believe** that God has made a covenant with all of creation (Gen 9.8-12). God has brought into being an earth community based on the vision of justice and peace. The covenant is a gift of grace that is not for sale in the market place (Is 55.1). It is an economy of grace for the household of all of creation. Jesus shows that this is an inclusive covenant in which the poor and marginalized are preferential partners, and calls us to put justice for the “least of these” (Mt 25.40) at the centre of the community of life. All creation is blessed and included in this covenant (Hos 2.18ff).
7. **Therefore we reject** the culture of rampant consumerism and the competitive greed and selfishness of the neoliberal global market system, or any other system, which claims there is no alternative.
8. **We believe** that any economy of the household of life, given to us by God’s covenant to sustain life, is accountable to God. We believe the economy exists to serve the dignity and well being of people in community, within the bounds of the sustainability of creation. We believe that human beings are called to choose God over Mammon and that confessing our faith is an act of obedience.
9. **Therefore we reject** the unregulated accumulation of wealth and limitless growth that has already cost the lives of millions and destroyed much of God’s creation.
10. **We believe** that God is a God of justice. In a world of corruption, exploitation, and greed, God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, the exploited, the wronged, and the abused (Psalm 146.7-9). God calls for just relationships with all creation.
11. **Therefore we reject** any ideology or economic regime that puts profits before people, does not care for all creation, and privatizes those gifts of God meant for all. We reject any teaching which justifies those who support, or fail to resist, such an ideology in the name of the gospel.

12. **We believe** that God calls us to stand with those who are victims of injustice. We know what the Lord requires of us: to do justice, love kindness, and walk in God's way (Micah 6.8). We are called to stand against any form of injustice in the economy and the destruction of the environment, "so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5.24).
13. **Therefore we reject** any theology that claims that God is only with the rich and that poverty is the fault of the poor. We reject any form of injustice which destroys right relations – gender, race, class, disability, or caste. We reject any theology which affirms that human interests dominate nature.
14. **We believe** that God calls us to hear the cries of the poor and the groaning of creation and to follow the public mission of Jesus Christ who came so that all may have life and have it in fullness (Jn 10.10). Jesus brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; he frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind (Lk 4.18); he supports and protects the downtrodden, the stranger, the orphans and the widows.
15. **Therefore we reject** any church practice or teaching which excludes the poor and care for creation, in its mission; giving comfort to those who come to "steal, kill and destroy" (Jn 10.10) rather than following the "Good Shepherd" who has come for life for all (Jn 10.11).
16. **We believe** that God calls men, women and children from every place together, rich and poor, to uphold the unity of the church and its mission, so that the reconciliation to which Christ calls can become visible.
17. **Therefore we reject** any attempt in the life of the church to separate justice and unity.
18. **We believe** that we are called in the Spirit to account for the hope that is within us through Jesus Christ, and believe that justice shall prevail and peace shall reign.
19. **We commit ourselves** to seek a global covenant for justice in the economy and the earth in the household of God.
20. **We humbly confess** this hope, knowing that we, too, stand under the judgement of God's justice.
 1. We acknowledge the complicity and guilt of those who consciously or unconsciously benefit from the current neoliberal economic global system; we recognize that this includes both churches and members of our own Reformed family and therefore we call for confession of sin.
 2. We acknowledge that we have become captivated by the culture of consumerism, and the competitive greed and selfishness of the current economic system. This has all too often permeated our very spirituality.
 3. We confess our sin in misusing creation and failing to play our role as stewards and companions of nature.
 4. We confess our sin that our disunity within the Reformed family has impaired our ability to serve God's mission in fullness.

21. **We believe**, in obedience to Jesus Christ, that the church is called to confess, witness and act, even though the authorities and human law might forbid them, and punishment and suffering be the consequence (Acts 4.18ff). Jesus is Lord.
22. **We join in praise** to God, Creator, Redeemer, Spirit, who has “brought down the mighty from their thrones, lifted up the lowly, filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands” (Lk 1.52f).

Covenanting for Justice

1. By confessing our faith together, we covenant in obedience to God’s will as an act of faithfulness in mutual solidarity and in accountable relationships. This binds us together to work for justice in the economy and the earth both in our common global context as well as our various regional and local settings.
2. On this common journey, some churches have already expressed their commitment in a confession of faith. We urge them to continue to translate this confession into concrete actions both regionally and locally. Other churches have already begun to engage in this process, including taking actions and we urge them to engage further, through education, confession and action. To those other churches, which are still in the process of recognition, we urge them on the basis of our mutual covenanting accountability, to deepen their education and move forward towards confession.
3. The General Council calls upon member churches, on the basis of this covenanting relationship, to undertake the difficult and prophetic task of interpreting this confession to their local congregations.
4. The General Council urges member churches to implement this confession by following up the Public Issues Committee’s recommendations on economic justice and ecological issues
5. The General Council commits the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to work to other communions, the ecumenical community, the community of other faiths, civil movements and people’s movements for a just economy and the integrity of creation and calls upon our member churches to do the same.
6. Now we proclaim with passion that we will commit ourselves, our time and our energy to changing, renewing, and restoring the economy and the earth, choosing life, so that we and our descendants might live (Deuteronomy 30.19).

Appendix E

Alternative Globalisation Addressing People and Earth – AGAPE

AGAPE Call A Call to Love and Action

Introduction

We, representatives of churches gathered at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), emphasise that a world without poverty is not only possible but is in keeping with the grace of God for the world. This conviction builds on the rich tradition of ecumenical social

thought and action, which is centred on God's option for the poor as an imperative of our faith. It captures the results of a seven year global study process of the churches' responses to economic globalisation with contributions from all regions of the world and involvement of a number of Christian World Communions, particularly through the 2003 Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the 2004 General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

This process has examined the project of economic globalisation that is led by the ideology of unfettered market forces and serves the dominant political and economic interests. The international financial institutions and the World Trade Organisation among other such institutions promote economic globalisation. The participants in the AGAPE process shared their concerns about the growing inequality, the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few and the destruction of the earth – all aggravating the scandal of poverty in the South and increasingly in the North. In recent years the escalating role of political and military power have strongly surfaced. People all over the world experience the impact of imperial forms of power on their communities.

Meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the home of the World Social Forum (WSF), we are encouraged by the constructive and positive message of the movements gathering in the WSF that alternatives are possible. We affirm that we can and must make a difference by becoming transformative communities caring for people and the earth.

We recognize that the divisions of the world are present among us. Since we are called to be one in Christ, we are called to be transformed by God's grace for the sake of all life on earth, overcoming the world's division. Challenged to monitor and transform economic globalization, we call ourselves to action as churches working alongside people of faith communities and movements.

AGAPE Call – for love and action

God, Creator, endowing your creation with integrity and human beings with dignity;

God, Redeemer and Liberator, freeing us from slavery and death;

God, Holy Spirit, transforming and energising us.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit let us witness to your love, life and transforming grace.

All: God, in your grace, transform the world.

We have become apathetic to suffering and injustice. Among us are many who suffer the consequences of economic globalization; women, abused and yet caring for life; children who are denied their rights; youth living in economic insecurity and unemployment; those labouring under exploitative conditions; the many caught in unjust trade relationships and debt slavery. There are people with disabilities and those living at the margins of society, people of colour often the first and most painfully hit by poverty, those pushed away and alienated from the land, the earth - battered, depleted and exploited. Denied of their sustenance, these people are often the most vulnerable to diseases such as HIV/AIDS. We confess that many of us have failed to respond in solidarity.

All: God, in your grace, transform the world.

We are tempted to give in to comfort and its empty promises when we ought to choose costly discipleship and change. We are driven to accept oppression and suffering as a given, when we should keep our hope and advocate for justice and liberation.

We confess that many of us have failed to take a stand in our faith and act against economic injustice and its destructive consequences on people and the earth. We are tempted to give in to materialism and the reign of money. We play to the rules of greed and conform to political and military power when we should align ourselves with the poor and excluded people.

All: God, in your grace, transform the world.

God, we ask your forgiveness.

All: God, in your grace, transform the world.

God, let our economic structures be inspired by the rules of your household of life, governed by love, justice and grace.

Let us not be afraid of change, or to seek alternatives.

Let us work for justice by resisting destructive economic structures,

Proclaiming with hope the Jubilee Year of the Lord, the cancellation of debt, the release of the captives and rest for the land,

let us work for an agape economy of solidarity.

All: God, in your grace, transform the world.

God, you send us out,

to care for the earth and to share all what is necessary for life in community;

to resist and to denounce all that denies life,

to love our neighbours and to do what is just,

so that where there was death, there will be life.

We call each other

to respond to your love for all people and for the earth

in our own actions and in the witness and service of our churches;

to work for the eradication of poverty and the unconditional cancellation of debts;

to care for land, water, air - the entire web of life;

to build just and sustainable relationships with the earth.

In the world of labour, trade and finance to study and engage power in its different forms and

manifestations, remembering that all power is accountable to you, God. God in your grace, help

us to be agents of your transformation and to hear your call to act with courage.

**All: Creator God, may the power of your grace transform us,
Christ, give us courage and hope to share our life with each other and the world,
Holy Spirit, empower us to work for justice for people and the earth.**

God, in your grace, transform the world. Amen.

In the spirit of this uniting prayer, we challenge ourselves to have the courage to take action. The *AGAPE* call invites us to act together for transformation of economic injustice and to continue analysing and reflecting on challenges of economic globalisation and the link between wealth and poverty.

1. Poverty eradication

We recommit ourselves to work for the eradication of poverty and inequality through developing economies of solidarity and sustainable communities. We will hold our governments and the international institutions accountable to implement their commitments on poverty eradication and sustainability.

2. Trade

We recommit ourselves to work for justice in international trade relations through critical analyses on free trade and trade negotiations, and to collaborate closely with social movements in making those agreements just, equitable and democratic.

3. Finance

We recommit ourselves to campaign for responsible lending; unconditional debt cancellation and for the control and regulation of global financial markets. Investments should be redirected towards businesses that respect social and ecological justice, or in banks and institutions that do not engage in speculation, nor encourage tax evasion.

Sustainable use of land and natural resources

We recommit ourselves to engage in actions for sustainable and just patterns of extraction and use of natural resources, in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, who seek to protect their land, water, and their communities.

We recommit ourselves to challenge the excessive consumption of affluent societies so that they will shift towards self-restraint and simplicity in lifestyles.

4. Public goods and services

We recommit ourselves to join the global struggle against the imposed privatisation of public goods and services; and to actively defend the rights of countries and peoples to define and manage their own commons.

We recommit ourselves to support movements, groups and international initiatives defending vital elements of life such as bio-diversity, water and the atmosphere.

5. Life-giving agriculture

We recommit ourselves to work for land reforms in solidarity with landless agricultural labourers and small farm holders; to advocate in various ways for self-determination over food concerns. To oppose the production of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as well as trade liberalisation as the sole directive. We commit ourselves to promote ecological farming practices and to stand in solidarity with peasant communities.

Decent jobs, emancipated work and people's livelihoods

We commit ourselves to build alliances with social movements and trade unions that advocate decent jobs and just wages. We commit ourselves to advocate for those workers and bonded labourers who work under exploitative conditions and are deprived of their rights to form trade unions.

6. Churches and the power of empire

We recommit ourselves to reflect on the question of power and empire from a biblical and theological perspective, and take a firm faith stance against hegemonic powers because all power is accountable to God.

We acknowledge that the process of transformation requires that we as churches make ourselves accountable to the victims of the project of economic globalization. Their voices and experiences must determine how we analyze and judge this project, in keeping with the Gospel. This implies that we as churches from different regions make ourselves accountable to each other, and that those of us closer to the centres of power live out our first loyalty to our sisters and brothers who experience the negative impacts of global economic injustice everyday of their lives.

This AGAPE call is a prayer for strength to transform unjust economic structures. It will guide our reflections and actions in the next phase of the ecumenical journey. Our engagement will build on the findings, proposals and recommendations to the churches from the AGAPE process as outlined in the AGAPE background document.

15 September, 2005

WATER: LIFE BEFORE PROFIT (Blue)

Origin: Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee
Water Issues Task Group

Background

Water is life. Without water, there is no life. When water is polluted, life is compromised. When water is too expensive or controlled by others, individuals and communities suffer.

Over one billion people in the world lack access to clean drinking water. One third of the world's population live in areas that are water stressed, and 50 percent of countries have experienced water shortages. Current predictions are that by 2050 at least one in four people are likely to live in countries affected by current or recurring shortages of fresh water. It is the poor who are most adversely affected by water shortages, pollution, privatization, and the impact of climate change on water quality and quantity.

Canadians are among the biggest water users in the world. Urban residents in Canada use more than twice as much water as their European counterparts, with significant levels of wastage and inefficiency. Groundwater is extremely important in supplying fresh water to meet the needs of Canadians. Over four million Canadians residing in urban areas rely on groundwater for their domestic water supply. In addition, bottled groundwater in small 500 mL plastic containers is being bought by many Canadians to replace drinking water that flows through their taps. Testing has shown that tap water is as clean as or cleaner than some of this water in small bottles. Further, the proliferation of the plastic bottles is contributing to landfill garbage problems. Churches in rural areas and camps face significant challenges as a result of increasingly rigorous water testing regulations. Many have few options other than using bulk bottled water or making major investments in new water treatment systems. Many Aboriginal peoples living on reserves face health threats from contaminated water.

Water, in most traditional world views, is part of the “commons”—a term referring to life-sustaining elements of creation shared by a community. For Aboriginal peoples, water is a fundamental element of sacred Mother Earth. Even in areas of chronic water scarcity or political conflict around the world, there are long traditions of generosity and water hospitality.

But now pressure is increasing to consider water a “commodity” that can be privatized and traded. This is problematic when it comes to something as essential to life as water. Privatized services require a profit to meet expectations of shareholders, which can place upward pressure on prices and neglect important long-term ecological concerns such as the sustainability of aquifers. In 1990, 51 million people got their water from private companies. In 2003, this figure was more than 300 million. The World Bank has lent \$30 billion in the past 12 years for water privatization.

Privatization tends to undermine community control. With private control of water services, the community generally has fewer checks and balances for transparency and accountability of those responsible for the service. It is more difficult to have genuine community participation in water services if outside forces can declare water a commodity and turn water delivery systems into a source of profit. Skyrocketing water rates have generally followed takeovers of public water systems by private interests, which in turn put the poor and vulnerable at particular risk of losing access to the water they need. The push for privatization of water services is found in a wide range of trade and investment agreements and policies, whether national (federal), bilateral (between two countries), or multilateral (among multiple countries, or among countries and international financial and commercial institutions). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank often push privatization through loan conditions and the types of projects they support. Current global trade agreements negotiated through the World Trade Organization (WTO) favour the privatization of water systems. The policies of the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO are largely determined by the wealthy industrialized nations that promote a “neo-liberal” economic ideology favouring unfettered markets, minimal regulation of corporations, and limited government involvement in the economy.

The global water industry is dominated by 10 corporations, two of which are titans in the field—Vivendi Universal and Suez (both based in France)—with four others not far behind—Bouygues-SAUR (France), RWE-Thames Water (Germany), Bechtel-United Utilities (U.S.), and

Azurix (U.S.). The annual revenues of the water industry are currently about 40 percent of oil sector revenues and are already one third larger than revenues of the pharmaceutical sector.

The Canadian government and governments in other donor countries promote water service privatization by supporting—among other things—the worldwide push for “public-private partnerships” (PPPs), which allow private corporations a role in public services. PPPs are far less accountable to public control, and are becoming ever more widespread on every continent, despite the proven success of democratic, adequately financed public systems in delivering safe water. In fact, successful, publicly owned water services remain the norm in North America, and people around the world have gone out of their way to defend this model. In Uruguay and Bangladesh, for example, people protested privatization of their public services and succeeded in halting the plans. In Canada, Moncton, New Brunswick, and Hamilton, Ontario, have recently reasserted public control over their water management services after periods of unsatisfactory private management. Public operation of water services is not a guarantee of effective and efficient management, but community control does offer more options for participation, accountability, limiting price increases, and ensuring access for all.

The United Church of Canada has initiated a major focus on water issues in Canada and around the world. This initiative is grounded in the church’s long history of engagement in issues of economic and ecological justice, with a priority focus on the impact on the poor of policies related to such issues as foreign debt, trade, structural adjustment programs, and corporate concentration. A resolution adopted at the 38th General Council 2003 — “Water! Water! Water!” — called for the church to begin an educational and advocacy process on water issues. A variety of resources have been provided and actions have been taken nationally by the United Church on the basis of that resolution, and many local congregations and individual members are involved in actions in their own contexts. Through the Mission and Service Fund, the United Church supports global partners in development programs that can include water projects. The United Church is an active member of the ecumenical coalition KAIROS, which is in the midst of a two-year advocacy project entitled *Water: Life before Profit!*

This resolution furthers the United Church’s engagement and reflects a growing understanding in the church of how “empire” power concentrated in international economic institutions, governments, and corporations can have a profoundly destructive impact on people and the Earth. “Empire” is increasingly understood by the United Church as the convergence of economic, political, cultural, military, and religious powers in a system of domination that forces the flow of benefits from the vulnerable to the powerful. Empire crosses all boundaries, distorts identities, subverts cultures, subordinates nation states, and either marginalizes or co-opts religious communities.

The resolution has been endorsed by the Justice, Global, and Ecumenical Relations Unit Committee and the Executive of the General Council Permanent Committee for Programs in Mission and Ministry.

Theological and Ethical Principles

Water is a fundamental gift of God. It is a prerequisite for life. But in today's world, access to water is threatened on many levels—by climate change, pollution, exploitation, and privatization.

A. Water as Part of God's Good Earth

God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31a)

Throughout the familiar creation story in Genesis 1, we have the repeated phrase “and God saw that it was good.” This assertion of the goodness of the Earth begins a long trajectory by which the writers of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures sketch a relationship of affirmation by God of what has been created. We hear it explicitly in this first chapter of Genesis, and we read many celebrations of the beauty, majesty, and bounty of the Earth in the Psalms. Though there are times of pain and suffering reported in scripture when the Earth seems barren or when God expresses anger at human disobedience, the image that predominates is of a God who brought creation into being and sustains it out of profound love.

The context for the writing of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures was an Israelite culture that was largely rural and agrarian. The people depended on the Earth for sustenance and expressed their care of it through such processes as observing the Jubilee, which allowed the land to rest and replenish itself. They also celebrated the Earth's bounty through religious rituals tied to the cycle of the agricultural year. Acknowledging God's role in creation, worshippers presented the first and best fruits of the harvest to God.

After the scientific and industrial revolutions, humans came to consider themselves as distinct from and superior to the rest of creation. The Earth was seen as ours to use however we wished. In recent years, that perspective has started to change, particularly as a result of discoveries in the ecological sciences, wisdom of Indigenous peoples, and insights from eco-feminism—all of which point to the inter-relatedness of humans with creation and our dependence upon it. Both in a physical and spiritual sense, we are the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the dust out of which we are formed.

B. Caring for Water and the Earth for the Common Good

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. (Psalm 24:1–2)

All of God's good creation is dependent on the seas and the rivers. There are innumerable species and elements of ecological systems that make up the full panoply of God's creation. We humans are only one among the many. As a fundamental element of creation and a prerequisite for life, water must be available to all members of the community of life—for the common good. When access to water is threatened by human activity, life and justice are at risk.

We humans do not own the Earth—it belongs to God. We are to care for the Earth with the same love with which God cares for it. We will be held responsible for how we execute those responsibilities.

In partnership with God, humans have the duty and indeed the privilege to foster the well-being of all life. We find deep wells of spiritual nourishment by being engaged in community, by seeking the welfare of others who share this fragile planet—the human family and other creatures. We are called to seek the highest quality of life for all people, especially those who have historically been deprived of it.

Striving for the common good for all is a response to God’s love of creation. It invites a prioritizing of community over unrestricted individualism. It values sharing over greed. The common good invokes a commitment to solidarity with all life.

C. Assuring Access to Water for All

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” (John 4:10)

Water is an essential element of creation—God’s gift to all creatures. Nothing should be allowed to interfere with the access of people and other creatures to this essential life-giving element.

For many in today’s world, access to water exacts a heavy cost. The United Church’s global partners report the following:

- “many of the families that live in the most populated neighbourhoods of San Salvadore, El Salvadore and the whole metropolitan area constantly suffer the lack of water in their homes” (Emmanuel Baptist Church, El Salvadore)
- there is an “unequal distribution of water resources between Israel and the Palestinian territories” (Middle East Council of Churches)
- “many of the rivers in the Philippines are biologically dead, due to mining, pollution from industrial and domestic waste, siltation and sedimentation due to erosion which is brought about by forest denudation” (National Council of Churches of the Philippines)
- “water has become a commodity especially in urban and peri-urban areas, even the vulnerable people have to pay for water...water is basically sold as a commercial product in Zambia and companies make profit out of it” (Council of Churches of Zambia)

In parts of Canada, there is a cost for ensuring that American border states do not exceed their fair proportion of shared trans-boundary water systems, as illustrated by the conflict over policies for diversion projects from the Great Lakes. In coastal regions, there is a cost paid by communities devastated by depleted fish stocks. Aboriginal communities pay a cost in health from contaminated wells and rivers polluted by industrial wastes. Some communities have paid a cost in lives and livelihoods because of polluted wells and inadequate testing.

Jesus required real water from the well to live another day. The Samaritan woman, though astonished by this request that crossed cultural barriers, was prepared to give Jesus what he needed. Jesus expands the discussion to “living water” that he offers to her. It is God’s offer of water that brings new life, that sustains the life in the Spirit, that nourishes us for our relationships with our creator and the world around us. This juxtaposition of real H₂O water that Jesus needed from the Samaritan woman and the “living water” that he offers to her reinforces the link of water and life, both the physical and the spiritual. It is, in a sense, an incarnated assertion that all who are thirsty should have access to water as an essential life-assuring element, just as Jesus offers water that enlivens us with the Spirit.

Working to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable is a critical dimension of discipleship in today's world. Indeed, it is in community that we most poignantly find God and it is in community that God seeks to find us.

We are to care for water and the Earth for the benefit and well-being of all. No person, community, company, or country has the authority to horde the Earth's bounty or to destroy its life-giving character for selfish gain. The Earth does not belong to anyone with such rights. The Earth is the Lord's.

Members of the JGER Water Issues Task Group:

- Wendy Evans, Montreal, PQ
- John McKenzie, Winnipeg, MB
- Janet Sigurdson, Carlyle, SK
- Glenys Verhulst, Victoria (member until Sept. 05)
- JGER Staff: David Hallman, Gary Kenny, Christie Neufeldt

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ETHICAL INVESTMENT FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL (Blue)

Origin: Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee

The 39th General Council 2006 is called to prayerfully discern the ministry of The United Church of Canada into the future. This relates to ethical investment and the call from partners as we are reminded of our missiology – affirmed by previous General Councils – of heeding the call of partners, and walking with them in solidarity and accompaniment in God's mission of justice. We are also reminded that when one part of the Body suffers, we all suffer.

The issue of ethical investment in Palestine and Israel comes to the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit of The United Church of Canada through its mandate, which states that the Unit seeks to:

Work mutually with global partners sharing people and resources in God's mission, including acting and advocating in solidarity in response to partners' identified priorities.

At its April 2005 meeting, the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit Committee approved a motion recommending ethical investment for peace in Palestine and Israel. This was forwarded to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry in September 2005 for review, and brought before the Executive of the General Council in October 2005. The Executive approved the following motion, requesting the General Secretary to forward the attached proposal on ethical investment for peace in Palestine and Israel to the 39th General Council 2006 Thunder Bay:

The Executive of the General Council:

- Requests the General Secretary to forward to the 39th General Council 2006 for consideration, the proposal on an “ethical investment policy in Israel and Palestine” with increased emphasis on reinvestment;
- Encourages the General Secretary to strengthen the research necessary to support such a policy, and to continue to seek ecumenical and interfaith collaboration on ethical investment initiatives.

With this directive, the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit has undertaken research, in collaboration with Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, on two aspects of proactive ethical investment in Palestine and Israel.

Theological Rationale for Ethical Investment

To Seek Justice & Resist Evil: Towards a Global Economy for All God's People, adopted by the 37th General Council 2000, stated that “the Church's faith, rooted in Scripture and nourished by countless examples of human community, looks to the new society, God's *shalom*, which Jesus and the prophets proclaimed. *Shalom* is the biblical word which points to the fulfilment of God's purpose for humankind: people living together in community, in just relations with one another, in harmony with creation and in fellowship with God. We see the economic aspect of *shalom* in this passage from Isaiah 65:21-23:

They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat...
They shall not labour in vain,
or bear children for calamity;
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord.”

The 37th General Council 2000 therefore called on members of The United Church of Canada “to join in reflection and action toward economic justice for all God’s people as a matter of faith, challenging economic policies, institutions, systems and relationships that destroy human well-being and the integrity of creation.” From this call arise the theological convictions woven throughout this proposal.

Background

The United Church of Canada has consistently striven for peace with justice in the Middle East, working ecumenically and in concert with global partners in the region. The United Church has affirmed support for the State of Israel and its right to peace and security. Colleagues within Jewish/Christian dialogue networks have encouraged the Church to continue to affirm this strongly and directly in the context of any statement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The United Church has and continues to condemn acts of terrorism and violence by Palestinian extremists, as well as state terror, and continues in its conviction that, among other things, a just peace will require the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and an end to the occupation. These positions also reflect the stance of the United Nations.

In August 2003, the 38th General Council 2003 voted on Resolution 83 in two parts. It adopted Part 1 as follows:

The 38th General Council 2003 recorded its conviction that a just peace in the Middle East will require:

- the recognition by the Israeli Government of a fully sovereign State of Palestine with secure borders, and territorial contiguity encompassing the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- the recognition by the emergent State of Palestine and other neighbouring Arab States of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state within safe and secure borders;
- the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- the ending of suicide bombings as well as other forms of violent attacks directed towards civilians on the part of Palestinians;
- the withdrawal of Israeli military forces to pre-1967 borders and the ending of all forms of collective punishment and violence by the Israeli Government on the Palestinian people;
- the recognition by the Israeli Government and the emergent State of Palestine of equal citizenship rights, protections, privileges and responsibilities for all their citizens regardless of religious or national origins.

A vote of the 38th General Council 2003 defeated Part 2 of Resolution 83 which called on:

The membership, congregations and organizations of The United Church of Canada:

- to resist any support to the expansion and maintenance of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza including divestment from any Canadian and international companies involved in construction, servicing or marketing of goods related to the settlements; and to direct the Executive of the General Council to direct the appropriate Permanent Committee to provide research and direction to the Church on divestment and other strategies of peaceful resistance.

However, since 2003 the situation in the region has become significantly worse. The Executive was asked to adopt the attached proposal on Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel in light of the urgent call from partners in the region. The Executive referred the proposal to the 39th General Council 2006 Thunder Bay.

Context

Partners' voices

Partners in the Middle East, specifically the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)⁹², and Sabeel⁹³ have urgently renewed their call to the global ecumenical family of Christians to stand in solidarity with the suffering and oppressed in the conflict, and to act in accordance with our Christian faith that calls us to seek justice and resist evil.

We in the Middle East Council of Churches see [ethical investment] as putting our faith into practice and affirming the insistence of Christian teachings that we do not aid directly or indirectly unjust systems nor promote unequal relations based on sheer power and control. (Dr. Guirguis Saleh, General Secretary, MECC, February 23, 2005 – Appendix A)

We must act responsibly under God. God calls us to value all people and stand up for all who are suffering and oppressed regardless of their nationality. Such a stand leads us to responsible stewardship in the investments we make as individuals, churches, institutions and corporations. As Christians we object to all those who carry out violent, unethical, immoral, and illegal actions. (Sabeel: "A Call for Morally Responsible Investment", Palm Sunday, 2005 – Appendix B).

There exists a heightened sense of urgency for the global ecumenical family and the international community to act *now*, as the crisis escalates and the situation on the ground rapidly deteriorates. Recent reports from regional partners, The United Church of Canada personnel serving in the region, and members of the global ecumenical family have confirmed that conditions have so deteriorated that Palestinians are driven to the edge of despair and hopelessness.

While the world was looking at the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, the possibility of a two-state solution with a viable, contiguous, independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and living as neighbours with a secure Israel, remains far from being assured. The current situation is also having a negative impact on Israeli society, which suffers from a growing gap between the rich and poor: child poverty and hunger is growing⁹⁴, as is the percentage of the elderly who live in poverty and don't have enough to eat; teenage suicide rates are soaring; and the vision of the future is blurry for the youth as the focus on security through force is a dominant aspect of Israeli life. An ethical investment plan is intended to support peace

⁹² The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) is a fellowship of the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant church families in the Middle East. MECC has been a UCC ecumenical partner through the former Inter-Church Action and now KAIROS since its inception in 1974.

⁹³ Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre is a grassroots ecumenical theological movement that seeks to make the Gospel contextually relevant for Palestinians, and to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. Sabeel (an Arabic word meaning 'the way' or 'channel') has been a UCC partner since it was formed in 1992.

⁹⁴ Poverty Report, Latet – Israeli Humanitarian Aid, 2004

Annual Survey Report 2002-2003, National Research Institute – Administration and Research Planning (Jerusalem: April 2004).

and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians in line with the wishes of both Israeli and Palestinian partners.

Partners have told us that the dismantling of Israeli settlements in Gaza could be positive but recent statements by the Israeli Prime Minister make it clear that it is a part of a strategy to re-draw borders and seize Jerusalem and much of the best land on the West Bank without negotiation. On August 21, 2005, the General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, Dr. Guirguis Saleh, stated that while the Gaza withdrawal is a welcome first step, he urged *“that this be a first step towards the withdrawal from all Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 so that the Palestinian people can enjoy a happy and stable life that opens possibilities for development and advancement in an atmosphere of peace and justice among the peoples of the region. The MECC prays also that Jerusalem returns to a city of brotherhood and peace.”*

The World Council of Churches’ Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) has provided a very useful lens through which member churches can evaluate the Gaza pullout, based on seven signs of peace (Appendix C).

The United Church of Canada partner Bat Shalom⁹⁵ has shared that despite the emphasis on the pain associated with the Gaza withdrawal, the exercise clearly demonstrated to Israelis that it can be done: the settlements are not inviolable and can be dismantled. The United Nations, partners and previous General Councils call for the dismantling of all settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as well.

The settlement project is seeking to transform the illegal annexation of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem and the West Bank into a permanent, political fact on the ground and trump international law. Israeli peace groups report that the Sub-committee of the Local Committee for Planning and Construction in Jerusalem has confirmed a plan to erect a Jewish neighbourhood in the Palestinian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) reports that, according to the plan, 30 housing units will be built to accommodate some 150 people. The Palestinians in East Jerusalem live in socio-economic suffering; therefore a permanent settlement in such a vicinity, with better living conditions than those of the Palestinian residents, would lead to provocation and a serious political and social crisis. ICAHD states that:

“...the proposed plan is also a continuation of a consistent Israeli policy whose purpose is a violation of the balance between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem, creating by this policy a Jewish majority in East Jerusalem. Increasing Israeli control over Palestinian land in East Jerusalem is intended unilaterally to create facts on the ground. With such policy Israel is violating international law, which does not recognize Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem, occupied in June 1967. Resolution 478 of the UN Security Council declares the annexation of East Jerusalem to be illegal under international law, and according to article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention it is illegal for an occupying

⁹⁵ Bat Shalom is an Israeli national grassroots organization of women working together for a genuine peace grounded in a just resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict, respect for human rights, and an equal voice for Jewish and Arab women within Israeli society. Together with the Jerusalem Centre for Women (a Palestinian women’s organization) they comprise “The Jerusalem Link”. Both are ecumenical partners of UCC through KAIROS.

power to deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”⁹⁶

A report on October 31, 2005 also issued by the ICAHD says that ultranationalist Jewish organizations have taken over buildings in Jerusalem’s walled Old City and nearby environs in an attempt to thwart any future peace deal with the Palestinians. These actions to change facts on the ground emphasize the real urgency of the situation, as they have serious implications for the possibility of a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The route and placement of the separation wall, construction of which has been condemned in July 2004 by the International Court of Justice and Israeli human rights groups such as B’Tselem⁹⁷, are annexing land and water sources in the West Bank. The Israeli government has declared its intention to determine unilaterally its final borders, which will include the major West Bank settlements and claim greater Jerusalem – without negotiations. The continuous extension of the separation barrier around West Bank towns and East Jerusalem is accelerating. The separation wall epitomizes the dispossession of Palestinians. Its construction has forcefully and violently cut off Palestinians from their land, families, schools, hospitals and work, and could destroy any possibility of a viable, contiguous, independent Palestinian state with connectivity to Gaza. The argument that it provides security is inconsistent with its current route, proving instead that the Israeli Government is changing facts on the ground in a manner that prejudices the outcome of possible future negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. A September 2005 joint report by B’Tselem and Bimkom⁹⁸ provides in-depth analysis of the expansion plans of four settlements in the West Bank⁹⁹. Construction has only just begun in the case of some settlements – a clear violation of UN resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention¹⁰⁰. This also contradicts Israeli government and legal official statements that the barrier is to protect against existing security threats. The report ends by stating that the primary goal of setting the barrier’s route – expanding the settlements and protecting the economic interests of Israeli real-estate developers – is itself illegal.

Ecumenical Voices

Momentum is growing among Christian churches to act as the gospel calls us to. In July 2004, the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA) took the step of initiating “a phased, selective divestment of church funds from those companies whose business in Israel is found to be directly or indirectly causing harm to innocent people, Palestinian or Israeli”.

In February 2005, at a meeting of its Central Committee, the World Council of Churches, of which The United Church of Canada is a member, called on its 347 member churches to consider economic measures it described as “equitable, transparent and non-violent” to protest illegal

⁹⁶ Ha’aretz, August 31, 2005

⁹⁷ B’Tselem – The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories acts primarily to change Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories and ensure that the Israeli government respects the rights of residents there and complies with international law.

⁹⁸ Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights was established in May 1999 by planners and architects with the goal of strengthening the connection between human rights and spatial planning in Israel.

⁹⁹ B’Tselem and Bimkom, “Under the Guise of Security: Routing the Separation Barrier to Enable Israeli Settlement Expansion on the West Bank”, September 2005

¹⁰⁰ The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Article 47, which proscribes the annexation of occupied territory, in whole or in part, by the occupying power.

activities in the occupied territories, including possible divestment from or boycott of companies operating in the occupied territories.

In June 2005, the Anglican Consultative Council voted unanimously in favour of a resolution urging its member churches to “examine their investments to make sure companies in which they have holdings don’t support either the occupation or Palestinian violence against innocent Israelis.”

In July 2005, at its General Synod meeting in Atlanta, the United Church of Christ in the USA voted in favour of a resolution calling on its membership to use economic leverage to promote peace in the Middle East.

At its August 31 – September 6, 2005 meeting held in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council adopted a statement saying its members had encountered “the [Israeli] separation wall and found shocking its impact on the daily lives of Palestinians”. Representatives of LWF member churches stated that their stay had “opened the eyes of many of us to the daily sufferings of the Palestinian people, often not shown to us by the media, and in which context our member church [the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land] speaks boldly a message of hope and reconciliation.”

In October 2005, the Executive of the Episcopal Church USA directed its Social Responsibility in Investments Committee, to use the church’s investments to encourage positive change in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

Within The United Church of Canada, Toronto Conference is engaged in discussion and decision-making around the implementation of its motion for ethical investment in support of a just peace in the Middle East, approved at the 79th Annual Meeting of Toronto Conference in 2003.

The United Church of Canada is strengthening partnership and ecumenical co-operation in the region. Chris and Susan Ferguson (Toronto Conference) are currently serving as overseas personnel in Palestine and Israel in ecumenical initiatives of the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem, the MECC and the WCC. Larry Harder (2006, Hamilton Conference), David LeGrand (2006, Manitou Conference), Desmond Parsons (2005, Newfoundland and Labrador Conference), Laura Sundberg (2004, Saskatchewan Conference) and Tad Mitsui (2003, Alberta and Northwest Conference) have served as ecumenical accompaniers with the WCC initiative of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), witnessing in solidarity and accompaniment to the violence, despair and desperation that call us to move beyond statements to action.

Interfaith Voices

The United Church of Canada continues on the journey of renewing faithful witness to our relationship with Judaism through thoughtful and prayerful study of the document *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today*, and dialogue with the Jewish community, principally through the Canadian Christian Jewish Consultation (CCJC), of which the Canadian Jewish Congress is a member.

The issue of ethical investment has been an item of discussion in the Canadian Christian Jewish Consultation (CCJC) for some time, notably at the time of the United Church motion discussed at the 38th General Council 2003. In September 2004, the issue was again raised, in response to the actions of the Presbyterian Church-USA, the WCC, and the Anglican Peace and Justice Network. Discussions continued at meetings in February, April, June and September, 2005. The CCJC has been informed of Toronto Conference discussions around implementation of their 2003 motion, and that The United Church of Canada has been working on a proposal. Our commitment is to be transparent about our intentions, and to that end the decision to move forward with this proposal to the 39th General Council 2006 Thunder Bay, and a copy of the proposal, have been circulated to CCJC members.

It is clear in discussions at CCJC that agreement to this proposal will be viewed negatively and become a source of tension and pain in our relationship with Jewish members of the Consultation. We will be accused of antisemitism by those who see ethical investment strategies as fuelling anti-Jewish sentiments. Indeed, there are some who suggest that most recent critique of Israeli policy expresses hostility to Israel and is, therefore, antisemitic. However, our conviction is that we take these actions in response to destructive Israeli government policies, consistent with a long tradition of critiquing the policies of the Canadian government and those of other governments around the world, when those policies have failed to uphold the rights and dignity of all citizens. The ethical investment strategies being recommended are consistent with actions we have previously taken in response to injustice in Guatemala, Myanmar (Burma), Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa and Sudan; and with our commitment to global economic justice affirmed in *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil: Toward a Global Economy for All God's People*.

We will continue to dialogue. In the United States, Christian and Jewish leaders participated in a joint delegation to the Middle East in September 2005, pledging to continue to work together for peace despite disagreements over ethical investment policies. Possibilities for working together in Canada include a proposed CCJC trip to the Middle East.

Thus The United Church of Canada is called to discern the path of justice while seeking to maintain a stance of care and respect for our Jewish sisters and brothers. In so doing, we bear in mind the policy statement on United Church-Jewish relations adopted by the 38th General Council 2003, arising from the study *"Bearing Faithful Witness."* We have stated that: "We believe that our faith calls us to repent when the church has been unfaithful in its witness by not loving Jews as neighbours" and have acknowledged "a history of anti-Judaism and antisemitism within Christianity as a whole, including The United Church of Canada." We have affirmed "the significance of Judaism as at once a religion, a people, and a covenant community;" "that the State of Israel has the right to exist in peace and security;" and "our common calling with Jews and others to align ourselves with God's world-mending work."

It is also important to note the work towards a statement on the relationship of The United Church of Canada and Islam taking place in the study *"That We May Know Each Other."* The proposed statement would affirm a journey towards reconciliation, understanding and cooperation with our Muslim neighbours and encourage all people of The United Church of

Canada to seek out opportunities to work together with Muslims to seek justice and resist evil for the sake of the world we all inhabit.

As with all our work for justice and right-relationship, we place these actions in the framework of “whole world ecumenism,” developed in “*Mending the World*,” which calls The United Church of Canada to be engaged in “God’s work of healing, sharing the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and making common cause with all people of good will, whether they be of faith or not, for the creation of a world that is just, participatory and sustainable.”

Partners living in the region are badly in need of encouragement. They welcome every small sign. As Jean Zaru, a Quaker from Ramallah, says, “We live for Hope and we live by Hope. Now it is all we have”.

Why an ethical investment strategy for peace in Palestine and Israel?

In doing so, The United Church of Canada will be acting in concert with the wider global ecumenical family on the words of the gospel which calls for us to work for peace and seek justice. In acting for justice and peace, we will be challenging our own complicity in the systems of violence and economic oppression that destroy homes and take away livelihoods (Isaiah 3:13-15; Psalm 52:6-8; Psalm 58:1-2).

We will be also be acting in accordance with our mandate, goals and stated positions in key documents such as *Mending the World* and *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil*.

Our principle of listening to and heeding the call of partners for solidarity, accompaniment and advocacy will be upheld through direct action.

The General Council will be working in synchronicity with Toronto Conference.

The introduction of an ethical investment strategy would build on the United Church’s long standing commitment to peace in the Middle East, and our history of using investment funds in a socially responsible way. For example, the 23rd General Council 1968 established a Committee on Investing Church Funds for Social Purposes. The committee focussed its attention on how churches can use their investment funds proactively to meet the housing needs of people with low incomes. Today, the United Church has hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in the Canadian Alternative Investment Co-operative that still benefits housing initiatives in Canada, and in Oikocredit¹⁰¹ in solidarity with global partners. Congregations are encouraged to consider their own investment strategies as outlined in *Mission and Investing: A Guide for The United Church of Canada Congregations and Organizations* published in 2002.

In tandem with investment strategies, the United Church has a long and strong practice of divestment strategies both with Canada and multinational corporations. Specifically, we would be fulfilling the call of the 37th General Council 2000 to:

¹⁰¹ Oikocredit is a worldwide cooperative society which promotes global justice by challenging individuals, churches and others to share their resources through socially responsible investments and by empowering disadvantaged people with credit.

Respond to the ethical issues related to the impact of investment on the lives of people ... by examining further aspects of ethical investment (beyond alcohol, military, and tobacco prohibitions) in relation to church investments and investment policy... ensure there is an instrument for ethical evaluation of investments available to all United Church members, congregations, and related organizations.

To Seek Justice and Resist Evil, 2000 Record of Proceedings, page 849

Pro-Active Investment Strategy

The ethical investment strategy is not new to the church. It is based on an existing mechanism of good stewardship of resources, given the history of The United Church of Canada with Alternative Investments and its policy as set out in the November 1987 motion of the Executive of General Council on *A Request for the Authority to make Alternative Investments from the General Funds of the Church*. In this particular proposal, appropriate General Council bodies would be requested to provide materials that may be used by all settings of the church to discern the kinds of economic leverage that they can use to contribute to the development of communities in Palestine and Israel as part of two independent, secure, and economically viable states. The missiological framework we engage in is first: listening to partners on the ground about their experience and then, in response, discerning an ethical use of the gift of resources in our stewardship to act in support of justice.

Investment

The Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit has consulted with partners and several development, relief and humanitarian agencies and groups in the region, including the Palestinian Fair Trade Association, the Lutheran World Federation Offices in Jerusalem, Jerusalem Center for Women, the Near East Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Works, the International Christian Committee, the Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development, the Alternative Tourism Group and others. As directed by the October 2005 Executive resolution, we are excited by the possibility of ecumenical cooperation on ethical investment with a group of churches based in the US who are also considering pro-active investment strategies. We are also exploring opportunities to work with interfaith partners.

The Palestinian Fair Trade Association (PFTA)

The Palestinian Fair Trade Association provides the best option, based on the criterion of investment rather than grants. The Palestinian Fair Trade Association is a national Palestinian union of farming and producing cooperatives, traders and processors that promotes and supports fair and equitable trading principles, developed locally by the PFTA, and compatible with international fair trade principles. Fair trade ensures that farmers, workers and producers are paid a fair price for their goods produced under healthy, safe and equitable working conditions for all those involved. The philosophy of fair trade not only entails higher returns to producers and farmers but also includes supporting producing communities' capacities for sustainable development.

What individuals in The United Church of Canada can do

Assisting farmers in obtaining organic certification at approximately \$250 per farm could be taken on by individual congregations who could donate the money to a revolving fund which would assist participant farmers by funding the initial certification expenses. The returns of the

certification will be substantial enough to help farmers pay for their own certification in subsequent years. This project will empower farmers by adding value to their product that increases their income, provides a market for their products and increases social capital through participation in the co-operative and collective work.

Individuals can also support this initiative through *purchasing of Palestinian Fair Trade products* such as the Zatoun Olive Oil.

What congregations in The United Church of Canada can do

Congregations could support a number of micro-credit projects through the Palestinian Fair Trade Association. Examples of these include:

Support of Sun-dried Couscous Cooperatives which currently consist of two co-operatives of five members each. The PFTA will extend a loan of CAD \$600 for each member. Funds may be used for the purchase of the couscous ingredients and necessary kitchenware. Training and specification for production will be provided, and the produced couscous purchased from members on a regular basis. This project will empower ten women members by providing them with the capacity to produce and earn income, as well as a market for their products.

There are similar micro-credit projects of differing amounts for the production of sun-dried tomatoes, olive oil soap, wild flower seed and pickled green olives.

What the General Council Office can do

The financing of an olive oil press and storage facility, estimated at US \$260,000. The United Church of Canada, together with ecumenical partners, could invest in a low-interest loan with an equitable repayment strategy to enable the establishment of such a facility, providing hundreds of olive farmers in the destabilized northern West Bank a reason for hope. Olive oil is required to be stored in large airtight containers in a cool, dark place. A substantial amount of farmers are unable to maintain the quality of the oil during the hot summer months. The Palestinian Fair Trade Association proposes to build a 350 square meter underground olive oil storage facility, which would be designed to store up to 150 tonnes of olive oil in premium storage conditions where quality would be maintained year round. More storage capacity would be added as the need arises.

We are currently exploring possibilities for supporting joint Jewish-Arab initiatives through conversations with The Centre for Jewish-Arab Economic Development (CJAED) - Building Business Bridges (BBB) Program. The “Building Business Bridges” (BBB) Unit aims to create and train a young business leadership comprised of Israeli Arabs, Jews and Palestinian leaders who will build economic cooperation and initiate Arab–Jewish business ventures. The Program serves as a multi-cultural meeting point enabling participants to learn, understand and respect the different backgrounds from which their colleagues arrive. By lifting psychological and historical barriers through the personal knowledge acquired during the program, the BBB MBA facilitates social relationships and business opportunities for all involved. The goal is that, in turn, the relationships forged will facilitate the building of business and peace bridges between all three populations involved that will enable knowledge-sharing which can transform spontaneous business ideas into on-the-ground reality.

It is important to recognise that there are strengths and limitations to the option of *investment*. In using “investment” as a tool for peace-building, we affirm our understanding that when people are able to earn a fair wage and provide for their families, they reclaim their right to dignity and stability, and nurture hope for the future. It is our hope and our belief that by investing in peace in Palestine and Israel, we will be helping to promote dignity and stability, and provide hope without requiring the kinds of acquiescence to structures that neither promote nor support a just solution to the conflict.

However, we must also ask ourselves if investment is *sufficient* response to the injustice of the occupation. Investment may enable Palestinians to live “comfortably” under occupation, and Israelis to continue living with a false sense of security behind a concrete barrier. It does not adequately address the fundamental injustice of the occupation and its effects on both Palestinians and Israelis, nor does it challenge the systems of social and economic oppression which profit from the occupation.

Divestment

The purpose of divesting is to say ‘no’ to the injustice that ignores the suffering of Palestinians and Israelis, and pockets the profits from occupation. It is a resounding ‘yes’ to justice and peace through a principled decision to invest in hope for Palestinians and Israelis. Such engagement with the corporate sector is intended to support prayerful stewardship of resources, and to facilitate education within our churches and communities regarding this aspect of corporate social responsibility.

In direct response to the request of partners in Palestine and Israel, we have also been working with Kairos to research and assess, within the Canadian context, companies that could potentially be named for divestment. The Presbyterian Church of the USA’s list of companies includes: Caterpillar, Citigroup, Motorola, ITT Industries and United Technologies. The Toronto Conference of The United Church of Canada lists Caterpillar, Boeing, General Electric, Lockheed Martin and Canadian Aviation Electronics.

Toronto Conference

At its 79th Annual Meeting in 2003, Toronto Conference approved the following motion:

“Toronto Conference calls on the presbyteries, churches, mission units and associated bodies (such as the Toronto United Church Council) within its bounds, as well as its membership, to:

- *Reaffirm the United Church’s commitment to the right of Israel to exist in peace and security within internationally-recognized borders, and the right of Palestinians to exist in peace and freedom in an internationally-recognised homeland and state;*
- *Recognize that the path of peace is dependent on the ending of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, including the withdrawal of Israeli settlements there;*
- *Commit itself to:*
 1. *Join the World Council of Churches international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories;*

2. *Divest itself of investments in corporations whose activities in the Israeli settlements and/or the Palestinian Territories including East Jerusalem serve to encourage the continued existence of these illegal settlements;*
3. *Boycott the goods and services of corporations whose activities in the Israeli settlements and/or in the Palestinian Territories (including East Jerusalem) serve to encourage the continued existence of these settlements;*
4. *Direct the World Affairs Committee of Conference to provide resources to assist congregations to take action to divest and boycott goods and corporations related to Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.”*

A Task Group on Ethical Investment was struck reporting to the World Affairs Committee, and much research done. The current campaign initiated in Toronto Conference seeks to educate congregations through an annual Holy Land Awareness Week, a letter-writing campaign to urge Canadian politicians to adhere to our contractual obligations under international law (to require Israel to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention to which Canada and Israel are both signatories), and a petition to the Government of Canada to modify the *Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement* to disallow products from the illegal settlements. The campaign also calls for divestment from companies that profit from the illegal occupation by production and sale of military hardware. The campaign also includes a boycott of products of the two companies that sell products to average Canadian consumers: Caterpillar and General Electric.

General Council Offices and Divestment

The United Church of Canada investments are managed through the General Council Offices by an investment company, and funds in the portfolio are sometimes shifted to different companies at different times. While potential investment options for the pension and investment funds administered by the national office are carefully screened, the situation with regard to congregational and individual investments and their compliance with recommendations about ethical screens is unknown at present. Accordingly, it is difficult to say, at any one time, what we as an institutional body or as individual members of the United Church own shares in and what we do not.

The General Council's current screening practices already filter out companies engaged in practices that might endanger peace, justice or the integrity of creation. As a result, this already includes corporations that other faith communities have identified as impeding peace in the Middle East. The specific implications of approving the proposed resolution would be to enable the General Council offices to research opportunities to invest pro-actively for peace, confirm identification of companies that are engaged in practices that are a barrier to peace, initiate dialogue with these same companies, and, where dialogue fails, to publicly call for divestment from those companies that refuse to change their practices of gain from the perpetuation of violence, including the occupation and terrorism. Where possible, the United Church would pursue its ethical investment options both ecumenically and interfaith.

What individuals, congregations, presbyteries, Conferences and the General Council Office can do

In assessing which companies to engage for possible divestment as strategy of last resort, the church as we understand it is not only the corporate institution but thousands of investors and

mutual fund owners, seeking wisdom and direction in their efforts to live out Jesus' proclamation that "where your treasure is, there is your heart also (Luke 12:34)".

In its document "A Call for Morally Responsible Investment: A Nonviolent Response to the Occupation", Sabeel has developed a set of criteria which can guide both The United Church of Canada and individuals in determining the kinds of corporate practices by which companies may be profiting from the ongoing occupation. The United Church of Canada could call on congregations and individuals to exert pressure on companies and corporations to discontinue business activities that:

- a. provide products, services or technology that sustain, support or maintain the occupation;
- b. have established facilities or operations on occupied land;
- c. provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement-related infrastructure;
- d. provide products, services or financial backing to groups that commit violence against innocent civilians; or
- e. provide finances or assist in the construction of Israel's separation wall on occupied land or settlement infrastructure¹⁰².

Using this as a lens, the United Church and its members can choose also to participate in campaigns with ecumenical, interfaith and secular partners. Whenever possible, the United Church seeks to act ecumenically.

The strategy outlined above is also in keeping with the *Corporate Responsibility Guidelines* issued by the Investment Committee in July 1984. Those guidelines speak of selling of shares "as a last resort". This is similar to the Sabeel approach to this question. Partners stress that, after nearly 40 years of occupation, that time has come.

As responsible owners and investors, the ethical investment options the United Church would pursue as a result of the ethical investment proposal regarding Israel and Palestine would include:

- continuing to invest in companies that promote peace and justice by supporting or contributing to the economic viability of communities in Israel and Palestine;
- divestment from companies whose activities or products support and maintain the occupation structure in post-1967 occupied territories not recognised by international law, including the separation barrier along its current route, the maintenance of settlements in the occupied territories, or violent acts of terrorism that harm innocent Israelis and Palestinians, which would follow a four-part strategy with actual divestment as the course of last resort:
 - avoidance strategy: avoiding investment in a company that was complicit;
 - engagement strategy: discussions with companies and corporations to exercise pressure to encourage them to operate in an ethical and just manner;
 - reinvestment strategy: moving funds on ethical grounds from companies complicit in wrongdoing to those that engage in ethical business or reinvest in a company after positive change;

¹⁰² Sabeel, *A Call for Morally Responsible Investment: A Non-Violent Response to the Occupation*, 15-16.

- divestment: withdrawing funds from companies that support or contribute to the occupation and violence that harms innocent Israelis and Palestinians.

It is important to remember that the above initiative would only be one aspect of the United Church's multiple areas of advocacy in pursuit of peace and justice for the people of both Israel and Palestine. Additional work continues with our long standing partners such as the Middle East Council of Churches and its Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, the Jerusalem Ecumenical Office, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel of the World Council of Churches, and in Canada through the Canadian Christian–Jewish Consultation as well as numerous local initiatives where United Church members are actively committed to participation with Jewish, Christian and Muslim neighbours to work for peace in both Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

Appendix A

From: Guirguis I Saleh, General Secretary

Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2005 11:09 PM

To: Gichuru, Wendy

Area secretary, East and Central Africa and the Middle East

The United Church of Canada

Greetings and Peace from the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC).

I share with you and with UCC the deep concern for the Israeli – Palestinian problem from a perspective of partnership that would struggle for a just and lasting peace.

As to the issues of divestment, boycott and sanctions with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the unjust occupation to the Palestinian lands, I would like to inform you that MECC together with the DSPR (Department of Service to Palestinian refugees) had discussed these issues in a Round Table with partners in October 2004 in which two representatives from KAIROS Canada were present.

Divestment, as presented and contextualized by PCUSA, is not seen as a punishment measure. Rather it serves as a constructive one to expedite the process of ending occupation and promoting eventual peace and reconciliation. It was made clear in the Round Table meeting mentioned above that divestment is not across the board but rather focused on those enterprises that touch on the military or contribute to the infraction of the basic human rights of the Palestinian population. While the idea of divestment and boycott of Israel would naturally be strongly opposed by pressure groups in North America, particularly among Jewish groups and communities, they need also to see that without a fair and lasting solution to the predicament of the Palestinian people, the unjustness of the situation would eventually hurt the chances of all peoples in the Middle East for an acceptable solution to the thorny problems of Arab-Israeli relations.

From this perspective and in this context, we in the MECC consider divestment policy as a clear and sound message to the Israeli government of the need to end its occupation of Palestinian lands and to stop all measures that would infract on the basic rights of the Palestinian population.

Accordingly, we lend the policy of divestment our unconditional support hoping that it will help expedite the process of bringing peace and reconciliation closer to the troubled holy land and its peoples.

While I realize that the divestment question is liable to raise many sensitivities particularly in your part of the world, we in the MECC see it as putting our faith into practice and affirming the insistence of Christian teachings that we do not aid directly or indirectly unjust systems nor promote unequal relations based on sheer power and control.

I take this opportunity to wish you and UCC my best as you embark on this debate and as you proceed to formulate a position.

Be assured of our prayers and sincere partnership and availability whenever needed.

Sincerely,

Guirguis Saleh
General Secretary
Middle East Council of Churches

Appendix B

From: Sabeel, Canadian Friends
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2005 10:01 PM
To: Middle East Working Group (MEWG)

Palm Sunday 2005

A NONVIOLENT RESPONSE TO THE OCCUPATION:

A Call for Morally Responsible Investment

The movement towards a resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict through nonviolent means is now accelerating. There is a window of opportunity to reach a just settlement. In spite of past setbacks and much scepticism, many people on both sides of the conflict cling to the hope for peace. As people of faith, the God we believe in is the God of hope and peace. We must not give in to despair.

Regardless of whether this new opportunity bears fruit in the political arena, we believe that serious ethical and moral issues pertaining to the occupation still need to be addressed by people of faith. Hence the challenge is for churches to consider seriously the issue of morally responsible investment.

A Call from Palestinian Christians

The Palestinian Christian community in Palestine is very small in number. We are less than 2% of the population. Although we are fully Palestinian and an integral part of the Palestinian people, we are distinctly Christian. Since the inception of the conflict one hundred years ago, the Christian community has been playing a very active role in championing justice for all the people of the land. In fact, some of the main advocates for peace have been Palestinian

Christians. We continue to take a stand on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Palestine so that all of us can enjoy freedom.

Although we work for peace alongside our Muslim and Jewish brothers and sisters, we are blessed by our links and partnership with a “great cloud of witnesses” throughout the world that, like us, are members of the Body of Christ. Biblically and theologically we stand together:

- For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body (1Corinthians 12:12-13).
- If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it (1Corinthians 12:26).
- We are called by God to work for justice: He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8).
- We are called by Christ to work for peace: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9).

We are, therefore, pleading with our brothers and sisters all over the world to invest their God-given material resources in morally responsible activities that would contribute to the achievement of a just peace in Israel-Palestine. Furthermore, we ask them to continue to pray for all the inhabitants of our land so that peace will be achieved and the way for reconciliation will be opened.

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
PO Box 49084
91491 Jerusalem
Sabeel@sabeel.org

Appendix C

From: World Council of Churches
Conseil œcuménique des Eglises
Consejo Mundial de Iglesias
Ökumenischer Rat der Kirchen

Geneva, 22 August 2005

CCIA Background Information On International Affairs

To evaluate the Gaza pullout look for Seven Signs of Peace

This brief provides information to help churches discern what is happening in Israel and Palestine now and in the months ahead. It is also an invitation for member churches and ecumenical partners to watch, pray and act for peace guided by the deep commitment within the WCC fellowship to the legitimate rights and wellbeing of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Our purpose in writing is to assist with evaluation of the pullout of settlers and soldiers from Gaza, an event that cannot be understood in isolation. Below are seven signs to watch for—in

Gaza and other conflict zones—that will indicate in the months ahead whether the withdrawal enhances prospects for peace.

Sign One: Life for the residents of Gaza improves, including human rights. After the pullout, some 1,400,000 people in one of the most densely populated places on earth are to receive a small increase in physical, psychological, political and economic space. About 8,000 more privileged people, the settlers, are being moved. Thankfully, it was done in a manner that respects their dignity. To monitor this sign, watch Gaza to see if:

- *Vacated land is used for the benefit of needy Gazans.*
- *Land, sea and air links open to the outside world, especially to the West Bank, with international oversight to ensure proper functioning as well as fair and effective security measures.*

Sign Two: The people evacuated from Gaza are resettled within Israel's pre-1967 borders.

Where the settlers from Gaza are relocated will be one of the clearest indicators of overall prospects for peace. Their new locations will be physical evidence of future intentions toward other occupied land, the issue at the heart of the conflict. What to watch for:

- *How many Gaza settlers will resettle within Israel's pre-1967 borders? (Reports indicate that about half the evacuees will be moved from Gaza to other still-occupied territory.)*

Sign Three: From now on, decisions affecting both sides are negotiated equitably between the two sides. Equitable negotiations would be an undeniable sign for peace. They would send a vital signal that the use of violence by either side will no longer determine the course of events. Equitable negotiations would also lend much-needed credibility to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a leader taking political risks for peace with little to show for it so far. Equitable negotiations on core issues are long overdue, including:

- *The route of the Israel's barrier versus Palestinian land and water rights.*
- *The final status of Jerusalem.*

Sign Four: Both sides treat Jerusalem as a shared and open city. This sign would show whether Jerusalem is to be home for both its peoples. Palestinian residents of greater East Jerusalem would again be able to live there, work there, travel in their own communities, reach their holy sites, receive visitors from the West Bank and visit the West Bank in return. The sealing-off of greater Jerusalem, an old plan, is now nearing completion and with it these everyday options have all but disappeared for most of East Jerusalem's Palestinian citizens. Churches of Jerusalem are suffering along with their neighbours. As an indicator for peace, any good that comes out of the Gaza withdrawal will pale in the long term unless current trends in and around Jerusalem are reversed. Positive evidence for this sign would include:

- *Palestinians have free access to their communities in East Jerusalem while Israel assures the security of its citizens in accordance with international law.*
- *Construction stops on the barrier wall, Israeli settlements and Jewish neighbourhoods in greater East Jerusalem and their future is negotiated.*

Sign Five: Palestinians in the West Bank are able to travel between their communities and to Gaza. Freedom of movement is necessary for a viable society and economy, and is a basic human right. It also spurs hope. If occupation controls of movement are lifted and people can

again reach jobs, schools and hospitals, conditions of everyday life would improve, daily humiliations would disappear, extremism would lose its power, and moderates could slowly regain their footing and influence. What evidence to watch for here?

- *The hundreds of checkpoints and barriers within the occupied territories are removed.*

Sign Six: The international community meets its obligations to bring peace. The world's leading nations bear central responsibility to enforce international law and have the essential third-party role of ensuring progress toward peace. When the US, for example, has spoken specifically and forcefully against unilateral actions that violate the Geneva Conventions, it has been effective. Others, including churches, also have considerable capacity for promoting international law as the basis for peace. One positive indicator to watch for here:

- *The US administration uses its authority to focus Israeli and Palestinian leaders on issues such as sharing Jerusalem, trading land for peace, and adhering to international law as the basis for peace.*

Sign Seven: Israelis become more secure. Good faith and concrete measures like those above may well be the only sustainable security policy for Israel. If abuses related to the occupation are corrected, injustices that fuel conflict would decrease and popular confidence in a negotiated peace could be regained. After years on the margins, people on both sides committed to non-violent, law-based solutions could again be in a position to take the political initiative.

- *Cease-fires hold; they are repaired whenever they break down.*
- *Both sides handle violent acts as criminal acts, under the law.*

It is important to note what these seven future signs of peace have to do with the pullout from Gaza now.

First, they all address serious threats to peace that have intensified while international attention has focused on Gaza. If the occupation ends in one place but is being strengthened in many other places, the overall situation has actually become worse. Second, the policy of encouraging people to settle on occupied territory has caught people up in a policy of control and conquest that will not bring peace. The Gaza withdrawal—affecting less than two percent of the settlers—dramatically demonstrated the high personal costs for those involved in this political strategy. The signs above turn attention now to the other 98 percent of the people involved.

Finally, the essential legal framework for resolving the conflict is the same in Gaza and the other places mentioned. It is the body of international law that deals with foreign occupations, especially the Geneva Conventions and relevant United Nations resolutions.

In such a long and bitter conflict we must not turn our back on any initiative that could help bring peace, like the Gaza pullout, but nor can we turn a blind eye to actions that perpetuate injustice in the name of peace and security. We believe that unilateral actions conceived to promote the interests of one group over another will never bring peace. The biblical prophets warn us of those who cry 'Peace, peace, where there is no peace'. We are convinced that, by replacing unilateral actions with negotiations under international supervision and the rule of law, a just peace agreement can be concluded. Then all who live in Gaza, Jerusalem, the West Bank and Israel, and all of us, will see real signs of peace.

7 July 2006

To the Commissioners, guests and visitors of the 39th General Council 2006:

**Re: Responses to Proposal GS2 and Report
“Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel”**

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Risen One.

Please find attached two responses to Proposal GS and Report “Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel”. This report and Proposal were included in Workbook I.

They represent two of the many voices across a broad and varied spectrum that have responded to the above report and its Proposal. The responses come from very different organizations with whom the United Church is in a valued relationship. Our mutual commitment to dialogue and partnership is deep and unquestioned.

We commend these voices and others to your prayerful and careful consideration as you read the report about this complex matter and prepare for discussion and decision at GC39.

That discernment of how best to act on the Proposal will require much of everyone gathered in Thunder Bay: careful preparation, attentive listening, prayerfulness, and confidence in the presence and guidance of the Spirit.

Sincere thanks for your care in addressing this matter.

Faithfully,

Jim Sinclair
General Secretary, General Council

With the following attachments:

1. Canadian Jewish Congress Response to Proposal GS 2 and Report “Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel”
2. Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre Response to Proposal GS 2 and Report “Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel”

**Canadian Jewish Congress Response to
Proposal GS 2 and Report
“Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel”
39th General Council of the United Church of Canada
(August 13-19, 2006, Thunder Bay)**

Executive Summary

- **Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) petitions the commissioners of the 39th General Council to reject divestment and the resultant recommendations in Proposal GS 2.**
- We encourage the commissioners to build on GS 2’s appeal for positive economic investment in Palestinian and Israeli development by including, in the proposal’s language, the promotion of confidence-building projects and co-existence programs that build bridges for peace.
- We understand the intense commitment and concern of the United Church of Canada (UCC) to alleviate the plight of the Palestinian people, some of whom are fellow-Christians. Canadian Jews, while caring deeply about the State of Israel, share the UCC’s concern. There can only be a just peace when Israelis and Palestinians recognize their common humanity, share a concern for each other’s well-being and mutually accept their respective right to sovereign statehood.
- We recognize as genuine the UCC’s abhorrence of antisemitism, its appreciation of the monumental significance of the Shoah (Holocaust) as well as its efforts to build positive bonds with the Jewish community. (Bearing Faithful Witness: Statement on United Church-Jewish Relations Today, 2003). Unfortunately, there is a serious disconnect between these sensitivities and the UCC’s approach towards the state of Israel.
- The authors of the proposal unfairly treat Israel as singularly responsible for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and fail to recognize the critical and indispensable role that Palestinian leaders themselves must play in working with Israel in good faith to achieve peace.
- Israel and Canada are democracies, grant their citizens full and equal rights irrespective of ethnic origin or religious affiliation, and subscribe to the very same fundamental values. Israel, since its modern re-establishment in 1948 has sought a permanent peaceful settlement with its neighbours, and has successfully negotiated peace agreements with credible partners (Egypt, Jordan).
- At the root of the conflict is the refusal by large parts of the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim worlds to accept the legitimacy of a sovereign Jewish State in “their” part of the world.
- Terrorism, corruption, and a widespread PA-supported campaign of incitement to hatred of Jews and Israel are urgent problems and major obstacles to stability and peace.
- Hundreds of lethal rockets have been launched on Israeli population centres from Gaza since the August 2005 Israeli evacuation. This demonstrates that Israeli territorial withdrawal alone will not bring peace.
- Divestment, in its misguided attempt to punish Israel, is unjust, based on wrong premises and counterproductive to achieving the peace we all seek. Moreover, it detracts from the UCC’s constructive involvement in promoting reconciliation among the faith communities of the Middle East and endangers the good, carefully nurtured relations between the United Church and the Jewish community in Canada.

Overview

- The proposal for “ethical investment” masks its explicit call for “selective, phased divestment” from certain companies that do business with Israel as the way of addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- United Church and Jewish community values are one and the same, based on shared texts. It is ironic, then, that a proposal aimed at punishing Israel (for that is its intent and effect) bases itself on the imperative to seek justice, resist evil and pursue peace as exemplified by the Hebrew word shalom and as articulated by the Jewish prophets.
- It is in accordance with shared values that CJC reiterates its readiness to work together with the UCC in identifying constructive, realistic measures aimed at promoting reconciliation.
- It is through such common efforts that we can make a contribution to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where Israel, as a Jewish State, lives in security side-by-side with a viable, sovereign and democratic Palestinian state.
- GS 2 and the Report (R) that buttresses it cannot achieve this objective because they give comfort to the many extremists and rejectionists whose consensus goal is to eliminate the Jewish State, subvert Israel’s readiness to make concessions and seriously endanger United Church-Jewish community rapprochement that culminated in Bearing Faithful Witness.

Understanding the Jewish Community’s Perspective

- The State of Israel constitutes the culmination of the Jewish people’s yearning for self-determination and self-realization in its ancestral homeland as well as its liberation from perennial persecution.
- There is not an Israel because of the *Shoah* but rather had there been an Israel there would not have been a *Shoah*.
- Israel, Jews and Judaism are inextricably intertwined as part of a single body (God, Land and People) and Israel’s role in shaping Diaspora Jewish identity is critical.
- A “new” world wide antisemitism has emerged in the last five years the likes of which has not been seen since after the end of the Second World War. It combines the traditional denial to Jews of equal membership in the human family with the additional aim of denying the Jewish State its rightful place in the community of nations. At its most extreme it is genocidal because it seeks to make the world both free of Jews and free of a Jewish State.
- The Israeli writer Amos Oz has observed that before the Holocaust, graffiti read “Jews to Palestine,” only to be transformed in modern times into “Jews out of Palestine.” The message to Jews, notes Oz, is, “Don’t be here and don’t be there. That is, don’t be.”
- Proposal GS 2 comes in the midst of a well-orchestrated global campaign aimed at isolating Israel through punitive economic measures and a variety of boycotts. Jews cannot but view GS 2 as part of this campaign and in the historical context that Israel’s enemies have used boycotts and divestment to segregate the Jewish State from the international community and threaten its very existence.

Substantive Problems with Proposal GS 2 and its Report

- The documents misrepresent Israel as being the primary agent obstructing peace and the emergence of a Palestinian state and misinterpret crucial United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 242/338.

- GS 2 and R mistakenly rely on UNSC Resolutions 242/338 as the basis for making one of their primary objectives Israel's withdrawal to the pre-1967 border (actually, the temporary 1949 Armistice Line that has never been an official boundary).
- Resolution 242 deliberately calls on Israel to “withdraw from territories” (not from “the” or “all” territories) in exchange for peace, thereby acknowledging that the pre-1967 borders do not provide Israel with sufficient security against existential threats and envisaging border modifications in any future negotiations.
- Israel from its very modern beginnings has sought ways of achieving a permanent peaceful settlement with its neighbours.
- Specifically, in compliance with 242/338, Israel continually has demonstrated a willingness to trade “land for peace” when it has had a credible partner. In 1979, it returned the Sinai to Egypt for peace, recognition and normalized diplomatic relations. Again, in 1994, it exchanged land with Jordan in return for peace and security guarantees.
- Israel has attempted to negotiate peace with the Palestinians—most notably:
- The Oslo Accords (1993-2000), and
- The Camp David/Taba talks (2000/2001), when Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered an Israeli withdrawal from virtually all of the territories with an exchange of land to make up for the remainder and unprecedented accommodations on Jerusalem.
- Chairman Yasser Arafat rejected the offer and, instead, launched a far-reaching terrorist campaign that prevails to this very day. It includes the launching of hundreds of lethal rockets from evacuated Gaza, directed at population centres within Israel's pre-1967 borders.
- Israel still awaits the outstretched hand of a Palestinian Anwar Sadat or King Hussein. It finds itself in the situation of “I am all peace, but when I speak, they are for war” (Psalms, 120:7).

Thematic Problems with R and GS 2

- They are rooted exclusively in a Palestinian narrative and an unvarnished one at that. It is difficult to understand how in fairness the authors could have framed their conclusions by listening only to the voices of one side. “Is there indeed silence when you should be speaking righteousness? When you should be judging people with fairness?” (Tehillim, 58:2).
- The only perspectives heeded are those of Christian “partners” from the region who come with this bias and that small number of Israeli NGOs, which are markedly unrepresentative of the vast majority of Israelis and the global Jewish community.
- The authors of R and GS 2 do recognize the deleterious effect that their adoption will have on United Church-Jewish relations based on concepts and concerns repeatedly stressed (but largely ignored) at the national Canadian Christian-Jewish Consultation (CCJC) in which both CJC and UCC are members. They are, however, prepared to pay that price on behalf of the UCC. We pray that the commissioners will reject the price as one too high to pay.
- *Bearing Faithful Witness* calls on the General Council “to be vigilant in resisting antisemitism and anti-Judaism in Church and society.” Yet R and GS 2 totally ignore the antisemitism that is rampant in the Palestinian Authority.
- Irwin Cotler, human rights activist, Member of Parliament and former Minister of Justice, explicitly has drawn attention to “the standing Palestinian incitement to hatred and violence against Israel and Jews in the state-controlled television, radio, newspapers, and children's textbooks.” He should have added “in the mosques.” This antisemitism is an integral part of a broader culture of anti-Jewish hatred endemic to the Arab world.

- The one major antisemitic calumny that Bearing Faithful Witness identifies by name is The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the infamous Czarist forgery of the early 1900s purporting to be the Jewish blueprint for world domination. It best integrates the tripartite view of the Jew as medieval demon, 19th century subversive and 20th century racial threat. For the Nazis, historian Norman Cohn writes, it was the “warrant for genocide.”
- Research by historian Robert Wistrich has uncovered 60 different Arabic-language editions of the Protocols currently on sale.
- There is no expectation in R and GS 2 for any accountability by the Palestinians themselves for the systemic corruption of their leadership and the decades-long campaign of terrorism emanating from the Palestinian Authority, deliberately aimed at Israeli civilians, with official inaction in the face of it or most often with official support and financing.
- This approach is nothing less than astonishing, given that R and GS 2 are thoroughly up to date on Israeli developments but completely ignore the Palestinian election of a government led by Hamas, which is listed by the Canadian government as a terrorist organization, is viciously antisemitic, has the destruction of Israel as its stated aim and regards terrorist operations against the people of Israel as both legitimate and desirable.
- In marked contrast, there is no effort made to incorporate any element of the Israeli narrative.
- There is no empathy for the suffering of ordinary Israelis as the physical and psychological victims of terrorism. While Israel is militarily powerful, terror is a weapon of great and devastating power, with lasting consequences.
- One looks in vain in R and GS 2 for even a single reference to how Israelis have learned the hardest way possible that a trip on a bus, shopping at a mall, enjoying a restaurant meal, conducting a Passover Seder or congregating outside a synagogue after Sabbath services could have lethal consequences.
- While paying lip service to Israel’s need for security, R makes the breath-taking observation that Israelis are now “living with a false sense of security behind a concrete barrier.” This flies in the face of unassailable statistics that speak to the barrier’s value (only a small proportion of which is actually concrete) in helping to prevent the penetration of suicide bombers.
- There is no attempt to visualize the genocidal outcome for Israel’s Jewish inhabitants and the catastrophic consequences for the Jewish people entailed in the aim to destroy Israel.
- “Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may live.” (Deuteronomy 16:20). The second iteration of justice underscores the commandment to achieve justice through just means. The punitive policy of divestment aimed against Israel is unjust.

How UCC Can Make a Positive Contribution

(This echoes some of the recommendations in Section 3 of GS 2 with *additional suggestions in italics*)

The UCC should:

- Continue “to work with the Jewish and Arab communities *reflecting on the realities of both sides’ perspectives*, to promote peace and understanding and the end of hostilities in the Middle East.”
- Continue “to denounce acts of violence perpetrated against civilians on both sides of the conflict” *while acknowledging the distinction between acts of terrorism and acts of self-defence*.

- *Acknowledge the catastrophic role that Palestinian terror and corruption play in perpetuating the conflict and undermining the Palestinians' attempts to achieve statehood, and identify positive ways to counteract these systemic tendencies.*
- Adopt a “pro-investment strategy with companies which engage in ethically responsible business and contribute to peace and a secure and economically viable Palestinian state alongside a secure and economically viable State of Israel.”
- *Adopt a policy of positive investment in peace and confidence-building projects as well as meaningful coexistence programmes and work with groups that act as bridge-builders for peace.*
- Advocate “with the Canadian government and ... *other influentials* to take leadership in international efforts toward a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict.”
- Effect true justice in its approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by taking CJC’s response into account and, following the lead of the 2003 38th General Council, reject divestment. It is a policy that is not conducive to ending the conflict and which both undermines the UCC’s credibility and significantly diminishes its constructive involvement in promoting peace.

“The whole of the Torah is for promoting peace, as it is written (Proverbs 3:17),
‘Her ways are pleasant, and all her paths peaceful.’”
(Babylonian Talmud, Gittin, 59b).

From:
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**Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
Response to
Proposal GS2 and Report
“Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel”
United Church of Canada
39th General Council
August 13-19, 2006
Thunder Bay**

July 7, 2006

Greetings from Jerusalem!

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center is a partner of the United Church of Canada. As an organization, we work for justice, peace and reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis. Sabeel is based in Jerusalem and Nazareth with Friends of Sabeel chapters around the world. We, as Palestinian Christians, looking for a just and lasting resolution to this conflict, feel that there is a degree of urgency at this moment to take action and create a movement for change.

Since the United Church of Canada will consider at the 39th General Council in August to

discern the ministry of ethical investment with possible actions similar to our Morally Responsible Investment strategy, we hope that some comments will be of value to you in your deliberations about the best course for the church to follow. We developed our Call to churches around the world for Morally Responsible Investment in faith that our common goal is to end the occupation in Palestine and to seek security for both peoples through a just peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. We recognize that prospects for achieving a viable Palestinian state are rapidly disappearing because of the Israeli government's expanding settlement program and their unilateral separation wall built on Palestinian land, dividing families and communities. Between the barrier's route and the settlements, the little land that will be left to Palestinians, divided into non-contiguous islands, will not be sustainable as a state.

As Christians, we call on our brothers and sisters in Christ to help in these difficult times. We see developing accountability with investments – making sure that church money does not contribute to the violence in the region – as a nonviolent response from the global church. We remember the transformation that this movement brought to South Africa and we pray that here as well it will begin a process of discernment and change.

Sabeel calls on churches to encourage companies and corporations to support institutions and businesses that build a strong and healthy Palestinian community. At the same time, we call on the same companies and corporations to discontinue business activities that violate international law by sustaining and developing illegal settlements or producing military equipment that is used against innocent civilians under occupation. When such pressures fail to yield positive results, Sabeel calls on churches to divest from the respective companies that choose not to comply with responsible investment and business practices.

In the last year, with the relative quiet in the region, there was no international pressure to bring the Israeli and Palestinian governments together to move the situation forward. Now as the violence escalates, the separation wall continues, the confiscation of land continues, the building of settlements continues – the Palestinian people begin to lose hope. At this time, it is imperative that the global church speak about its commitment to human rights, international law, and justice. We ask that you make prayerful decisions at the General Council with your Palestinian Christian partners and all peoples of the region in mind.

The Palestinian Elections of 2006:

A Christian Perspective

Palestinian Christians have deep roots in Palestine. Over the last two millennia, we have learned to live with our neighbors and to relate to the powers that be. Our life in our homeland has always had its ups and downs but our faith in God has sustained our existence regardless of the political, religious, social, and economic upheavals that affected our land. We have learned to maintain a basic statement of faith. Our faith and hope are anchored in God and not in kings and rulers. It has not been optimism that has kept us open to the future, it is our faith in the sovereignty of God “in whom we live and move and have our being.” Therefore, we continue to walk through history in trust and confidence in the loving and gracious mercy of God.

Our theology of the Incarnation is real and strong. Jesus Christ is with us and in us as we journey on. Even when we falter and fall, even when some of us are frustrated and in despair,

and even when others pack up and emigrate, there are those who stay and maintain this innate trust in God. We choose to remain faithful to God in the context of life where God has placed us. Most of the time, we do not live up to this statement of faith. Yet it remains a beacon that guides and inspires us, consciously for some and unconsciously for others, and we are able to face the vicissitudes of everyday life. As we say in colloquial English, “This is where we are coming from.”

As to the recent Palestinian elections (January 25, 2006), Palestinian Christians understand the victory of Hamas:

- a. as a direct result of the deadlocked peace process resulting from Israel’s unilateral policies and their dismissal of President Mahmoud Abbas and his moderate government as a partner for peace.
- b. as a judgment on the corruption and inefficiency of the Palestinian leadership that preceded it.

Palestinian Christians expect Hamas to meet and honor its promise of tolerance and just rule, and to rise to the expectations of the Palestinian people for good governance and a peaceful ending to the conflict with Israel.

At the same time, many people, especially abroad, have serious fears and concerns about Hamas. No sooner than the elections were over, western journalists started asking the same basic questions: what will become of the Christian community of the land? Are they threatened? Will they now emigrate? And so on. Much of these fears are exaggerated due to media bias. Hamas has been linked to violence. We do not deny that Hamas was involved in violent activities and we believe that all terrorist activity needs to be condemned. People, however, need to remember that Hamas’ violence was provoked by Israel’s policies against the Palestinians as well as Israel’s contempt of International Law through its confiscation of Palestinian land, building settlements, creating Israeli-only roads, checkpoints and closures, targeted killings, demolishing of Palestinian homes and so much more.

Morally we must look at the whole picture rather than on one side only. We must not see the violence of the oppressed without recognizing the prior violence and terrorism of the oppressors. And we must condemn both as acts of terror. Many western governments and people live in such a double standard. Terrorism and violence are not the way of peace. Whoever is guilty of violence and terrorism needs to be condemned with no exceptions.

Indeed, Hamas needs to change and needs to adopt nonviolent resistance but it is mandatory on us to stand prophetically against the injustice of the powerful and champion the cause of the poor and oppressed Palestinians. Such a stance is in line with our biblical prophetic tradition.

Now that Hamas has formed the new government, we hope it can negotiate an honorable peace. The danger that Hamas might impose Islamic law in Palestine is a concern not only for Christians but equally for most mainstream Muslims. If that happens, I expect that many Palestinians both Christian and Muslim will turn against such religious extremism and through democratic and nonviolent means bring about the necessary change.

Hamas is not the real threat to the presence of Christians, the occupation is. The major reason for the emigration of Christians from the Holy Land is the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel. There are other subsidiary factors as the need for housing, employment, education of children, and the growing religious fanaticism on both sides. Therefore, Palestinian Christians work and pray for a permanent peace. Peace can be achieved by tearing down the racist wall and ending the Israeli occupation of all the occupied territories. Palestinian Christians would like to see direct negotiations between the two sides rather than the negation of the Palestinian government because it is led by Hamas. After all, peace is negotiated between enemies and not friends.

In fact, the two new governments of Palestine and Israel need to begin negotiating with each other. Both of them are guilty against morality and International Law. Neither of them can brag about possessing a higher ethical standard. Both have targeted civilians and killed innocent people. In fact, the government of Israel must be held even more accountable because it is the more powerful party and it stands in breach of International Law and United Nations resolutions for illegally occupying and dominating over three million Palestinians against their will. Therefore, as we look with hope to the future, we would like to highlight the following way for peace:

1. The Quartet needs to immediately start facilitating direct negotiations between the new Israeli government and the new Palestinian government with no prior conditions.
2. The two governments need to give up violence and terrorism. There is no future for peace if only Hamas gives up violence while Israel continues to practice it. Both must be held equally accountable for ending all violence.
3. There is no future for peace if Hamas recognizes Israel while Israel does not recognize the legitimate national and human rights of the Palestinian people in all the occupied territories in accordance with International Law and UN resolutions.
4. There is no future for peace if the international community does not act fairly with both sides, without bias or partiality, in the imposition and implementation of International Law so that a just-peace is established.

Palestinian Christians are concerned about the welfare of all the people of our land – Palestinians and Israelis. Many of us today are wholeheartedly involved in seeking a peace that can last. We are inspired by the words of Christ “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.” We also know that peace can only be based on truth and justice and this is why we continue to speak prophetically. Those who have ears let them hear!

Naim Ateek, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
1 May 2006

MINUTES OF THE 39TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2006
Sunday, August 13, 2006

The 39th General Council 2006 of The United Church of Canada met from 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 13, 2006 to the close of the service of installation on Saturday, August 19, 2006 at the Student's Union Hangar, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario. The Moderator, The Right Reverend Peter Short, presided.

Elder Josephine Mandamin led the Opening Ceremony and Sacred Fire at sunrise to begin the 39th General Council 2006.

Constitution of the Court

The Moderator constituted the General Council with the following words:

“Au nom de notre Seigneur, Jésus-Christ, seul chef souverain de l'Église, et par l'autorité qui m'a été conférée par le 38ième Conseil général 2003, je déclare ouvert, par la présente, le 39ième Conseil général 2006 et ses travaux, dans l'intérêt du Royaume de Dieu.”

“In the Name of Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, and by the authority vested in me by the 38th General Council 2003, I hereby declare this meeting of the 39th General Council 2006 to be in session for the work that may properly be brought before it to the glory of God.”

The Moderator reviewed the many beginnings from the Garden of Eden to the Sacred Fire that began this General Council. He thanked the members of the 39th General Council and asked God's blessing on all present.

Welcome

Stan McKay introduced Chief Peter Collins from Fort William First Nation.

Chief Peter Collins welcomed the members of the 39th General Council 2006 to the First Nations territory and to this meeting place that has been a meeting place for people long before Canada became a nation.

The Moderator acknowledged and welcomed our global and ecumenical partners and guests.

Procedural Motions

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC39 2006 - 001

Bounds of Council

That the bounds of the 39th General Council 2006 be the round tables on the infield of the Student's Union Hangar at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Carried

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 002

Corresponding Members

That the following persons who are in attendance be corresponding members of the 39th General Council 2006 and as such, be entitled to speak but not to move motions or to vote:

- Moderators: Rev. George M. Tuttle, Rev. Lois M. Wilson, Rev. Robert F. Smith, Rev. Sang Chul Lee, Rev. Stanley J. McKay, Dr. Marion S. Best, Rev. William F. Phipps; and Elder Josephine Mandamin
- Global partner representatives, ecumenical, inter-faith and official guests of the Council
- Participants and leaders in Youth Forum
- Participants and leaders of Children and Young Teens at Council
- Those that have been requested by the General Secretary to serve as resource person to the Council
- Parliamentarians Cynthia Gunn and John Young
- Members of the Business Committee who are not Commissioners: Debra Bowman and Michelle Slater
- General Council Ministers, Executive Ministers, Executive Officers, and Conference Executive Secretaries and Speaker.

Motion to Amend: Ken DeLisle/Edward Avey

That Roy Holton, Affirm United spokesperson, be named a corresponding member.

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

**Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed
Business Committee Membership**

GC 39 2006 - 003

That the Business Committee for the 39th General Council 2006 be:

- Michelle Slater, Chair
- Paul Reed
- Cari Copeman-Haynes
- Debra Bowman, Chair, Agenda and Planning
- Peter Short, Moderator
- Jim Sinclair, General Secretary, General Council
- Janet McDonald, General Council Minister, Planning Processes
- Merjean Enriquez, Business Committee Support

Parliamentarians

That the Parliamentarians for the 39th General Council 2006 be:

- Cynthia Gunn and John Young

Friend in Council

That the Friend in Council of the 39th General Council 2006 be David Woodall.

Reference and Counsel

That the Reference and Counsel for the 39th General Council 2006 be:

- Jean Wilson, Walter Sowa, and Terry McKague.

Records Review

That the Records Review Committee, coordinated by Barbara Reynolds, review the records of the Conferences.

Scrutineers

That the Scrutineers for the 39th General Council 2006 be:

- Katharine Moore, Hugh John Cook, Brian Cornelius, Kate Crawford, Jean Leckie, Jean Wilson, Tara-Ann Wilson, Jacob Zacharias (Table #11).

Roll of Council

That the Report for the Roll of the 39th General Council 2006 be made by Jim McKibbin; and
That the report of the Committee on the Roll

- i) Contain the names of those entitled under section 501 of *The Manual (2004)*, which shall constitute the permanent roll of the 39th General Council 2006; and
- ii) Statistics regarding attendance at General Council for the information of the Council.

Business before the 39th General Council 2006

That the reports and proposals printed in the Work Books, along with any change pages, and any new business received by the deadline for new business, be received for consideration by the 39th General Council 2006.

Election of Moderator

That the following be approved as the process for nominations and election of the 39th Moderator of The United Church of Canada:

1. Nominations from the floor be received in writing by the Chair of the Business Committee by 12 noon, Monday, August 14;
2. Nominations from the floor of the Council be declared closed at 12 noon, Monday, August 14;
3. The nominees be introduced to the Council at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 13;
4. Candidates will address the Council, individually, Tuesday, August 15th;
5. Voting will be by ballot and take place on Tuesday, August 15;
6. A candidate will be declared elected as the 39th Moderator upon attaining 50% plus one of the votes cast;
7. After the first ballot, the name of the candidate receiving the fewest votes, and the name of any other candidate receiving 5% or less of the votes cast, shall be omitted from subsequent ballots;
8. Announcements of the results of ballots shall take place at times determined by the Business Committee;
9. Tallies of votes will not be announced.

Business Procedures

That the following items be adopted as the business procedures for the commons sessions of this meeting:

- The Moderator shall assume responsibility:
 - To adhere to and to ensure that the Council adheres to the established Rules of Debate and Order (*The Manual* Appendix III) and as approved herein in the Opening Resolutions for this 39th General Council 2006. “*Bourinot’s Rules of Order*” will be used as the authority should a question arise which is not answered by Appendix III or the established rules of debate and order for the 39th General Council 2006;

- To complete the items of business in the scheduled commons sessions as outlined in the agenda and as arranged by the Business Committee;
- To judge when all aspects of an issue have been raised, and on that judgment, to suggest to the Court that the debate be closed;
- To discern the mood of the Court and to suggest such things as a song, stretch break, moment of silence, prayer, etc as appropriate;
- To consult with the General Secretary at any time and to refer questions of order or procedure to the General Secretary who shall state the rule covering the matter.
- Speakers shall:
 - Speak from designated microphones in the Court;
 - Be recognized by the Moderator prior to speaking;
 - Begin comments by identifying themselves by name, role, and Conference (or position as appropriate);
 - Normally speak for no longer than 90 seconds except at the discretion of the Moderator;
 - Use the PROCEDURAL microphone only to raise a point of order, that is to raise a specific question of procedure with the Moderator;
 - Use the floor microphones (the microphones other than the procedural one) to raise points of personal privilege which shall be understood to be limited to comments noting that the individual raising the point has been insulted or maligned in the current debate;

Note: Points of general privilege (inability to hear, temperature of the room, missing documentation) shall be made to the Friend in Council, David Woodall, who shall determine how the concern will be addressed.

Concerns for the well-being of individuals, celebrations of birthdays, etc. shall be made to the Friend in Council who shall co-ordinate these for “community moments”.

- All notices of new business shall be received, in writing, by the Business Committee no later than 12 noon Monday, August 14 for incorporation into the approved agenda, unless the court otherwise determines in the case of a specific item.
- Referrals of business may be made to one of the following: General Secretary or to the Executive of the General Council.
- Unfinished business shall be referred to the Executive of the General Council.

Minutes of the 38th General Council 2003

That the minutes of the 38th General Council 2003 as printed in the Record of Proceedings be approved.

Minute Secretary

That the Minute Secretary for the 39th General Council 2006 be Joan MacGillivray.

Carried

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 004

Establish Commissions

That the 39th General Council 2006 establish three Commissions and to assign work to each.

Voting Privileges in Commissions

That the Commissioners of the General Council have voting privileges in the Commission to which their membership has been assigned; that Corresponding members of General Council have privilege of voice but no vote, in Commissions; and that the Moderator and the General Secretary are ex-officio members of all Commissions.

Carried

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed**GC 39 2006 - 005****Business Assigned to Commission Red**

That the 39th General Council 2006 assign to Commission Red the following items of business:

- Proposal SK 6 – Designation for Interim Ministers
- Proposal MNWO 9 – Interim Ministry Requirements
- Proposal HAM 3 – Mandatory Training in Racial Justice for all United Church Ministry Personnel
- Proposal LON 7 – Settlement for Candidates
- Proposal ANW 1 – Commissioning to the Diaconal Ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care
- Proposal M&O 3 – References to Diaconal Ministry
- Proposal GS 3 – Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel
- Proposal GS 23 – Reviews involving Effectiveness of Ministry Personnel
- Proposal ANW 5 – A Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry
- Proposal LON 5 – A Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry
- Proposal GCE 7 – Leadership Outcomes Framework for Ordered Ministry
- Proposal BQ 1 – The Meaning of Ministry
- Proposal ANW 3 – Rethinking the Order of Ministry
- Proposal ANW 10 – Accountable Ministry
- Proposal LON 1 – Recognition of Spouses of Overseas Personnel
- Proposal GCE 11 – Retirement
- Proposal BC 5 – Retirement Policy for Pension Qualifications
- Proposal ANW 12 – Rescind the Executive of the General Council's Implementation of the Sabbatical Policy
- Proposal MNWO 2 – Accessibility of Policies
- Proposal BC 2 – Inclusion of Spiritual Direction in Benefit Package
- Proposal MNWO 1 – Conciliar Church
- Proposal MNWO 4 – General Council Minister, Regional Relations
- Proposal SK 5 – Salary Parity for Ministry Positions in the General Council Office
- Proposal BQ 5 – Use of the Manse by Ministry Personnel on Disability
- Proposal BQ 2 – Repayment of Moving Expenses
- Proposal MNWO 3 – Supervision
- Proposal BC 4 – Combining Sections 333 and 363 of The Manual of The United Church of Canada
- Proposal LON 3 – Amendment to Section 363 of The Manual
- Proposal TOR 4 – Changes to Article 363 of The United Church of Canada Manual
- Proposal BC 1 – 363 Review Process – Resolution of Conflicts
- Proposal ANW 8 – Creation of a National List of Approved Qualified Trained Educational Supervisors

- Proposal BQ 3 – Requirements for a Police Records Check
- Proposal GCE 12 – Police Records Check
- Proposal GS 34 – Designated lay Ministry / Congregational Designated Ministry

Membership of Commission Red

That the 39th General Council 2006 appoint the membership of Commission Red as listed:

Amos Adeniyi	Martha Dawson	Hannah Lee	Bernice Saulteaux
Susan Anderson	Joyce Dickson	Jean Lee	Ian Schweitzer
Jim Angus	Dwaine Dornan	Sang Chul Lee	Hilde Seal
Robert Badcock	Bonnie Driver	Heather Leffler	William Service
Esther Baerends	Marina Dudgeon	Sarah Leffler	Marlon Severight
Nora Bagshaw	Terry Dunseith	Patricia Lisson	David Shearman
Julie Baker	Diane Dwarka	Jim Lochhead	Judy Shulist
James Ball	Colin Elliott	John Lougheed	Michelle Slater
Edison Bardock	Karen Elliott	Janet Lousley	Donald Smith
Laura Barfoot	Chris Fickling	Donna Lovelace	Rita Smith
Catherine Barkhouse	Gregg Ford	Gary MacDonald	Robert Smith
Anna Barr	Elizabeth Frazer	Joyce MacKinnon	Benjamin Snook
Matthew Barrett	Chera Gale	Catherine MacLean	Catherine Somerville
Pat Beach	Alicia Gervais	Kate MacLean	Bill Somplatsky-
Robert Berkowski	Deanna Gibson	Donald MacPherson	Jarman
Marilyn Billings	Zoe Godfrey-Davies	Lorna MacQueen	Gordon Sonmor
Jacob Black-Lock	Kerri Graham	Wendy Mason	Gord Spence
Jim Blanchard	Kyle Grant	David McColl	Miriam Spies
Beth Bourke	Abdul Hai Patel	Mary McColl	Amanda St.James
diana brecka	Marianna Harris	Ian McDonald	Shirley Stark
Robert Brinn	Ted Harrison	Murdo McDougall	Matthew Stevens
Alex Brohman	Alyssa Hewitt	Kristal McGee	Anna Stewart
Jean Brown	Lisa Hofstetter	John McGonigle	Lori Stewart
Teresa Burnett-Cole	Maureen Huismans	Maggie McLeod	Catherine Stewart
Jeffro Bursey	Linsell Hurd	Eunice McMahan	Savage
Elizabeth Cameron	Jean Hutchinson	Luis Melo	Laura Sundberg
Susan Cameron	Tanis Irvine	Patricia Milliken	Joan Tessier
Laurie Campbell	Dale Irving	Alexandra Mirowski	Bethan Theunissen
Heather Carlson	David Ivany	Brian Monague	Emilie Thoms
Jean Carruthers	Andrew Johnson	Donnie Morrison	Karen Thorne
Sylvia Carscadden	Robert Jones	Gloria Myles	Diane Thurlow
Jennifer Chiwela	Todd Joyes	Thom O'Keefe	James Vanstone
Shirley Cleave	Julianne Kasmer	Bronwyn Orchard	Roz Vincent-Haven
Wayne Cole	Gerald Kerr	Neil Parker	Cathie Waldie
Frances Combs	Roger Kett	Craig Penalagan	David Ward-
Bruce Cook	BoJeong Kim	Allison Picard	Nightingale
Christopher Cooke	Mary Kivell	Shelley Pick	Allan Warren
Ted Cooke	Kathy Koehler	Lynda Price	Christopher Watson
Brian Copeland	Michael Kooiman	Manuel Quintero-	Terry Wood
Lois Creith	Ted Kostecki	Perez	Matt Woodall

Norma Cronkwright
Heather Davies

Karen Lam
Ken Lane

Barbara Rafuse
Lynella Reid-James
Heather Robbins

Ryan Workman
Robert Wright
Kathi Zwicker

Leadership of Commission Red

That Dwaine Dornan and Heather Leffler be the Co-Chairs, Michelle Slater be the Business Committee Chair, and that Robin Chen be the minute secretary.

Business Assigned to Commission Green

That the 39th General Council 2006 assign to Commission Green the following items of business:

- Proposal GCE 14 – Anglican – United Church Dialogue
- Proposal GCE 15 – Ecumenical Shared Ministries
- Proposal GCE 9 – That We May Know Each Other
- Proposal BC 6 – Decision-making and Administrative Processes of The United Church of Canada
- Proposal GCE 4 – Lay Presidency at the Sacraments
- Proposal ANW 4 – Achieving Equity between Lay and Ordered Past Presidents, and Lay Past Presidents and Past Moderators
- Proposal M&O 10 – Official French Version of The Manual of The United Church of Canada
- Proposal MAR 1 – Inclusion of “Mail-in Ballot” Process in The Manual
- Proposal MTU 4 – Changing the Definition of Quorum
- Proposal SK 1 – Quorum at a Meeting of Presbytery
- Proposal GS 10 – Quorum Requirements
- Proposal MNWO 5 – Right of Conscience to Officiate when off Congregational Property
- Proposal SK 3 – Freedom of Conscience for Ministry Personnel regarding Same-Sex Marriage
- Proposal LON 9 – Marriage Policy and the Independence of the Clergy
- Proposal SK 4 – Consistency in Same-Sex Marriage Policy
- Proposal HAM 4 – National Aboriginal Consultations
- Proposal GCE 16 – Partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples in Healing the Church and the World
- Proposal GCE 8 – Circle and Cross: The Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality
- Proposal MTU 3 – The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
- Proposal GCE 5 – A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada
- Proposal TOR 10 – Task Group regarding Educational Requirements for Ethnic Ministries
- Proposal TOR 1 – Admission Requirements for Ethnic Ministers
- Proposal GS 6 – Audit Requirements
- Proposal SK 2 – Alternative to Presbytery Audit
- Proposal MAR 2 – Timing for Presbytery Appointments and Settlement of Ordered Ministry
- Proposal MTU 2 – Presbytery Status of Retired Lay Ministries
- Proposal M&O 12 – Rules Governing the Sharing of a Church Building by Two Congregations
- Proposal MNWO 8 – Current model of Recruiting Volunteers for General Council Volunteer Structure

- Proposal GS 33 – Nominations to the Executive of the General Council and Committees of the General Council
- Proposal GS 35 – Remits Authorized by the 38th General Council 2003
- Proposal GS 36 – Moderator as Presiding Officer of the General Council
- Proposal GS 37 – Powers of the Executive of the General Council
- Proposal GS 38 – Committees of the General Council
- Proposal GS 39 – Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures
- Proposal GCE 17 – General Council Commissioners
- Proposal GS 4 – Licensed Lay Worship Leaders
- Proposal GS 5 – General Secretaries as Commissioners
- Proposal GS 7 – Corresponding Privileges
- Proposal GS 8 – Definition of “Decision”
- Proposal GS 9 – Definition of “Polity”
- Proposal GS 11 – Temporal Matters and Disbanding of Congregations
- Proposal GS 12 – Notice Read “from the pulpit”
- Proposal GS 13 – Grounds for Appeal
- Proposal GS 14 – Decisions Not Subject to Appeal, Individuals in the Admission or Re-Admission Process
- Proposal GS 15 – Nominations Committee
- Proposal GS 16 – Ministry Personnel on Joint Needs Assessment Committee
- Proposal GS 17 – Elders
- Proposal GS 18 – Official Board Committees
- Proposal GS 19 – Church Board Committees
- Proposal GS 20 – Church Council Committees
- Proposal GS 21 – Congregations Disbanding
- Proposal GS 22 – Membership of Presbytery Executive
- Proposal GS 24 – Membership Requirement for Conference Executive Secretaries
- Proposal GS 25 – Balance between Ministry Personnel and Lay Members
- Proposal GS 26 – Membership Requirement for General Secretary, General Council
- Proposal GS 27 – Duties of the General Secretary, General Council for Budget
- Proposal GS 28 – Duties of the General Secretary, General Council for Retirees
- Proposal GS 29 – National Extra Appeals
- Proposal GS 30 – Motion to Table
- Proposal GS 31 – Committee of the Whole

Membership of Commission Green

That the 39th General Council 2006 appoint the membership of Commission Green as listed:

Leanne Acton	Kate Crawford	Danielle Ayana James	Duncan Roach
Ashe Attridge	Lori Crocker	Carmencita	Lillian Roberts
Elisabeth Bachem-	Vanessa Cutler	Karagdag-Peralta	Carrie Robinson
Jennings	Thom Davies	Melanie Kauppila	Margaret Sawyer
Margaret Bain	Thierry Delay	Betty Kelly	Tom Sawyer
Richard Balson	Ken DeLisle	Adam Kilner	Peter Scott
Ellen Beairsto	Cindy Desilets	Cheryl Kinney	Owen Severight
Merrilee Beller	Craig Dickson	Matheson	Jo Shearer
Maxine Blacksioux	David Eagles	Fern Klassen	Karen Shipley

Barbara Blois	Brad Easton	JoAnne Knobbe	Neville Smith
E. Bois	Aaron Evans	Ed Laksmanis	John Snyder
Sheri Bolitho	Patty Evans	Amy Yea-Kyong Lee	Norma Soble
Mary-Margaret Boone	Mirjam Fines-	John Lee	Alvina Steinhauer
Lynn Boothroyd	Neuschild	Kevin Logie	Paul Stott
Gary Boratto	Bonnie Fraser	Fraser MacPherson	Jessica Swance
George Bott	Allan Gairns	Hannah Mang-	Lindsay Sword
Alan Boyd	Sheila Gallant	Wooley	Sarah Tupholme
David Boyd	Olivia Garside	Ian March-MacCuish	George Tuttle
Fred Braman	David Giuliano	Alana Martin	Noreen Ueberer
Mary Brenson	Jane Graham	Chris McCarthy	Kathi Urbasik-
Jane Brissenden	Elaine Gray	Elise McDonald	Hindley
Michelle Brotherton	Allison Halstead	Robin McGauley	Susanne VanderLugt
Adam Brown	Carolyn Harding	Rene McKay	Paul Vardy
Julie Brushey	Bronwen Harman	Stan McKay	Ron Vincent
Phyllis Buchner	Ian Harrison	Robyn Moffat	Isaac Vosper-
William Butt	Nelson Hart	Katharine Moore	Kooiman
Carol Bye	Desmond Hemingway	Mary-Beth Moriarity	Joyce Ward
Lynne Calnek	Dorothy Hemingway	Gerard Mourits	Nona Ward
Janis Campbell	Kay Heuer	Karen Mundt	Laura Warren
Anne-Marie Carmoy	Nikki Highmoor	Gloria Muskego	Mary White
Liz Carter	Amy Hill	Brian Nicholson	Tarance Whiteye
Sandra Carver	Ha'eis Clare Hill	Christina Paradela	Audrey Whitney
Carl Chikoski	Arthur Hills	Marion Pardy	Vic Wiebe
Catherine Christie	Richard	Desmond Parsons	Lloyd Williams
James Christie	Hollingsworth	Linda Parsons	Jean Wilson
Hugh John Cook	Ron Holotuk	Lois Parypa	Sara Wilson
Cari Copeman-	David Honor	Heather Peters	Tara-Ann Wilson
Haynes	Kofi Hope	Alan Porter	Jamie Wood
Mary Corkery	John Hurst	Jeffrey Poynter	John Yeo
Brian Cornelius	Bruce Hutchinson	Emma Prestwich	Janice Young
Wendy Cranston	Alan Jacques	Barrett Prettyshield	Jacob Zacharias
		Barbara Reynolds	

Leadership of Commission Green

That Paul Stott and Mary-Beth Moriarity be the Co-Chairs, Cari Copeman-Haynes be the Business Committee Chair, and Susan Fortner be the minute secretary.

Business Assigned to Commission Blue

That the 39th General Council 2006 assign to Commission Blue the following items of business:

- Proposal BC 3 – Appendix IV Corporations / Societies Supervised by Congregations and Presbyteries as well as by Conferences
- Proposal GCE 10 – Revision of Appendix IV
- Proposal M&O 8 – Accountability for the Canada-Central America four Free Trade Agreement (CA4FTA)
- Proposal TOR 9 – Sovereign Control of Canadian Electricity

- Proposal ANW 11 – Let's Make Child Poverty History
- Proposal HAM 1 – Reducing Child Poverty
- Proposal M&O 2 – Support for Church Suppers in Ontario
- Proposal TOR 3 – A Call for the Restoration of Corporate Contribution to Canadian Society
- Proposal TOR 8 – Protection of Canadian Sovereignty Over its Energy and Environment
- Proposal TOR 2 – Call for a Canadian Energy Security Strategy that Meets the Interests of All Canadians
- Proposal HAM 2 – A Proposal to Reduce Costs of Information Transfer, in Paper Form and Improve Efficiency of Information Transfer within The United Church of Canada
- Proposal MTU 1 – Special Funding for Experimental Ministries
- Proposal ANW 6 – Concerning Farm Income
- Proposal BQ 4 – National United Church Archives
- Proposal TOR 5 – Gun Registry in Canada
- Proposal TOR 6 – Gun Violence as a National Issue
- Proposal ANW 7 – A Health Policy Framework for Public Health Care
- Proposal M&O 9 – Resources and Strategies to Challenge Homophobia in the Church
- Proposal ANW 2 – Self Insurance
- Proposal LON 8 – A Mutual Property Insurance System
- Proposal M&O 7 – Implementing Kyoto
- Proposal GCE 6 – Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire
- Proposal ANW 13 – Support for the Eight Millennium Development Goals Emanating from the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000
- Proposal M&O 6 – Mining Criteria for Canadian Companies in Other Countries
- Proposal ANW 9 – Review of Property Sale Procedures
- Proposal MNWO 6 – Creation of a Department of Peace
- Proposal TOR 7 – Pathways to Peace in the Holy Land
- Proposal MNWO 7 – Endorsement of the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth
- Proposal M&O 4 – Augmentation of Tax Credit for Charitable Donations
- Proposal M&O 5 – Implementing The Refugee Appeal Division
- Proposal LON 6 – Violence as a National Issue
- Proposal N&L 1 – Violence as a General Council Issue
- Proposal GCE 13 – Water: Life before Profit
- Proposal M&O 1 – Water: Life Before Profit
- Proposal TOR 11 – Water as a Human Right
- Proposal LON 4 – Water: A Gift for All
- Proposal TOR 12 – Encouragement Concerning Spiritual Formation
- Proposal GS 2 – Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel

Membership of Commission Blue

That the 39th General Council 2006 appoint the membership of Commission Blue as listed:

Laura Alcantara	Caroline Duffus	Hillary MacDonald	Barbara Roberts
Ted Alexander	Edward Elkin	Iris MacDonald	Carole Roberts Butler
Harold Alston	Jay Ettinger	Shirley MacKeigan	Bill Rogers
Eugenio Anaguaya	Tracy Fairfield	David MacLachlan	Louise Rogers
Linda Anderson	Nancy Ferguson	Rick Magie	Jesse Root

Nicolas Anderson	Wayne Flewelling	Terence McKague	Ruth Rudderham
Kelly Andrews	Frances Flook	Jim McKibbin	Louise Rutledge
Kim Antosh	Janice Frame	Rick McKinley	Ashley Schwartz
Barbara Archibald	Foster Freed	Charles McMillan	Heather Scott
Thelma Arnott	Gwen Galbraith	Ryan McNally	Janet Severight
Marilyn Arthur	Doniecia Ganness	Myra McWilliams	Frederick Sheffer
Martha Ashbaugh	Caroline Giesbrecht	Jeremy Milgrom	Allan Sinclair
Jake Autio	Evelyn Gillespie	Kitty Miller	Dale Skinner
Edward Avey	Jennifer Gillis	Alan Mills	Karen Smart
Jessica Baird	Barbara Greenlaw	James Young-Key	Greg Smith
Erin Bartlett	Blaine Gregg	Min	Walter Sowa
Robert Bartlett	Charlotte Griffith	Ewen Moase	Edward Spratt
Marion Best	Mary Hagemeyer	Sharon Moon	Shirley Squires
Isabel Black	Lawrence Hale	George Moore	Patricia Steer
Diane Blanchard	Fran Hare	Dave Moors	Linda Stenson
Sharron Bodnaryk	Claude Hender	Jennifer Mountain	Lillian Stewart
Gay Boese	Kathy Highmoor	Peter Myles	Katherine Sulatycki
Donna Bowman-	Maggie Hodgson	Samantha Neil	Colin Swan
Woodall	Shawna Holmes	Jordan Newell	Charley Switzer
Susan Brodrick	Fannie Hudson	Philip Newman	George Takashima
Lorne Burles	Sarah Ibbitson	Anthony Nicholson	Erwin Thompson
John Burton	Barb Jardine	Darren Liepold	Linda Thompson
Marion Carr	Everest Kao	Nicholson	Emma Thurston
Dorothy Carson	Kathleen Kerr	Blair Odney	Allen Tysick
Jenny Carter	Debra Kigar	Sasha Parsons	Mya Uhlman
Aisake Casimira	Lorna King	Scott Parsons	Warren Vollmer
Melany Catherine	Donald Koots	Shannon Patterson	Margaret Walker
Cassidy-Wise	Martha ter Kuile	Charlie Peters	Jamie Webber
Sung-Chul Choi	Linda Kuschnik	Colin Phillips	Barbara White
Howard Clark	Cindy Laing	Bill Phipps	Bob Williams
Lewis Coffman	Jope Langejans	Jill Piebiak	Sharon Willis-
Prince Conteh	Jean Leckie	Robert Pike	Whitwell
Daniel Crawford	Sydney Lewis	Bonnie Pilkey	Lois Wilson
Megan Crawley	Jeanette Liberty-Duns	Elizabeth Piper	Nancy Wilson
Cathy Cryder	Julia Lobsinger	Daniel Reed	Doug Wright
Kathleen Doucet	Steven Longmoore	Paul Reed	Kathryn Young
Leanne Douglas		Barry Rieder	
Beth Duffus		Nellie Ritchie	

Leadership of Commission Blue

That Marion Carr and Don Koots be the Co-Chairs, Paul Reed be the Business Committee Chair, and Patti Rodgers be the minute secretary.

Carried

Agenda

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 006

That the 39th General Council 2006 accept, as its agenda, the agenda as circulated and approved on the understanding that the agenda may be changed, as necessary, by the action of the General Council, or by action of the General Council on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

Motion to amend: Frances Combs/Jean Lee

To move Proposal GS 2 - Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel from the Blue Commission to Commons.

The motion was ruled out of order noting that the procedural motion assigning work to the Commissions would first need to be reconsidered.

Motion: Peter Scott/Martha ter Kuile

GC 39 2006 - 007

To reconsider the approval of the motion assigning business to the Commissions.

Comments and concerns were expressed on reconsidering this motion and the Moderator reviewed the information on how the Commissions will be doing their work.

Motion to reconsider – Defeated

Motion to adopt the agenda - Carried

Nominees for 39th Moderator

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 008

That the 39th General Council 2006 receive and place on the ballot the following names of nominees for the 39th Moderator:

- James Angus
- Patricia Evans
- David Giuliano
- Peter Scott
- Colin Swan

Carried

Michelle Slater, chair of the Business Committee, introduced the Agenda and Planning Committee chair, Debra Bowman who welcomed the members of the General Council and gave an overview of the meeting.

Michelle Slater made announcements including information on the floor and procedural microphones and invited the members to introduce themselves in table groups. Throughout the meeting, Michelle Slater made announcements.

Worship

The Right Rev. Dr. Peter Short, Moderator; Rev. Dr. James Sinclair, General Secretary, General Council; and Rev. Susan Ivany from Westminster United Church in Thunder Bay presided in the opening communion worship. The Moderator offered words of welcome and talked about “history in the making”. A drama on “All Microphones”, liturgical dance, and music were part of the worship.

Greetings

The Moderator introduced George Bott, President, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario who brought greetings from the Conference and from Cambrian Presbytery to the 39th General Council 2006.

Global Guests

The Moderator introduced Omega Bula, Executive Minister, Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit, and Bruce Gregersen, General Council Minister, Programs who introduced the global guests: Captain Neil Parker, Council of United Church Chaplains; Aisake Casimira, Pacific Council of Churches, Fiji; Jennifer Chiwela, People's Action Forum, Zambia; Rev. Dr. James Christie, Canadian Council of Churches; Mary Corkery, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives; Rabbi Edward Elkin, First Narayever Congregation, Canada; Doniecia Ganness, Presbyterian Church in Grenada; Imam Abdul Hai Patel, Islamic Council of Imams, Canada; Dr. Maggie Hodgson, Carrier First Nation, Canada; Kofi Hope, Black Youth Coalition Against Violence, Canada; Eunice McMahon, Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, Tri-Tribal, Manitoulin Island; Rev. Dr. Luis M. Melo, S.M., Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom, Ecumenical Accompaniment Program for Palestine and Israel, Israel; Rev. Eugenio Poma Añaguaya, World Council of Churches, Bolivia; Rev. Manuel Quintero-Perez, Frontier Internship in Mission, Cuba/Switzerland; Bishop Nelly Ritchie, Methodist Church of Argentina; Rev. William Somplatsky-Jarman, Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

It was noted that Reverend Nzeba Kalombo Berthe, theologian from the Congo was unable to obtain a visa to visit Canada and could not attend. It was also noted, with regret, that no one from Palestine was able to attend.

The Moderator welcomed the guests and thanked them for their contributions to the meeting including the reminder that “we are not alone”.

Accountability Reports

The Moderator introduced the accountability reports of the Moderator, General Secretary, and Executive of the General Council with instructions on filling in the response sheets.

The Moderator invited Moderator Marion Parady to take the chair for the Moderator's Accountability Report.

Moderator's Accountability Report

The Moderator reminded the Commissioners of his report in the Workbook. The Moderator opened his report with a poem and a reminder of ancient truths including “what we need is here”. He related stories to illustrate these truths of seeing and accepting what is already here noting that as a church, the community of Christ is already here.

The Moderator reviewed his leadership of the past three years including his ministry retreats and the freedom for people to walk with Jesus across all boundaries. In conclusion, the Moderator offered his report to the Council.

Marion Pardy thanked the Moderator with gratitude for his ministry among us that has pointed the United Church towards the God of wisdom and Spirit.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Paul Reed

GC39 2006 - 009

That the 39th General Council 2006 receive the Moderator's Accountability report for information.

Carried

The Moderator resumed the Chair.

Introduction of Moderators

The Moderator introduced the eight Moderators attending the Council: George Tuttle, Marion Best, Stan McKay, Lois Wilson, Sang Chul Lee, Marion Pardy, and Bob Smith. The Moderator noted that Bill Phipps will be arriving later in the meeting. Walter Farquarson, Bruce MacLeod, and Anne Squire were unable to attend.

Moderator Candidates – Introduction

The General Secretary introduced the nominees and thanked them for saying yes to the call to allow their name to be put forward for Moderator.

The General Secretary reviewed the process in the General Council Office as each of the nominations was received. He noted that the nominees had an opportunity to meet with one another and were briefed on the predetermined question and process.

Each candidate responded to the following question – “How do you envision your role as Moderator of The United Church of Canada in our third generation?”

Colin Swan used the image of an umbrella to illustrate the role of the Moderator to hold the umbrella, cover everyone, and to invite others under. He talked about a pastoral care emphasis with pastoral care of the entire church as the goal and function of the Moderator.

David Giuliano used the image of his two grandfathers' shoes. He talked about the Moderator's big shoes to fill. He noted that the shoes don't belong to the Moderator and they are already headed in the right direction. He talked about the honour to walk in the Moderator's shoes for awhile and then pass them along.

Peter Scott questioned the attempts to find a vision for the church instead of looking at what God is calling each of us to do. He noted that the task is to help the church to find the courage to live out God's call.

Jim Angus focused on the serious issues in the church including living out justice as a church, the concern about the declining membership, imbalance in the world, and the importance of “Emerging Spirit”. He said that he would steer the canoe of the United Church to reflect justice and to work with everyone with honour and trust.

Patty Evans talked about differing demands in times of change and the importance of discernment of what the church is being called to do. She talked about the joy of bringing out all the voices and noted that the church is only as strong as its weakest voice and that these rich harmonies will build the church.

The General Secretary offered a time of silence to review the gifts of the nominees followed by prayer.

Accountability of the General Secretary

The General Secretary referred to his report in the Workbook and noted the direction from the 38th General Council 2003 regarding Same Sex Marriage. Correspondence was sent to the federal government as well as to congregations and presbyteries noting the implications. The General Secretary made a ruling that ministers are required to abide by the marriage policy of their congregations and the Judicial Committee upheld this ruling. As a result, congregations are now establishing marriage policies together with educational processes.

The General Secretary quoted several statements that have sustained him through his 4 years with the General Council including statements by Bruce MacLeod and Omega Bula; as well as Lois Wilson's statement "we are all in this room because of Jesus Christ".

He thanked the committee members for their work and noted their contribution to the United Church.

United Church Observer

The General Secretary noted the significant transition at the *United Church Observer* with the retirement of Muriel Duncan as editor and extended the appreciation of the United Church, on behalf of the General Council, to Muriel Duncan, the 6th editor of the *United Church Observer*.

The General Secretary introduced David Wilson, the new editor and publisher of the *United Church Observer*.

In concluding his report, the General Secretary thanked the church for the immense privilege to serve.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Paul Reed

GC39 2006 - 010

That the 39th General Council 2006 receive the General Secretary's Accountability Report for information

Carried

The Moderator invited Moderator Marion Parfy to take the chair.

Appointment of General Secretary, General Council

The Moderator reviewed the role of the General Secretary, General Council in *The Manual* including the need for wisdom, knowledge, and faith. The Moderator reviewed the search and selection process for the new General Secretary, General Council.

The Moderator reviewed the resume of Nora Mary Sanders and noted that she would be available to assume responsibilities in January and that Jim Sinclair had agreed to continue until that time to allow for a smooth transition.

Motion: Peter Short/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 011

That the 39th General Council 2006 receive the Report of the General Secretary, General Council Search Committee and that, on the recommendation of the Committee, the 39th General Council 2006 appoint Nora Mary Sanders to the position of General Secretary, General Council, effective as of a date to be fixed by the Executive of the General Council or the Sub-Executive.

Carried

Nora Saunders addressed the Court and talked about the connections of those who are not here today, including family, and those who share the common bond of the United Church. She talked about her life in the far North and in small communities. She noted that wherever we live, this is the centre of the world for us. We are a large church but each congregation is the face of the church to each community. Nora thanked Jim Sinclair for agreeing to assist with the transition. She concluded with her experiences at the Arnprior Assembly.

Accountability – Executive of the General Council

The Moderator and General Secretary gave the accountability of the Executive and the Sub-Executive of the General Council and noted the report in the Workbook and the Digest of the minutes for the triennium. Highlights noted included the Beads of Hope campaign, the discernment process, and the work of Members Services.

Motion: Peter Short/Jim Sinclair

GC39 2006 - 012

That the 39th General Council 2006 accept the accountability report of the Executive of the General Council.

Carried

The Moderator resumed the chair.

Table Groups

Table groups had an opportunity to reflect on the reports they had just received and to fill out response sheets for the Committees giving the presentations and to the General Secretary and the Moderator.

In table groups, the following questions about the reports and presentations were addressed:

- How might this influence the life of a congregation/pastoral charge?
- How might this influence the life of The United Church of Canada?
- How might this influence the life of the world?

David Woodall, Friend in Council, made announcements throughout the meeting, both to ask for the prayers of Council for special intentions and to celebrate special occasions.

Martha Martin noted the list of optional worship times throughout the week in the Avila Chapel.

Each Conference met together as a Conference Caucus.

The music team from *More Voices* led gathering music throughout the meeting and grace before meals.

Snap Shot of Canada

Looking at the context for the 39th General Council 2006, the Moderator asked the Council to name “the heart of the church”. He noted that this cannot be done unless there is a deep feeling for the world we live in and for Canada’s changing context.

Janet McDonald introduced Michael Adams, President of Environics Research, to assist in understanding the Canadian context and who we are as Canadians.

In a PowerPoint presentation, Michael Adams identified 13 socio-cultural tribes in Canada to illustrate the social values and social change within Canada.

Table groups looked at questions on response sheets and Michael Adams responded to questions.

Janet McDonald thanked Michael Adams for his wisdom and insights into who we are as The United Church of Canada.

Closing Litany

The closing litany included prayers by our ecumenical and global partners – Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom, Jennifer Chivela, Nelly Ritchie, and Imam Abdul Hai Patel.

Monday, August 14, 2006

Discernment and Worship

The Moderator introduced the discernment process and the Spiritual preparation for the 39th General Council 2006. He noted that the Commissioners were being asked to do something that had never been asked before.

Debra Bowman, Martha ter Kuile, and Keith Howard shared in weaving together worship and discernment through Scripture and reflection of God speaking to Samuel, to Eli, and to us.

Debra reviewed the discernment process and Kerygma Café including the following principles:

- Listen for the Spirit
- Gather and Share Collective Discoveries
- Listen together for Patterns, Insights, and Deeper Questions
- Connect Diverse Perspectives
- Encourage Everyone’s Contribution
- Set the Context
- Create Hospitable Space
- Explore Questions that Matter

Debra introduced the message group who will listen throughout the meeting to both what is said and what is not said in order to begin to identify the mind of the Court. The members of the

Message Group are Martha ter Kuile, Fannie Hudson, Katharine Moore, Sung-Chul Choi, Elise McDonald, Karen Shipley, David Ward-Nightingale, Clare Hill, John Lougheed, Scott Parsons, Janice Young, Chris McCarthy, and Maggie McLeod.

In conversation groups of four, the following conversations took place:

Conversation One – Where are you? Personally, your congregation, in our denomination. Where are we? What is for us right now?

Conversation Two – How do we know when God speaks? How do we recognize God's voice, the yearnings of God?

Conversation Three – What common themes emerged about where we are now, personally, as a congregation, a denomination? What common themes did you hear about how we know God's voice? Were there any clear lines of difference?

Comments and feedback were received from some of the groups and everyone was invited to post thoughts from their conversations on the discernment message board.

Business Committee

Michelle Slater reported for the Business Committee on the requests to change the election of the Moderator until later in the meeting to give more time for discernment.

Motion: Paul Reed/Cari Copeman-Haynes

GC39 2006 - 013

That the agenda, timing, and process for the election of the Moderator be reconsidered.

Carried

Discussion with questions and comments took place.

Motion: Paul Reed/Cari Copeman-Haynes

GC39 2006 - 014

That the election of the Moderator occur on Friday, August 18;

That the Nominations for Moderator close at 12 noon on Thursday, August 17; and further,

That the Business Committee make the necessary adjustments to the agenda

Carried

Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire

Omega Bula, Executive Minister, Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit, introduced two members of the Empire Task Group (Bob Smith and Nanette McKay).

Nanette McKay gave the background and overview of the report on Empire from the Workbook which gives glimpses of the reality of empire through the eyes of United Church partners.

Two United Church partners, Maggie Hodgson and Carmencita Karagdag, presented stories and examples of empire from both the Philippines and from Canada.

Bob Smith reminded that the people of the Bible lived within the imperial context of domination and that it was God's message that gave alternatives to empire.

Response sheets were filled out and returned to the group making the presentation.

Ethnic Ministries

The Moderator introduced Emmanuel Ofori, George Takashima, and Larissa Kanhai who presented the context from the perspective of Ethnic Ministries. They talked about the need for transformation of the whole church into an intercultural church with a commitment to racial justice.

George Takashima noted that collaboration with everyone is essential for transformation including transforming worship and the way we are together. He noted that no one is sure what this intercultural church will look like down the road but invited the whole church to join and look forward to the vision.

Table groups were reminded to fill out their response sheets and respond to the following questions:

- What is living in the body of Christ in your context?
- What is dying in the body of Christ?
- What is rising?

20th Anniversary of the Apology

This was moved to later in the agenda because of time constraints.

Learning Options

In two sessions, the following Learning Options were presented:

- Empire
- Ethical Investment
- Circle and Cross
- Residential Schools
- Youth at Risk
- Treaty
- Canadian Context
- Leadership Can be Taught
- More Voices
- Statement of faith
- Isolation in Ministry
- Front Runners

Tuesday, August 15, 2006

Message Group

After announcements and welcome, Martha ter Kuile gave feedback on the longings and yearnings heard by the Message Group. These included that the Council heard the word of God in many different ways. The Message Group also noted the humility of each person as they shared their understanding.

Discernment and Worship

Children and Young Teens (CAYT) shared in the worship with a presentation from the book of Exodus and a dramatization of Martin Luther in today's context as he moved towards reformation. CAYT, with their own discernment process, joined the Council in the conversation groups.

Conversation One – Who are you in the Exodus story? What would Moses say to you today? Are you hearing him?

Conversation Two – Who are we, the United Church, in the story? Where do we see Moses' message making a difference?

Conversation Three – What are you holding on to that won't allow for reformation today? What reformation change do you see happening today? How did you overcome the obstacles?

Conversation Four – What are we, the United Church, holding on to that won't allow for reformation today? What reformation changes do we see happening? How are we overcoming the obstacles?

Greetings

The Moderator introduced the University President, Dr. Fred Gilbert, and Student Union President, Isabel Poniatowski who brought greetings and welcome on behalf of Lakehead University and its students.

The Moderator thanked the candidates for Moderator and their families for allowing the General Council to move the election to Friday.

The Council moved into table groups.

Michelle Slater brought 2 proposals from the Business Committee.

Motion: Mary Hagemeyer/Carolyn Harding

GC39 2006 - 015

That Table Group time allocated for reflection and discussion be honoured, and that the Moderator be requested to take necessary and appropriate measures to protect and ensure Table Group time.

Carried

Motion: Brian Nicholson/Teresa Burnett-Cole

GC39 2006 - 016

A vote of thanks to the Youth Forum and Children and Young Teens at General Council for their leadership, commitment, and sharing of faith in the Coffee House on Monday evening and Worship on Tuesday morning because they have modeled for us that God IS on the loose.

Carried

20th Anniversary of the Apology

The Moderator welcomed Bob Smith, Stan McKay, and Marion Best for reflection and recognition on the 20th anniversary of the Apology.

Bob Smith remembered 20 years ago, when four leaders addressed the General Council and spoke of their experiences as Aboriginal people. Bob also gave an overview of what has and has not been done in the past 20 years.

Stan McKay talked about sharing with all of life and that colonialism and paternalism are still present. He noted that walking together does require an effort and does not address the loss of language and culture.

Marion Best prayed for healing to take place with everyone listening to the stories, with empathy for each other, and with repentance.

Table groups shared the following:

- What have you heard?
- What can you share that would help you to live out the Apology in your community?

Bob Smith invited all First Nations people, present in the court, to stand at the front to receive the Apology as he re-read the 1986 Apology.

Statement of Faith

The Moderator introduced the Statement of Faith and invited Michael Bourgeois to lead the presentation. Michael introduced the members of the Theology and Faith Committee - Catherine MacLean, Alvin Dixon, Scott Douglas, and Stephen Chambers.

Michael Bourgeois gave the background and overview of the report in the workbook and introduced table group time to discuss questions and concerns; to record comments and questions on the response forms; and to identify questions for clarification.

Michael reviewed the mandate from the 37th General Council 2000 for a new Statement of Faith and noted that there will never be a final statement as it must be revised from time to time. He further noted that this Statement will not replace the New Creed nor will it become a “test” of individual faith but could be used as a resource for Christian education; provide theological guidance for policy and other decision making; and convey to others what the United Church believes.

Ministry Compensation and Isolation in Ministry

Jim Blanchard and Alan Hall gave the history and background of the two reports including an overview of the information in the Workbook. Jim noted that the steering groups worked hard to look at the impact these would have on congregations and presbyteries as well as the interrelations between the pieces of work.

Table groups reviewed the Isolation in Ministry and Ministry Compensation Reports with the following questions:

1. How important is it that we continue to develop policies and practices that will free ministry personnel for greater service in and with pastoral charges?
2. How would the actions recommended in the reports free ministry personnel for service?
How might they not?
3. How would they enhance the health and faithfulness of the pastoral charge's ministries?
4. How would they enhance the health of the whole of the church?

World Council of Churches

The Moderator introduced Carmen Lansdowne, our World Council of Churches representative, who has been elected a member of the Central Committee.

Emerging Spirit

The Moderator introduced Keith Howard and Lesley Harrison and the Emerging Spirit project. Keith Howard shared the background and highlights of Emerging Spirit noting the goal to establish and nurture a relationship between the United Church and people between the ages of 30 and 45 who are not part of any organized faith group. Lesley Harrison reviewed the work of the impact teams and theological rationale. She also talked about the support for congregations and the regional training events.

Table groups discussed the following questions:

- Do you think God is calling us to reach out and (re) establish a relationship with those 30/45?
- What do you think will be the most significant issue in whether Emerging Spirit proves "successful"?
- What other questions do you have?

Moderator Candidates

The General Secretary presented the candidates for Moderator and reviewed the process for the speeches.

Peter Scott talked about meaningful discernment and that doing the will of God is critical to the Christian life including asking how each piece of work witnesses the life of Jesus Christ.

Patty Evans asked how we as a church, in time of change and empire, serve God's purpose in the world. She talked about the gifts of the whole community as we build and nurture relationships with all of creation including those who feel isolated and pushed to the margins.

Colin Swan called for audacity in faith and the way we live out our faith. He used the umbrella to encompass all within the church. He noted that we cannot love something that cannot love back and only people can love back, not institutions.

David Giuliano talked about the importance of creativity, imagination, children, youth, and the marginalized. He also talked about fear standing between us and hearing God's word. He asked everyone to find courage and the heart to witness and share the Spirit at work.

Jim Angus talked about his beliefs, values, and balance including a balance between earth and creation to look at where we are. He talked about looking at where we are, where we have been, and where we are going.

The General Secretary concluded with prayer.

Closing Litany

Global and ecumenical guests, Eunice McMahon, Rev. Eugenio Poma Añaguaya, and Dr. Maggie Hodgson led prayers.

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Discernment and Worship

The Moderator welcomed Nanette McKay and Laverne Jacobs who introduced the worship and discernment process. Chief Josephine Mandamin gave the blessing and Stan McKay led the teaching of the four directions with assistance from Alf Dumont, Eugenio Poma, Alberta Billy, and Sophia Jamieson.

The focus question for the circle was – Where do we find wisdom for healing and new life as we seek to walk together?

At the conclusion, an honour song was sung to remember all who were present at the Apology in Sudbury in 1986. Grand Chief of the Union of Ontario Indians, John Beaucage addressed the Court and talked about First Nations Spirituality, treaties with the government, and the need for self government. A round dance and blessing of the food brought closure to the table time followed by an Aboriginal Feast.

Members of the General Council were invited to join the Youth Forum for evening vespers.

Thursday, August 17, 2006

The Moderator welcomed everyone back and led prayer. The Moderator reminded everyone of the purpose of the General Council “to speak for the heart of the church to name our purpose for the third generation of The United Church of Canada.”

Message Group Report

Martha ter Kuile introduced the Message Group and noted that they have read, and are reading, everything written during the discernment times and on the message board. Martha celebrated the vulnerability and deep, rich sharing that is taking place including the honesty that arises as people take risks.

Discernment and Worship

Members of the Youth Forum were introduced to lead in worship and discernment.

Questions arose about the agenda and the need for more time in Commissions. It was noted that the real business of the General Council takes place in the discernment time.

Motion: Warren Vollmer/Alan Boyd

GC39 2006 - 017

To amend the convening of the commissions from 2 p.m. to 11 a.m.

Defeated

In Worship and Discernment, the Youth Forum shared the Exodus story in today's context with Egypt as the empire; the Hebrews as those calling for salvation; and Moses as the United Church. The Youth Forum talked about listening to the voices during discernment and hearing God's call to action.

Discernment groups of four discussed the following:

- Conversation One – What is growing at the heart of The United Church of Canada?
- Conversation Two – How do we proclaim what is growing at the heart of The United Church of Canada?
- Conversation Three – How might we, the third generation, lead and inspire the new growth at the heart of The United Church of Canada?

The Moderator expressed deep appreciation to the Youth Forum for their leadership.

Commissions

The Moderator bid the Commissioners to go to the Commissions in the wisdom of discernment to make decisions. Each Commission Chair was invited to receive the Christ candle for their Commission. Commissioners reconvened in the Commissions.

COMMISSION BLUE

Opening Music was offered by Rick Gunn, Lynn Boothroyd, and Syd Woolfrey from the *More Voices* Development Team.

Commission Co-Chair Marion Carr offered words of welcome and described the bounds of the court. Clarification was sought and given on who could speak to the court, and included all commissioners, Global partners, and General Council Office Staff acting as resource persons.

Business Committee Chair Paul Reed explained the decision making process in which the Commission was engaged and answered questions.

Opening Procedural Motions

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 018

Bounds of the Court

That the bounds of Commission Blue be the floor area within the tables of the Bora Laskin gymnasium

Business Committee

That the Business Committee for Commission Blue be Paul Reed (chair), Lynn Boothroyd, and Louise Rogers.

Parliamentarian

That the parliamentarian for Commission Blue be John Burton.

Reference and Counsel

That the reference and counsel for Commission Blue be Foster Freed and Walter Sowa.

Scrutineers

That the scrutineers for Commission Blue be Susan Brodrick, Diane Blanchard, Jeanette Liberty-Duns, David MacLachlan, Rick McKinley, Samantha Neil, Jesse Root, Ashley Schwartz (Table #18).

Carried

Agenda

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 019

That the agenda as circulated be accepted and approved by Commission Blue as its agenda, on the understanding that the agenda may be changed as necessary, by the action of the Commission, or by action of the Commission on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

Motion to Amend: Gail Boese/Blair Odney

That the report on Empire be moved to now and move the Water reports to 7:00 pm.

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire (GCE 6)

Business Committee Chair Paul Reed introduced Proposal GCE 6 – Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire. Discussion occurred and comments were received from Global partners.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 020

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information with appreciation the report “Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Receive for information the Proposed Actions - Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire.
4. Refer the Proposed Actions, Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire, to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Motion: Colin Swann/Brian McNally

GC39 2006 - 021

That the motion be dealt with seriatim

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC 39 2006 - 022

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information with appreciation the report “Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire”.

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC 39 2006 - 023

2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC 39 2006 - 024

3. Recognise our explicit complicity in Empire.

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC 39 2006 - 025

4. Receive for information the Proposed Actions - Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire.

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC 39 2006 - 026

5. Is in support of the proposed actions, and directs the Executive of the General Council to act upon the proposed actions, Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire.

Motion to Amend: Warren Vollmer/Karen Smart

That point five read:

“General Council is in support of the proposed actions, and directs the Executive of the General Council to act upon the proposed actions, Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire.”

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel (GS 2)

Business Committee Chair Paul Reed introduced Proposal GS 2 – Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel. The Chair reminded the commission that use of Holy Manners is appropriate for this discussion and reminded visitors who were not corresponding members that they may not speak to the matter on the floor of the court.

The Chair ruled that speakers could only speak for 60 seconds. Sharon Moon asked that people only be allowed to speak once but it was noted that in proposal stage people could speak more than once. In parliamentary procedure, any changes would require a motion.

Motion: Colin Swan/Brian McNally

GC39 2006 - 027

That the Motion be dealt with seriatim.

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 028

That the 39th General Council 2006

1. Receive for information the report on “Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel.”

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC 39 2006 - 029

2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC 39 2006 - 030

3. Through the General Secretary, General Council, invite the membership, congregations and organizations of The United Church of Canada to contribute to the realisation of a just peace in Palestine and Israel through:
 - a) continuing to work with the Jewish and Arab communities to promote peace and understanding and the end of hostilities in the Middle East;
 - b) continuing to denounce acts of violence perpetrated against persons on all sides of the conflict;
 - c) adopting a pro- investment strategy with companies which engage in ethically responsible business, and contribute to peace and a secure and economically viable Palestinian state alongside a secure and economically viable State of Israel;

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC 39 2006 - 031

4. Engaging in a process of selective, phased divestment with Canadian and international companies and corporations that:
 - a) Provide products, services or technology that sustain, support or maintain the occupation;
 - b) Have established facilities or operations on occupied land;
 - c) Provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, and/or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement-related infrastructure;
 - d) Provide products, services or financial support to groups that engage in violence against innocent civilians; or
 - e) Provide finances or assist in the construction and/or maintenance of the separation barrier within occupied territories;

Ruling: The Chair ruled that correspondence from Palestinian global partners would not be received at this time.

Motion to Amend: Darren Liepold Nicholson/Margaret Walker

That the 39th General Council 2006 encourage all United Church ministries to invest in those organizations that promote peace in our world and encourage divestment in those companies which profit from the killing of innocent people

The chair ruled this motion out of order.

Motion to Amend: Harold Alston/ Warren Vollmer

That section (d) be deleted.

Defeated

Motion to Amend: Barry Rieder/Gary Boese

That section (iv) include “against Palestinian or Israeli persons.”

Carried

Motion to Amend: Lorna King/Charlotte Griffith

That section (iv) be moved to become point (i) in section (d)

Carried

Motion to Amend: Lawrence Hale/David MacLachlan

That the first line of (d) be replaced with “Making financial investments, as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, only in peaceful pursuits, and affirm that the customary ethical investment process of our denomination is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal. Non-peaceful pursuits would include Canadian and international corporations and companies that:”

Carried

Motion to Amend: Foster Freed/Martha ter Kuile

Add section (vi): Provide products, services, or technology to any government, or organisation that refuses to recognise the legitimate right of the State of Israel, including its right to exist as a Jewish state.

Carried

Motion to Amend: David MacLachlan/Susan Brodrick

To move (vi) to (ii) and remunerate the others down.

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC 39 2006 - 032

e) Advocacy with the Canadian government and corporations to take leadership in international efforts toward a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Carried

Motion: Gay Boese/Janice Frame

GC 39 2006 - 033

5. Request the Executive of the General Council to develop a means of raising one million dollars to support projects, initiatives, and groups of any faith, working for peace in Palestine and Israel.

Motion to Amend: M. Walker/D. Nicholson

Add the word “interfaith” after “support”.

Defeated

Motion to Amend: Tracy Fairfield/Dale Skinner

That the words “at least” be added in before “one million”

Defeated

Motion as Amended - Carried

That the 39th General Council 2006

1. Receive for information the report on “Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Through the General Secretary, General Council invite the membership, congregations and organizations of The United Church of Canada to contribute to the realization of a just peace in Palestine and Israel through:
 - a) continuing to work with the Jewish and Arab communities to promote peace and understanding and the end of hostilities in the Middle East;
 - b) continuing to denounce acts of violence perpetrated against persons on all sides of the conflict;
 - c) adopting a pro-investment strategy with companies which engage in ethically responsible business, and contribute to peace and a secure and economically viable Palestinian state alongside a secure and economically viable State of Israel;
 - d) Making financial investments, as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, only in peaceful pursuits, and affirming that the customary ethical investment process of our denomination is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal. Non-peaceful pursuits would include Canadian and international corporations and companies that:
 - i) provide products, services or financial support to groups that engage in violence against Palestinian or Israeli persons.; or
 - ii) provide products services or technology to any government or organization that refuses to recognize the legitimate rights of the State of Israel including its right to exist as a Jewish State.
 - iii) provide products, services or technology that sustain, support or maintain the occupation;
 - iv) have established facilities or operations on occupied land;
 - v) provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, and/or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement-related infrastructure;
 - vi) provide finances or assist in the construction and/or maintenance of the separation barrier within occupied territories;
 6. advocacy with the Canadian government and corporations to take leadership in international efforts toward a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict.
4. Request that the executive of Executive of the General Council to develop the means of raising one million to support projects initiatives and groups of any faith working for peace in Palestine and Israel.

Self Insurance (ANW 2)

The Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal ANW 2 – Self Insurance. Discussion occurred and advice was sought from staff on the issue.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 034

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Direct the General Secretary, General Council to request of the Auditor of The United Church of Canada, or other firm as such auditor may recommend, to complete an independent and

comprehensive feasibility study on a timely basis to determine the risk, financial, funding, staffing and insurance issues of Self-Insurance and to report the results of such study to the General Secretary who shall make recommendations to the Executive of the General Council for action.

Carried

Mutual Property Insurance System (LON 8)

Business Committee Chair Paul Reed introduced Proposal LON 8. Discussion occurred.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 035

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Set up a mutual property insurance system for all buildings held in trust for The United Church of Canada.

Defeated

Omnibus Motion

Proposal ANW 6 - Concerning Farm Income and ANW 13 Support for the Eight Millennium Development Goals, United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 were removed from the omnibus motion.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 036

That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the intent and action of the following Proposals to the General Secretary:

~~ANW 6 – Concerning Farm Income~~

~~ANW 13 – Support for the Eight Millennium Development Goals~~

M&O 8 – Accountability for the Canada-Central America four Free Trade Agreement

ANW 7 – A Health Policy Framework for Public Health Care

M&O 6 – Mining Criteria for Canadian Companies in Other Countries

M&O 5 – Implementing The Refugee Appeal Division

HAM 1 – Reducing Child Poverty

Carried

Water: Life before Profit (GCE 13)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal GCE 13 – Water: Life before Profit.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 – 037

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “Water: Life before Profit”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Affirm its conviction that water is a sacred gift that connects all life. Its value to the common good must take priority over commercial interests. Privatization turns a common good into a commodity, depriving those who cannot pay and further threatening local ecosystems.

And further, through the General Secretary, General Council,

4. Encourage United Church congregations to learn more about, and become engaged in, water issues so that members individually, and together as communities of faith, can be better stewards of water, utilising available resources including Waters of Life: Issues, Ethics, and Actions prepared by the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit.
5. Encourage United Church members and congregations to participate in the advocacy campaign denominationally and ecumenically based on this statement against the privatization of water.
6. Call upon the Government of Canada to act, nationally and internationally, to ensure access to clean water for all, now and for future generations by:
 - a. Supporting publicly or co-operatively controlled water services that have genuine community participation, noting the critical need in First Nations communities;
 - b. Opposing measures in federal, bilateral and multilateral agreements and policies that promote the privatization of water services, and
 - c. Protecting and preserving natural sources of water.

Carried**Water: A Gift for All (LON 4)**

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal LON 4 – Water: A Gift for All. Discussion occurred and concerns were voiced concerning rural communities which have municipal water sources forced upon them at great cost. It was suggested that the intent of the proposal was to support those who are not supported by existing legislation or the ability to have same.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd**GC39 2006 - 038**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Through the General Secretary, General Council

1. That The United Church of Canada Water Mission Study be extended for an additional two years;
2. That The United Church of Canada continue, with KAIROS, to pressure the Federal Government to ensure equal access to clean water for all;
3. That The United Church of Canada discourage the purchase of bottled water starting within its courts and congregations where possible;

And through the Executive of the General Council

That The United Church of Canada support projects for the construction of communally owned water treatment facilities and pipelines in developing countries.

Motion to Amend: Mick Magie/Rick McKinley

Delete “Support projects for the construction of communally owned water treatment facilities and pipelines in developing countries.”

Defeated**Motion to Amend: Sung-Chul Choi/Jesse Root**

Addition to the motion: #5 Direct the General Secretary, General Council, The United Church of Canada to urge all levels of government to update water policy.

Defeated

Motion - Carried**Water: Life Before Profit (M&O 1)**

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal M&O 1 – Water: Life before Profit and reminded the commission that the intent of this proposal is similar to GCE 13, which has been passed.

Motion: Lorna King/D. Moors**GC39 2006 – 039**

To receive M&O 1 – Water: Life before Profit and take no action.

Carried**Water as a Human Right (TOR 11)**

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 11 – Water as Human Right.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd**GC39 2006 - 040**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Through the General Secretary, General Council, firmly call upon our federal government to declare water as a human right, support municipalities in keeping water in public control, and resist any attempts by the United States to increase exports of Canadian fresh water under the energy proportional sharing provisions of NAFTA.

Carried**Appendix IV of *The Manual* (GCE 10)**

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal GCE 10 – Appendix IV of *The Manual*. Discussion occurred and the advice of staff was sought with respect to appointing appropriately qualified persons to boards of Appendix IV Corporations which fall under Category 2 of the proposal, who may or may not be United Church members, and took into account Proposal BC 3. Appropriate wording to offer clarity to the proposal was agreed to in the proposal phase of discussion.

Allan Tysick declared a conflict of interest and asked that his abstention be recorded.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers**GC39 2006 - 041**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “Appendix IV of *The Manual*”.
2. Approve the following policy changes for Appendix IV:
 - Provide for three categories of defined relationships with incorporated bodies. These categories will be defined along the following lines:

Category 1: The United Church of Canada Incorporated Ministries

This category affirms the close and vital relationship of the church to the corporation.

- These corporations shall comply with the requirements of Appendix IV.
- A majority of Board members shall be from The United Church of Canada and the Executive-Secretary of the supervising Conference shall be ex-officio a corresponding

member of the board of the Corporation (receives notices of meetings, minutes of meetings, has right to attend all meetings – voice not vote) but would not normally be expected to attend meetings.

- There will be annual reporting of financial statements and acceptable levels of insurance coverage.
- The supervising Conference has authority to permit the Corporation to determine its own manner of naming the membership of the Corporation.
- Permission will be sought from the supervising court and higher courts, as needed, for changes to corporate by-laws and for defined forms of fundraising.
- Indebtedness will be subject to prescribed limits unless exceptions are approved by the supervising Conference.
- Oversight visits shall take place in the spirit of The Manual section 332 and as determined by the supervising Conference.
- These ministries will be committed to participation in the sector-appropriate duty of care program and accreditation process that is being developed in The United Church of Canada.
- Category 1 will be the default designation for all current and future incorporated bodies associated with The United Church of Canada unless it is an incorporated partnership (Category 2).
- The assets of these corporations shall be vested in The United Church of Canada in the event that the corporation ceases to function or its corporate existence is terminated and shall be subject to the real property policies of the General Council as they are amended and updated from time-to-time.
- Corporations spawned by Category 1 corporations will be organized and supervised according to Appendix IV.

Category 2: Incorporated Partnership Ministries

This category acknowledges The United Church of Canada as one of two or more partners in a corporation.

- The level of representation of corporation members and Board of Directors will normally be in proportion to the agreed level of participation of the United Church. For example, if The United Church of Canada is one of three equal partners, then one-third of the members and board members will be selected by The United Church of Canada.
- Responsibilities and potential risks will be similarly divided to reflect the partnership make-up and defined in the corporation's by-laws.
- Regular and annual reporting of financial statements and confirmation of insurance coverage will be required.
- Oversight visits shall take place in the spirit of Manual section 332 and as determined by the supervising Conference.
- These corporations may have their own self-defined duty of care program, participate in The United Church of Canada's Duty of Care Program, or participate in the duty of care program of one of the other partners, as long as the standards are comparable with The United Church of Canada's or higher.
- In the event that the corporation ceases to function or its corporate existence is terminated, the assets will be vested in The United Church of Canada in proportion to The United Church of Canada's participation in the partnership and will be subject to the

real property policies of the General Council as they are amended and updated from time-to-time, or subject to comparable policies of one of the other partners.

- Corporations spawned by Category 2 corporations will function according to the ownership and shared liability rules governing the original corporation.

Category 3: Legacy Incorporated Ministries

This category will explicitly acknowledge the historical origins of the corporation's ministry with The United Church of Canada and the distance from the church that has evolved, for whatever reason.

- The legal tie of the corporation to the church will be severed following appropriate consultation and agreement with the supervising court and all higher church courts.
 - Appropriate consultation and approval processes that are recognized by The United Church of Canada and the people the corporation serves, including clients or participants, will take place to guard against precipitous action resulting in irrevocably severing the corporation's link with The United Church of Canada.
 - The United Church of Canada will cease to have any liability or indebtedness for the corporation.
 - The disposition of capital assets, including lands and buildings, will be negotiated according to the real property policies of the General Council as they are amended and updated from time-to-time.
 - Ways of enhancing the relationship between Category 3 Corporations and The United Church of Canada will be nurtured, without the legal liabilities that pertain to Category 1 corporations, including
 - Developing/identifying the General Council entity which will guide the relationship between Category 3 corporations and The United Church of Canada
 - Strengthening associations for specific ministries, e.g. the Organization of United Church of Canada Homes; Connections – the triennial camping conference; the gathering of community ministries, etc.
 - Developing associations where currently none is in place
3. Approve the policy changes with respect to supervision:
 With respect to the supervisory apparatus for Appendix IV corporations, Presbyteries and Congregations shall no longer have primary supervision for corporations. The Conferences shall supervise all The United Church of Canada corporations within their geographic bounds. Conferences may phase in the transfer of supervisory responsibility from Presbyteries/Congregations to the Conference within the implementation period (up to December 31, 2011). The conference may delegate specific supervisory tasks to the Presbytery or congregations, but remains accountable for the supervisory responsibility which cannot be delegated. Exceptions are the two corporations, The United Church Observer and The United Church of Canada Foundation that are supervised by the General Council. Conference offices shall inform the Executive of the General Council on an annual basis of the compliance of The United Church of Canada corporations with the provisions of Appendix IV. The Executive of the General Council shall provide the required support for uniform reporting on compliance from Conferences.
4. Revise *The Manual* to reflect the policy changes.

5. And direct this to the General Secretary, General Council for implementation.

Carried

Motion: Caroline Duffus/Everest Kao

GC39 2006 - 042

To extend the order of the day until we are done.

Carried

Appendix IV Corporations/Societies Supervised by Congregations and Presbyteries as well as by Conferences (BC 3)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal BC3 - Appendix IV Corporations/Societies Supervised by Congregations and Presbyteries as well as by Conferences

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 043

That the 39th General Council 2006 receive BC 3 and take no further action.

Carried

Concerning Farm Income (ANW 6)

Business Committee Chair Paul Reed introduced Proposal ANW 6 – Concerning Farm Income. Discussion occurred and concerns were raised regarding the definition of “farmer” as it relates to the Government of Canada.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 044

That the 39th General Council 2006, through the General Secretary, General Council, seek to meet, or communicate with the Federal Agriculture Minister, requesting:

1. A farmer would be considered any individual who files a farm tax return
2. that a long term and reorganized Income Stabilization Program that includes a profit margin for farmers be established, and be as user-friendly as possible, and
3. that efforts be made to seek new markets for agricultural products, and the farmer be able to share in the profit and fair-market value, and
4. that the tax be removed from farm diesel fuel, and
5. that governments do more to assist farmers with updated information regarding available grains/seeds and other farm products, and
6. that governments do more to promote improved insurance premiums and benefits, and
7. that governments support farmers’ collective efforts to speak with a united voice, and
8. that governments provide more well-informed staff to assist farmers with loan management, and
9. that governments find ways to support “the environmental farm plan” which is producer-driven, bank- favoured, and enhances farmers’ sense of security, and
10. that governments do more to assist farmers who are handicapped by subsidized imports, and
11. that governments create new markets for farmers and encourage industry to work with farmers for value added products: e.g. ethanol, pasta

Carried

Support for the Eight Millennium Development Goals Emanating from the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 (ANW 13)

Business Committee Chair Paul Reed introduced Proposal ANW 13. Discussion occurred and Global Partner Jennifer Chiwela advised the Commission that the proposal did not include the Education for All (EFA) goals, which were passed by the United Nations six months prior to the Millennium Development Goals, and asked whether the Commission would consider including the EFA goals in the proposal. Advice was sought from staff and further discussion undertaken, in particular, whether The United Church of Canada had itself formally committed to the goals which are the subject of the proposal.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 045

That the 39th General Council 2006 commit The United Church of Canada to actively pursue the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and all the Education for All Goals; and further;

Through the General Secretary, General Council, urge the Government of Canada to recommit to and actively pursue the attainment of the eight Millennium Goals by the years stated.

Urge the Government of Canada to recommit to spending 0.7 percent of the GDP on foreign aid.

And further, to urge the Government of Canada and to recommit to, and actively pursue the attainment of all the “Education for All” (EFA) goals.

Carried

Reduce Costs of Information Transfer, in Paper Form and Improve Efficiency of Information Transfer within The United Church of Canada (HAM 2)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal HAM 2.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 046

That HAM 2, A Proposal to Reduce costs of information transfer, in paper form and improve efficiency of information transfer within The United Church of Canada, be referred to the General Secretary, General Council that it might inform the work of the Communications Strategist.

Carried

National United Church Archives (BQ 4)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced BQ 4 – National United Church Archives.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 047

That BQ 4, National United Church Archives, be referred to the General Secretary, General Council to inform the work of the Archival Network Review Project.

Carried

Support for Church Suppers in Ontario (M&O 2)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal M&O 2. Discussion ensued, with comments received that recent actions by the Ontario Government may affect this proposal.

Motion: Rick Magie/Caroline Giesbrecht

GC39 2006 - 048

That M&O 2, Support for Church Suppers in Ontario, be recommended to the Social Justice Network of Ontario Conferences with our support.

Carried

Pathways to Peace in the Holy Land (TOR 7)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 7.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 049

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Declare our willingness to support and participate in the World Council of Churches' proposed week for International Church Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel focusing on the Holy Land and provide educational material and worship resources.

Carried

Creation of a Department of Peace (MNWO 6)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal MNWO 6 and discussion occurred.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 -050

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Through the General Secretary, General Council, petition the Government of Canada to create a Department of Peace with:

1. The intention of infusing all departments and agencies of the federal government with an ethic of peace and identifying the basic causes of conflict and to develop strategies and programs that will encourage a more caring society;
2. An over-riding mandate to re-invigorate Canada's role as a global peace builder through the promotion of the non-violent resolution of conflict, human rights, and the security of persons and their communities, socio-economic justice and democratic participation in government;
3. The expectation of involving civil society and its voluntary organizations, as well as its own staff and other federal government departments;
4. A minister who would have human and financial resources appropriate for a full department.

Carried

Let's Make Child Poverty History (ANW 11)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal ANW 11 and discussion occurred.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 051

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Through the Executive of the General Council

1. follow up Campaign 2000 with a letter writing and education program focused on raising awareness and garnering government support of the Campaign 2000 objectives, and
2. petition the Government of Canada to make a long-term commitment to increasing Child Tax Benefits to \$4,900.00 per child.

Carried

Sovereign Control of Canadian Electricity (TOR 9)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 9.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 052

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Through the General Secretary, General Council, urge the Government of Canada to

- use the protection of NAFTA to allow public utilities and provincial governments to maintain integrated utilities in the public sector;
- encourage greater integration of the Canadian electricity sector;
- ensure that all transmission systems be owned and operated by public entities;
- ensure that Canadian public entities do not surrender any part of these systems to foreign-controlled organizations (such as the Regional Transmission Organizations);
- prohibit private exports of electricity and private power trading;
- develop a strong regulatory role in electricity-related environmental issues that includes:
 - a national electricity conservation program;
 - a provincial assessment of all private power projects for their systemic impact;
 - the establishment of an institute for environmentally responsible energy development.

Carried

Protection of Canadian Sovereignty over its Energy and Environment (TOR 8)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 8 and there was discussion on the proposal. Concern was expressed that the proposal had the potential to affect the economies of two of Canada's provinces, and possibly the national economy, and as such, was deserving of further study.

Motion: Blair Odney/Walter Sowa

GC39 2006 - 053

That we receive TOR 8, Protection of Canadian Sovereignty over its Energy and Environment, and refer it to the Executive of the General Council for further study.

Carried

Edward Avery abstained from voting.

Call for a Canadian Energy Security Strategy that Meets the Interests of All Canadians (TOR 2)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 2. There was discussion on the proposal.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 054

That the 39th General Council 2006, through the General Secretary, General Council, call upon the Government of Canada to:

- Emulate Mexico by obtaining the same exemption from NAFTA's proportional sharing clause pertaining to energy exports.
- Call upon the federal government to develop a new Canadian Energy Security Strategy in partnership with the provinces;

- Initiate, with the provinces, a national strategy and timetable for reducing dependence on fossil fuels, conserving our remaining supplies of oil and natural gas, and massively increasing investment in renewable energy alternatives such as solar and wind power;
- Conduct a public review of energy price-setting practices with a view to restoring the capacity of our governments to regulate energy prices, and
- Restore the previous practice of maintaining a 25-year supply of oil and gas reserves to meet domestic needs.

Motion to Amend: Blair Odney/Martha Ashbaugh

That the fourth bullet read “conduct a public review of energy price-setting practices.”

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

That the 39th General Council 2006, through the General Secretary, General Council, call upon the Government of Canada to:

- Emulate Mexico by obtaining the same exemption from NAFTA’s proportional sharing clause pertaining to energy exports.
- Call upon the federal government to develop a new Canadian Energy Security Strategy in partnership with the provinces;
- Initiate, with the provinces, a national strategy and timetable for reducing dependence on fossil fuels, conserving our remaining supplies of oil and natural gas, and massively increasing investment in renewable energy alternatives such as solar and wind power;
- Conduct a public review of energy price-setting practices, and
- Restore the previous practice of maintaining a 25-year supply of oil and gas reserves to meet domestic needs.

A Call for the Restoration of Corporate Contribution to Canadian Society (TOR 3)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 3. There was discussion on the proposal and feedback from other commissioners read.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 055

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Through the General Secretary, General Council urge the Federal and Provincial governments for a revised Canadian taxation policy that will require that corporations return their fair share of profits back into Canadian society.

Carried

Augmentation of Tax Credit for Charitable Donations (M&O 4)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal M&O 4. Discussion occurred.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 056

That through the General Secretary, General Council the Government of Canada be urged to offer an improved credit for charitable donations by Canadians starting with the next Federal Budget.

Further to this, that the following propositions be adopted:

- A 45% credit for all donations with an increase of the overall limit for the donation as a percentage of net revenue from 75% to 80%

And urge

- The Government of Quebec to raise the credit to 45% to a maximum of 80% of the net revenue.
- Furthermore, the Government of Quebec to not group non-refundable tax credits for charitable donations with other credits.

Defeated

Gun Registry in Canada (TOR 5)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 5. There was discussion that a similar motion had been passed in 1984, however, the commission was in support of proceeding on this proposal as well.

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 057

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Express its full support of the Canadian Gun Registry Program, and urge the continued implementation of said program;

And that the General Secretary, General Council communicate this statement to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Honourable Vic Toews, and the acting leader of the opposition, the Honourable Bill Graham.

Carried

Review of Property Sale Procedures (ANW 9)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal ANW 9. There was discussion concerning the proposal and its possible impact on small and rural congregations and expressed concern that the time lines may be difficult to meet. Conversely, the intent appeared to be that the church would benefit from a guide to the complex issues surrounding real property.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 058

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Direct the General Secretary to review the procedures for sale of property in The United Church of Canada, with the following ends in view:

1. A resource be prepared bringing together all the necessary source materials for the sale of property.
2. The development of a standard procedure for sale of property across the church.
3. Identify time lines (vis à vis title transfer) that Congregations can work with in their communications with purchasers and financial institutions; said time lines not to exceed twenty business days.

And that the Executive of the General Council approve the required policy and changes to *The Manual*.

Carried

Special Funding for Experimental Ministries (MTU 1)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal MTU 1.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd

GC39 2006 - 059

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Direct the Executive of the General Council to review the guidelines of the Mission Support Fund with a view to making funds available to support churches or church groupings that desire to experiment with models that could sustain ministry in areas that are at risk and which presently are unable to access Mission Support Funding because of restrictive guidelines placed on that fund.

Carried

Motion: Blair Odney/Linda Thompson

GC39 2006 - 060

To refer all remaining proposals to the Executive of the General Council, with the request that they consider them through the lens of “Empire.”

Motion to Amend: Susan Brodrick/Jake Autio

To delete “with the request that they consider them through the lens of “Empire”.”

Carried

Motion as Amended - Defeated

Gun Violence as a National Issue (TOR 6) (LON 6) (N&L 1) (Blue 1)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 6. Upon discussion, TOR 6, LON 6 and N&L 1 were considered together and a new motion (Blue 1) created.

Motion: Jennifer Mountain/Darren Liepold Nicholson

GC39 2006 - 061

That the preamble, parts 1 and 2 be dealt with together and part three separately of TOR 6.

Carried

Motion: Paul Reed/Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 062

Having heard TOR 6, LON 6, and N&L 1, that the 39th General Council 2006:

Declare that gun violence should be a national concern, and direct the General Secretary, General Council, to seek opportunities to:

1. make public statements on the issues of gun violence, advocating that all levels of government make systemic changes to address the root causes of the violence, and
2. seek out ways for the Church to stand in solidarity with oppressed communities in Canada and the various coalitions and networks working to end this oppression; and

That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the Executive of the General Council develop and promote an educational program within the United Church of Canada to advance an understanding of the many faces of racism and hatred in our urban and suburban centres across the country, including with Black, Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian and Middle Eastern peoples

Motion to Amend: Leanne Douglas/Wayne Flewelling

To remove “in our urban and suburban centres”.

Carried**Motion as Amended - Carried**

Having heard TOR 6, LON 6, and N&L 1, that the 39th General Council 2006:
Declare that gun violence should be a national concern, and direct the General Secretary, General Council, to seek opportunities to:

1. make public statements on the issues of gun violence, advocating that all levels of government make systemic changes to address the root causes of the violence, and
2. seek out ways for the Church to stand in solidarity with oppressed communities in Canada and the various coalitions and networks working to end this oppression; and

That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the Executive of the General Council develop and promote an educational program within the United Church of Canada to advance an understanding of the many faces of racism and hatred across the country, including with Black, Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian and Middle Eastern peoples.

Encouragement Concerning Spiritual Formation (TOR 12)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal TOR 12. There was discussion on whether to change the words “New Testament” to “Bible”, and the hope that the proposal would enrich congregational and personal life in the church. It was also lifted up that this is already a practice of many ministry personnel and lay leaders throughout the church.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd**GC39 2006 - 063**

That the 39th General Council 2006, through the General Secretary, General Council, To encourage our membership (ministry personnel and lay) and adherents of The United Church of Canada to re-acquaint ourselves with the primary written source of our faith by making a commitment to personally and prayerfully read through the entire New Testament once a year over the next three years, opening ourselves to the Spirit of God to speak to us afresh through the written witness to Christ as to how we might live out Christ’s message in our lives today.

Carried**Resources and Strategies to Challenge Homophobia in the Church (M&O 9)**

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced M&O 9 and received comments from the floor.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd**GC39 2006 - 064**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Direct the General Secretary, General Council, to create resources for people of all ages for the purpose of:

- recognizing homophobia
- changing our behaviour and establishing just relationships

and that attention be given to strategies for intervention and support on behalf of those who are caught in situations of homophobic abuse, In co-operation and consultation with Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble.

Carried

Implementing Kyoto (M&O 7)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal M&O 7 and discussion ensued. Concerns were raised that the cost of an energy audit might prove prohibitive for some congregations. It was pointed out that often the cost savings in terms of energy costs balance to cost of the energy audit.

Motion: Paul Reed/Lynn Boothroyd**GC39 2006 - 065**

That the 39th General Council 2006 through the General Secretary

- Request presbyteries to urge ministries within their boundaries to take responsibility to make their buildings more energy efficient by conducting an energy audit of their buildings, and preparing and implementing a plan based on the audit;
- Campaign with others to have the Government of Canada take actions to meet its commitments to implement the Kyoto Protocol; highlighting the need for public transportation as one priority.
- Campaign with others to have the Government of Canada urge the Government of the United States of America to participate with the international community in helping solve the problems of climate change by joining the Kyoto Protocol;

And further, that The United Church of Canada: use its relations with its ecumenical and interfaith partners to join in the campaign to encourage Governments including those of the United States and Canada to participate with international commitments to implement the Kyoto protocol.

Motion to Amend: Frederick Sheffer/Melany Cassidy-Wise

Second point: “that the Government of Canada confirm its commitment to implement ...”

Carried**Motion to Amend: Dave Moors/George Takashima**

To remove button 3.

Carried**Motion as Amended - Carried**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Through the General Secretary

- Request presbyteries to urge ministries within their boundaries to take responsibility to make their buildings more energy efficient by conducting an energy audit of their buildings, and preparing and implementing a plan based on the audit;
- That the Government of Canada confirm its commitment to implement the Kyoto Protocol and take actions to meet its Kyoto Protocol, highlighting the need for public transportation as one priority.

And further, that The United Church of Canada: use its relations with its ecumenical and interfaith partners to join in the campaign to encourage Governments including those of the

United States and Canada to participate with international commitments to implement the Kyoto protocol.

Endorsement of the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth (MNWO 7)

Business Committee Chair, Paul Reed, introduced Proposal MNWO 7. Having reviewed the document in question, the commission was prepared to move on the matter.

Motion: Paul Reed/ Louise Rogers

GC39 2006 - 066

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- Endorse the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth prepared for the Coalition on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth by J.E. Durant and R. Ensom, with the knowledge that endorsement of the statement signifies confidence in its review of research on physical punishment and conclusions drawn from the review, and support of its recommendations; and

And that through the General Secretary, General Council,

- Commend the Statement to congregations for study.

Carried

Lorna King expressed appreciation for the diligent work of the leaders, stewards, recorders, and staff saying: “You have been on board the whole time and we appreciate it.”

Motion: Ewen Moase/Linda Kuschnik

GC39 2006 – 067

Motion to Adjourn.

Carried

The Commission closed the evening with prayer.

COMMISSION RED

The Co-Chair, Heather Leffler, opened the Commission with song, prayer, and offered thanks to all.

Opening Procedural Motions

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March- MacCuish

GC39 2006 – 068

Bounds of the Court

That the bounds of Commission Red will be the floor of the Students Union Outpost.

Business Committee

That the Business Committee for Commission Red be: Michelle Slater (chair), Jim Blanchard, and Ian March-MacCuish.

Parliamentarian

That the parliamentarian for Commission Red be Linsell Hurd.

Reference and Counsel

That the reference and counsel for Commission Red be Ted Kostecki, Lois Creith, and Diane Dwarka.

Scrutineers

That the scrutineers for Commission Red be Kathy Koehler, Christopher Cooke, Ian McDonald, Gloria Myles, Neil Parker, Lynda Price, Judy Shulist, and Lori Stewart (Table #13).

Administrative Staff

That the administrative staff for this meeting of Commission Red be Terry Beaumont, Sarah Johnson and that the minute secretary for this meeting be Robin Chen.

Carried

Agenda

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish

GC39 2006 – 069

That the agenda as circulated be accepted and approved by Commission Red as its agenda, on the understanding that the agenda may be changed, as necessary, by the action of the Commission, or by action of the Commission on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

Carried

The Co-Chairs made introductions and reminded the Commission that discernment continues through the Commissions and to listen prayerfully with understanding.

The Business Chair, Michelle Slater, gave a PowerPoint presentation on how to dispose of Business. It was noted that the Business Committee reviewed all the response sheets, which were summarized throughout the meeting.

Omnibus Motion

Heather Leffler, the co-chair, identified the Omnibus items and noted that they would direct the intent and action to the Executive of the General Council for proposals GCE 11, MNWO 2, BQ 5, and ANW 8. Two response forms were received for these items.

Dwaine Dornan, co-chair, introduced the proposals approved for the Omnibus proposal.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March MacCuish

GC 39 2006 - 070

That the 39th General Council direct the intent and action of proposals

GCE 11 – Retirement

MNWO 2 – Accessibility of Policies

BQ 5 – Use of Manse by Ministry Personnel

ANW 8 – National List of Supervisors

to the General Secretary, General Council

Carried

Designation for Interim Ministers and Interim Ministry Requirements (Red 3)

The Business Chair, Michelle Slater read the proposed motion (Red 3) based on proposals SK6 and MNWO 9 and confirmed that no response sheets were received. The Commission made comments and discussed the proposal.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish**GC 39 2006 - 071**

Having heard Proposals SK6 and MNWO 9, that the 39th General Council 2006 refer SK6 and MNWO 9 to the Executive of the General Council for further study:

Revise section 465.1 of *The Manual* to reflect:

- a) That Initial Designation be required prior to the first interim, and re-designation be required at the end of the first interim.
- b) That designation to Interim Ministry be regarded as valid for five years from the date of the end of the last active Interim Ministry, unless designation has been removed by action of the Interim Ministry Committee. (For greater clarity a re-designation interview will be required every five years for all interims, active or not active.)
- c) That whenever an Interim Ministry is completed or concludes, as an essential part of the reporting process, an exit interview be conducted with the outgoing interim by the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee in which the Interim Ministry took place and by the Conference Interim Ministry Committee. Such interview is for re-designation only at the end of a five year period.
- d) That the Conference Interim Ministry Committee and presbytery will continue to have oversight responsibilities for an Interim Minister.
- e) That effective evaluation tools be developed to assist pastoral charges, presbyteries, and conferences in their responsibility to evaluate those practicing Interim Ministry.

Carried

Mandatory Training in Racial Justice for all United Church Ministry Personnel**Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March MacCuish****GC 39 2006 - 072**

That proposal HAM 3 be postponed definitely until after ANW 10.

Carried

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March MacCuish**GC 39 2006 - 073**

That proposal HAM 3 be moved to the end of the agenda.

Carried

Settlement for Candidates (LON 7)

Michelle Slater introduced proposal LON 7 and noted the comments and affirmations from the response sheets. Concerns were expressed and responded to.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish**GC 39 2006 - 074**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Direct the Executive of the General Council to develop a process by which the church will actively seek sites for settlement throughout the church that meet the needs of all candidates for the Order of Ministry, Diaconal and Ordained (whether that be congregational ministry or other Presbytery recognized community agencies/institutions) so that those who offer their gifts and calling to the church may be settled.

Carried

Diaconal Ministry References (Red 2)

Michelle Slater introduced Proposals M&O 3, ANW 1, and a new proposal, Red 2. She noted that three response sheets were received in favour of the proposals. Discussion on the proposal took place and Dwaine Dornan, co-chair, confirmed that the proposal is consistent with the diaconal minister term in *The Manual*.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 075

Having heard Proposals M&O 3 and ANW 1, that the 39th General Council 2006 directs the General Secretary to ensure that with regard to the definition of Diaconal Minister, all relevant sections of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada be changed to match the wording found in Section 001 of *The Manual*.

Motion to Amend: Julianne Kasmer/Jean Lee

And

That all services of ordination and commissioning use the wording of Basis of Union-11.3, question, #2 along with *The Manual* section 001.

Further, when referring to diaconal ministry, that the terms “commissioned” and “commissioning” always be followed by the term “in” or “to diaconal ministry”

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

Having heard Proposals M&O 3 and ANW 1, that the 39th General Council 2006 directs the General Secretary to ensure that with regard to the definition of Diaconal Minister, all relevant sections of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada be changed to match the wording found in Section 001 of *The Manual*.

And

That all services of ordination and commissioning use the wording of Basis of Union-11.3, question, #2 along with *The Manual* section 001.

Further, when referring to diaconal ministry, that the terms “commissioned” and “commissioning” always be followed by the term “in” or “to diaconal ministry”

Designated Lay Ministry/Congregational Designated Ministry (GS 34)

The Chair introduced Proposal GS 34 and noted the response sheets received. Ministry Employment Policies and Services staff member, Joe Ramsay, clarified the background to the proposal with comments, questions, and discussion.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 076

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Approve the policy that:

1. There be two streams of paid accountable lay ministry in the United Church:
 - (i) Designated Lay Ministers who are accountable to a Presbytery and recognized by the Conference; and
 - (ii) Congregational Designated Ministers who are accountable to a Pastoral Charge and recognized by the Presbytery.
2. Presbyteries shall approve all paid accountable ministry positions by either:
 - (i) declaring a vacancy that may be filled by a member of the Order of Ministry or a Designated Lay Minister; or
 - (ii) approving a Congregational Designated Ministry position to be filled by someone appropriately qualified according to guidelines to be approved by the Executive of the General Council.

And that *The Manual* be revised to reflect this policy.

Carried

Dwaine Dornan, co-chair, reviewed Proposals GS 3, ANW 5, LON 5, and GCE 7. It was agreed, through consensus, to consider the proposals separately.

Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel (GS 3)

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March MacCuish

GC 39 2006 - 077

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “The Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel”.
2. Adopt the draft standards of practice contained in that report as the standards of practice for Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada (Section 5).
3. Adopt the draft ethical standards contained in that report with the addition of the words “they are called to” following “in these positions” in Section 6.2.1, as the ethical standards for Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada (Section 6).
4. Direct the Executive of the General Council:
 - a. to develop and execute an implementation plan for the standards of practice and ethical standards as outlined in the report; and
 - b. to evaluate the present process for discipline and oversight of Ministry Personnel.

Motion to Amend: James Ball/Robert Brinn

That the word “profession” be removed from the Standards of Ethics and be replaced by the word “vocation”.

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry (ANW 5) (LON 5)

Proposals ANW 5 and LON 5 were introduced and discussed with comments. Discussion included concerns about separate codes of ethics.

Motion: Allan Warren/Diana Brecka

GC 39 2006 - 078

That ANW 5 – Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry be adopted.

Motion to Amend: Andrew Johnson/Matt Woodall

Add: for those paid, and/or volunteer who work with youth.

Carried

Motion as Amended – Defeated

Proposal LON 5 was introduced and discussion continued.

Motion: Ian March March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 079

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That a Code of Ethics be developed for Youth Ministry using as a resource the Code of Ethics and commentary that was developed at the National Consultation on Youth Ministry Training (November 2004).

Carried

Leadership Outcomes Framework for Ordered Ministry (GCE 7)

Michelle Slater introduced proposal GCE 7 and noted that many response sheets were received on this proposal. Questions were clarified, staff responded to questions, and a new proposal was introduced.

Concerns were raised and suggestions made by the parliamentarian, Linsell Hurd.

Motion: Michael Kooiman/Susan Cameron

GC 39 2006 - 080

That no further action be taken on GCE 7.

Defeated

Motion: Teresa Burnett-Cole/Roz Vincent-Haven

GC 39 2006 - 081

That we receive the report and:

Direct the Executive of the General Council to review the Leadership Outcomes Framework in light of the Standards of Practice in the 39th General Council 2006 Record of Proceedings with a view to harmonizing the Leadership Outcomes Framework with the Standards of Practice; and to undertake further study including reviewing response forms and correspondence received by the 39th General Council 2006.

Motion to Amend: James Ball/Joyce MacKinnon

Add clause:

Understanding that the 39th General Council 2006 sees the principle benefit of an Leadership Outcomes Framework model and its usefulness as an evaluative aid to E&S Committees in their work, to students who are in preparation for ministry and continuing education.

Defeated

The chair was challenged and there was a request to send the proposal to the Reference and Counsel. The chair's ruling was upheld and it was agreed to continue.

Motion - Carried

The Meaning of Ministry (BQ 1)

Proposal BQ 1 was introduced.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish

GC 39 2006 - 082

That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the Executive of the General Council to:
Engage the whole church in a time of discernment concerning the meaning of ministry in The United Church of Canada and

That the discernment would give attention to the following issues:

- a theology of call and vocation
- the theology of ordered ministry
- the theology of lay pastoral ministry
- the theology of lay ministry
- the ecumenical implications

Carried

Rethinking the Order of Ministry (ANW 3)

The Business Chair introduced Proposal ANW 3 and suggested that it be referred to the Executive of the General Council for implementation. Two response forms were received.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 083

That the 39th General Council 2006 refer ANW3, Rethinking the Order of Ministry, to the Executive of the General Council for consideration in implementing BQ 1, The Meaning of Ministry.

Carried

Accountable Ministry (ANW 10)

Proposal ANW 10 was introduced.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish

GC 39 2006 - 084

That the 39th General Council 2006 receive and take no action on Proposal ANW 10 – Accountable Ministry.

Carried

Recognition of Spouses of Overseas Personnel (LON 1)

Proposal LON 1 was introduced with discussion and comments.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish

GC 39 2006 – 085

That the 39th General Council 2006 directs the Executive of the General Council to ensure that:

The United Church of Canada suitably recognize, honour and pay tribute to those unrecognized and unpaid spouses of ministry and overseas personnel who have served and are serving Christ in the work of the church.

Carried

Mandatory Training in Racial Justice for all United Church Ministry Personnel (HAM 3)

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March MacCuish

GC 39 2006 - 086

That we move immediately to proposal HAM 3.

Carried

Proposal HAM 3 was introduced and discussed with responses from staff member, Kim Uyede-Kai, General Council Minister, Racial Justice.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March MacCuish

GC 39 2006 - 087

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Direct the General Secretary, General Council, to develop and implement mandatory training in racial justice for all ministry personnel.

Carried

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March MacCuish

GC 39 2006 – 088

That the order of the day be extended one hour.

Carried

Retirement Policy for Pension Qualification (BC 5)

Proposal BC 5 was introduced and it was noted that the Business Committee made some changes to the wording of the proposal. Discussion followed and staff responded to questions.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish

GC 39 2006 – 089

That the 39th General Council 2006 directs the Executive of the General Council to review the retirement policy of the pension plan including the combination of age and service ensure that:

With all due alacrity, revise the retirement policy of the Pension Plan with the result that ministry personnel may retire with an unreduced pension if the combination of their age and service is 80.

Defeated

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish

GC 39 2006 - 090

That the 39th General Council 2006 receive and take no action on Proposal BC 5 - Retirement Policy for Pension Qualification.

Carried

Rescind Executive of the General Council's Implementation of the Sabbatical Policy (ANW 12)

The Business Chair introduced Proposal ANW 12 and noted that it is not possible to rescind motions. Discussion took place and staff, Joe Ramsay, reviewed the current Sabbatical Policy which provides funding for weekend supply.

Motion: Catherine MacLean/Edison Bardock **GC 39 2006 - 091**
That the 39th General Council 2006 receive Proposal ANW 12 and take no action
Carried

Inclusion of Spiritual Direction in Benefit Package (BC 2)

Proposal BC 2 was reviewed and concerns were expressed.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish **GC 39 2006 - 092**
That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the General Secretary, General Council to ensure that: Spiritual Direction, or such resources, are included in the compensation package for ministry personnel.
Defeated

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish **GC 39 2006 - 093**
That GS 23, BC 4, LON 3, TOR 4, BC 1 be considered immediately
Carried

Proposals GS 23, BC 4, LON 3, TOR 4, and BC 1 were introduced as a group (Red 1) and the Business Chair suggested that the 5 proposals be referred to the Executive of the General Council. Table groups took time to discuss this suggestion.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard **GC 39 2006 - 094**
Having adopted GS 3 that the 39th General Council 2006 refer proposals GS 23, BC 4, LON 3, TOR 4, and BC 1 to the Executive of the General Council for consideration in evaluating the present process for discipline and oversight of ministry personnel.
Carried

Conciliar Church (MNWO 1)

Proposal MNWO 1 was introduced and Ian Fraser, General Council Minister, Resources for Mission and Ministry, responded to questions on policy.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard **GC 39 2006 - 095**
That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the Executive of the General Council to:

1. Seek means to bring the General Council Human Resources policies into line with practices appropriate to a conciliar church and ensure that the rights of and protections for all employees are at least equivalent in the General Council Human Resources system to what is provided for the in *The Manual* and Pastoral Relations system;

2. Establish a Task Group to bring the Human Resources policies of the church into consistency with the Pastoral Relations processes of The United Church of Canada.

Carried

General Council Minister, Regional Relations (MNWO 4)

Proposal MNWO 4 was introduced and the concern from the response sheets was noted.

Discussion took place.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 096

That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the Executive of the General Council to:

Designate a team composed of at least two elected members of their respective Conferences and one representative of the Executive of the General Council, using a model similar to the Supervision Committee of the General Secretary, General Council, to supervise each Executive Secretary, and that the General Council Minister, Regional Relations, serve as a resource to the staff committees without participating in their decision-making.

Motion: Robert Brinn/John Lougheed

GC 39 2006 - 097

That the motion be referred to the Executive of the General Council.

Carried

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 098

To extend the order of the day by 30 minutes.

Carried

Salary Parity for Ministry Positions in the General Council Office (SK 5)

Proposal SK 5 was introduced with discussion. It was noted that it is important that the salary scales are available including the ranges and minimum and maximum salaries. The principles for salary equity and job evaluation were discussed including the application of the cost of living. The minimum and maximum salary range for level 7 and level 15 were noted.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish

GC 39 2006 - 099

That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the Executive of the General Council:

To adhere to the principles of justice, fairness, equity, sustainability and the unity of faith and ministry by implementing a plan for salary parity for persons in ministry positions within the General Council Office Salary System (categories 7 to 15) by removing the gap between the salaries paid to General Council Program staff, General Council Ministers, the Senior Leadership team, the General Secretary, General Council, and the Moderator and taking into account regional differences through living allowances separate from the salary scale.

Defeated

Supervision (MNWO 3)

Proposal MNWO 3 was introduced and discussed.

Motion: John Lougheed/Catherine MacLean

GC 39 2006 - 100

To refer Proposal MNWO 3 to the Executive of the General Council as part of the Human Resources review.

Carried

Repayment of Moving Expenses (BQ 2)

Proposal BQ 2 was introduced.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 101

That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the Executive of the General Council to:

State that prior to waiving the repayment of the moving expenses of an ordinand/commissionand, the Presbytery must consult with the appropriate General Council Unit, and that prior to waiving the moving expenses of a member of the order of ministry who is not an ordinand/commissionand, the Presbytery must consult with the Pastoral Charge and that *The Manual* section 036(n) be amended to reflect this change.

Motion to Amend: David Shearman/John Loughheed

Add following Pastoral Charge “and that the requirements to repay moving expenses shall not normally be waived.

Carried

Motion as Amended – Carried

That the 39th General Council 2006 direct the Executive of the General Council to:

State that prior to waiving the repayment of the moving expenses of an ordinand/commissionand, the Presbytery must consult with the appropriate General Council Unit, and that prior to waiving the moving expenses of a member of the order of ministry who is not an ordinand/commissionand, the Presbytery must consult with the Pastoral Charge and that the requirements to repay moving expenses shall not normally be waived and that *The Manual* section 036(n) be amended to reflect this change.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 102

To extend the order of the day by 5 minutes.

Carried

Police Records Checks (GCE 12)

Proposal GCE 12 was introduced, comments from response sheets were noted, and discussion took place.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard

GC 39 2006 - 103

That the 39th General Council 2006 approve:

1. That *The Manual* be amended to include the vulnerable sector check (Level 2) Police Records Check.

2. All ministry personnel be required to have completed a vulnerable sector (Level 2) Police Records Check no later than 90 days following the publication of the Record of Proceedings.
3. The vulnerable sector (Level 2) Police Records Check be required prior to the initiation of any new pastoral relationship, including call, settlement, appointment, and internship.
4. Prior to the initiation of a pastoral relationship (call, appointment or internship) a minimum of two references are to be interviewed by a minimum of 2 members of the search committee or appointing body; using guidelines to be provided by the General Secretary, General Council.
5. The documentation of the reference checks be included on the call/appointment form to include the name of the reference, name of interviewers, and the date of the interview.
6. Only the original Police Records Check be valid.
7. Reduce the number of vulnerable sector checks (Police Records Check) required from every three years (during scheduled pastoral oversight visit) to a maximum of every six years (or alternate triennial pastoral oversight visits) for those in a continuous pastoral relationship, whether by call or appointment, and that *The Manual* and guidelines be changed to reflect this policy.
8. *The Manual* include the requirement that paid accountable ministry personnel must immediately report to the Pastoral Relations Committee of their Presbytery whenever they have been charged with any criminal offence, in any jurisdiction.
9. That the General Secretary, General Council create a form to document that a Vulnerable Sector (Level 2) Police Records Check has been completed and seen by the Presbytery Pastoral Relations and Oversight Committee at the second tri-annual visit of the ministry personnel in the same pastoral relationship (or 6 years).

Motion to Amend: David Shearman/Sylvia Carscadden

That in the year prior to ordination or commissioning to diaconal ministry that only one vulnerable sector (Level 2) police records check be required for Education and Students and Settlement purposes.

Carried

Motion to Amend: James Vanstone/Jean Lee

Add: That 1 member and 1 interviewer

Defeated

Motion as Amended – Carried

That the 39th General Council 2006 approve:

1. That *The Manual* be amended to include the vulnerable sector check (Level 2) Police Records Check.

2. All ministry personnel be required to have completed a vulnerable sector (Level 2) Police Records Check no later than 90 days following the publication of the Record of Proceedings.
3. The vulnerable sector (Level 2) Police Records Check be required prior to the initiation of any new pastoral relationship, including call, settlement, appointment, and internship.
4. Prior to the initiation of a pastoral relationship (call, appointment or internship) a minimum of two references are to be interviewed by a minimum of 2 members of the search committee or appointing body; using guidelines to be provided by the General Secretary, General Council.
5. The documentation of the reference checks be included on the call/appointment form to include the name of the reference, name of interviewers, and the date of the interview.
6. Only the original Police Records Check be valid.
7. Reduce the number of vulnerable sector checks (Police Records Check) required from every three years (during scheduled pastoral oversight visit) to a maximum of every six years (or alternate triennial pastoral oversight visits) for those in a continuous pastoral relationship, whether by call or appointment, and that *The Manual* and guidelines be changed to reflect this policy.
8. *The Manual* include the requirement that paid accountable ministry personnel must immediately report to the Pastoral Relations Committee of their Presbytery whenever they have been charged with any criminal offence, in any jurisdiction.
9. That the General Secretary, General Council create a form to document that a Vulnerable Sector (Level 2) Police Records Check has been completed and seen by the Presbytery Pastoral Relations and Oversight Committee at the second tri-annual visit of the ministry personnel in the same pastoral relationship (or 6 years).
10. That in the year prior to ordination or commissioning to diaconal ministry that only one vulnerable sector (level 2) police records check be required for Education and Students and Settlement purposes.

Motion: Ian March-MacCuish/Jim Blanchard**GC 39 2006 - 104**

To extend the agenda for another 5 minutes.

Carried**Requirements for a Police Records Check (BQ 3)**

Proposal BQ 3 was introduced and it was confirmed that, considering GCE 12, is not redundant.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Ian March-MacCuish**GC 39 2006 - 105**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Adopt a policy that permits Retired Ministry Personnel to use a Police Records Check for up to three years from the date of issue when applying for Appointment within the Presbytery of which they are a member and direct that the General Secretary, General Council revise *The Manual* accordingly.

Carried

The Co-Chairs offered thanks to all and ended in prayer.

COMMISSION GREEN

The Co-Chair, Mary-Beth Moriarity, opened the commission with song, prayer, and offered thanks to all.

Opening Procedural Motions

Motion: Cari Copeman Haynes/Brian Cornelius

GC 39 2006 - 106

Bounds of the Court

That the bounds of Commission Green will be the floor of Avila Gym.

Business Committee

That the Business Committee for Commission Green be Cari Copeman-Haynes (chair), Ron Holotuk, and Brian Cornelius.

Parliamentarian

That the parliamentarian for Commission Green be Margaret Bain.

Reference and Counsel

That the reference and counsel for Commission Green be Jean Wilson, Bruce Hutchinson, and John Snyder.

Carried

Scrutineers

That the scrutineers for Commission Green be Katharine Moore, Hugh John Cook, Brian Cornelius, Kate Crawford, Jean Leckie, Jean Wilson, Tara-Ann Wilson, Jacob Zacharias (Table #11)

Questions were raised regarding the number of scrutineers and that two scrutineers named were also named to other roles. Reference and Counsel was asked for a new enabling motion.

Reference and Counsel reported back.

Motion: Jean Wilson/Cari Copeman-Haynes

GC 39 2006 - 107

That Katherine Moore, Kate Crawford, Hugh John Cook be the scrutineers for Commission Green.

Carried

Agenda

That the agenda as circulated be accepted and approved by Commission Green as its agenda, on the understanding that the agenda may be changed as necessary, by the action of the Commission, or by action of the Commission on the recommendation of the Business Committee.

Carried**Anglican – United Church Dialogue (GCE 14)**

Proposal GCE 14 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk**GC 39 2006 - 108**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “Anglican – United Church Dialogue”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Direct, for priority setting and direction, the recommendation for the continuation of the Anglican - United Church Dialogue to the Executive of the General Council following the 39th General Council 2006.

Discussion and questions raised by the court were addressed by Gail Allen, Staff. Statements reflected the need for all theological faculties to be involved in the “Anglican-United Church Dialogue”. Concern was expressed that the Evangelical Lutheran Church be included in the third point of the motion. A request was given to have the words clarity setting and direction included in the motion.

Motion - Carried**Ecumenical Shared Ministries (GCE 15)**

Proposal GCE 15 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk**GC 39 2006 - 109**

That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt as policy:

1. That ministry personnel from partner denominations with which The United Church of Canada participates in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry not be designated as ordained/ diaconal supply, and therefore that references to Ecumenical Shared Ministries be removed from section 342: Diaconal Supply or Ordained Supply.
2. Direct the General Secretary to develop a new section in *The Manual*, to be approved by the Executive of the General Council, which recognizes Ecumenical Shared Ministries as a unique category of pastoral relationship and clarifies expectations of United Church personnel and those in other denominations.
3. That these changes take into account the “Guidelines for Pastoral Relations” offered in the *Handbook for a Canadian Ecumenical Shared Ministry*.

Carried**A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada (GCE 5)**

Proposal GCE 5 was introduced.

Discussion centered on how the court could evaluate the proposed actions. Points were raised against this motion due to increased funding and staffing. Further discernment raised concerns on Intercultural Ministries including the omission of the deaf ministries and disabled ministries that appeared to be lost in the context of the proposal.

There was a request that the motion be dealt with seriatim.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk **GC 39 2006 - 110**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information and affirm the directions of the report “A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada”.

Carried

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk **GC 39 2006 - 111**

2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.

Carried

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk **GC 39 2006 - 112**

3. Commit The United Church of Canada to becoming an intercultural church, and that intercultural dimensions of ministries be a denominational priority in living out its commitment to racial justice, where there is mutually respectful diversity and full and equitable participation of all Aboriginal, Francophone, ethnic minority, and ethnic majority constituencies in the total life, mission, and practices of the whole church.

Carried

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk **GC 39 2006 - 113**

4. Direct the Executive of the General Council that Ethnic ministries, in partnership with the Aboriginal, and Francophone ministries, continue to lead The United Church of Canada in its efforts to become an intercultural church, by “act[ing] justly within its own structures, courts, policies, and practice”*.

Carried

*Act Justly, Section 3 of The United Church of Canada Anti-Racism Policy from the 38th General Council 2003

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk **GC 39 2006 - 114**

5. Receive for information the “Proposed Actions”.

Carried

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk **GC 39 2006 - 115**

6. Refer the “Proposed Actions” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Carried

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk **GC 39 2006 - 116**

7. Direct that the Executive of the General Council ensure that Support to Local Ministries be included in further development of A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada specifically for the inclusion of the Deaf and the disabled.

Carried

Motion: Desmond Parsons/Cheryl Kinney-Matheson **GC 39 2006 - 117**

8. And that Ethnic Ministries be included in the planning, development and implementation in all programs such as Emerging Spirit which involve reaching out to our communities.

Defeated

Task Group regarding Educational Requirements for Ethnic Ministers (TOR 1) (Green 1)

Proposal TOR 1 and 10 were introduced and discussed and a new proposal (Green 1) was presented.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk **GC 39 2006 - 118**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Direct, for priority setting, the Executive of the General Council to establish a Task Group to review the educational and admission requirements for Ethnic Ministers, including but not limited to the following:
 - Seminary training for clergy whose first language is not English and who wish to transfer to The United Church of Canada in their own language;
 - Summer intensive programs taught in languages other than English to equip clergy from other countries to minister in their mother tongues to communities in Canada;
 - Scholarships to students who are fluent in other languages who wish to enter the ministry;
 - Settlement not only to pastoral charges but also to ethnic communities not being served;
 - Ways to facilitate and encourage the establishment of new ethnic ministries
 - Ways to use our United Church of Canada mutuality in mission program to bring clergy from partner denominations to serve in particular ethnic communities in Canada;
 - Ways to invite returning overseas personnel who are fluent in a culture and language other than English to minister to those ethnic communities within Canada;
 - Ways to partner with congregations of other ethnic origins to begin to plant churches in Canada.
 - The United Church of Canada's educational and language requirements for ethnic ministers seeking admission into The United Church of Canada
2. That no further action be taken on TOR 10 and TOR 1.

Carried

Motion: Betty Kelly/George Bott **GC 39 2006 - 119**

To extend the order of the day till 11:00 pm.

Carried

Circle and Cross: Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality (GCE 8)

Proposal GCE 8 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 120

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information and affirm the directions of the report “Circle and Cross: Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Receive for information the Proposed Actions for Circle and Cross (on purple pages as found on COMM 251-252).
4. Direct for priority setting, the Proposed Actions for Circle and Cross to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Carried

Partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples in Healing the Church and the World (GCE 16)

Proposal GCE 16 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 121

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Recognizes our historical legacy and desires to transform our relationship with Aboriginal people to an equal and joint partnership in healing the church and the world in the Spirit of Christ with the active partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples of The United Church of Canada.

Discussion and concerns were raised regarding the wording of the motion including whether or not the church can or cannot transform its legacy.

Motion - Withdrawn

Motion: Alan Potter/Tom Sawyer

GC 39 2006 - 122

To defer the above proposal to the Business Committee to have it properly amended.

Carried

Motion: Janis Campbell/Betty Kelly

GC 39 2006 - 123

To refer Proposal GCE 16 to Reference and Counsel.

Carried

Motion: Jean Wilson/Lindsay Sword

GC 39 2006 - 124

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Acknowledging its historical legacy, The United Church of Canada transform its vision to that of an equal and joint partnership in healing the church and the world in the Spirit of Christ with the active partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples of The United Church of Canada.

Carried

National Aboriginal Consultations (HAM 4)

Proposal HAM 4 was introduced with discussion and clarification.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 125

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Affirm the need for a regular Aboriginal Consultation in which the First Nation members of our Church can meet and address issues in a manner consistent with cultural patterns, and that these Consultations occur every three years, at a time other than when General Council is in session;
2. Direct this work to the Executive of the General Council for priority setting and budgeting.
3. Direct the Executive of the General Council, in collaboration with representatives of the Aboriginal Community to develop a process by which there can be an ongoing dialogue between the members of the Aboriginal Consultation and the General Council.

Carried

Pastoral Letter on Same-Sex Marriage (SK3, LON 9, MNWO 5, Green 2)

With reference to Proposals MNWO 5, SK 3, and LON 9 a new proposal (Green 2) was introduced. Discussion on the new proposal centered on the phrasing and the use of words.

There was a request that the motion be dealt with seriatim.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 126

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Direct the General Secretary to ensure that a Pastoral Letter be sent to all Presbyteries/Districts, Sessions (or equivalent) and Ministry Personnel:
 - Encouraging ongoing study of “Passion and Freedom” and “Of Love and Justice” and other study resources concerning marriage;
 - Encouraging continued development of marriage policies;
 - Encouraging Ministry Personnel and Sessions (or equivalent) to strengthen their covenantal relationships as they struggle together where there is disagreement about marriage policy;
 - Encouraging that where there is difference of opinion between the Session (or equivalent) and the minister around the performing of same-sex marriages, that they make every effort to make other suitable arrangements;
 - Encouraging, among congregations and within Presbyteries, the sharing of stories and resources related to the development of marriage policies.

Carried - with 10 abstentions

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 127

2. Direct the General Secretary to determine ways in which same-sex marriage could be provided in all Conferences of The United Church of Canada in order to ensure accessibility to marriage to all members and adherents.

Carried – with 8 abstentions

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 128

3. That no further action be taken on Proposals MNWO 5, SK 3 and LON 9.

Carried – with 8 abstentions

Consistency in Same-Sex Marriage Policy (SK 4)

Proposal SK 4 was introduced with discussion. A strong sentiment among Commissioners was that the majority present were not against same sex marriages. Discussion and questions

included looking for a way forward without raising confrontations between Session and ministry personnel.

Reflections from the response sheets were shared by Brian Cornelius.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 129

That the 39th General Council 2006 take no action on proposal SK 4.

Carried – with 6 abstentions

Achieving Equity Between Lay and Ordered Past Presidents, and Lay Past Presidents and Past Moderators (ANW 4)

Proposal ANW 4 was introduced and discussion took place on the question of a remit and the wording including the strength of using the word member as opposed to persons.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 130

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Authorize a Remit to the Presbyteries to amend Basis of Union:

6.2.12 “who are Past Presidents or Past Leading Elders of Conference whose congregational membership is within the jurisdiction of Presbytery within the Conference they served as Presidents or Leading Elders”.

Amend Section 310 (b) of *The Manual* to add a sub-section xii, “who are Past Presidents or Past Leading Elders of Conference whose congregational membership is within the jurisdiction of a Presbytery within the Conference they served as President or Leading Elder”.

Carried

Presbytery Status of Retired Lay Ministers (MTU 2)

Proposal MTU 2 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 131

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Authorize a Remit to the Basis of Union,

6.2.13 allowing lay pastoral ministers and staff associates to remain members of Presbytery upon retirement.

Amend section 365.1 (e) of *The Manual* allowing lay pastoral ministers and staff associates to remain members of Presbytery upon retirement.

Carried

Green 3

Motion: Peter Scott/Marion Pardy

GC 39 2006 - 132

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Ask the General Secretary for a ruling on whether Section 010(a) of *The Manual*, which refers to “The members of the Church entitled to all church privileges”, prevents a Session from denying marriage to any member of the church.

Carried

Manual Committee Report (Green 4)**Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk****GC 39 2006 - 133**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Receive the Manual Committee Report for information.

Carried**Lay Presidency at the Sacraments (GCE 4)**

Proposal GCE 4 was introduced and comments and questions were received from table groups.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk**GC 39 2006 - 134**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the “Lay Presidency at the Sacraments” report with particular attention to the following paragraphs;

Polity

The United Church of Canada is conciliar, meaning that its structural constitution belongs to councils that complement each other in governing the Church. Authority and responsibility reside in the General Council for determining doctrine and polity, in the Conferences for ordering and designating ministry, in the Presbyteries for ensuring accountability in ministry and in the Sessions (or comparable congregational courts) for overseeing the administration of the sacraments.

Ministry

Ministry is shared throughout the United Church. Upon the baptized and those received into full communion rests a commitment to ministry that informs the discipleship of the *laos*, the whole people of God. Diverse gifts are offered and recognized for the upbuilding of the local community of faith, for the church universal and for the world in which the church is set. Amidst the *laos*, the United Church, through call, discernment and preparation, identifies those whom it sets apart variously by ordination (to Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care), commissioning (to Education, Service and Pastoral Care) and designation to particular functions. Ordained, Diaconal and Lay Pastoral Ministers comprise this group which is augmented by Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training, Student Interns, Candidate Supplies, Intern Supplies, Student Supplies, and Diaconal supplies.

Sacraments

The United Church acknowledges two sacraments: Baptism and The Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion). A range of theological images undergird the perception of the sacraments in the United Church. Baptism signifies God’s grace by incorporating souls into a covenanted community to which they belong. Holy Communion variously quickens and mediates the dynamics of remembrance, celebration, covenant, renewal, atonement, pledge of the Messianic banquet, community and a political act. They are signs and seals of the covenant created by the life, death and resurrection of Christ. They are means of grace by which Christ quickens, strengthens and comforts faith. They are ordinances by which the United Church confesses Christ and is “visibly distinguished from the rest of the world”. (Basis of Union). Their administration and observance call for signs of that distinction.

Presidency

Many conditions obtain for the sacraments to be rightly administered. Among them is the requirement of a presider, one who officiates. It is for the sake of order that the United

Church grants authority to persons to preside. The presider signifies the ministries of Christ, the church universal and the assembled community.

Authority and Accountability

Authority to preside at sacraments in the United Church is granted ex officio to Ordained Ministers. Conferences regularly give licenses to administer the sacraments to Diaconal and Lay Pastoral Ministers and exceptionally to the other designed ministries. Conditions for the granting of such license are usually some form of covenanted ministry and engagement in paid accountable ministry and appropriate training. In the opinion of the General Secretary of the General Council: “The Session and Conference have separate and distinct responsibilities in relation to the Sacraments under our Polity... While the Conference determines who may administer the Sacraments, the Session determines when and how the Sacraments are to be administered within the Congregation.

Availability of Ministry Personnel

The question of lay presidency at the sacraments arises when two expectations are not met:

- i. That there will be sufficient ministry personnel available and positioned to administer the sacraments to all congregations
 - ii. That congregations shall according to need, i.e., regularly and frequently, have access to the administration of the sacraments.
2. Establish an office to be known as Sacraments Elder.
 3. Instruct the General Secretary to:
 - a. Determine an appropriate qualification process for this office including a standard set of outcomes for the course for Sacraments Elders, to be shared with Conferences for their use upon request;
 - b. Revise *The Manual* to include licensing procedures for Sacraments Elders as recommended in the Lay Presidency at the Sacraments Report.
 - c. Examine General Council policies for recruiting and retaining paid accountable ministers with a view to supplying sufficient ministry personnel licensed to administer the sacraments.
 4. Instruct the Committee on Theology and Faith to undertake a thorough reflection on Ministry and Sacraments, to serve as context for the further development of these processes.

Motion to amend: Katherine Christie/ Joanne Knobbe

Add “and Staff Associates” to the end of the paragraph entitled “Ministry”

Under the heading “Availability of Ministry Personnel” #3 Change “Instruct” to “Direct”

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the “Lay Presidency at the Sacraments” report with particular attention to the following paragraphs;

Polity

The United Church of Canada is conciliar, meaning that its structural constitution belongs to councils that complement each other in governing the Church. Authority and responsibility reside in the General Council for determining doctrine and polity, in the Conferences for ordering and designating ministry, in the Presbyteries for ensuring accountability in ministry and in the Sessions (or comparable congregational courts) for overseeing the administration

of the sacraments.

Ministry

Ministry is shared throughout the United Church. Upon the baptized and those received into full communion rests a commitment to ministry that informs the discipleship of the *laos*, the whole people of God. Diverse gifts are offered and recognized for the upbuilding of the local community of faith, for the church universal and for the world in which the church is set. Amidst the *laos*, the United Church, through call, discernment and preparation, identifies those whom it sets apart variously by ordination (to Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care), commissioning (to Education, Service and Pastoral Care) and designation to particular functions. Ordained, Diaconal and Lay Pastoral Ministers comprise this group which is augmented by Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training, Student Interns, Candidate Supplies, Intern Supplies, Student Supplies, ~~and~~ Diaconal supplies and Staff Associates.

Sacraments

The United Church acknowledges two sacraments: Baptism and The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). A range of theological images undergird the perception of the sacraments in the United Church. Baptism signifies God's grace by incorporating souls into a covenanted community to which they belong. Holy Communion variously quickens and mediates the dynamics of remembrance, celebration, covenant, renewal, atonement, pledge of the Messianic banquet, community and a political act. They are signs and seals of the covenant created by the life, death and resurrection of Christ. They are means of grace by which Christ quickens, strengthens and comforts faith. They are ordinances by which the United Church confesses Christ and is "visibly distinguished from the rest of the world". (Basis of Union). Their administration and observance call for signs of that distinction.

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The question of lay presidency at the sacraments arises when two expectations are not met:

- i. That there will be sufficient ministry personnel available and positioned to administer the sacraments to all congregations
 - ii. That congregations shall according to need, i.e., regularly and frequently, have access to the administration of the sacraments.
2. Establish an office to be known as Sacraments Elder.
 3. ~~Instruct~~ Direct the General Secretary to:

- a. Determine an appropriate qualification process for this office including a standard set of outcomes for the course for Sacraments Elders, to be shared with Conferences for their use upon request;
 - b. Revise *The Manual* to include licensing procedures for Sacraments Elders as recommended in the Lay Presidency at the Sacraments Report.
 - c. Examine General Council policies for recruiting and retaining paid accountable ministers with a view to supplying sufficient ministry personnel licensed to administer the sacraments.
4. Instruct the Committee on Theology and Faith to undertake a thorough reflection on Ministry and Sacraments, to serve as context for the further development of these processes.

Accountability for the Canada-Central America four Free Trade Agreement (MNWO 8)

Official French version of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada (M&O 10)

Inclusion of ‘mail-in ballot’ process in *Manual* (MAR 1)

Timing for Presbytery Appointments and Settlement of Ordered Ministry (MAR 2)

Decision-making and Administrative Processes of The United Church of Canada (BC 6)

Rules governing the sharing of a church building by two congregations (M&O 12)

Decisions Not Subject to Appeal, Individuals in the Admission or Re-Admission Process (GS 14)

Elders (GS 17)

National Extra Appeals (GS 29)

Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures (GS 39)

Motion: Brian Cornelius/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 135

That the 39th General Council 2006 refer the following pieces of business to the Executive of the General Council:

MNWO 8 - Accountability for the Canada-Central America four Free Trade Agreement

M&O 10 - Official French Version of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada

MAR 1 - Inclusion of “Mail-in Ballot” Process in *The Manual*

MAR 2 - Timing for Presbytery Appointments and Settlement of Ordered Ministry

BC 6 - Decision-making and Administrative Processes of The United Church of Canada

M&O 12 - Rules Governing the Sharing of a Church Building by Two Congregations

GS 14 - Decisions Not Subject to Appeal, Individuals in the Admission or Re- Admission Process

GS 17 - Elders

GS 29 - National Extra Appeals

GS 39 - Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures

Carried

General Council Commissioners (GCE 17)

Proposal GCE 17 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 136

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. authorize the General Secretary, General Council to appoint a task group:

- (i) to review the number of Commissioners to the General Council and the process for calculating such number, including the formula “ $N = 372$ ”; and
 - (ii) to report to the 40th General Council 2009 with recommendations as to any revisions to the number of Commissioners and the process for calculating such number that the task group may consider appropriate.
2. That the 39th General Council 2006 adopt the policy that the following persons be made *ex officio* Commissioners of the General Council:
 - (i) the persons elected by the Conferences to serve on the Executive of the General Council (presently twenty-six persons, two elected by each Conference);
 - (ii) the President-elect or Leading Elder-elect of each Conference; and
 - (iii) ten members elected by the General Council to serve on the Executive of the General Council (other than those elected by the Conferences or the Chairpersons of each of the Permanent Committees of the Executive of the General Council);
 3. That the 39th General Council 2006 authorize a remit to test the will of the church with respect to the policy change set out in paragraph 2.

Carried

“That We May Know Each Other: Statement on Christian-Muslim Relations” (GCE 9)

Proposal GCE 9 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 137

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report “That We May Know Each Other” and the Preamble referring to the report.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Adopt the following statements:

As an act of witness to our desire to find new ways of understanding and working with Muslim neighbours for the sake of the well-being of our world, The United Church of Canada:

Affirms that Christianity and Islam are in essence religions of peace, mercy, justice, and compassion.

Acknowledges hostility and misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims and between Christianity and Islam.

Affirms a vision of Muslim and Christian relations no longer bound by past histories, and free from ignorance, indifference, and ill will.

Affirms that The United Church of Canada is committed to a journey towards reconciliation, understanding, and co-operation with our Muslim neighbours.

Affirms that we share with Muslims a belief in one God and a common heritage through Abraham.

Affirms that God is creatively at work in the religious life of Muslims and Christians.

Acknowledges another common bond in that Jesus, as understood in Islam, is accorded special honour as a prophet in the Qur’an and by Muslims.

Acknowledges the prophetic witness of Muhammad, and that the mercy, compassion, and justice of God are expressed in the Qur’an, which is regarded by Muslims as the Word of God.

Affirms that God, whose love we have experienced in Jesus Christ as boundless and resourceful, works creatively and redemptively in us and in others.

Affirms that The United Church of Canada is committed to a vision that leads us to work with Muslims and others for peace and justice for all humanity.

Invites all people of The United Church of Canada to participate in conversation and study that upholds and respects the integrity and faithful witness of our traditions.

Encourages all people of The United Church of Canada to seek out opportunities to work together with Muslims to seek justice and resist evil for the sake of the world we all inhabit.

Carried

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (MTU 3)

Proposal MTU 3 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 138

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples as the guiding principles in The United Church of Canada's ongoing work of establishing right relationship with First Nations people;

And that the RCAP recommendations form the basis of our public witness and prophetic voice.

Carried

Remits authorized by 38th General Council 2003 (GS 35)

Proposal GS 35 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 139

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Direct the General Secretary to enact Remit Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5, effective upon the release of the Record of Proceedings of this 39th General Council 2006; and
2. Direct the General Secretary to revise *The Manual* to reflect the enactment.

Carried

Omnibus Motion

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 140

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Take the action requested in the following proposals:

Proposal GS 33 - Nominations to the Executive of the General Council and Committees of the General Council

Proposal GS 37 - Powers of the Executive of the General Council

Proposal GS 38 - Committees of the General Council

~~Proposal GS 39 - Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures~~

Proposal GS 4 - Licensed Lay Worship Leaders

Proposal GS 7 - Corresponding Privileges

Proposal GS 8 - Definition of "Decision"

Proposal GS 9 - Definition of "Polity"

Proposal GS 11 - Temporal Matters and Disbanding of Congregations

Proposal GS 13 - Grounds for Appeal

~~Proposal GS 14 – Decisions Not Subject to Appeal, Individuals in the Admission or Re-Admission Process~~

Proposal GS 16 - Ministry Personnel on Joint Needs Assessment Committee

Proposal GS 18 - Official Board Committees

Proposal GS 21 - Congregations Disbanding

Proposal GS 24 - Membership Requirement for Conference Executive Secretaries

Proposal GS 25 - Balance between Ministry Personnel and Lay Members

Proposal GS 26 - Membership Requirement for General Secretary, General Council

Proposal GS 27 - Duties of the General Secretary, General Council for Budget

Proposal GS 28 - Duties of the General Secretary, General Council for Retirees

Proposal GS 30 - Motion to Table

Proposal GS 31 - Committee of the Whole

Carried

General Secretaries as Commissioners (GS 5) (Green 5)

Proposal GS 5 was introduced with questions raised on how this should be dealt with until the next General Council.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 – 141

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Authorize a Remit to the Presbyteries with respect to the following changes to the Basis of Union, in order to reflect the re-organization of the General Council offices:

8.0 The General Council shall consist of:

...

8.3 the Chairperson or alternate of each General Council Division, ~~and three of the General Council Secretaries.~~

Carried

Please note: There is no motion number GC 39 2006 - 142

Circle and Cross: Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality (GCE 8)

Partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples in Healing the Church and the World (GCE 16)

National Aboriginal Consultations (HAM 4) (Green 6)

Having read the documents Circle and Cross GCE 8, National Aboriginal Consultations HAM 4, and Partnership of Aboriginal People GCE 16 and having heard the teachings of the elder yesterday a new proposal Green 6 was introduced.

There was a request that the motion be dealt with seriatim.

Motion: Peter Scott/David Giuliano

GC 39 2006 - 143

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Refer with support in principle the following:

1. That for every dollar spent on the Emerging Spirit Project from the beginning, there be a dollar spent on healing and rebuilding relation with aboriginal peoples.

Defeated

Motion: Peter Scott/David Giuliano

GC 39 2006 - 144

2. That the Moderator be requested to make the visiting of aboriginal congregations and communities a priority over the next three years.

Carried

Motion: Peter Scott/David Giuliano

GC 39 2006 - 145

3. That all United Church bodies occupying treaty lands be encouraged to approach the First Nations owners of the lands and acknowledging their rightful ownership of the land and entering into conversation about respectful and appropriate ways to remain in their territory or ways to return the land to its rightful owners.

Carried

Motion: Peter Scott/David Giuliano

GC 39 2006 - 146

4. Use our resources to work with Aboriginal communities to resolve treaty issues with Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments.

Carried

Motion: Peter Scott/David Giuliano

GC 39 2006 - 147

5. Refer the three related documents cited above to the Executive of the General Council for development and implementation of the work.

Carried

Audit Requirements (GS 6)

Proposal GS 6 was introduced. Discussion and questions were addressed including the definition of audit.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 148

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Add a definition of “audit” to section 001 of the By-Laws, as follows:

[new] **“Audit”** means an independent examination of financial records, to determine the accuracy of financial statements, to determine whether financial transactions have been properly recorded, and to identify potential weaknesses in the accounting systems. Such an examination may be conducted by a public accountant as an audit or review engagement, or by an individual who is familiar with bookkeeping and who understands the purpose of an independent review of financial records. For Pastoral Charges or Congregations, these procedures include:

- (a) ensuring that there is segregation of duties among two (2) or more people who are at arm’s length;
- (b) examining the minute book of the Committee of Stewards or equivalent;
- (c) examining for accuracy the books of record, by reviewing cash receipts, cash disbursements, payroll, and general ledger transactions;
- (d) ensuring proper authorization of transactions;
- (e) reviewing bank reconciliations for the year;
- (f) ensuring that all donated monies designated for the Mission and Service Fund have been forwarded to the United Church on a monthly basis;

- (g) reviewing the procedures used in the record-keeping of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, and ensuring that the chance of error or fraud is minimized;
- (h) verifying cash receipts against charitable donation receipts issued; and
- (i) ensuring that the annual information return was completed and submitted not later than six (6) months after the previous fiscal year-end.

And

That the 39th General Council 2006 amend section 167, section 170, subsection 187(d), paragraph 384(b)v., subsection 464(g), paragraph 814(c)i., and subsection 856(d) of the By-Laws, as follows:

167 The Committee of Stewards shall present to the annual meeting of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation:

- (a) a detailed statement of its receipts and expenditures, ~~duly audited~~ for which an Audit has been performed ~~or subject to review engagement~~;
- (b) a detailed statement of the receipts and expenditures of the Board of Trustees, ~~duly audited~~ for which an Audit has been performed ~~or subject to review engagement~~; and

...

170 Treasurer. The Committee of Stewards shall elect annually from among its members a Treasurer. ... At the end of the financial year the Treasurer shall present a statement for which an Audit has been performed, certified by the auditor or auditors appointed by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation or the Official Board.

187 Treasurer of the Mission and Service Fund. It shall be the duty of the Official Board to appoint a separate Treasurer of the Mission and Service Fund for the Pastoral Charge, who shall:

...

- (d) present a complete ~~audited~~ report for which an Audit has been performed, to the Official Board and to the annual meeting of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation(s)

384 [Presbytery] Finance Committee.

...

- (b) Duties. It shall be the duty of the Committee:

...

- v. to keep accounts, ~~which shall be audited and~~ A detailed statement of receipts and expenditures, for which an Audit has been performed, shall be presented to the Presbytery annually. Interim financial statements shall be given as required by the Presbytery.

464 [Conference] Finance Committee.

...

- (g) Budget Submissions. Each participant in the Conference Fund shall prepare annually a budget setting forth its estimated requirements for the ensuing calendar year, together with ~~an audited~~ a financial statement for which an Audit has been performed, for the previous year, for submission to the Finance Committee not later than April 15th of each year. The Finance Committee shall have authority to request from participants in the Conference Fund such information as it may require.

814 [Presbyterial United Church Women] Annual Meeting.

...

(c) Duties and Powers. The annual meeting shall:

...

ii. elect officers, an auditor ~~or reviewer~~(as necessary), and delegates and alternates to the Conference United Church Women; ...

856 Responsibilities of [*The United Church Observer*] Board of Directors.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors shall be:

...

(d) to review and approve the annual financial statement for which an Audit has been performed, for presentation to the annual meeting of members.

d) to review and approve the annual ~~audited~~ financial statement for which an Audit has been performed, for presentation to the annual meeting of members

Carried

Alternative to Presbytery Audit (SK 2)

Proposal SK 2 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 149

That having adopted Proposal GS 6, which satisfies the intent of Proposal SK 2, that no action be taken.

Carried

Quorum Requirements (GS 10)

Proposal GS 10 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 150

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Amend the definition of Quorum in section 001 of the By-Laws, as follows:

“Quorum” Except where a higher number or a specific composition is provided in these By-Laws, “Quorum” means:

(a) in any meeting of a Pastoral Charge, Congregation, Session, Committee of Stewards, Official Board, Church Board or Church Council, of those entitled to vote, the lesser of twenty (20) persons and one-third (1/3);

~~(a)~~ (b) in any meeting of a Presbytery, a Conference, or the General Council, not less than one-fifth (1/5) of those entitled to vote, of whom at least one-third (1/3) shall be members of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training, or Staff Associates, and at least one-third (1/3) shall be lay persons except those appointed as Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training, or Staff Associates; and

~~(c)~~ (b) in any other meeting, including a meeting of the Executive or the Sub-Executive of a Presbytery, a Conference, or the General Council, of those entitled to vote, the lesser of twenty (20) persons and one-third (1/3).

Carried

Changing the definition of Quorum (MTU 4)

Proposal MTU 4 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 151

That the 39th General Council 2006:

That the definition of a Quorum in the Basis of Union be changed through the Remit process as follows:

1. Delete the words “a Presbytery” from Definitions Section 001 “Quorum” of *The Manual* P.43.
2. Add a separate subsection titled “Definition of Quorum for Presbytery” which shall read as follows:

- “The quorum for a meeting of a Presbytery shall be: not less than one third (1/3) of the members of the settled, retained, or appointed Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training, or Staff Associates on the roll of Presbytery, and
- not less than one third (1/3) of the lay members on the roll of Presbytery.”

Motion to Amend: Jean Leckie/ Marion Pardy

Refer the concerns raised in Proposal MTU 4 to the Executive of the General Council.

Carried

Motion - Carried

Quorum at a Meeting of Presbytery (SK 1)

Proposal SK 1 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 152

To refer the concerns raised in Proposal SK 1 to the Executive of the General Council.

Carried

Notice Read “from the pulpit” (GS 12)

Proposal GS 12 was introduced with changes. Discussion centred on the definitions of pulpit, Manual Committee with clarification. It was determined that whoever presides during worship and reads from the pulpit is the officiating minister.

Motion: Brian Cornelius/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 153

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Adopt the policy that, for the sake of clarity and consistency in all sections of *The Manual* that are impacted by the Trusts of Model Deed, notices for all meetings of a Pastoral Charge or Congregation shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship;

and that sections 112, 257, and 258 of the By-Laws be changed to reflect this policy, as follows:

112(a) ... notice of the meeting shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, ...

112(b) ... notice of the meeting shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, ...

[new] **112(c)** When the object of the meeting is:

i) to deal with matters referred to in Section 9 of the Trusts of Model Deed; ... notice of the meeting shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation on each of the two (2) preceding Sundays on which public worship is held. For greater clarity, the earliest time at which the meeting may take place is on the day immediately following the second Sunday at which the notice of meeting was read during public worship. Before notice of a meeting called for the objects specified in paragraph (i) is made public, a written notice shall be given to the Secretary of the Presbytery and the Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to that Pastoral Charge. The Secretary of the Presbytery shall promptly inform the Presbytery Property Committee. ...

And that remaining paragraphs be renumbered accordingly.

257 ... notice that shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation ...

258(b) ... notice ... shall be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship and may also be inserted in the printed order of worship of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation ...

258(d) ... the Presbytery may cause notice to be read from the pulpit by the minister or person officiating as minister during public worship ...

Carried

Nominations Committee (GS 15)

Proposal GS 15 was introduced.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 154

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Add a new section 117 to the By-Laws, as follows:

[new] **117** Nominations Committee. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation at its annual meeting ~~shall~~ may appoint a Committee to assume responsibility for nominations. That Committee shall propose the names of persons who are eligible, suitable, and willing to serve in those positions for which the Pastoral Charge, Congregation, Session, Committee of Stewards, Official Board, Church Board, or Church Council requests nominations.

And that the 39th General Council 2006 amend section 122 of the By-Laws, as follows:

122 All Ministry Personnel settled in or appointed to a Pastoral Charge shall be ex officio members of all Committees of the Pastoral Charge except for:

- (a) the Joint Search Committee of the Pastoral Charge and the Presbytery and;
- (b) the Ministry and Personnel Committee of the Official Board or Church Board or Church Council; and
- (c) the Nominations Committee of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation.

Carried

Church Board Committees (GS 19)

Proposal GS 19 was introduced.

Motion: Brian Cornelius/Ron Holotuk**GC 39 2006 - 155**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Amend sections 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, and 213 of the By-Laws, as follows:

208 Normally each member of the Church Board shall serve on a Committee according to interest or calling. Other members and Adherents of the Congregation(s) may be encouraged to serve as members ~~at-large~~ of Committees of the Church Board. From among the members of the Church Board, the Pastoral Charge or the Church Board shall ~~select~~ elect officers to perform the functions of a Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

209 Faith Formation and Christian Education. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation ~~It shall be the duty of the Church Board~~ shall establish, and ~~to appoint~~ elect the members of, a Committee to address the faith formation and Christian education needs of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, as detailed in section 242. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to the Committee.

210 Manse Committee. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation ~~It shall be the duty of the Church Board~~ shall, where applicable, establish, and ~~to appoint~~ elect, where applicable, the members of, a Manse Committee as detailed in section 243. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to the Manse Committee.

211 Ministry and Personnel Committee. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation ~~It shall be the duty of the Church Board~~ shall establish, and ~~to appoint~~ elect the members of, a Ministry and Personnel Committee as detailed in section 244. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

212 Stewardship Committee. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation ~~It shall be the duty of the Church Board~~ shall establish, and ~~to appoint~~ elect the members of, a ~~carefully selected~~ Stewardship Committee as detailed in section 245. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to the Stewardship Committee.

213 Other. Responsibility for the other functions of ministry incumbent upon the Pastoral Charge may be fulfilled through a wide variety of Committees, ~~the~~ the number, nature, and duties of those Committees ~~which~~ shall be determined and defined by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation in its mission strategy. The members of those Committees shall be elected by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation. Where it has been authorized by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, the Church Board may elect additional members to those Committees.

Carried**Church Council Committees (GS 20)**

Proposal GS 20 was introduced.

Motion: Brian Cornelius/ Ron Holotuk**GC 39 2006 - 156**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Amend sections 217, 224, 225, 226, 227, and 228 of the By-Laws, as follows:

217 Members of Committees. Members of the Committees shall be elected by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation chosen from among the members and Adherents of the Congregation(s) for maximum participation, according to the number, qualifications, and method determined by the mission strategy of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation.

224 Faith Formation and Christian Education. The Pastoral Charge or Congregation shall establish, and elect the members of, a Committee to address the faith formation and Christian education needs of the Pastoral Charge or Congregation, as detailed in section 242.

225 Manse Committee. The Pastoral Charge shall where applicable, establish, and where applicable, elect the members of, a Manse Committee as detailed in section 243.

226 Ministry and Personnel Committee. The Pastoral Charge shall establish, and appoint the members of, a Ministry and Personnel Committee as detailed in section 244.

227 Stewardship Committee. The Pastoral Charge shall establish, and elect the members of, a carefully selected Stewardship Committee as detailed in section 245.

228 Other. Responsibility for the other functions of ministry incumbent upon the Pastoral Charge may be fulfilled through a wide variety of Committees, ~~the~~. The number, nature, and duties of those Committees which shall be determined and defined by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation in its mission strategy. The members of those Committees shall be elected by the Pastoral Charge or Congregation.

Carried

Membership of Presbytery Executive (GS 22)

Proposal GS 22 was introduced.

Motion: Brian Cornelius/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 157

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Adopt the policy that the Presbytery be free to choose the most appropriate composition of its Executive with as little limitation as necessary;

and that section 322 of the By-Laws be changed to reflect this policy, as follows:

322 Executive. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery to provide for the continuing work of the Presbytery between regular meetings by appointing an Executive. Such Executive shall consist of at least five (5) persons, of whom at least ~~two (2)~~ one (1) shall be ~~lay persons~~ a lay person other than a Lay Pastoral Minister, Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training, or Staff Associate, and at least one (1) shall be a member of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Minister, Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training, or Staff Associate. ~~;~~ if the Executive consists of more than five (5) persons, the proportion of lay members shall be maintained. Such Executive has all of the duties and powers of the Presbytery unless the Presbytery otherwise determines. When the Executive acts for the Presbytery between regular meetings, its actions shall be reported to the Presbytery for information and for record in the minutes.

Motion to Amend: Bruce Hutchinson/Liz Carter

Add "District" wherever it says "Presbytery" to read Presbytery/District.

In 322 after "Staff Associate" add "if the Executive consists of more than five (5) persons, the proportion of lay members shall be maintained"

Carried

Motion as Amended - Carried

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Adopt the policy that the Presbytery/District be free to choose the most appropriate composition of its Executive with as little limitation as necessary;

and that section 322 of the By-Laws be changed to reflect this policy, as follows:

322 Executive. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery/District to provide for the continuing work of the Presbytery/District between regular meetings by appointing an Executive. Such Executive shall consist of at least five (5) persons, of whom at least ~~two~~ ~~(2)~~ one (1) shall be ~~lay persons~~ a lay person other than a Lay Pastoral Minister, Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training, or Staff Associate, and at least one (1) shall be a member of the Order of Ministry, Lay Pastoral Minister, Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training, or Staff Associate if the Executive consists of more than five (5) persons, the proportion of lay members shall be maintained. ~~if the Executive consists of more than five (5) persons, the proportion of lay members shall be maintained.~~ Such Executive has all of the duties and powers of the Presbytery unless the Presbytery otherwise determines. When the Executive acts for the Presbytery between regular meetings, its actions shall be reported to the Presbytery for information and for record in the minutes.

Moderator as Presiding Officer of the General Council (GS 36)

Proposal GS 36 was introduced. Discussion centered on agreement with the terms but not the rationale. There were questions with clarity needed regarding the “Secretary is the Chief Executive Officer”. Discussion continued around inaccuracies of taking the duties in *The Manual* and placing them in the Basis of Union.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk**GC 39 2006 - 158**

To extend the time of adjournment to 11:30 p.m. August 17, 2006

Carried**Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/ Ron Holotuk****GC 39 2006 - 159**

To refer Proposal GS 36 to the Executive of the General Council.

Carried**A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada (GCE 5) (Green 8)****Motion: Brian Cornelius/Ron Holotuk****GC 39 2006 - 160**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Refer to the Executive of the General Council for their consideration the following:

Direct the Executive of the General Council to perform an evaluation of the 10 years of the Ethnic Ministries Unit as a way of celebrating the 10 years of the Ethnic Ministries Unit and in preparation for the future.

Defeated**Green 9****Motion: Brian Cornelius/Ron Holotuk****GC 39 2006 - 161**

That the 39th General Council 2006:

Refer to the Executive of the General Council for their consideration the following:

In response to Proposal GCE 5, express to the Executive of the General Council its deep concern that new Ethnic Ministries Unit staff and resources are being sought for work which could be completed by current staff.

Carried

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Ron Holotuk

GC 39 2006 - 162

To Adjourn August 17, 2006 at 11:30 pm.

Carried

Co-chair, Paul Stott, closed the meeting with a litany, prayer, and blessing.

Friday, August 18, 2006

The Moderator opened with prayer and invited the Commissioners to hold the experiences from yesterday in their minds and to carry them into the days work including the silence in the morning and the long day and night of work in the Commissions.

Procedural Microphone

Barbara Reynolds spoke on a question of personal privilege concerning the lack of French at this General Council.

Message Group

Martha ter Kuile spoke about what the message group heard surfacing as they read and listened to the discernment practice. She noted the contrasts of silence and noise and the way people are together in discernment times and the way they are together in Commission times and asked: Are we an emerging Spirit church or are we an empire church?

Worship and Discernment

Martha Martin led worship and using the Ignatius practice of Examin, asked table groups to talk about the following:

- For what are you most grateful?
- For what are you least grateful?

Deb Bowman introduced the handout prepared by the Message Group on what they heard and observed to date – “What is surfacing in our discernment practice”. Conversation groups reviewed the handout and had the following conversations.

Conversations One and Two:

- What resonates for you?
- Why?
- What is missing?

Conversation Three:

- What were the common threads?

Feedback was given from the conversations and gratitude was expressed to the Council for their willingness to risk and participate in the discernment process.

Election of Moderator

The Moderator led the General Council in the New Creed and invited the General Secretary to preside over the election for the new Moderator. The General Secretary reviewed the voting procedures for the election followed by a time of silence and prayer.

The stewards distributed and collected the ballots for the first ballot.

Procedural Microphone

Two Commissioners rose on points of personal privilege. One Commissioner commented on the excess amount of paper used and hoped that this would be addressed in future General Councils. A second Commissioner raised a caution that the economic base of the area and the University is the forestry industry that supplies the paper.

Emerging Spirit

Keith Howard and Aaron McCarroll-Gallegos responded to concerns, comments, and questions regarding their presentation and clarified some of the points. Keith noted the goal of Emerging Spirit to develop the best material possible, test them, listen to the responses, and improve based on these responses.

Michelle Slater, Chair of the Business Committee, introduced and presented Proposal GS 32 – Emerging Spirit.

A concern was raised regarding the congregational commitment which would create a very real burden for small congregations. The Moderator asked that this concern be noted so that it will be taken into account when strategies are discussed. Discussion on the proposal took place.

Procedural Microphone

Stan McKay rose on a point of personal privilege and expressed a concern from the All Native Circle regarding language used in the Emerging Spirit response.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 163

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report on “Emerging Spirit”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statements to be developed by this General Council.
3. Approve in principle the Emerging Spirit Project as outlined in the report.
4. Direct the Executive of the General Council in November 2006 to consider an expenditure of up to \$10.5 million dollars for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 for the Emerging Spirit Project.
5. Direct the General Secretary to secure interim funding to initiate the media campaign for the Emerging Spirit Project in 2006.

Motion to Amend: Barry Rieder/Danielle Ayana James

Whereas the 39th General Council 2006 recognizes and affirms

- the hard work and excitement around the Emerging Spirit Program and the pastoral need it responds to
- We are convinced that this project needs to be rooted in our call to be a
 - Church that overcomes its complicity in Empire
 - Church that lives out its Apology to our First Nations people
 - An intercultural church

We direct the Executive of the General Council to

1. Receive for information the report on “Emerging Spirit”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement to be developed by this General Council.
3. Approve in principle the Emerging Spirit Project as outlined in the report, subject to the preamble outlined above.
4. Revision Emerging Spirit in consultation with Ethnic Ministries, Aboriginal Ministries, and the Empire Task Group;
5. Proceed cautiously with those elements of Emerging Spirit already developed that seem to be consistent with the foregoing approach;
6. Exercise appropriate concern over stewardship in the implementation of this program with particular reference to the proportion of funding given to congregations and to the campaign;
7. Direct the Executive of the General Council, in November 2006, to consider an expenditure of up to \$10.5 million for the years 2007, 2008, and 2009 for the Emerging Spirit Project.
8. Direct the General Secretary to secure interim funding to initiate the media campaign for the Emerging Spirit Project in 2006, in as much as the Executive of the General Council discerns that the project meets the concerns expressed here.

Defeated

Procedural Microphone

A concern was raised at the procedural microphone that there were many waiting to speak on the substance of the motion. Discussion on the motion continued.

The Moderator thanked the speakers and introduced table group time.

The Business Committee raised the concern from Stan McKay concerning the language used regarding Aboriginal people in the response presented. The Aboriginal members of the General Council requested that the business on the Emerging Spirit motion be postponed until they had time to reflect on everything that had taken place.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 164

That we postpone definitely this motion until 7:30 p.m. tonight.

Carried

A question was raised at the procedural microphone, whether all business should be postponed until all members of the General Council return. Cheryl Jourdain, Speaker of the All Native Circle, noted that the Aboriginal members had not yet left the court and that all the voting members of the All Native Circle, except for one, would remain. She stated that the Aboriginal members requested that the business continue.

Election of Moderator

It was agreed to proceed to receive the results from the first ballot before the Aboriginal members withdrew from the Court.

The General Secretary announced that Jim Angus, Patty Evans, David Giuliano, and Peter Scott would be on the second ballot. The General Secretary offered the appreciation of the court to Colin Swan for helping with the discernment for Moderator.

The stewards handed out and collected the second ballot for Moderator.

Statement of Faith

Michael Bourgeois affirmed the importance and value of all of our languages and gave a summary of the responses. He noted that of the 94 responses most gave strong affirmation to A Song of Faith. He noted the main questions and concerns and responded to these concerns.

As a result of the comments and feedback the following proposal was presented followed by time in table groups.

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- Adopt “A Song of Faith” in its English version as the statement of faith of The United Church of Canada for this generation of the church;
- Direct the General Secretary to ensure that it be faithfully translated into appropriate languages;
- Direct the General Secretary to ensure the development of appropriate resources for its use in faith formation and education, and for worship and liturgy; and
- Commend it to the church for reflection, study, and theological guidance of policy and practice.

The Moderator noted that if the proposal on the floor was made into a motion and carried, the Council would not proceed on Proposal GS 1, LON 2 or M&O 11.

Questions and concerns were expressed.

Motion: Catherine MacLean/Hannah Lee

GC 39 2006 - 165

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- Adopt “A Song of Faith” in its English version as the statement of faith of The United Church of Canada for this generation of the church;
- Direct the General Secretary to ensure that it be faithfully translated into appropriate languages;
- Direct the General Secretary to ensure the development of appropriate resources for its use in faith formation and education, and for worship and liturgy; and
- Commend it to the church for reflection, study and theological guidance of policy and practice.

Motion to Amend: Rick Magie/Richard Hollingsworth

That “The” statement of faith become “A” statement of faith.

Carried

The following amendment was proposed and ruled out of order because it asks for changes within the actual Statement rather than to the motion.

That the words “age and ability” be added in “The Song of Faith” after “cross boundaries of race, class, culture and gender”.

In a Point of Personal Privilege, it was suggested that the omission may have been an oversight and suggested that the Committee on Theology and Faith look for ways that “age and ability” could be added to “A Song of Faith” after “cross boundaries of race, class, culture, and gender”.

Election of Moderator

The General Secretary announced the third ballot for the election of Moderator and that Jim Angus, Patty Evans, and David Giuliano would be on the ballot. The General Secretary expressed the appreciation of the Court to Peter Scott for allowing his name to be put forward. The third ballot was handed out and collected by the stewards.

Statement of Faith

Motion: Matt Woodall/Donald MacPherson

GC 39 2006 - 166

That we call for an immediate vote for the motion as shown.

Carried

Motion - carried

Procedural Microphone

A concern was raised that A Statement of Faith was approved without a French translation. It was requested that the Executive of the General Council ensure that A Statement of Faith be rewritten in French as quickly as possible. The General Secretary gave his assurance that this will happen.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 167

That the 39th General Council 2006 reconvene at 7:00 p.m. tonight

Carried

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 168

Having adopted A Statement of Faith, that the 39th General Council 2006 take no action on Proposals LON 2, M&O 11, and GS 1.

Carried

Election of Moderator

The General Secretary announced that Jim Angus and David Giuliano will be on the fourth ballot for Moderator. The General Secretary expressed the appreciation of the Court to Patty Evans for allowing her name to be put forward. The stewards handed out and collected the fourth ballot.

Commission Reports

Michelle Slater welcomed the co-chairs of the Red, Green, and Blue Commissions. The co-chairs honoured the work of each Commission and noted the faithful work of the Commissions as they made their decisions.

Motion: Marion Carr/Heather Leffler

GC 39 2006 - 169

To receive the printed Commission reports for information.

Carried

Emerging Spirit

Motion to Amend: Sharon Moon/Howard Clark

At the end of point 2 add “and go forward, guided by the purpose statements that emerge from this Council; and that its implementation be overseen by an advisory group with intercultural representation.”

Concern was expressed about adding another level and it was noted that “Mending the World” is the lens through which all the mission work of the United Church is guided. The General Secretary noted that “Mending the World” is a significant document and describes the attributes of what the United Church is seeking to be. The document continues to have a formative place and influence in all our policies and work.

The Moderator ruled that the amendment was in order because it was different from the first amendment.

Motion to Amend the Amendment: Linda Kuschnik/Cathy Cryder

Add “and Affirm United” before “representation”.

Carried

Amendment - Defeated

Motion - Carried

- | |
|--|
| <p>That the 39th General Council 2006:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive for information the report on “Emerging Spirit”. 2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statements to be developed by this General Council. 3. Approve in principle the Emerging Spirit Project as outlined in the report. 4. Direct the Executive of the General Council in November 2006 to consider an expenditure of up to \$10.5 million dollars for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 for the Emerging Spirit Project. 5. Direct the General Secretary to secure interim funding to initiate the media campaign for the Emerging Spirit Project in 2006. |
|--|

Isolation in Ministry

Jim Blanchard reviewed the feedback on the Isolation in Ministry Report and addressed specific questions and concerns while noting the affirmations. He noted that this is an investment on behalf of the church to strengthen the pastoral covenants.

Election of Moderator

The General Secretary welcomed the new Moderator of The United Church of Canada, David Giuliano.

David Giuliano addressed the Court and thanked the other nominees noting the tremendous honour to have spent time with them. He thanked Commissioners for the honour and privilege of serving as the 39th Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

Motion: Jim Angus/Patty Evans

GC 39 2006 - 170

That we declare the vote unanimous in declaring David Giuliano Moderator.

Carried

Katherine Moore, chief scrutineer, thanked the scrutineers from table group 11, on behalf of the court, for their faithful work. She thanked the stewards for their work in distributing and collecting the ballots.

Motion: Katherine Moore/Jim Sinclair

GC 39 2006 - 171

That the ballots used in the election of the Moderator be destroyed.

Carried

The Moderator led a prayer of thanks for all the candidates and for the new Moderator.

Isolation in Ministry

Time was spent in table groups looking at the following proposal.

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the “Isolation in Ministry” report.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Refer the “Proposed Actions for Isolation in Ministry” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Order of the Day

An order of the day, to hear from our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, was reached.

Maggie McLeod, Robert Pike Jr., Barret Prettyshield, and Alberta Billy addressed the court in response to the deep concerns and perceived lack of respect for the First Nations people raised in the Emerging Spirits presentation.

Keith Howard addressed the Court with thanks and appreciation to the All Native Circle.

The Moderator offered prayer and noted that whenever one in the body of Christ is hurt, all are hurt. The Moderator asked for the advice of Stan McKay who gave the wisdom of the elders not to disrupt the work of the church.

The Conference Presidents recommended healing music and adjournment to the youth dance. They noted a learning of this General Council to walk together with humility and that no one speaks for another. The Council was silent to allow what happened to seep into the very bones of everyone present so that no one would forget and the Council was invited to learn afresh what it means to dance.

Closing Litany

The litany closed the time together.

Saturday, August 19, 2006

The Moderator opened with prayer and the reminder that truth is greater than us all. He asked that we have the humility and strength to give our hearts to the whole truth.

Residential Schools Steering Committee

Jamie Scott and Alvin Dixon reported on the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Jamie highlighted significant portions of the Agreement. Alvin identified members of the Steering Committee and noted that this landmark agreement offers an opportunity for closure for many former students as well as validating their experience as real.

As everyone in the Court stood, Jamie Scott symbolized the ongoing commitment of the United Church by offering the words of the 1998 Apology to Alvin Dixon.

Discernment and Worship

Debra Bowman introduced discernment and worship and talked about the challenges faced. The call to Worship was a PowerPoint presentation of the offerings on the message board. Worship was a reminder of the journey followed throughout this General Council.

Table groups were invited to relate their stories of the week by completing the following phrases:

And then

But before that

The Message Group brought forward all the discernments they had read and heard over the past week. The wisdom from the Council was read by the Moderator in the Call to Purpose.

In conversation groups the following questions were discussed:

Conversation One – Is there something that God is now calling me to become or do – a step I can take?

Conversation Two – What is God now calling us as the Church to become and to do?

The proposal including the call to purpose was presented.

Discussion on the proposal continued including concerns that not everything can be included. There was a suggestion that the prayer in this proposal be sent to each pastoral charge to be used as a service of regret and renewal. It was noted that this suggestion will be forwarded to the Executive of the General Council, for their information, if this becomes a motion which carries.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Martha ter Kuile

GC 39 2006 - 172

That for the following motion, youth forum participants be extended voting privileges.

Carried

Motion: Martha ter Kuile/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 – 173

That the 39th General Council 2006 affirm “Call to Purpose: A message from the church to the church” as below;

And direct it to the Executive of the General Council to inform the Executive as it gives leadership to the church in its expression of the Ministry of Jesus Christ:

39th General Council 2006: Call to Purpose

A message from the church to the church

What purpose lies at the heart of The United Church of Canada in the beginning of its 3rd generation? Spirit has moved in our time, and with a new restlessness we have heard a call to step forward. We have been together in deep conversations, surprised and gratified at the depth of connections. We have recommitted ourselves to seek right relationships and to withstand that which denies life. Our discernment has persuaded us that as followers of Jesus and in the movement of the Spirit, we must attend to these things:

We long for a deeper relationship with God. We remember that we are created in love, by God, for God. We are called to devote time and energy listening for God’s voice, reflecting on our life in Christ. We want to learn and lean in to spiritual practices of discernment, silence and theological reflection.

We long for deeper connections with one another. We remember that we encounter Christ in each other. Listening deeply, we are in search of genuine conversations and understanding – within the church and with international, ecumenical and interfaith partners. In our conversations and decision making we will be mindful of our commitment to interculturalism. We want to honour children and youth as a vital part of the church’s present, as well as the promise of the future. All these connections strengthen us to live in our faith and to work for justice and peace as the Body of Christ.

We acknowledge the brokenness, pain and fear we carry. There is pain in our congregations and communities. There is pain in our wounded relationships with all those who have been marginalized and isolated, in our past and present. We recognize in our lives the pain and the power of what is not of God, and we want to claim the courage to resist its domination. We are sustained with awareness of the healing presence of God in Christ.

We believe that our spirituality and our prophetic voice spring from one source and are lived in one Body. We are restless with a renewed call. We are seeking to live faithfully as a united people in a divided world. We seek to be authentic. We seek relationships that are truthful and just. We long to embody what we say we believe, to be the United Church of Canada, for our communities, for the world, and for Creation.

In this Spirit we pray:

God of all creation,

we offer you our thanksgiving for a time rich with connections,
among each other and with you.
We thank you for moments when we have experienced what it is to be united
even in our differences.
Help us to grow as a listening, discerning, learning people.
Help us to give up patterns and structures that enslave us and others.
Help us to acknowledge our fear
and lean into your hope and your courage.
Help us to grow in our trust in each other and in your Spirit.
Fill us with your grace and with your wisdom,
with your patience and with your love.
Propel us into your future,
rooted in the richness of our past.
In Christ we pray.
Amen

Carried

Courtesies

The Moderator introduced Bruce Gregersen, General Council Minister, Programs, who thanked the ecumenical guests and global partners. Bruce talked about how immensely blessed the Council has been because of the contributions of the 17 ecumenical and global guests.

Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom spoke on behalf of the global and ecumenical guests with an expression of gratitude for the hospitality shown. He noted that internationally, everyone has the obligation to keep the Scriptures in front of them and remember the forces that keep people enslaved. He also noted the richness in Spirit connecting everyone into one community.

Ministry Compensation (GCE 2, GCE 3)

Alan Hall and Jim Blanchard reviewed the responses and reworded proposal GCE 2 based on input from the response sheets. They noted one common thread and responded that a central payroll system is a change in mechanics only and does not alter the fundamentals of the pastoral relationship.

The following proposal was presented:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive the report on “Ministry Compensation”.
2. Affirm the “theological principles” of justice, fairness and equitableness and the principles of sustainability and consistency contained in the report
3. And refer the “Proposed Actions” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration and action consistent with the purposes discerned by this Council.

Discussion on the proposal took place including differential in the salaries of the various categories of ministry personnel, relationship between ordered and lay, a provision for those living in high cost urban centres, clarifying working student credits, and the principle of retroactivity.

Motion: Ed Laksmanis/Warren Vollmer

GC 39 2006 - 174

To deal with the motion seriatim.

Carried

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Catherine Somerville

GC 39 2006 - 175

Receive the report on “Ministry Compensation”.

Carried

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Catherine Somerville

GC 39 2006 - 176

Affirm the “Theological Principles” of justice, fairness, and equity and the principles of sustainability and consistency contained in the report.

Carried

Motion: Jim Blanchard/Catherine Somerville

GC 39 2006 - 177

And refer the “Proposed Actions” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration and action consistent with the purposes discerned by this Council.

Motion to Amend: Warren Vollmer/Robert Bartlett

That only points 2-4 be referred to the Executive of the General Council.

Defeated

Motion – carried

Proposal GCE 3 on Ministry Compensation was presented including discussion on the differences between a centralized payroll system and denominationally funded salary administration.

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Martha ter Kuile

GC 39 2006 - 178

The 39th General Council 2006:

Take no action on a denominationally funded salary administration system at this time until progress is made on other proposed actions suggested by the “Ministry Compensation” report.

Motion to Amend: Bruce Hutchinson/Alan Mills

That the motion end after “at this time”

Defeated

Motion - Carried

Isolation in Ministry (GCE 1)

There was a reminder that proposal GCE 1 had been presented with discussion taking place when the order of the day was reached.

Motion: Jim Blanchard/David Boyd

GC 39 2006 - 179

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the “Isolation in Ministry” report.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Refer the “Proposed Actions for Isolation in Ministry” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Carried

Roll of Council

Jim McKibbin addressed the Roll of Council and noted that the report will appear in the Record of Proceedings.

Conference Minute Review

Barbara Reynolds reported that she examined 12 sets of minutes from the Conferences and attested that the minutes adhered to the rules as outlined in *The Manual*.

Motion: Barbara Reynolds/Martha ter Kuile

GC 39 2006 - 180

That the report of the Records Committee be adopted.

Carried

New Business

It was noted that five proposals were received after the deadline for new business and they could not be accommodated in the business of the General Council.

- Awakening a Sleeping Giant: A Transformative Vision for Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the Third Generation of The United Church of Canada.
- Pharmaceutical Laws in Canada
- First Nations Representation to Emerging Spirit Project
- Opening Day at the 40th General Council 2009
- Intercultural Protocols

Motion: Cari Copeman-Haynes/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 181

That the above proposals be referred to the Executive of the General Council.

Carried

Moderator Recognition

John Loughheed, chair of the Moderator’s Advisory Committee, recognized the work of the Rt. Rev. Peter Short, the 38th Moderator of The United Church of Canada. He gave the deep thanks of the church to Peter Short, to his family, and to the congregation at Wilmont United Church in Fredericton. With a PowerPoint presentation, John showed pictures and reviewed the Moderator’s three years including his retreats with ministry personnel, the Arnprior Assembly, his visits to the 13 Conferences, his travels to Africa, Brazil, and his visit to the Six Nations at Caledonia where he was given the name Shining Rock.

General Secretary Recognition

Walter Sowa, chair of the General Secretary’s Supervision Committee, expressed appreciation to the General Secretary, Jim Sinclair. Walter noted the enormous breadth and scope of the work of the General Secretary and talked about how Jim built relationships within the General Council

Office and beyond and the blessings bestowed on the church with Jim's Monday emails and his stories.

Commissioning and Covenanting

The General Secretary asked the Commissioners to stand and commissioned the Commissioners through to the 40th General Council 2009.

The Moderator invited the new members of the Executive of the General Council forward to be covenanted.

The Moderator charged and commissioned the members of the Executive of the General Council.

The Moderator expressed thanks to the members of the Executive of the General Council for accepting the task and gave God's blessing on the members and their work.

Courtesies

A PowerPoint presentation highlighted the gifts of the people who worked on this General Council with thanksgiving on behalf of the General Council.

Procedural Microphone

Members of the Youth Forum thanked the leadership for their patience. They did express their disappointment, because time limits were not honoured, that new business to the General Council was referred to the Executive of the General Council instead of being dealt with by the Council.

The Moderator thanked the Youth Forum for the care and time they put into their proposal. The Moderator suggested that people with proposals speak to the Executive members who would be considering the proposals. He also noted that the chair of the Agenda and Planning Committee for the 40th General Council 2009 would note this concern.

Each table, throughout the Council, had a seedling. One seedling from each part of the circle; black, red, yellow, and white; was taken for planting at the cairn in Sudbury.

Table Groups

Table groups were invited to close their time together with discussion on the following:

- For your time here, what are you most grateful for?
- For your time here, what are you least grateful for?
- Where was God in both those moments?

Receiving Reports and Discharging the Commissions

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 182

That the 39th General Council 2006 enter the minutes from the three Commissions in the Record of Proceedings; and

That the 39th General Council 2006 discharge Commissions Red, Blue, and Green with the appreciation of the court.

Carried

Closing Procedural Motions**Powers of the Interim Sub-Executive – Resolution 101****Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed****GC 39 2006 - 183**

That the Interim Sub-Executive be given necessary powers:

To accept obligations, loans, hypothecs, transfers, and delegations of payment, and gifts, bequests, Deeds of Dation en Paiement, and conveyances of property both movable and immovable; to bind this Corporation to such conditions as the said Sub-Executive may deem necessary or expedient and to the payment of any consideration price; to grant delays of payment for sums due or to become due under Deeds of Sale or Loan or for other debts and to increase or reduce the rate of interest; to make transfers of sums due to this Corporation and give subrogation with or without warranty and to receive the price; to receive payment of all sums, both capital and interest, in any way and at any time due and for all sums received good and sufficient acquaintances to give and grant: to discharge mortgages, hypothecs, and other privileged claims and release property there from with or without consideration and to limit and restrict any hypothec and privilege or other security upon any immovable property to such sum or sums and in such manner as the said Sub-Executive may think fit and this either by a separate instrument or by intervention in any deed or document to sell and convey with legal or more extended or more limited warranty any and all movable and immovable property which may now belong to this Corporation acquired from the Sheriff of any District, from any debtor or in any other manner, or that may hereafter come into its possession in any such way or in any such manner whatever; to declare any property sold to be free from encumbrances and to make other declarations thought usual or necessary; the whole upon such terms and conditions and for such price or other considerations as the said Sub-Executive may see fit, to arrange the terms of payment and rate of interest and other details, including the date of possession and the nature and amount of security for the price; to receive the price whenever paid; to whole in such manner as the said Sub-Executive may think proper or be advised by any one chosen to aid or advise this Corporation; to take and authorize to be taken any and all proceedings, suits and actions, legal and otherwise, which may be necessary, or thought necessary, for the enforcing of the claims of this Corporation, the preservation of its rights or the protection of its interests, and to defend all suits and actions; and further, that any one or more members of the said Sub-Executive who may be mentioned in a resolution passed for that purpose may do and perform all acts and deeds and sign and execute all documents and writings which he or they may deem necessary or advisable in or about the premises: and that the said Sub-Executive be and it is hereby further authorized and empowered to name and appoint by resolution one or more persons in the Province of Quebec or elsewhere from time to time as the said Sub-Executive may deem it necessary or advisable to do so; to do and perform for and on behalf of The United Church of Canada all acts and deeds and to sign and execute all documents and writings as the said person and persons may deem necessary or advisable in connection with any one or more business matters which may be referred to in a resolution passed by the Sub-Executive for that purpose.

That the Interim Sub-Executive of General Council be given necessary powers to do any act or thing of a routine or emergency nature which the Executive of the General Council has power to do, except in any case in which the Executive has decided it should not exercise such powers.

Carried

Authority of the Executive of the General Council

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 184

That the authority of the Executive of the General Council shall be as described in *The Manual*.

Preparation for the 40th General Council 2009

That the Executive of the General Council ensure that arrangements are made for the 40th General Council 2009, such arrangements to be presented for adoption at the first business session of that General Council.

Digest of Minutes of the Executive and Sub-Executive of the General Council

That, upon request, a digest of the actions of the Executive and Sub-Executive of General Council be made available to Commissioners to the 39th General Council 2006 between the meetings of this 39th General Council 2006 and that of the 40th General Council 2009 and that this digest be included in the documentation for the 40th General Council 2009.

Carried

Authority for Changes in *The Manual* and Record of Proceedings

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 185

That the General Secretary, General Council be given authority to edit the Record of Proceedings of the General Council and to make necessary changes in *The Manual* resulting from the actions of the General Council.

Carried

Publication of the Record of Proceedings

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 186

That the General Secretary, General Council be given authority to publish the Record of Proceedings in such format(s) as deemed appropriate for the distribution of the actions of this meeting throughout the church.

Carried

Adjournment

Motion: Jim Sinclair/Paul Reed

GC 39 2006 - 187

That the 39th meeting of the General Council be adjourned at the close of the Service of Installation on Saturday, August 19, 2006.

Carried

The Moderator closed the meeting and asked each Commissioner to plant the earth with their own lives of commitment and encouragement to communities.

The meeting concluded with a Communion service and Installation of the new Moderator.

ROLL OF COUNCIL

A Community of 829 People

- 108 Youth Forum Delegates and Leaders
- 129 Local Arrangements, Stewards, Resource, and Staff
- 373 Commissioners
 - 58% women
 - 42% men

Lay Persons and Ministry Personnel

- 31% lay women
- 27% women ministry personnel
- 24% men ministry personnel
- 18% lay men

Demographics of Age

- 10% under 30
- 25% 30 – 49
- 51% 50 – 65
- 14% 66+

CORRECTIONS TO MINUTES OF THE 38TH GENERAL COUNCIL 2003

Membership of Commission C – Page 45

That the ~~37th~~ 38th General Council appoint the membership of Commission C as listed on pages Replacement INFO 57-60, inclusive.

Commission C Minutes – Page 99

Elimination of the Congregational Accountable Ministry (CAM) Category – Resolution 86 Motion – That the 38th General Council refer ~~Petition~~ Resolution 86 to the Executive of the General Council for further work and to be brought back to General Council, for action.

Commission C Minutes – Page 104

Membership of Courts – Petition 142

That the 38th General Council adopt ~~Resolution~~ Petition 142.

Transfer and Settlement Policies – Petition 125

That the 38th General Council adopt ~~Resolution~~ Petition 125.

Transfer and Settlement Policies – Petition 126

That the 38th General Council adopt ~~Resolution~~ Petition 126.

Mission Support Funding – Petition 127

That the 38th General Council adopt ~~Resolution~~ Petition 127

General Council Nominations Report – omitted from Record of Proceedings of the 38th General Council 2003

Background

The Human Resources Committee reviewed the membership and composition of the following governance-level bodies:

- Executive of the General Council
- Interim Sub-Executive

- Permanent Committee on Finance
- Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
- Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
- Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry

- Agenda and Planning Committee
- Archives and History Committee
- Audit Committee
- Judicial Committee
- Manual Committee
- Theology and Faith Committee

Subsequently, the committee submitted a report to the Sub-Executive of the General Council for their consideration and approval. It included:

- a slate of 86 appointments (5:1 returning to new members; 1:1 lay to ordered members)
- a commitment to proactively seek diversity, gender and regional balance in filling any future vacancies
- a recommendation to defer the appointment of a Chair of the Agenda and Planning Committee until a review of the planning and processes functions assigned to various committees and individuals takes place

The process to develop the report was:

Committee chairs and members were invited to indicate their willingness to let their names stand for nomination. Number and type of vacancies were identified in conversation with the chair and staff resource person. Profiles were written to describe the current situation, mandate, and composition of each committee.

Members connected to the work of this committee were asked to reflect on who is best suited to serve and to nominate prospective members. The Nominations Coordinator for General Council 38 consulted with Conference Executive Secretaries and a cross-section of elected, appointed and staff members.

The Nominations Coordinator gathered more background information on prospective members. She built an initial list of those who meet the agreed-upon criteria and, as much as possible, reflect the diversity of the United Church of Canada. Special emphasis was placed on including those who have been historically excluded from positions of influence and authority. Committee chairpersons and staff resource persons, Conference Executive Secretaries and the Senior Leadership Team were provided an opportunity to comment on the proposed membership and composition of each committee.

The General Council Executive's Human Resources Committee was convened to deliberate and discern its recommendations to the Sub-Executive. Members recommended for appointment by the Human Resources Committee were contacted and invited to serve. The Sub-Executive of the General Council reviewed, amended and adopted the Human Resources Committee's report. The Nominations Report for General Council was prepared. Four invitations were outstanding and awaiting reply at the time that this report was finalized for distribution. These appointments have been set aside to be confirmed after General Council.

Executive of the General Council and Its Permanent and Standing Committees

A *minimum* number of new appointments are proposed. Priority has been given to tightening up the governance model (e.g. differentiating roles), and making adjustments for better balance in gender and region. On a base of 110 possible appointments, 82 are proposed (appointments within the purview of Conferences have not been included in this total) at this time. This allows committees to continue to recruit according to emerging needs and for a new set of principles, practices and processes for recruitment and selection to be implemented from the beginning of the triennium

Resolution No. 95**Title: Nominations to the General Council Executive,
Permanent and Standing Committees**

From: Human Resources Committee

Financial Implications: N/A

Source of Funding: N/A

Be it resolved that the persons listed in this report be appointed by the 38th General Council to serve:

Executive of the General Council			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 - 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Ex-officio		Moderator General Secretary	
Immediate Past Moderator		Marion Pardy (O/N&L)	
Conference Representatives	Jim Balfour (O/SK) Cindy Desilets (O/MTU) Norma Soble (L/BQ) Jim Jackson (L/MNWO) Stephen Mabee (O/TOR) Barbara Rafuse (L/MAR) Allan Sinclair (O/ANC) Michelle Slater (O/BC) Walter Sowa (L/HAM) Martha ter Kuile (O/M&O) David Woodall (O/LON) Representative (O/N&L)	Kathy Suteau (L/ANW)	Lynn Boothroyd (L/M&O) Marion Carr (L/BC) Dwayne Dornan (L/SK) David Giuliano (O/MNWO) Dorothy Hemingway (L/MTU) Donald Koots (O/ANW) Heather Leffler (O/HAM) Mary Beth Moriarity (O/MAR) Tony Newell (O/N&L) Lorna Pawis (L/ANC) Paul Reed (O/BQ) Paul Stott (L/TOR) Jordan Thompson (L/LON)
Chairpersons, Permanent Committees		Jim Blanchard (L/MAR) Diane Dwarka (L/MNWO) Doug Einarson (L/MNWO) Jennifer Llewellyn (L/MAR)	

Chair, Business Committee			Deferred
Members-at-Large	Dong Chun Seo (O/ANW)		Maggie McLeod (O/HAM) Susan Tough (O/MNWO)
Central Committee of the World Council of Churches Representative	Marion Best (L/BC)		
Ethnic Ministries Representative			George Takashima (L/ANW)
Francophone Constituency Representatives			Anne-Marie Carmoy (L/M&O) Stephane Vermette (L/M&O)
Corresponding Members	Chairperson, Agenda and Planning Committee Chairperson, Committee on Theology and Faith Chairperson, The Observer Board of Directors Chief Archivist Elected Officer of the United Church national women's organization Executive Secretaries of Conferences General Council Minister, Programs for Mission and Ministry General Council Minister, Racial Justice General Council Minister, Regional Relations General Council Minister, Resources for Mission and Ministry		
Staff Resource Person	General Council Minister, Planning Processes		

Interim Sub-Executive			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 – 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Ex Officio		Moderator General Secretary	
Immediate Past Moderator		Marion Pardy (O/N&L)	
Business Committee Rep		Deferred	
French Constituency Representative		Anne-Marie Carmoy (L/M&O)	

Ethnic Ministries Representative		George Takashima (L/ANW)	
Conference Representatives		Jim Balfour (O/SK) Lynn Boothroyd (L/M&O) Jim Jackson (L/MNWO) Donald Koots (O/ANW) Stephen Mabee (O/TOR) Barbara Rafuse (L/MAR) Michelle Slater (O/BC)	
Corresponding Members	General Council Minister, Programs for Mission and Ministry General Council Minister, Racial Justice General Council Minister, Regional Relations General Council Minister, Resources for Mission and Ministry		
Staff Resource Person	General Council Minister, Planning Processes		

Permanent Committees

Permanent Committee on Finance			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 – 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson		Doug Einarson (L/MNWO)	
Members		Glen Elliott (L/HAM) Shawn Keown (L/M&O) Hugh MacLean (O/MAR) Hubert Norman (L/N&L)	Karen Brophy (L/MTU) Bob Burrows (O/BC) Don Hunter (L/TOR) Anne Kline (L/M&O) Janet MacDonald (O/HAM)
Staff Resource Persons	Executive Officer, Financial Services General Council Minister, Resources for Mission and Ministry		

Permanent Committee on Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 – 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson		Jennifer Llewellyn (L/MAR)	

Members		Mark Ferrier (O/BQ) Terence McKague (L/SK) Harry Oussoren (O/BC) Jean Wilson (O/BQ)	Marilyn Noble (L/MAR)
Corresponding Members:	Conference Executive Secretaries Representative General Council Minister, Racial Justice General Council Minister, Regional Relations		
Staff Resource Person	General Council Minister, Planning Processes		

Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 – 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson		Jim Blanchard (L/MAR)	
Members		Norm Graham (L/HAM) Robert James (L/MNWO) Earl Reaburn (O/ANW) Linda Thompson (L/TOR) Alison West (O/SK)	Elizabeth Brown (O/ANW) Brian Copeland (O/M&O) Alan Hall (O/TOR) Catherine Somerville (O/MTU)
Corresponding Members	Conference Personnel Ministers Representative		
Staff Resource Persons	Executive Minister, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services General Council Minister, Resources for Mission and Ministry		

Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 - 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson		Diane Dwarka (L/MNWO)	
Members		Joan Bancroft (L/LON) Rodney Booth (O/BC) Richard Charlton (L/MAR) Dianne Cooper (L/MNWO) Donald Dale (L/ANW) Kelly Hudson (O/MAR)	Myung Choong Yoon (L/BC) Jeanette Liberty-Dune (O/SK) Gary Paterson (O/BC) Ted Tupper (L/MAR) Christine Williams (L/M&O)

Corresponding Members	Conference Staff Representative(s) Executive Minister, Ethnic Ministries Executive Minister, Faith Formation and Education Executive Minister, Financial Stewardship Executive Minister, Ministères en Français Executive Minister, Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Executive Minister, Resource Development and Production Executive Minister, Support to Local Ministries
Staff Resource Persons	General Council Minister, Programs for Mission and Ministry General Council Minister, Racial Justice

Standing Committees

Agenda and Planning			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 - 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson			Deferred
Members	Hiraku Iwai (O/SK) Martha Martin (O/MAR) Jennifer Power (O/MAR)		
Staff Resource Person	General Council Minister, Planning Processes		

Archives and History			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 - 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson	Jim Lewis (L/TOR)		
Members		Judith Colwell (L/MAR) Diane Haglund (L/MNWO&ANC) Elizabeth Lundy (L/TOR) Michael Owen (L/HAM) Alison Piercey (L/N&L) Holly Schick (L/SK) Bob Stevenson (L/HAM) Bob Stewart (L/BC) Beverley Anderson-Levine (L/M&O) Eva Archibald (L/LON) Jane Bowe-McCarthy (L/ANW)	
Staff Resource Person	Chief Archivist		

Audit Committee			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 - 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson			Ian MacPherson (L/TOR)
Members		Barbara Caldwell (L/BQ) Debora Harrold (L/TOR)	Sandro Colasacco (L/BC) Edward Hooey (L/TOR) John Wallace (L/MTU)
Staff Resource Person	Executive Officer, Financial Services		

Judicial Committee				
Role	35th – 39th General Council 1994 - 2006	36th – 40th General Council 1997 – 2009	37th – 41st General Council 2000 – 2012	38th – 42nd General Council 2003 – 2015
Chairperson		To be named		
Executive Members		Alan Austin (L/TOR) Bernice Saulteaux (O/ANC) Sharon Copeman (O/BC) Frank Van Veen (O/LON)	Norman Carruthers (L/MAR) Mary Dunbar (L/BQ) Gary Gaudin (O/BC) Derek Green (L/N&L)	
Conference representatives				
Newfoundland		Hector Swain (O)	Patricia Richie (O) Derek Green (L) Donald Lockhart (L)	
Maritime		David Hewitt (O) Beverley Brasier (O)	Norman Carruthers (L)	
Montreal and Ottawa	Charles Knight (L)	Angela Bailey (O) Doreen Moffat (O)		
Bay of Quinte		Terrence Deline (O) Doug Mann (L)	Mary Dunbar (L)	

Toronto	Gordon Nodwell (O)	Malcolm Finlay (O) Allan Austin (L) Gwyn Griffith (L)		
Hamilton	Philip Cline (O)		Ian Gordon (L)	
London	Charles W. Brown (L)	Frank Van Veen (O) Cheryl Ann Stadelbauer Sampa (O) Sheila Duffin (L)		
Manitou		Bruce Thomson (O) Calvin Ferrier (L)		
All-Native Circle		Bernice Saulteaux (O) Stan McKay (O) Norma Lickers (L) Connie Dieter-Buffalo (L)		
Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario				Charles Huband (L) Bruce Faurshou (O) Kirk Windsor (L) Glenna Beauchamp (O)
Saskatchewan	Dale Morrison (O)	Carolyn McBean (O) Dennis Johnson (L) Kevin Fenwick (L)		
Alberta and Northwest		Don Koots (O) Robert Shnell (L) Evelyn Buckley (L)	Elizabeth Brown (O)	
British Columbia		Sharon Copeman (O) Graeme Keirstead (L) Cheryl Vickers-Adams (L)	Gary Gaudin (O/BC)	
Staff Resource Person	Legal/Judicial Counsel			

Manual Committee			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 - 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 – 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson			To be named
Members		Alan McLean (L/MAR) Gail Christie (O/M&O) John Hamilton (L/TOR) Michael Hare (O/BC) Roland Harper (O/SK) John Young (O/BQ)	
Staff Resource Person	Legal/Judicial Counsel		

Theology and Faith Committee			
Role	37th – 39th General Council 2000 – 2006	38th – 39th General Council 2003 - 2006	38th – 40th General Council 2003 - 2009
Chairperson	Michael Bourgeois (L/TOR)		
Members	Susanne Abbuhl (O/BQ) Jennifer Balls (O/MAR) Alvin Dixon (L/BC) Scott Douglas (L/MNWO) Gordon MacDermid (O/MNWO) Catherine MacLean (O/ANW) John Moses (O/BQ) Debra Schweyer (O/MNWO)		
Staff Resource Persons	Executive Minister, Faith Formation and Education General Secretary		

Actions of the 39th General Council 2006

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
ANW 1	Commissioning to the Diaconal Ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care (RED 2)	Red	145	GC39 2006 - 075	See RED 2	None
ANW 2	Self Insurance	Blue	145	GC39 2006 - 034	Carried	GS
ANW 3	Rethinking the Order of Ministry (See BQ 1)	Red	148	GC39 2006 - 083	Refer	GCE
ANW 4	Achieving Equity between Lay and Ordered Past Presidents, and Lay Past Presidents and Past Moderators	Green	150	GC39 2006 - 130	Carried	GS
ANW 5	A Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry	Red	150	GC39 2006 - 078	Defeat	None
ANW 6	Concerning Farm Income	Blue	161	GC39 2006 - 044	Carried	GS
ANW 7	A Health Policy Framework for Public Health Care	Blue	162	GC39 2006 - 039	Carried	GS
ANW 8	Creation of a National List of Approved Qualified Trained Educational Supervisors	Red	163	GC39 2006 - 070	Carried	GS
ANW 9	Review of Property Sale Procedures	Blue	164	GC39 2006 - 058	Carried	GS
ANW 10	Accountable Ministry	Red	165	GC39 2006 - 084	Take no action	None

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
ANW 11	Let's Make Child Poverty History	Blue	167	GC39 2006 - 051	Carried	GCE
ANW 12	Rescind the Executive of the General Council's Implementation of the Sabbatical Policy	Red	168	GC39 2006 - 091	Take no action	None
ANW 13	Support for the Eight Millennium Development Goals Emanating from the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000	Blue	170	GC39 2006 - 045	Carried	GS
BC 1	363 Review Process – Resolution of Conflicts (RED 1)	Red	175	GC39 2006 - 094	Refer	GCE
BC 2	Inclusion of Spiritual Direction in Benefit Package	Red	176	GC39 2006 - 092	Defeat	None
BC 3	Appendix IV Corporations / Societies Supervised by Congregations and Presbyteries as well as by Conferences	Blue	177	GC39 2006 - 043	Take no action	None
BC 4	Combining Sections 333 and 363 of The Manual of The United Church of Canada (RED 1)	Red	177	GC39 2006 - 094	Refer	GCE
BC 5	Retirement Policy for Pension Qualifications	Red	178	GC39 2006 - 090	Take no action	None
BC 6	Decision-making and Administrative Processes of The United Church of Canada (GREEN 7)	Green	179	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
BQ 1	The Meaning of Ministry	Red	171	GC39 2006 - 082	Carried	GCE
BQ 2	Repayment of Moving Expenses	Red	172	GC39 2006 - 101	Carried	GCE

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
BQ 3	Requirements for a Police Records Check	Red	173	GC39 2006 - 105	Carried	GS
BQ 4	National United Church Archives	Blue	173	GC39 2006 - 047	Refer	GS
BQ 5	Use of the Manse by Ministry Personnel on Disability	Red	175	GC39 2006 - 070	Carried	GS
GCE 1	Isolation in Ministry	Commons	73	GC39 2006 - 179	Carried	GCE
GCE 2	Ministry Compensation	Commons	74	GC39 2006 - 174 to 177	Carried	GCE
GCE 3	Ministry Compensation (Denominationally Funded Salary Administration System)	Commons	75	GC39 2006 - 178	Carried	GCE
GCE 4	Lay Presidency at the Sacraments	Green	75	GC39 2006 - 134	Carried	GS
GCE 5	A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada	Green	77	GC39 2006 - 110 to 117	Carried	GCE
GCE 6	Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire	Blue	80	GC39 2006 - 021 to 026	Carried	GCE
GCE 7	Leadership Outcomes Framework for Ordered Ministry (RED 5)	Red	82	GC39 2006 - 081	See RED 5	None
GCE 8	Circle and Cross: The Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality	Green	82	GC39 2006 - 120	Carried	GCE

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
GCE 9	That We May Know Each Other	Green	85	GC39 2006 - 137	Carried	GCE
GCE 10	Revision of Appendix IV	Blue	87	GC39 2006 - 041	Carried	GS
GCE 11	Retirement	Red	89	GC39 2006 - 070	Carried	GS
GCE 12	Police Records Check	Red	91	GC39 2006 - 103	Carried	GS
GCE 13	Water: Life before Profit	Blue	92	GC39 2006 - 037	Carried	GS
GCE 14	Anglican – United Church Dialogue	Green	93	GC39 2006 - 108	Carried	GS
GCE 15	Ecumenical Shared Ministries	Green	93	GC39 2006 - 109	Carried	GS
GCE 16	Partnership of the Aboriginal Peoples in Healing the Church and the World	Green	95	GC39 2006 - 124	Carried	GCE
GCE 17	General Council Commissioners	Green	98	GC39 2006 - 136	Carried	GS
GS 1	Statement of Faith	Commons	101	GC39 2006 - 165	Carried	GS
GS 2	Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel (item 4 only)	Blue	101	GC39 2006 - 027 to 033	Carried	GCE

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
GS 2	Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel (Also GCE)	Blue	101	GC39 2006 - 027 to 033	Carried	GS
GS 3	Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel	Red	104	GC39 2006 - 077	Carried	GCE
GS 4	Licensed Lay Worship Leaders	Green	105	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 5	General Secretaries as Commissioners	Green	106	GC39 2006 - 141 & 142	Carried	GS
GS 6	Audit Requirements	Green	106	GC39 2006 - 148	Carried	GS
GS 7	Corresponding Privileges	Green	109	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 8	Definition of “Decision”	Green	109	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 9	Definition of “Polity”	Green	110	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 10	Quorum Requirements	Green	111	GC39 2006 - 150	Carried	GS
GS 11	Temporal Matters and Disbanding of Congregations	Green	112	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 12	Notice Read “from the pulpit”	Green	112	GC39 2006 - 153	Carried	GS

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
GS 13	Grounds for Appeal	Green	114	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 14	Decisions Not Subject to Appeal, Individuals in the Admission or Re-Admission Process (GREEN 7)	Green	114	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
GS 15	Nominations Committee	Green	115	GC39 2006 - 154	Carried	GS
GS 16	Ministry Personnel on Joint Needs Assessment Committee	Green	116	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 17	Elders (GREEN 7)	Green	117	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
GS 18	Official Board Committees	Green	117	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 19	Church Board Committees	Green	119	GC39 2006 - 155	Carried	GS
GS 20	Church Council Committees	Green	120	GC39 2006 - 156	Carried	GS
GS 21	Congregations Disbanding	Green	121	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 22	Membership of Presbytery Executive	Green	123	GC39 2006 - 157	Carried	GS
GS 23	Reviews involving Effectiveness of Ministry Personnel (RED 1)	Red	123	GC39 2006 - 094	Refer	GCE

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
GS 24	Membership Requirement for Conference Executive Secretaries	Green	124	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 25	Balance between Ministry Personnel and Lay Members	Green	125	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 26	Membership Requirement for General Secretary, General Council	Green	126	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 27	Duties of the General Secretary, General Council for Budget	Green	126	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 28	Duties of the General Secretary, General Council for Retirees	Green	127	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 29	National Extra Appeals (GREEN 7)	Green	128	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
GS 30	Motion to Table	Green	129	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 31	Committee of the Whole	Green	130	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 32	Emerging Spirit	Commons	131	GC39 2006 - 163	Carried	GCE
GS 33	Nominations to the Executive of the General Council and Committees of the General Council	Green	132	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 34	Designated Lay Ministry / Congregational Designated Ministry	Red	140	GC39 2006 - 076	Carried	GS

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
GS 35	Remits Authorized by the 38th General Council 2003	Green	141	GC39 2006 - 139	Carried	GS
GS 36	Moderator as Presiding Officer of the General Council	Green	142	GC39 2006 - 159	Refer	GCE
GS 37	Powers of the Executive of the General Council	Green	142	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 38	Committees of the General Council	Green	143	GC39 2006 - 140	Carried	GS
GS 39	Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures (GREEN 7)	Green	144	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
HAM 1	Reducing Child Poverty	Blue	180	GC39 2006 - 036	Carried	GS
HAM 2	A Proposal to Reduce Costs of Information Transfer, in Paper Form and Improve Efficiency of Information Transfer within The UCC	Blue	182	GC39 2006 - 046	Refer	GS
HAM 3	Mandatory Training in Racial Justice for all United Church Ministry Personnel	Red	183	GC39 2006 - 087	Carried	GS
HAM 4	National Aboriginal Consultations	Green	184	GC39 2006 - 125	Carried	GCE
LON 1	Recognition of Spouses of Overseas Personnel	Red	185	GC39 2006 - 085	Carried	GCE

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
LON 2	Statement of Faith	Commons	186	GC39 2006 - 168	Take no action	None
LON 3	Amendment to Section 363 of The Manual (RED 1)	Red	186	GC39 2006 - 094	Refer	GCE
LON 4	Water: A Gift for All	Blue	188	GC39 2006 - 038	Carried	GS
LON 5	A Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry	Red	189	GC39 2006 - 079	Carried	GS
LON 6	Violence as a National Issue (BLUE 1)	Blue	190	GC39 2006 - 062	See BLUE 1	None
LON 7	Settlement for Candidates	Red	191	GC39 2006 - 074	Carried	GCE
LON 8	A Mutual Property Insurance System	Blue	192	GC39 2006 - 035	Defeat	None
LON 9	Marriage Policy and the Independence of the Clergy (GREEN 2)	Green	192	GC39 2006 - 128	Take no action	None
M&O 1	Water: Life Before Profit	Blue	207	GC39 2006 - 039	Take no action	None
M&O 2	Support for Church Supporters in Ontario	Blue	208	GC39 2006 - 048	Carried	GS
M&O 3	References to Diaconal Ministry (RED 2)	Red	210	GC39 2006 - 075	See RED 2	None

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
M&O 4	Augmentation of Tax Credit for Charitable Donations	Blue	211	GC39 2006 - 056	Defeat	None
M&O 5	Implementing The Refugee Appeal Division	Blue	213	GC39 2006 - 036	Carried	GS
M&O 6	Mining Criteria for Canadian Companies in Other Countries	Blue	214	GC39 2006 - 036	Carried	GS
M&O 7	Implementing Kyoto	Blue	215	GC39 2006 - 036	Carried	GS
M&O 8	Accountability for the Canada-Central America four Free Trade Agreement (CA4FTA)	Blue	217	GC39 2006 - 036	Carried	GS
M&O 9	Resources and Strategies to Challenge Homophobia in the Church	Blue	218	GC39 2006 - 064	Carried	GS
M&O 10	Official French Version of The Manual of The United Church of Canada (GREEN 7)	Green	220	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
M&O 11	Additional Consultation Prior to Final Adoption of The United Church of Canada's Statement of Faith	Commons	221	GC39 2006 - 168	Take no action	None
M&O 12	Rules Governing the Sharing of a Church Building by Two Congregations (GREEN 7)	Green	222	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
MAR 1	Inclusion of "Mail-in Ballot" Process in The Manual (GREEN 7)	Green	205	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
MAR 2	Timing for Presbytery Appointments and Settlement of Ordered Ministry (GREEN 7)	Green	205	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
MNWO 1	Conciliar Church (Human Resource Policy)	Red	193	GC39 2006 - 095	Carried	GCE
MNWO 2	Accessibility of Policies	Red	194	GC39 2006 - 070	Carried	GS
MNWO 3	Supervision	Red	194	GC39 2006 - 100	Refer	GCE
MNWO 4	General Council Minister, Regional Relations	Red	195	GC39 2006 - 097	Refer	GCE
MNWO 5	Right of Conscience to Officiate when off Congregational Property (GREEN 2)	Green	196	GC39 2006 - 128	Take no action	None
MNWO 6	Creation of a Department of Peace	Blue	197	GC39 2006 - 050	Carried	GS
MNWO 7	Endorsement of the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth	Blue	198	GC39 2006 - 066	Carried	GS
MNWO 8	Current model of Recruiting Volunteers for General Council Volunteer Structure (GREEN 7)	Green	200	GC39 2006 - 135	Refer	GCE
MNWO 9	Interim Ministry Requirements (RED 3)	Red	201	GC39 2006 - 071	Refer	GCE
MTU 1	Special Funding for Experimental Ministries	Blue	202	GC39 2006 - 059	Carried	GCE
MTU 2	Presbytery Status of Retired Lay Ministers	Green	203	GC39 2006 - 131	Carried	GS

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
MTU 3	The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples	Green	203	GC39 2006 - 138	Carried	GS
MTU 4	Changing the Definition of Quorum	Green	204	GC39 2006 - 151	Refer	GCE
N&L 1	Violence as a General Council Issue (BLUE 1)	Blue	224	GC39 2006 - 062	See BLUE 1	None
SK 1	Quorum at a Meeting of Presbytery	Green	225	GC39 2006 - 152	Refer	GCE
SK 2	Alternative to Presbytery Audit	Green	226	GC39 2006 - 149	Take no action	None
SK 3	Freedom of Conscience for Ministry Personnel regarding Same-Sex Marriage (GREEN 2)	Green	227	GC39 2006 - 128	Take no action	None
SK 4	Consistency in Same-Sex Marriage Policy	Green	228	GC39 2006 - 129	Take no action	None
SK 5	Salary Parity for Ministry Positions in the General Council Office	Red	230	GC39 2006 - 099	Defeat	None
SK 6	Designation for Interim Ministers (RED 3)	Red	230	GC39 2006 - 071	Refer	GCE
TOR 1	Admission Requirements for Ethnic Ministers (GREEN 1)	Green	231	GC39 2006 - 118	Take no action	None
TOR 2	Call for a Canadian Energy Security Strategy that Meets the Interests of All Canadians	Blue	232	GC39 2006 - 054	Carried	GS

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
TOR 3	A Call for the Restoration of Corporate Contribution to Canadian Society	Blue	233	GC39 2006 - 055	Carried	GS
TOR 4	Changes to Article 363 of The United Church of Canada Manual (RED 1)	Red	234	GC39 2006 - 094	Refer	GCE
TOR 5	Gun Registry in Canada	Blue	235	GC39 2006 - 057	Carried	GS
TOR 6	Gun Violence as a National Issue (BLUE 1)	Blue	236	GC39 2006 - 062	See BLUE 1	None
TOR 7	Pathways to Peace in the Holy Land	Blue	237	GC39 2006 - 049	Carried	GS
TOR 8	Protection of Canadian Sovereignty Over its Energy and Environment	Blue	237	GC39 2006 - 053	Refer for study	GCE
TOR 9	Sovereign Control of Canadian Electricity	Blue	239	GC39 2006 - 052	Carried	GS
TOR 10	Task Group regarding educational requirements for Ethnic Ministers (GREEN 1)	Green	240	GC39 2006 - 118	Take no action	None
TOR 11	Water as a Human Right	Blue	241	GC39 2006 - 040	Carried	GS
TOR 12	Encouragement Concerning Spiritual Formation	Blue	242	GC39 2006 - 063	Carried	GS
BLUE 1	Gun Violence (LON 6, N&L 1, TOR 6)	Blue	730	GC39 2006 - 062	Carried	GCE

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
BLUE 1	Gun Violence (LON 6, N&L 1, TOR 6)	Blue	730	GC39 2006 - 062	Carried	GS
GREEN 1	Education & Admission for Ethnic Ministers (TOR 01, TOR 10)	Green	749	GC39 2006 - 118	Carried	GCE
GREEN 2	Marriage Policies (MNWO 5, SK 3, LON 9)	Green	751	GC39 2006 - 126 to 127	Carried	GS
GREEN 3	Ruling for Section 010 (a)	Green	752	GC39 2006 - 132	Carried	GS
GREEN 4	Manual Committee Report	Green	753	GC39 2006 - 133	Carried	None
GREEN 5	General Secretaries as Commissioners (GS 5)	Green	759	GC39 2006 - 141	Carried	GS
GREEN 6	Circle and Cross, National Aboriginal Consultations, and Partnership of Aboriginal People (GCE 8, HAM 4, GCE 16)	Green	759	GC39 2006 - 143 to 147	Carried	GCE
GREEN 7	Proposals referred to the Executive (BC 6, GS 14, GS 17, GS 29, GS 39, M&O 10, M&O 12, MAR 1, MAR 2, MNWO 8)	Green	756	GC39 2006 - 135	Carried	GCE
GREEN 8	Ethnic Ministries Unit - Evaluation	Green	767	GC39 2006 - 160	Defeat	None
GREEN 9	Transformative Vision - staffing (GCE 5)	Green	767	GC39 2006 - 161	Carried	GCE
RED 1	Discipline (BC 1, BC 4, GS 23, LON 3, TOR 4)	Red	741	GC39 2006 - 094	Carried	GCE

Source	Title	Court	Proposal Page	Motion #	Decision	Follow
RED 2	Diaconal Ministry (M&O 3, ANW 1)	Red	736	GC39 2006 - 075	Carried	GS
RED 3	Interim Ministry (SK 6, MNWO 9)	Red	735	GC39 2006 - 071	Carried	GCE
RED 5	Leadership Outcomes Framework for Ordered Ministry (GCE 7)	Red	738	GC39 2006 -081	Carried	GCE
COMM	Call to Purpose - A Message from the Church to the Church	Commons	775	GC39 2006 - 173	Carried	GCE
COMM	Call to Purpose - A Message from the Church to the Church (also to GCE)	Commons	775	GC39 2006 - 173	Carried	GS
NEW 1	Awakening a Sleeping Giant: A Transformative Vision for Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the Third Generation of The UCC	Commons	243	GC39 2006 - 181	Refer	GCE
NEW 2	Pharmaceutical Laws in Canada	Commons	244	GC39 2006 - 181	Refer	GCE
NEW 3	Opening Day at the 40th General Council 2009	Commons	245	GC39 2006 - 181	Refer	GCE
NEW 4	First Nations Representation to the Emerging Spirit Project	Commons	245	GC39 2006 - 181	Refer	GCE
NEW 5	Intercultural Protocols	Commons	246	GC39 2006 - 181	Refer	GCE

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