

LIST OF ADDENDUMS

Addendum A	2012 Operating Budget – Finance Accountability Report	490i
Addendum B	Gun Violence Report – PC PMM 13	490x
Addendum C	PC MEPS 28 – Human Resources Policy Changes	490xiii
Addendum D	General Secretary’s Accountability Report	490xxi
Addendum E	Moderator’s Accountability Report	490xxx
Addendum F	Intercultural Ministries Living into Transformation Report	490xxxiv
Addendum G	Report on Ministry Compensation	490lviii
Addendum H	Covenanting for Life	490lxvii
Addendum I	Towards 2025: A Justice Seeking / Justice Living Church Report	490lxxiv
Addendum J	Review of Canadian Partnership Report	490lxxxiii
Addendum K	Report on Consultations Regarding Healthy Pastoral Relationships and Effective Leadership	490cxiv
Addendum L	Proposed Site for General Council 42	490cxxi

ADDENDUM A

2012 OPERATING BUDGET

Executive Summary:

Our overall financial picture remains challenging, although the picture is largely consistent with the scenarios the Permanent Committee has been monitoring and reporting to the Executive of General Council for the last several years. At the time of the Permanent Committee on Finance meeting, the 2011 operating results were not final. We had left the door open for any final Mission and Service Fund payments from 2011 and continued with yearend processing. The books have now been closed and the un-audited 2011 result suggests a modest surplus. We have also made a number of changes to the 2012 Budget and the Three Year Operating plan (2011-2013) to bring it back in line from what we saw in the fall.

For the last decade, we have been relying on reserves, the Morrison bequest, and investment income to fund more General Council priorities than Mission and Service Fund donations alone could support. These “extra” funds have largely been depleted, or in the case of investment income, will be lower for the foreseeable future. It is recommended that we pursue an overall strategic review as a top priority rather than embarking on a program of immediate short term expense cutting which would not yield a sustainable plan going forward. A longer term view is needed.

A key assumption in our overall financial plan is of course achieving the Mission and Service Fund donations goal. The 2011 result will be \$1.2 million short. On the budget side, we fund any operating deficit from the Mission and Service Fund Operating Reserve, which means we will deplete that reserve faster than we were hoping. With the 2011 result, we would now breach the 30% of operating costs reserve target in 2015. We were previously aiming for an aggregate operating breakeven for the years 2011-2013. That goal is still achievable, but highly dependent on increasing Mission and Service from the 2011 level.

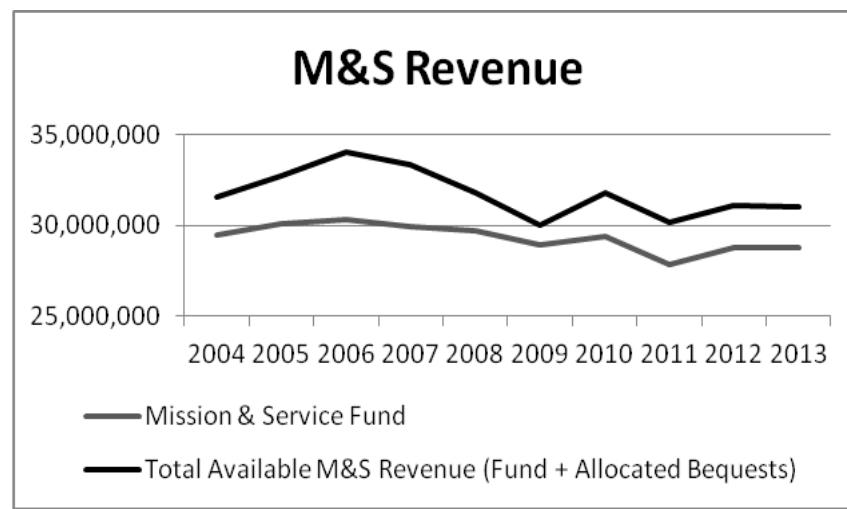
Financial Results

The preliminary 2011 financial results were reviewed by the committee and have been updated slightly. The anticipated savings from 2010 staff restructuring were largely on plan, but with the shortfall in M&S donations, the overall result is a slight surplus instead of the \$1.1 million surplus in the plan.

For 2012 and 2013 we have made a number of adjustments to funding assumptions and expense plans, and are back on track. All of this is predicated on achieving the revenue plan.

Mission & Service Donations

This chart shows the pattern of Mission and Service Fund receipts through the years 2004 to 2011 with projections for future years.



In 2010 we raised a total of \$29.4 million. The 2011 budget was \$29.3 million and we came in at \$28.2. The 2010 result included a \$900,000 bequest which distorts the picture.

For 2012, 2013, 2014 we will target Mission and Service givings at \$28.8 million which means making up 1/2 of the 2011 shortfall. We must find the balance between setting a

reasonable, achievable target versus sending messages that hurt the Mission and Service Fund “brand” and become self-fulfilling downward. This number assumes that some of the positive feedback we’ve been getting and our increased marketing investment will begin to pay off and that legacy gifts will increase over time.

Philanthropy Unit

The work identified in the philanthropy unit’s integrated revenue generation plan, shared with the Permanent Committee on Finance and the Executive of General Council last fall, is progressing well. The Philanthropy Team is proceeding with the plan as written with the exception that in light of the 2011 M&S shortfall and its impact on reserves, they have elected to strongly market Pre Authorized Remittance (PAR) giving **without waiving fees in 2012**. Further changes in the work plan will arise following a more thorough analysis of the results. Since the last report, the staff team has focused on maximising the 2011 Mission and Service revenue. The slow decline in Congregational giving and in the Mission and Service revenue from 2006 onwards which paused in 2010 has resumed with Mission and Service fund revenue \$1.2M below goal. This is a good news / bad news story with much good work being done to maximise this revenue and some significant areas of increase partially offsetting the decreases.

Confirming late gifts: Beginning late November the regional Financial Development Officers (FDOs), often working with Conference staff, called all congregations that were the furthest

behind last year to date. Initially 100 congregations were tracked that accounted for a \$1.5M variance in total, then over 200 congregations were called through December and January to encourage the timely transfer of funds. These calls were received positively.

Seeking additional gifts The Financial Development Officers also placed over 95 calls to individuals known to be highly supportive of Mission and Service to identify the likely shortfall and to provide the opportunity to help out. These calls have resulted to date in 15 additional gifts to M&S totalling \$111,800, confirmation of one bequest of \$250,000, an annuity of \$10,000 and a gift to the Foundation of \$1,000.

Some very positive congregational results: In an initial view of Mission and Service Fund giving by pastoral charges, it appears that a significant number of pastoral charges increased their giving to Mission and Service. This number is offset however by a larger number decreasing their giving. We will review these results to determine the reasons for these increases and declines.

Staff Campaign Success: In addition it should be noted that the GCO and Conference staff campaign for Mission and Service in which pledges were made in 2011 for 2012 increased by 37% to \$46,900.

Role of Church Closures: While recent church closures and amalgamations were cited as a significant part of the reason for the shortfall, revenue from the churches that have closed since 2008 and which gave to the Mission and Service Fund, provided higher revenue in 2011 than in 2010 due to two large gifts to Mission and Service arising from these closures. We will need to look further at the impact of closures prior to 2008 to see the longer term impact. Individual gifts beyond congregational gifts which are also supported by the Philanthropy team have showed positive results in 2011.

Planned gifts totalling \$3,429,868 were received at the General Council Offices for a range of destinations with just over \$2M committed to the Mission and Service Fund. This is the third highest level of planned gifts received in the past five years.

Emergency Response Gifts totalling \$2,261,984 were received in 2011, primarily for Horn of Africa and Japan. This is the second highest level of emergency gifts in the past 5 years, second to the Haiti gifts in 2010.

Mission and Service Direct Giving received gifts totalling \$854,586, the highest for this direct mail program and a 28% increase over 2010.

Gifts with Vision Gift Catalogue received \$76,868 in its first test year. The pilot program achieved a response rate of 4.2% resulting in 845 gifts. Revenue was split almost equally between mail and online. Input to the catalogue was overwhelmingly positive. Numerous constructive suggestions were received and will be implemented including: earlier distribution, lower price points, broader Canadian gift selection and improvements to the web functionality. Current planning for 2012 will include increasing the print distribution from 20,000 to 200,000 along with retaining the website with a few improvements. A stronger marketing plan will also be possible given that the catalogue will be more broadly distributed. Distribution will be led

through the Observer. Care will be taken again in 2012 to insure that this does not conflict with the London Conference's Gift Catalogue.

Additional Specific Donations received for areas such as World Relief and numerous unsolicited purposes totalled \$562,092, the lowest amount in the past five years.

United Church Foundation

In 2011 the Foundation received gifts of over \$3.1 million - \$2.4 million in the form of gifts of securities in support of the wider church, primarily for local congregations. The Foundation currently has 47 endowed and long term funds totalling over \$4.4 million. Of these funds 25 are actively granting, seven are growing towards the granting threshold and 15 will be activated by bequests. The long term and endowed funds include those that receive applications reviewed by the Joint Grants Committee as well as donor directed and donor advised funds.

A Mission and Service Endowed Fund was established in 2011 through a bequest and an immediate major gift. This fund will be part of a longer term strategy to sustain the Mission and Service Fund of the church through the use of longer term assets.

Work continues to progress in preparing the trusts and endowments of the church for transfer to the Foundation as per the 2009 agreement.

At December 31, 2011, 78 presbyteries, Conferences, congregations and related institutions had a total of 84 accounts for a total of approximately \$18.7 million co-invested alongside of the Foundation in the same Balanced Fund. The Foundation's Theological Education Fund and Leadership Fund are both now above the \$50,000 threshold for granting and will provide grants for the first time in 2012.

In an initial analysis on grants made by the Foundation in 2011 (from all sources), 44% of grants went to congregations, 41% went to Mission and Service, World Development and Relief and other United Church of Canada funds, 7% went to non-United Church organizations and the remaining 8% was split between camps, theological schools, retreat centres and partner organizations.

In addition the Foundation returned to the church \$70,449 transferred as the Foundation's 2010 operating surplus.

2012 Budget

The 2012 Budget exhibit is included as Exhibit I on [page 69](#) and as proposal [FIN 10](#). As promised in the fall, we have taken a number of relatively painless budget adjustments aimed at buying some time for the strategic review work and larger decisions that lie ahead. The revenue target is ambitious, but we hope, achievable. Philanthropy is watching the situation carefully and working to maximize returns. We need to hope for the best, but also plan for something less than that.

We are now back to a breakeven target for 2012, and the three year plan is potentially achievable. It is important to note that this is achieved with the ongoing use of reserves to

help fund the status quo. This is not sustainable. The reserve exhibit on [page 65](#) reflects the need for substantive long term change.

The budget continues to reflect:

- A 1.8% increase cost of living for salary grades for 2012. (\$203,000 cost of living adjustment)
- A 5% reduction in grants to theological schools (completing the 10% cut negotiated in 2010, 5% in 2010 and the balance in 2011).
- A loan from reserves of \$400,000 each year for three years to fund the Legacy Initiative fundraising expenses, the amount to be repaid in five to seven years. This initiative will add two more Fund Development Officers working at the congregational level where they are most needed, as well as two administrative staff and associated direct costs.
- A reduction of \$35,000 per year for five years in the amount transferred from the charitable annuities program, reflecting the smaller size of the program and per the report by the actuary. This program continues to be backed by a conservative portfolio of bonds earning a competitive rate of return.

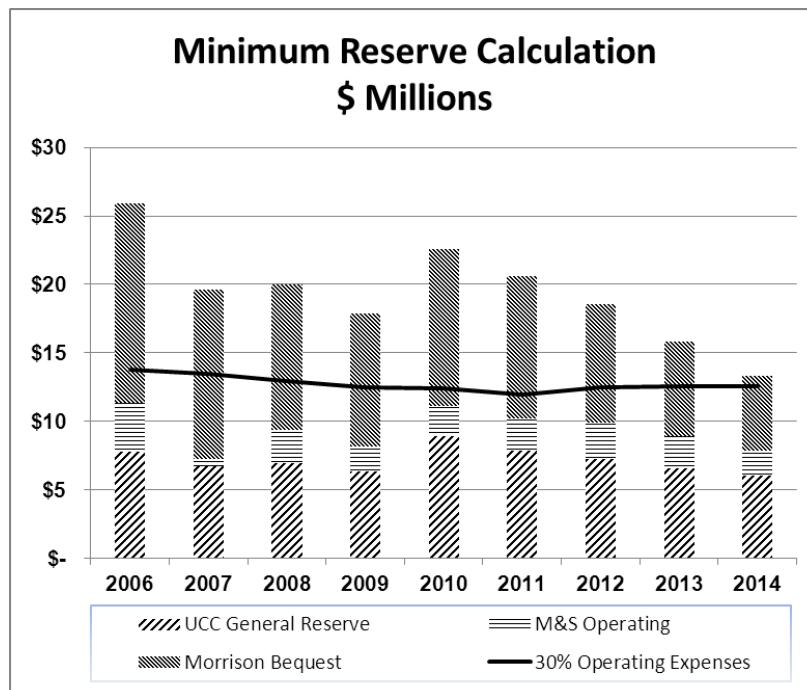
Key budget changes include:

- Certain expenses have been unbundled and re-categorized for improved transparency and to conform with external financial statement presentation. This impacts the 2011 versus 2012 year over year comparisons for “Other Revenues & Recoveries”, Grants and Staff Costs. For example, only \$107,000 of the reduction in grants is an actual cut and simply completes the reduction in Theological School funding agreed in 2010. As for the balance, \$719,000 of the decrease is because of moving the costs of overseas employees to the staff line, \$110,000 reflects Philanthropy shifting a grant to salary, and finally a \$250,000 increase in Right Relations.
- The apparent large increase in the staff cost line is also explained by unbundling. \$1.235 million reflects the cost of staff supporting Pension and Group Insurance, \$166,000 Ontario Archives staff, \$283,000 prison chaplains, \$306,000 for the Philanthropy initiative, and \$481,000 re overseas personnel. These increases are fully offset by reporting the corresponding income on a gross basis.
Actual staff cost increases include \$203,000 from the 1.8% cost of living adjustment, \$371,000 is due to step increases, promotions etc. In 2013 and onwards, we also reflect the impact of the increase in required pension plan contributions.
- Elimination of the annual contribution to the Real Property fund for 2012. This will save \$250,000 in the short term. We are still well positioned to respond to property spending needs as we have had two large sales transactions recently that have bolstered the fund.
- Elimination of the annual budget contribution to the Emergency Response Fund. This will cut \$93,000 in each of 2012 and 2013, with half being reinvested in refugee sponsorship work. Again, this fund is in strong shape and able to sustain a cut with no adverse impact to our work.
- Two staff vacancies will not be filled. One in the Communities in Mission Unit, and one in Ministry Employment.
- Cost recoveries from the Pension Plan have been re-negotiated downwards for 2011 and onwards. The annual impact is \$60,000.

- Extend full Morrison bequest funding for the Aboriginal Ministries Circle for one more year. \$250,000. The original plan had been to wean ourselves from reliance on the Morrison bequest beginning in 2012. This change better aligns funding with the unit spending plan.
- Philanthropy has withdrawn the request to waive PAR fees charged to congregations. This adds \$250,000 to our top line.
- Funding from Financial Reserves

As previously noted, the General Council has been intentionally using Morrison bequest monies and other available financial reserves to fund incremental work. Our capacity to do this is coming to a close.

The chart indicates we will breach our 30% of operating costs reserve threshold in 2015 – earlier if our M&S goals fall short.



Extending the Three Year Plan to 2014

The Permanent Committee on Finance has directed staff to continue to work to extend the current three year plan to 2014, recognizing the significant potential budget changes from such areas as the decrease in funding from the Morrison bequest, the initiatives in pastoral oversight and the implementation of new fundraising initiatives. The numbers shown to date are for illustration purposes only and do not assume approval of the Ministry Oversight proposal or any other significant change. They do assume adherence to the 30% reserve policy. In practical terms this would mean we have a significant gap in 2015 absent a windfall.

Treasury Fund Investments

The annual return on Treasury investments was 1.82%, slightly below the benchmark rate of 2.18%. Our practice of currency hedging, which has served us very well in the past, accounted for this differential with wide ranging results from the underlying asset classes. Bonds were the top performing asset class at 10.82%. US equities also generated positive returns while Canadian and international equities were negative.

The Church Treasury Investment Committee has taken a number of steps in partnership with the Working Group on Socially Responsible Investment and Resource Extraction to improve linkages and advance our agenda in this area.

The Investment Committee accepted and immediately acted on the Working Group's recommendation to participate in SHARE's core engagement program. Effective January 1, 2012, The United Church of Canada is again pursuing a more activist shareholder stance: voting our proxies and lending our name to a variety of letter writing campaigns consistent with our views on climate change, human rights and other concerns. SHARE is the leading Canadian provider of such services and acts as advisor to many religious denominations and ecumenical groups. <http://www.share.ca/services/shareholder-engagement/current-engagement-topics/> We continue to refine our Statement of Investment Policy and related due diligence, and a formal update will be provided in the fall.

Audit Update

The preliminary audit work in late 2011 went well with both the auditor and staff reporting a smoother process. One area of focus for the audit is the area of Pension and Group Benefit administration. We have recommended this area get special attention given the ongoing challenges we have experienced with the changeover to a new third party service provider.

Finance Staffing

For the last five months, Erik Mathiesen has served as Acting Executive Officer, Finance while continuing to fill his Mission through Finance role to a lesser degree. Finance has been top priority with a focus on year end and planning tasks. Bill Kennedy has been extremely helpful in transition. The major trade-off has been in developmental work in the Mission through Finance role. Webinars and workshops have been deferred and most queries dealt with on evenings and weekends.

Insurance Initiative

The efforts to increase the number of congregations participating in the national insurance program by offering free Directors and Officers insurance for two years have been hampered by a significant premium increase necessitated by our recent loss ratio. The broker has projected adding 85-100 congregations over the next 12 months.

General Council Office Relocation

In November 2011, the Executive of General Council decided to have the General Council Office remain in Toronto, and directed staff to explore development partnerships with two downtown churches. Considerable due diligence has been done, and final bids from Metropolitan and Bloor Street United Churches were submitted on February 7. At time of writing, the bids are being evaluated and formal presentations being scheduled. We hope to have a recommendation for the Sub-Executive by end of February.

Loan Guarantees

- **Facilitative Loan Guarantees** (per policy) – Loan Guarantees of \$920,000 are outstanding to St. Luke's United Church, Wellington Square and Cayuga Community Church. The original guarantee amount was \$2.2 million. All are on or ahead of schedule.

- **GCE Approved Special Situations**

The Griffith McConnell Residences sale transaction closed with net proceeds in excess of \$4 million after repayment of loans advanced to support orderly closure. Plans for the money are being discussed with stakeholders.

- **Symons Valley loan:** Per 2008 GCE directive, \$500,000 of national loan funds have been deployed to reduce the Royal Bank loan to \$2.2 million and a local capital campaign is underway to match this contribution. The congregation is growing but not at the hoped for rate. Calgary Presbytery is working on a larger loan facility secured by real estate and future land sales.

Overall Financial Position –

- The financial statement at the end of this report reflects the revenues and expenses associated with the Operating Budget. Revenue and expenses from major self-funding work, such as Pension and Group Insurance have been unbundled (shown as expense with offsetting revenue).
- Specifically funded work, such as government grants and emergency relief, have been removed from the statement, and monitored separately.
- Overall 2011 expenses tracked well against the budget but did not offset the Mission and Service contributions shortfall.
 - **Retail Sales** continue to trend downwards and the projections for the future may be overly optimistic. Opportunities for cost savings and potential ecumenical partnering are being explored. A verbal update with more information will be provided at the Executive of General Council meeting.
 - **Recovery of Admin** costs includes salaries and other charges rebilled to Conferences and the Pension, etc. The Pension allocation amounts were renegotiated downwards for 2011 and future years.
 - **Other Revenue** includes property tax rebates, GST rebates, commissions and shipping and handling charges. The property tax rebate for the whole year has already been received.
 - **Reserve Transfers** includes all transfers, including designated funds, the Morrison bequest, trusts and endowments. This finished under plan as certain draws are contingent on actual spending. We did not draw on the legal fund as the parameters for that fund are still under review.
- **Grants** include all payments to external entities, including the Conferences, Canadian and international partners. The 2011 result is slightly under spent as usual, because grants are never fully subscribed. The 2012 Plan however reflects a number of important changes as we unbundled certain costs for improved transparency. These were described in detail earlier.
- **Staff Costs** 2011 Salaries were \$199,000 under budget as intentional management of vacancies offset severance payments.
- **Resources** The cost of sales for retail is included in this expense line along with all of the other costs of producing paper and online content, so it will be under budget when sales are below budget. Some projects were also deferred.
- **Travel** Travel was slightly over budget. There is some year over year anomaly in how we categorize travel versus committee meetings.
- **Committee Meetings** The picture improved markedly in the fourth quarter and we finished under plan and consistent with prior year.
- **Office Costs** Similarly, the office costs picture improved markedly from forecast. We have identified a number of areas for costs savings, in particular in telecommunications.

- **Professional Fees** are over budget due to higher legal fees and a fundraising consulting contract. Legal fees are approximately \$150,000 over budget, but a good portion of this relates directly to incremental revenue.
- **Property** Insurance costs are slightly higher than budget, and maintenance is below budget.
- **Investment Expenses** Bank fees reflect increased use of credit cards for payment. This budget line may need to be increased over time.

Additional Financial Results

- **Other Revenue** consists of: Pension Plan and Group Insurance Fund reimbursements \$700,000; PAR commissions \$423,000; registrations \$232,000; tax recoveries \$261,000; rent \$152,000; and Foundation contribution \$70,000. CIDA and related funding totalled \$1.2 million.
- **Grants** of \$2.87 million were issued for CIDA work, for relief work in Africa and Asia, and for congregational loans.

Three Year Plan Update

Surplus / (Deficit)	Fall 2010 Original	Fall 2011	Spring 2012
2011	1,126	1,039	243
2012	(124)	(927)	(156)
2013	(1,002)	(1,206)	(397)
Total	0	(1,094)	2

Exhibit I - Budget Analysis & Updated Three Year Plan

The United Church of Canada - General Council Office - Operating Budget

(000's)

	2010 Actual	2011 Budget	2011 Actual	2012 Budget	2013 Outlook	2014 Early Outlook
Revenues:						
M&S Contributions	27,666	27,130	26,426	26,815	26,815	26,815
M&S Contributions - UCW	1,747	2,173	1,686	2,000	2,000	2,000
Retail Sales	2,021	2,079	1,837	1,837	1,806	1,776
Other Revenues & Recoveries	1,442	1,951	2,290	3,960	3,924	4,288
Transfers from Reserves	<u>8,807</u>	<u>8,415</u>	<u>7,809</u>	<u>8,136</u>	<u>8,078</u>	<u>7,396</u>
Total Revenues	41,683	41,748	40,048	42,748	42,623	42,275

Expenses

Grants	17,761	17,261	17,118	16,624	16,624	16,649
Staff Costs	13,949	12,919	12,720	15,679	16,097	16,526

Resources	2,322	2,470	1,963	2,500	2,485	2,470
Travel Expenses	672	741	781	855	769	692
Committee Meeting Expenses	2,017	2,391	2,002	1,944	1,750	1,575
Office Costs	2,788	3,091	2,897	3,192	3,247	3,302
Professional Fees	1,304	1,076	1,668	1,362	1,362	1,362
Property & Insurance Expenses	487	511	406	276	526	526
Investment Expenses	<u>150</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>160</u>
Total Expenses	<u>41,450</u>	<u>40,620</u>	<u>39,805</u>	<u>42,592</u>	<u>43,020</u>	<u>43,262</u>
 Excess of Revenue over Expenses	 233	 1,128	 243	 156	 (397)	 (987)

ADDENDUM B

GUN VIOLENCE (NEW 7/GCE 15)

The New Creed reminds us that we are:

“called to be the church...to seek justice and resist evil...”

The Song of Faith reminds us:

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.

The 39th General Council meeting in Thunder Bay, Ontario August 2006 approved the following proposal known as BLUE 1(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:

3. 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
4. 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.

Due to reduced staffing capacity in the then Justice Global and Ecumenical Relationship (JGER) Unit the work was not able to be completed. However, in response to 2005 Summer of the Guns in the city of Toronto the Congregational Educational and Community Ministries (CECM) Unit

with additional funding from the United Church of Canada Foundation, partnered with Toronto Conference to launch a youth leadership initiative – Youth Connection Project – July 2006 to July 2007. Kofi Hope, founder of the Black Youth Coalition against Violence, and youth animator for Toronto West Presbytery was hired to animate this initiative. A report of this initiative is available on request.

The 40th General Council meeting in Kelowna in August 2009, received a similar proposal (New 7) to that received at the 39th General Council in 2006.

That the 40th General Council 2009 Declare that gun violence should be a national concern, and

Direct the General Secretary, General Council, to seek opportunities to:

- a) 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**
- b) 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**

Direct the Executive of the General Council to 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

The proposal was referred to the Executive of the General Council, which referred the proposal GCE15 Gun Violence (GC40 New 7) to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry.

In seeking to approach this work the principles expressed in the Affirmation of the commitment to ***Mending the World*** approved in 1997 at the 36th General Council (<http://www.united-church.ca/files/sales/publications/400000063.pdf>) must guide our response to this proposal.

An Affirmation

We believe that the Church's passion to be involved in the transformation of the world is grounded in its relationship to God in Jesus Christ¹

We believe that God calls the Church to do separately only what it cannot do with others to care for itself in order to care for others to set basic human needs above institutional enrichment to give and not to count the cost²

We believe that God calls the Church to help build a culture of non-violence and respect of solidarity and just economic relationships of tolerance and truthfulness of equal rights and partnership between men and women³

We believe that God calls the Church to profess its faith in ways that honour God's love for all people and creation to make decisions that demonstrate an unqualified commitment to justice, peace and compassion to work in partnership with all who seek the health and well-being of the whole creation to discern and celebrate God's Spirit in people of other religions⁴ and ideologies to stand first with the poor⁵

We believe that God calls the Church to do justice and love kindness to show courage in the face of evil to seek reformation for itself and society to share God's liberating and empowering work to trust in God

We believe that God yearns for the healing of all creation, and calls the Church to share that yearning by joining now with other persons of good will in the search for justice, wholeness and love.

The lack of staff capacity is, however, a significant challenge for the full implementation of this work. Building the relationships with community groups and advocacy groups takes time and human resources and cannot be under-estimated.

This report seeks to identify a way forward in responding to the proposal referred to the PCPMM. It is limited to the issues of gun violence within the Canadian context as it relates but not exclusively to racialized and minority communities. It will not address issues of the international weapons trade, armament or disarmament issues, wars or make reference to the work of partner organizations like Project Ploughshares. At the same time, it also recognizes that the church has historically made statements and responded to issues of gun violence: Gun Registry (<http://www.united-church.ca/peace/disarmament/registry>), December 6th 1989 Montreal Massacre, and recently has responded to the Bill C-10 (<http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/takeaction/111102b>)

It is also important to recognize that many of our community ministries are engaged in working with marginalized communities across the country and are addressing the issues of gun violence within various marginalized communities within their particular context. For example, The Jane Finch Community Ministries and the Toronto Christian Resource Centre are two of the groups working particularly on issues of gun violence and youth violence. Any response that the General Council might offer to the systemic challenges of gun violence within racialized communities must be done in partnership with the various ministries working on the ground.

In addition, the church has been engaged in seeking to address a number of issues related to exclusion, racism and violence. This report affirms the work of the Aboriginal Justice Unit, the Aboriginal Ministries Circle, the Covenanting for Life educational engagement, the Racial Justice Advisory Group, Intercultural Engagement and Commitment to Inclusion as part of a framework by which the General Council seeks to build an understanding of issues of racism, hatred and marginalization.

The following decisions of the Permanent Committee will continue to build on the work that is being done within the church.

That the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry,

1. Refer the relevant recommendations from the Youth Connection Project (see Appendix 1) to the Communities in Ministry/Communautés et Ministers Unit staff for integration into the Youth Strategy.

2. Request the Communities in Ministry Unit to:
 - a) develop a strategy for the engagement of racialized and aboriginal youth and young adults, and marginalized communities in the life of the church.
 - b) ensure integration of the Youth and Young Adult Strategy with the work of the Aboriginal Ministry Circle's Youth Engagement work.
3. Ensure that educational and advocacy resources are developed in partnership with Community Ministries, General Council Staff and Conferences.
4. Adopt the following protocol for making public statements on gun violence:
 - a) Whenever there are incidents of gun violence in a community, in order to ensure a timely response, Staff in the CiM (in particular, Youth and Young Adults, Intercultural Engagement or Racial Justice) unit will consult with Community Ministry agencies, presbyteries or congregations on appropriate responses including a letter from the General Secretary.
 - b) In consultation with Media staff from Communications, the General Secretary would be requested to issue a press release.
 - c) The Executive Minister of Partners in Mission, in consultation with the appropriate staff, would initiate a Take Action process.

ADDENDUM C

MEPS 28 HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY CHANGES

1. Recruitment and Selection of Staff

It is being recommended that elected members will only be part of Search and Selection Committees for positions that are affirmed by the Executive of the General Council (Conference Executive Secretaries, General Council Officers, Executive Ministers/Officers), and it is therefore not a requirement for other positions.

The composition of the Search and Selection Committee has been streamlined, with recommendations that some positions with a higher profile (some Program positions, for example) may require an elected member to be part of the committee.

It is also being recommended that the following statement in the “Transfers” section be removed: “employees being transferred may be subject to a probationary period”. If an employee is transferred and it does not work out, a probationary period does not minimize the cost of termination pay. All years of service in the General Council and Conference Offices need to be considered – not just the probationary period – if termination is necessary.

2. Continuing Education

The recommendation is to remove the section on reimbursement guideline percentages. The practice is to have a specified amount available for employees which is then approved by the supervisor, and paperwork flows through Ministry and Employment who track continuing education expenses.

It is being recommended that a procedural sentence be added stating that Ministry and Employment must be consulted for adherence to policy for continuing education leave (study leave).

3. Sabbatical Leave

It is being recommended that the purpose of the Sabbatical be modified to allow for leaves exploring transformational change and expansion of the church, and for both personal and professional growth.

The current Sabbatical Leave policy gives authority to approve sabbatical leaves to the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment. The suggested revisions change the tone of the policy to speaking more about consensus, with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment confirming adherence to policy, followed by the supervisor formally approving the leave.

It is also being recommended that the timing of the leave may be approved by the supervisor after consultation with the unit/Conference leader, and that the timing does not need to be approved by the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment.

APPENDIX A: HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

1. Recruitment and Selection of Staff

Purpose

The United Church of Canada is committed to ensuring a fair and consistent recruitment and hiring process in all units and at all occupational levels in the General Council and Conference offices.

Policy

When a vacancy occurs, the job description will be reviewed by the employing unit/Conference. If required, a new/revised job description will be prepared by the employing unit/Conference, and a signed, dated copy will be sent to the Ministry and Employment Unit. Approval levels are indicated on the job description form. Proposals for new staff positions must be approved as indicated on the appropriate form, prior to submission for categorization. See Position Approval Policy.

The Ministry and Employment Unit is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate procedures are followed in all recruitment and selection processes.

Procedures

- 1) Appropriate approval must be obtained and communicated, in writing, to the Ministry and Employment Unit in order to begin the process for all positions in the General Council and Conference offices.
- 2) Recruitment for all positions will include postings, advertisements, and the use of agencies, as deemed suitable. For internal candidates, please refer to the “Transfers” section in this policy.

- 3) The approval/**appointment** level to hire is listed on Tables 1a and 1b.
- 4) Candidates will be interviewed by a Selection Committee, the members of which are listed on the Committee Representation Tables 2a and 2b. The Ministry and Employment Unit will assist the Hiring Committee as requested or as required.
- 5) Hiring approval/**appointment** for all positions is as follows:

Table 1a - Approval or Appointment Levels – General Council Office
General Secretary, General Council and Moderator <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The General Council
Positions Reporting to the General Secretary, General Council <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive of the General Council and General Secretary, General Council for General Council Officers, Executive Ministers/Officers• General Secretary, General Council for other positions
All Other Positions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Council Officer or Executive Minister/Officer

Table 1b - Approval or Appointment Levels – Conference Offices
Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Council Officer, Conciliar Relations, and the Executive of the General Council
All Other Positions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker, and/or Search and Selection Committee, and/or Staff Committee depending upon the Conference structure

6) Search and Selection Committee Representation (Minimum Requirements) **for committees with elected member participants**: It is desirable that members reflect regional representation, lay/ordered, ethnic diversity, and gender balance, and every effort will be made to accomplish this. Depending upon the nature of the position, members with appropriate technical skills may also be represented.

Composition of the Search and Selection Committee will be reviewed in advance by the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, to ensure consistency throughout the organization as it relates to the hiring process.

Committee Composition – General Council Office Table 2a
Administrative/Technical/Program/Specialist/Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Immediate supervisor</i>• <i>1 Ministry and Employment Unit facilitator (acts as staff resource)</i>• <i>Consideration should be given to including other members of the organization, depending upon the nature of the position</i>• <i>There may be positions with high visibility within the United Church where it is recommended that an elected member also be included</i>
Executive Minister/Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>General Secretary</i>• Chair of related Permanent Committee or designate• 1–2 Executive of the General Council members as designated by the General Secretary, General Council or his/her designate• 1 Ministry and Employment Unit facilitator (acts as staff resource)
General Council Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Secretary, General Council• Chair of the related General Council committee, or designate• 2 Executive members appointed by the General Secretary, General Council or his/her designate• 1 Ministry and Employment Unit facilitator (acts as staff resource) or an executive search professional

Committee Composition – Conference Office	Table 2b
<p>Administrative/Technical/Program/Specialist/Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker or designate • 1 human resources representative acting as staff resource (Staff Committee member or designate, or staff member from Ministry and Employment Unit, General Council Office, depending upon the Conference structure) • <i>Consideration should be given to including other members of the Conference, depending upon the nature of the position</i> • <i>There may be positions with high visibility within the United Church where it is recommended that a Conference Executive member also be included</i> 	
<p>Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Council Officer, Conciliar Relations • 2-3 representatives selected by the Conference Executive, or designate • 1 human resources representative acting as staff resource (Staff Committee member or designate, or staff member from Ministry and Employment Unit, General Council Office, depending upon the Conference structure) 	

- 7) Reference checks ~~with past/current supervisors~~ are required ~~in the case of~~ for all hirings. (internal transfers/promotions and external candidates).
- 8) Transfers:
 - An eligible internal candidate must advise his/her supervisor of his/her intent to apply prior to submitting an application.
 - All internal candidates in all employing units or Conferences will be given consideration for any vacancies for which they are qualified.
 - For transfers of categories 1–7 that occur within the immediate employing unit or Conference, staff may be moved directly into a vacant position without posting the position.
 - An employing unit, in consultation with Ministry and Employment, may move a term employee into the permanent position during the term without posting the position, provided that the term staff has **previously** gone through the full cycle of the search & selection process.
 - Any position changes between Conferences, and Conference and General Council Office are considered transfers or promotions, and not a new employment relationship.
 - Reference checks or consultation with past/current supervisors **will be conducted** are considered to be good practice ~~in the case of for~~ all internal transfers and promotions. The

hiring employing unit has the option of doing this directly with the current supervisor or having the Ministry and Employment Unit act on its behalf.

- ~~Relevant work history, or details from employee files that may have a bearing on the position being pursued, may be shared with the hiring employing unit at the discretion of the Ministry and Employment Unit. Unless such information has a direct bearing on the position being pursued, confidentiality of employee files will be maintained in relation to hiring employing units.~~
- Start dates will be negotiated between the supervisors, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit.
- ~~Staff transferring to a new position may be subject to a probationary period, at the discretion of the employing unit. See Probation Policy. All terms of appointment and letters of offer are prepared and finalized by the Ministry and Employment Unit.~~

2. Continuing Education

Purpose

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting the ongoing professional development of its employees and provides the opportunity for continuing education for permanent employees. This policy outlines the continuing education opportunities for employees in the General Council and Conference offices.

Policy

Continuing education opportunities such as training, skills development, education, or professional development may be available for employees if the continuing education is directly related to an employee's current work, known future work or anticipated areas of expansion at the United Church.

Permanent employees in categories 8 and higher may be provided with up to three weeks (15 working days) per year, of continuing education leave, also known as annual study leave, upon the approval of the immediate supervisor.

Permanent staff, in category 7 who were employed prior to December 2008, will continue to be eligible for continuing education leave.

Continuing education programs are subject to the approval of the immediate supervisor, who will determine whether the continuing education opportunity will facilitate the work of the church and will be of mutual advantage to the employee and the employing unit.

~~Funding of continuing education is subject to budget constraints. For continuing education programs that are taken as a graded course, reimbursement will be made upon submission of proof of successful completion from an accredited institute of learning. Other continuing education programs may be paid beforehand if appropriate (for example, a seminar where payment is required before attending). Final approval of the continuing education program rests with the General Council Officer, Conference Executive Secretary or Speaker, Executive Ministers/Officers, and supervisors, in consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.~~ Approval of the continuing education leave is subject to the requirements (skill level, time, etc.) of the workplace, as well as budgetary considerations.

Procedures

1. *A formal request will be made by the employee to the supervisor. Approval must be obtained in advance of the continuing education event.*
2. *For Continuing Education Leave (Study Leave), Ministry and Employment will be consulted prior to having annual study leave granted to ensure consistency with such policy issues as whether the employee is entitled to study leave, and whether there has been study leave taken that year.*
3. *Employees have access to specified amounts each year, and these amounts will be subject to yearly budgetary considerations. This information is available through Ministry and Employment Unit.*
4. *For continuing education events which are graded courses, half the amount will be paid upon registration, and the second half upon successful completion of the course and presentation of the grade obtained.*
5. *There is no provision for carrying over unused continuing education amounts from year to year. There is also no provision for carrying forward continuing education leave from year to year.*
6. Requests for time off during normal working hours to participate in continuing education and professional development opportunities, and which are not categorized as continuing education leave, may be granted by the immediate supervisor in consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.
7. ~~Prior to granting continuing education leave, also known as annual study leave, the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, must be consulted by the person approving the leave to ensure consistency of policy application.~~

Procedures

1. The following guidelines may be followed when determining how reimbursement will be made:
 - Directly Job/Skill Related: 100% (directly related to one's current work, and/or identified as an area for improvement or approved as being directly related to known future work)
 - Somewhat Job/Skill Related: 80% (not deemed essential, but which could have immediate value in fulfilling the current job requirements)
 - Potentially Job Related: 50% (less value to current position, but more value in the future of the employing unit – e.g., staff in non-program roles taking a religious studies course)
 - Unrelated: 0%

3. Sabbatical Leaves

Purpose

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting the ongoing professional and vocational development of its employees and provides the opportunity for a Sabbatical Leave for permanent staff in categories 8 and higher. The purpose of Sabbatical Leave is to provide time for an employee to enrich skill levels, further professional abilities, and become better equipped to serve on the cutting edge of her or his area of ministry. The result may be an individual who is revitalized to continue her or his work.

Policy

Permanent staff in categories 8 and higher may apply for Sabbatical Leave after five full years of employment, and again at successive five-year intervals. The Sabbatical Leave may be for a period of up to twelve weeks long with full salary and benefits, not including travel costs, in a reasonably intense and disciplined program that is approved by *the immediate supervisor, Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker, and/or the corresponding General Council Officer of the employing unit, in consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit*, at least six months prior to the leave.

Permanent staff, in category 7 who were employed prior to December 2008, will continue to be eligible for Sabbatical Leave.

Sabbatical Leave may be combined with continuing education leave (also known as annual study leave), vacation, and/or unpaid leave of absence to extend the term. The appropriate length of a Sabbatical Leave depends on many factors and will be determined by the immediate supervisor, and the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit. A Sabbatical Leave must be completed within a one-year period.

Procedures

1. The program for study undertaken must be **clearly job related**, either to one's current position, or to a known change in position in The United Church of Canada. **It may also be related to an area of expansion in the church, which includes training to enable growth into other areas, or helping to equip staff for transformational change.** The intent is to enable staff to grow personally and professionally and to assist the church in reaching out.
2. *The timing of the Sabbatical Leave, as well as the general area of focus, will be approved by the supervisor. The employee may then start to make plans regarding the Sabbatical Leave activities, before the final proposal has been formally approved.*
3. *Sabbatical Leave must be approved by the supervisor, Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker and/or General Council Officer, and after consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit. The approval process is meant to be consultative in nature in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the leave being proposed. Once consensus has been received, the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit will confirm compliance with policy. The supervisor will then formally approve the leave.*
4. *The employing unit and General Council Officer and/or Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker of the employing unit are responsible for determining the number of leaves to be requested per year for the unit, based on the needs of the unit, taking into consideration the unit's budgetary limitations and work requirements. Because of this, it may not be possible for a unit to grant a Sabbatical Leave at the time requested.*
5. A Sabbatical Leave proposal will be discussed in the early stages of development with the applicant and the supervisor in the employing unit/*Conference, with the Conference*

Executive Secretary/Speaker and/or General Council Officer of the employing unit/Conference, and with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.

- 6. Consultation and review of the Sabbatical Leave proposal must be reviewed at least six months before the proposed start date. Specific details are to be provided in writing no later than two months before the start of the leave.***
- 7. Upon completion of the Sabbatical Leave, the employee will provide written and/or oral reports as determined when the Leave was approved.***

ADDENDUM D

GENERAL SECRETARY'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ;

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

When we meet as the Executive of the General Council, we are more than two or three, but there is an intimacy of shared faith in our gatherings. As we near the end of the triennium, we are also linked by a shared history of facing difficult issues and of shaping dreams for our Church's future. Truly we have felt the presence of the Spirit in our midst through these times.

In this busy time of preparation for next summer's General Council, I reflect that your time on the Executive has not always been easy, but you have faced the challenges and worked your way through some significant decisions.

It has been a pleasure for me to work with each of you, and it is my honour to offer to you this report to the final meeting of this Executive.

Budget

Expense challenges continue to mount for the church. We continue to rely on reserve funds to fund the church's current work, but will soon reach the limits of this option. The staff team is developing alternative strategies for longer-term financial sustainability. I have asked Conference Executive Secretaries to join General Council Office management staff for a special meeting in May to talk about options we can offer to the 41st Executive to allow them to work through some of the difficult decisions that they will need to make.

The General Council Office met our expense-saving goals for 2011, yet we fell short on M&S donations. We can still meet our "breakeven" goal for the 2011-2013 financial plans, but this is very dependent on continuing to draw funds from reserves and reversing the M&S trend. We are undertaking every effort to create a stable financial environment for the church in 2012 and 2013 to give us time to discern the future.

The sales of the Ina Grafton Home in Moose Jaw and Griffith McConnell Homes in Montreal closed in 2011. The General Council Office helped fund an orderly closure. Net proceeds from both sales totalled over \$5 million; discussions are underway with stakeholders on how to best deploy these funds.

Full financial reporting is available in the [Permanent Committee on Finance Accountability Report](#) beginning on page 60.

Accommodations

Last November, you decided to move the General Council Offices to a downtown Toronto setting, in partnership with a United Church congregation. We had two proposals from Toronto congregations – Bloor Street United and Metropolitan United. You directed me to obtain more detailed information from both churches in order that you could select one.

This work is well along. Bill Kennedy and Erik Mathiesen have provided strong staff support, and we have continued to work with Cushman Wakefield and with volunteer experts from within the United Church. I have also drawn on the advice of members of the Executive's former Accommodations Task Group. We are close to having enough information to recommend one site.

Time is a significant factor; already, we are facing the likelihood of a need to extend the current lease for a bridging time until the development project is completed. It is most likely that before you meet at the end of March, I will go to the Sub-Executive to ask them for directions to proceed to finalize an arrangement with one of the two churches.

Philanthropy

The integrated revenue generation plan, shared with the Permanent Committee on Finance and the Executive, is progressing well. In light of the 2011 Mission and Service shortfall and its impact on reserves, we have elected to market the Pre Authorized Remittance (PAR) program strongly, without waiving fees in 2012. Further changes in our work plan will arise following a more thorough analysis of the results.

The [Permanent Committee on Finance's report](#) includes a detailed report on Philanthropy.

Simplifying Church Processes

In May 2010, the Executive approved a project for the simplification of *The Manual*, and authorized me to initiate a project to simplify our processes in order to reduce significantly the complexity and size of *The Manual* and make it more user-friendly. A team of General Council Office and Conference staff undertook this task. In May 2011, the Executive reviewed a detailed interim report and approved the principles upon which it was based. Through extensive consultation with polity and policy specialists and members from across the United Church, we have made revisions and improvements. The Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda oversaw this process and there was regular consultation with The Manual Committee. I believe that the full report that is before you now is ready for you to send on to the General Council for consideration in August.

This is one of the major accomplishments of the work that you have directed this triennium. It is significant because it offers to relieve some of the “process burden” that weighs upon many in the Church. Equally important, it symbolizes an intention to re-imagine church structures and free the church to spend its energy on living faith in the world.

Pastoral Relations

In November 2011, the Executive directed the General Secretary to consult with the wider church on the wisdom and viability about shifting some pastoral responsibilities to Conferences, as per Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services’ *Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships* report and proposal.

We have consulted with every Conference, and in many presbyteries. In addition, more than 800 members have participated in an online survey providing more than 1,300 narrative comments. The results of these consultations are available in the [Report on the Effective Leadership and Healthy Congregational Relationships Consultation](#). We will share an update on the material received after the preparation of that report at our March meeting. The revised proposal offered by the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services is available on [page 89](#).

You are being asked three things in this proposal:

1. To consider the principles in the report
2. To refer implementation as resources and priorities allow to the next Executive
3. To ask the General Council to authorize a remit to permit a shift of certain responsibilities from presbytery to Conference.

As you will see in the report, the idea of moving those specific pastoral relations responsibilities to be managed by professional staff employed by Conferences has been received quite favourably, but many of those consulted have raised questions about how this would be funded. We have included some funding options in the report. There is one possibility that would not require reallocation of current Mission and Service Fund dollars, and there are others options which would. If the General Council concurs with the direction of the principles of the proposal, then the funding would need to be put on the table alongside all other priority denominational initiatives. At that time, the Executive could discern which aspects of the proposal to implement or not.

In deciding what you want to recommend to the General Council, you may wish to reflect on what seem to me to be three possible outcomes:

- (a) General Council might accept the recommendation fully, and the next Executive would need to determine logistics and timelines, how (or whether) to fund its implementation, and whether or not to test portions at a time in Conferences and with presbyteries that are ready
- (b) General Council might reject the recommendations because of uncertainty about funding, returning the whole piece of work to the “drawing board”
- (c) General Council might approve a modified proposal that accepts the principles but does not at this time authorize a shift in responsibilities from presbytery to Conference. (There would be no remit during the next triennium about this matter.) It may direct the Executive to test portions of the model where presbyteries were willing to delegate

certain of their responsibilities to the Conference. This would mean that if a subsequent remit was authorized in 2015, it could not be acted upon until 2018 at the earliest, putting a 15-year time line on this work from when it first came to a Council.

At this meeting of the Executive of the General Council there will be time to reflect on the results of the consultations that have been held, to consider the principles of the proposal and ensure clarity of what is being proposed, and then to decide what, if anything we are prepared to bring to the General Council this summer for its consideration.

New Ministries Formation Fund

After issuing two calls and receiving 14 applications, the Joint Grants Committee approved the review team recommendations for four New Ministries Formation Fund grants. They are:

- Faith & the Arts -- A faith and the arts initiative , in Ottawa, ON (\$75,000)
- A Thunder Bay, ON based multi-site experiment using technology (\$35,000)
- A yoga church initiative in Mt Seymour, BC (\$17,000)
- A church plant championed by Winnipeg Presbytery in a new sub-division(\$85,000 per year for two years)

We have disbursed \$297,000 from the fund, to date.

EDGE: A Network for New Ministry provided consulting and learning opportunities to the applicants. In the future, we would like to work closely with potential applicants before they submit a formal application, and help them to better articulate their proposed projects. We are doing this at present with several applicants with unapproved projects.

Recruitment of a Diverse New Generation of Leadership

We are collaborating across units within the General Council Office and with the deans and principals of the church's theological schools to reimagine the now vacant Vocation for Leadership role.

We hope that current staff can continue to manage the current candidacy processes and the Candidacy Pathway pilot projects; the new position will focus more specifically upon recruitment. This would allow us to bring more attention and innovation to identifying that diverse new generation of leadership and calling them into ministry leadership roles in our church.

Together, we are developing a different approach to calling up a diverse new generation of leadership.

Vision Fund

The annual budget allocation for the Vision Fund was doubled in 2012 pursuant to the 2011 GCE directive. We will make \$100,000 available in the form of small grants to support local youth events and other eligible activities and \$100,000 will be available to support larger youth initiatives.

Membership

In my last report to this Executive, I spoke about the different perspectives currently under discussion on membership and noted that we are able to make some real changes within the

current rules and policies. I referred the broader issue of church membership to the Theology and Inter-church Inter-faith Committee for work.

I will be issuing a directive to congregations on our understanding of how a person becomes a member under current polity to encourage them to interpret the existing requirements in a broad and flexible way. At the November 2011 Executive meeting, I shared some different ways in which people could make a profession of faith and become members; however, I did not include options for non-baptized people, and I will provide advice for this situation. Along with the directive, we will include some sample wording and background commentary to assist congregations.

Legal Fund

The Executive referred a proposal for new terms of reference for the legal aid fund to the Sub-Executive, in May 2011. The Sub-Executive considered the proposal the next month, and allowed me the discretion to develop new criteria and to approve applications for assistance. These criteria are close to being completed and ready to communicate to the Conferences and presbyteries.

The legal aid fund provides assistance to presbyteries, Conferences and the General Council for external legal costs on matters arising from a presbytery or Conference. We have heard concern that no assistance is available for ministry personnel who incur their own legal costs in responding to church court processes or legal proceedings in civil court. We are exploring possible options to address this concern including insurance coverage.

Campus Chaplains

As part of the work on the review of campus ministries, we are extending the Pre Authorized Remittance (PAR) program to our campus chaplains in order to assist the various ministries with their efforts to raise funds for their ministries. A number of other recommendations are forthcoming from the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry.

Commitment to Inclusion

The 40th General Council 2009 directed the General Secretary to develop educational resources that will assist courts and congregations to, "...identify how they discriminate and develop a plan to make room for all...within The United Church of Canada."

In response, we developed the Commitment to Inclusion toolkit with an aim is to provoke an attitudinal shift towards differences (i.e., gender identity, ethnicity, race, age, physical ability, sexual orientation, language, class and any other of personal identity), and that conversation is the best vehicle to affect change in our hearts and minds.

We based the toolkit on four pillars: identity, connect, Scriptures, and language. The first two are the current direction for the church. Scriptures and language also derive from the double role of the United Church of Canada: as a social institution, language is the most powerful tool for social change. Furthermore, the Scriptures are the foundation for us as a faith community; they help us articulate our values, practices and beliefs.

The process represents another step forward in the life of the United Church as a justice living and justice seeking church. We are testing the program in congregations, at present. It will be ready for implementation this summer.

Ethnic Minority Ministries

Building on the Global Partnership review, the Migrant Church Partnerships Working Group identified a number of opportunities with global partner churches, to support and care for members of those global communities that have migrated to Canada. These churches include the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and Americas, the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea, the Church of North India, and the United Church of Jamaica and Caymans.

GLBTT National Consultation

The 40th General Council 2009 directed the church to consult and collaborate with Affirm United, and people of all sexual orientation and gender identities, to explore the state of homophobia and heterosexism in the church. The consultation began with a national gathering in June 2011, which also provided training for facilitators of regional gatherings. The church hosted regional gatherings between August and October 2011; approximately 380 people participated in these gatherings, online and in person.

The [Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry's report](#) contains the data and recommendations from the consultation.

Ministries in French

In response to the direction from the November 2011 Executive meeting, we initiated consultations with the United Church's Francophone constituency and Ministries in French Network. To date, we have reached out to:

- The Consistoire Laurentian
- United Theological College
- Montreal Presbytery
- Manitou Conference
- Montreal & Ottawa Conference
- Quebec-Sherbrooke Presbytery
- Ottawa Presbytery
- Maritime Conference
- Selected ministry personnel and staff

Several themes emerged from these conversations including leadership development for new emerging ministries in Francophone communities. In addition, we discussed greater collaboration between the General Council Office, presbyteries and Conferences on new ministry initiatives and funding these new ministries. Rather than jump to an immediate recommendation, I would like these conversations to continue for a little longer, as the dialogue is rich, and we are sowing the seeds of stronger relationships.

Records Management

The United Church of Canada Archives retained a consultant in November 2011 to assess the General Council Office and compile recommendations for its improving records management. The consultant will complete this work in March 2012. In addition, the Archives acquired 124 new records collections in 2011, and continued to manage regular public service hours receiving more than 600 visitors during the year.

Archives

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been onsite at the Archives since December 2011 to comply with the terms of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, digitizing all relevant records in the collection.

Website Update

In 2011, we changed our web strategy to revamp united-church.ca and include new sites with specific purposes. The new strategy allows us to refocus united-church.ca to become a more effective landing page for newcomers, seekers, and members of the church while still providing important updates to those already familiar with the organization. We will develop dedicated sites for specific work, such as administration (e.g., procedural handbooks, policies, vocations, etc.), and events (e.g., GC41.ca).

We have implemented many small changes already, and are on track to launch a revamped united-church.ca early in 2013.

The 41st General Council 2012 Website

We are developing a new website for the 41st General Council 2012 (GC41.ca). Its multiphase launch plan starts in March.

Building on the success of our gc40.united-church.ca, the new site will include more streaming video, more integration with Youth Forum, improved online registration, stronger social media integration, and a mobile-friendly site design for use on smartphones and tablets.

Implementing Digital Communication Technologies

As directed by the Executive in May 2010, the General Council Office has been reducing the number of print resources and communiqués it produces. The desire for digital delivery of United Church resources in different multimedia formats is real and rising. Print remains the primary communication and resource medium throughout the church, but the number of print projects has dropped by approximately 20% since 2009.

We received 2.1 million visits to united-church.ca, the church's primary website in 2011. Visitor numbers for the United Church's other websites (e.g., UCRDstore.ca, gc40.united-church.ca, the Church Leadership Network, and dedicated event sites) continue to rise, also. Mobile web traffic increased by 100% in 2011; we anticipate similar growth in 2012 as more people browse our web properties with web-enabled mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. To meet this use, we are integrating mobile standards in new designs and properties.

WonderCafé/CaféChange – the United Church's social media platform – averaged approximately 40,000 visits per month, in 2011. The church's Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube

channels are continuing to gain ground, engaging a more church-based audience than WonderCafé/CaféChange. Facebook consistently ranks among the top ten traffic sources for the United Church website. The trend toward common social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) over customized proprietary (e.g., WonderCafé) needs to inform our social media strategies and engagement, as well as the allocation of time, energy, and financial resources.

Publications

Mandate, *Gathering* and *Aujourd’hui Credo* are periodicals that support the mission and worship life of the church. All three have seen significant rework over the last year in content, design, and delivery. Readership numbers for *Mandate* and *Aujourd’hui Credo* remain flat; *Gathering* has seen a modest increase. Additional material for *Gathering* is now available online, enhancing its usability at the congregation.

Pastoral Charge Payroll Service

As of January 27, 2012, 94% of eligible pastoral charges are participating in the payroll service.

At its March 2011 meeting, the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services supported the Pension Board’s recommendation to introduce a monthly charge for funding the administration of a separate invoicing/accounting system to accommodate those pastoral charges and institutional employers not using the payroll service. The Executive approved this cost recovery fee, in May 2011. We mailed a letter to the applicable pastoral charges in September 2011 notifying them that the fee will begin in April 2012.

Staff at the General Council Office has received divided feedback on the Executive’s decision. Some liken the General Council’s decision to, “...bullying pastoral charges onto the payroll service.” Others are reluctantly moving forward with enrolment, acknowledging the significant costs that are incurred by the maintenance of separate, manual administration processes.

Third Party Pension and Benefits Administration

Aon Hewitt assumed responsibility for the administration of the United Church’s pension and group insurance plans on July 1, 2011.

There are still a number of administrative issues (i.e., invoicing for pastoral charges not using the payroll service) that General Council staff is working with Aon Hewitt to resolve. The timeline for resolving some of these outstanding items has been lengthy, creating problems for some plan members and pastoral charges. Regardless, Aon Hewitt has demonstrated a commitment to continuing to allocate staff and resources to obtain a satisfactory outcome, as well as provide the best level of service to United Church plan members and stakeholders. We will continue to inform members and treasurers regularly about Aon Hewitt through online postings and newsletter updates.

United Church Resource Distribution Centre

The United Church Resource Distribution Centre sales declined in 2011, particularly in curriculum and hymnbooks; congregations are simplifying or discontinuing their Sunday school programs, and *More Voices* has begun to saturate across the denomination. However, the United Church Resource Distribution Centre’s online store sees steady growth, with between 20 and 25 orders per day.

Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

The First Nations Theological Centre is functional, and continues to prepare spiritual leaders for ministry and provide cross-cultural education for the larger community.

The interim Keepers of the Centre met in fall 2011 to plan for the future of the new school. They continue their search for a Keeper of the Circle (“principal”) for Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre.

Global Partnership

Over the past four years, The United Church of Canada reshaped its global partnership program so it is more sustainable and vibrant. We have embraced a new articulation of partnership principles (*Review of Global Partnership Principles and Practices in the Context of Empire: Report to the Executive of General Council*, November 2008), and allowing us to engage the whole church more deeply in global mission.

We reduced the number of our global partnerships as part of this process, however several new arrangements are emerging that reflect the United Church’s commitments to systemic justice (i.e., gender, sexual minorities, and equality), ecumenism, and interfaith relations. Our new Partner Advisory Council is a vital part of this new formula.

People in Partnership

A major priority in the triennium has focused on engaging United Church congregations, presbyteries and Conferences, youth groups and Sunday Schools in global partnerships. Through the Extra Measures program and leadership training for education and exposure visits, the people of the United Church are living out their faith in the world, through connections with partners and projects outside Canada.

Public Witness

We have strengthened our engagement with the public through policy development and advocacy actions. We do this work informed by the experience of our global partners, consistent with our social policies, and in collaboration with ecumenical and civil society partners.

Throughout the last triennium, the United Church has lived out this mandate by producing Take Actions, letters and petitions addressed to our own government and other world governments. We have also organized delegations to meet with members of parliament and government officials.

These advocacy actions have focused on issues such as global climate change; extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, Colombia and Honduras; peace and humanitarian concerns in Palestine-Israel; Canada’s adoption and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; eradicating poverty in Canada; and the need for standards of ethical practice for Canadian resource extraction companies working internationally.

Poverty, Wealth, and Ecological Justice

We strengthened our work on climate change by implementing a new framework for Poverty, Wealth and Ecological Justice, which allows us to collaborate, connect, and seize new opportunities to integrate the justice analysis and action strategies of the church. By overlaying multiple “lenses” (i.e., ecological debt, sustainable economy, sustainable community and Whole

Earth Justice), we have drawn out particular issues and priorities and created action plans to move the vision forward.

Working with Canadian and global partners, we continue to explore ways to better engage our members, and the public, on strategies and alternatives, as we move toward a greener church and a greener economy. We have participated in campaigns against poverty, for greater socially responsible investment, and the promotion of environmental sustainability in resource extraction. We continue to advocate for the negotiation of a binding international agreement on climate change through the United Nations and for Canadian domestic policies on GHG emissions reduction.

The Moderator's initiative provided many opportunities for collaboration with other denominations and faith communities who joined in promoting the Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action on Climate Change to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP17 in Durban, South Africa. A highlight in 2011 was organizing the World Council of Churches' North American Forum and Hearings on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology, held in Calgary, which produced a final Call entitled "There's a New World in the Making." Follow up includes the production of video materials to share online, and the development of a North American network among churches focused on poverty, wealth and ecology issues.

Staff Updates

The sub-Executive appointed three Executive Secretaries since the last meeting of the Executive of the General Council. Please join me as we welcome our newest colleagues:

- The Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, Newfoundland and Labrador Conference
- The Rev. Dr. William Smith, Bay of Quinte Conference
- The Rev. Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, London Conference

The Rev. Pat Lawson Paul concluded her service in the Vocation for Leadership position in December. The Rev. Dr. Betty-Lynn Schwab will retire after 31 years of ordered ministry, as the Program Coordinator of Worship and Spirituality. We are grateful to Pat and Betty-Lynn for their years of service, hard work, and dedication and we wish them well.

ADDENDUM E

MODERATOR'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

I write this report grateful for what has been, and looking forward to what will be, with three particular priorities in the months to come:

- 'Moderator's Event' on Earth Day 2012
- Ecumenical Faith Leaders' Collaboration on Climate and Ocean Change
- Planning for General Council 41

Grateful for what has been

I am grateful for you and for the generosity of the church, which has invited me into myriad opportunities of mutual encouragement, extraordinary worship and opportunities to witness the work God is doing through our church. The breadth and depth of response to my invitation to explore our participation in God's healing of soul, community and creation, has exceeded my expectations. Over this triennium:

- More than 26 Town Halls and similar events have involved more than 2,000 people; even more have been involved in conference AGMs and other broadly-based events that engaged church and community in this conversation
- Soul, community and creation has also featured as the theme of last year's Lenten study, numerous online conversations related to the study, and an ongoing social media engagement.
- 716 individuals offered their names and contact information in order to stay in touch with me and this work of our church.
- Among many congregational "Green Teams," an additional 95 United Church congregations have taken the step of registering with Faith and the Common Good at greeningsacredspaces.net, and 53 congregations have confirmed their involvement in the Green Audit Pilot Program. The organization believes that the goal of 100 Green Audits in United Church congregations will be met before the end of 2012.
- I remain forever grateful to those who have offset my travel with their carbon reductions, and I have lost track of the number of congregations who've taken steps such as adding solar panels.
- As a church we are pursuing a more activist shareholder stance: voting our proxies and lending our name to a variety of letter writing campaigns consistent with our views on climate change, human rights and other concerns. I'm grateful to the Church Treasury Investment Committee and the Working Group on Socially Responsible Investment and Resource Extraction for their leadership in this area.
- I've met 'heroes' of hope, as my climate advisor Alanna Mitchell calls you, in every part of our church.

Since our November GCE meeting, Willard Metzger, General Secretary of the Mennonite Church Canada and I have travelled to the United Nations' Climate Talks in Durban, South Africa, representing the Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action. We served as part of the World Council of Churches delegation and worked closely with ACT Alliance in Durban as well. My daily blogs before and during these talks, and my Epiphany message following them, offers an overview of our impressions and activities related to these talks. Positive response to my Epiphany message was especially extensive, in both electronic and regular mail response.

I was grateful for invitations to present our statement during a WCC event (co-sponsored with Caritas International and Religions for Peace) under the UN umbrella in Durban, and to join South African church leaders at a news conference in which great interest was expressed in Canada's position and that of Canadian faith communities. This had some media pick-up in Canada due to the presence of Canadian journalists. Since our return, Willard and I have been encouraged by other Canadian Church Leaders to continue giving leadership to this work on their behalf. We are expecting to meet with Environment Minister Kent again in March and to

help prepare another significant interfaith contribution to Rio+20 in late June. We also long to collaborate more to achieve greater integrity with our own organizational emissions reductions strategies. For example, we are exploring the possibility of an emissions reduction target across faith communities, and pooling resources to help us measure our progress toward meeting our goals.

Last week I received an invitation from the Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Bhutan, quoting my blogs and asking if I would participate as a spiritual leader in a ‘High Level Meeting on Happiness and Wellbeing: Defining a New Economic Paradigm’ to take place at the United Nations in early April. After doing some research, and receiving the encouragement of General Council staff, I have decided to accept this invitation. This meeting will follow up on last summer’s UN resolution A/65/L.86 introduced by Bhutan and unanimously adopted by all nations of the UN, calling for a “holistic approach to development”, to go beyond GDP as the only way to account for social, ecological and environmental prosperity and sustainability. The hope is to develop practical policy recommendations which governments can adopt to move toward a new economic paradigm, and to make a contribution to the Rio+20 meeting.

It was also a privilege to contribute to the recent Canadian Church Leaders’ symposium on Just Peacemaking hosted by Project Ploughshares on Feb. 3rd; to represent you in a half hour radio interview with CFAX of Victoria, about our statement in support of the UN’s World Interfaith Harmony week; and to participate fully in the January staff leaders’ meeting. It is my great privilege as well to continue to respond on your behalf, to pastoral needs as they arise in the church.

Grateful for what is yet to be

- Metropolitan United Church’s (Toronto) Lenten series, first evening speaker, Feb. 24th
- Keewatin presbytery, Feb. 29 – March 3rd
- Yellowknife, March 8th to 15th with gratitude to the General Secretary for inviting me to consider visiting the North with her during my term
- Kootenay presbytery, April 12th to 15th, final leg of formal B.C. Conference visit, during which time former moderators Marion Best and Bob Smith will represent us at the regional Truth and Reconciliation event on Vancouver Island, alongside of Alvin Dixon, Jamie Scott and others
- ‘Soul, Community and Creation’ retreats at Calling Lakes, Five Oaks and Tatamagouche Centres during April and May
- Regional Truth and Reconciliation event in Toronto, May 31st
- Hamilton Conference AGM, on spiritual leadership, June 1st and 2nd
- National Truth and Reconciliation gathering in Saskatoon, June 21st to 24th
- Grand Council of the All Native Circle Conference, July 4th to 7th
- St. Andrew’s College 100th Anniversary, Guest Speaker at Convocation and Worship, July 8th
- UCW 50th Anniversary Celebration, Guest speaker
- Annual meeting of Affirm United, early August

- Praying through Lent with and for those in the circle of Permanent Committee Chairs, and working with the General Secretary and this circle of Chairs to begin a process on March 6th, of looking anew at what we are and do as a church, given our gifts and limitations
- A few more additional invitations are still under consideration as I write this report, and time has been reserved to allow me to prepare spiritually and practically for General Council

In addition to official Conference visits, 362 additional invitations have been received as of February 22nd 2012.

National Moderator's event, Earth Day 2012: Soul, Community and Creation

Earth Day, April 22nd, landed on Good Friday last year, and this year lands on the third Sunday in the season of Easter. A special Earth Day liturgy has been prepared by Betty Lynn Schwab and Bruce Sanguin for use by United Church congregations who want to join together in special worship throughout the country that day. Some features of the day:

- A new child-friendly ‘sacred song’ will be provided for this service thanks to a hymn competition organized by Music United. The judging became quite a task given that 38 original hymn submissions were received! Through worship and song, we participate in God’s healing of soul, community and creation.
- Carefully selected seeds, generously provided by Vesey Seeds of PEI, will be sent to every congregation as a way to invite those of all ages into an act of symbolic and real commitment to participate in God’s healing of soul, community and creation. (There’s another whole story there, which someday (perhaps) I’ll tell you.)
- Monthly ‘challenge activities’, the kind of thing to which youth respond particularly well, launched on the website on February 1st
- I will host a real-time webcast refreshment hour on Earth Day, the national conversational part of the ‘moderator’s event’ in which most in the church can participate without the need for travel.

All of these activities can be followed at <http://www.united-church.ca/earthday>

Planning for 41st General Council: Seeking, Loving, Walking/Rechercher, Aimer, Cheminer

It is a great joy to serve on the planning committee for the 41st General Council, and to witness the great work being done by ‘100 mile committees’ among others.

- In response to a recent phone meeting with Conference Presidents and Leading Elders, I have prepared and shared a document about the theme and logo of this General Council, the practice of prayerful discernment, and what is involved in the ‘Open Space’ day to which Stéphane Vermette refers in his report to you.
- The website for the 41st General Council is in the final design stage. What is up now includes the video invitation which I issued to this General Council in the spring of 2011,

in time for conference meetings and gatherings: <http://www.gc41.ca/>. The ‘potluck’ conversations to which this invitation refers will soon have some suggested questions.

- I am delighted that nine nominees for Moderator have already been received. What a tribute to the strength and faithfulness of leaders in our church!
- My preparations for the meeting include weekly French tutoring

Micah 6:8 is the scripture passage in which our General Council theme is rooted. It inspires questions which we bring to God as we consider the identity and connectional nature of The United Church of Canada, and as we prayerfully discern what grain we need to let fall into Earth so that God can bring new life and new possibilities. Two such questions are: What does the Lord require of us? and What is God looking for in us, as The United Church of Canada today?

I have seen this Executive work with great determination and faithfulness on questions such as these throughout this triennium. It is your work that has clarified the need for General Council and its Executive to focus on matters of identity and connection. It has been a great privilege to serve with you, to follow Christ with you. I look forward to more opportunities to express my gratitude.

ADDENDUM F

INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES: LIVING INTO TRANSFORMATION

Introduction and overview

In 2006, at the 39th General Council, The United Church of Canada made a commitment to becoming an intercultural church. This dynamic intercultural commitment was offered as a vision of transformation, where there is “mutually respectful diversity and full and equitable participation of all.”¹ Cultural and linguistic minority communities—specifically representatives from Aboriginal, Francophone, Deaf and racialized constituencies—were invited to lead the way in shaping the intercultural vision, with the understanding that insightful leadership can come from minority communities.

Representatives from those diverse communities were invited to be part of the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries, to continue to offer shape for the intercultural vision.

About the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries

The Task Group on Intercultural Ministries was established to assist the United Church in its efforts to become an intercultural and racially just church. We are a racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse group of people—with representatives from Aboriginal, Francophone, Deaf, racialized, and ethno-cultural majority communities—that began meeting in January 2008. We have operated with simultaneous translation and interpretation between English, French, and American Sign Language (ASL).

¹ A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada. 2006.

The purpose of our task group has been to continue to shape programs, processes, and policies about intercultural ministries, from representatives' community perspectives, for the church as a whole. We report directly to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry.

We have met over the course of several years, and this report offers insights and recommendations that emerge out of our faithful struggles and discernments. We have worked hard to be able to say with common affirmation what we have discovered and explored. As such, this report is offered in our own voices, with excerpts of stories interspersed.

The elected members of our task group have been Susan Beaver, Helen Bickle, Thierry Delay, Gisèle Gilfillan, Sarah Harrington, Ettie Gordon, Su Won Hong, Elaine Jacobs, Danielle Ayana James, Victor Kitagawa, Marie-Claude Manga, Emmanuel Kwadwo Ofori, and Martin Rumscheidt. Staff support to the task group was offered by Michael Blair, Adele Halliday (staff resource), Maggie McLeod, and Darla Sloan. Past staff support persons have included Pierre Goldberger and Laverne Jacobs.

Our circle of conversation has also, on occasion, included people whom we have invited to lead cultural immersion experiences. These resource persons have described and offered a diversity of lived experiences and resources for our continued work. We have spent time immersed in First Nations, Francophone, Deaf and racialized communities; we have also spent time exploring social class and rural contexts.

Our report, therefore, emerges from what we have been through in terms of our educational experiences, interactions within the group, life experiences, observations, research, group processes, and prayerful discernments.

Background

A transformative vision

The first report on intercultural ministries that was approved by the 39th General Council in 2006, entitled “A Transformative Vision for The United Church of Canada,” said:

“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.”

Recognizing that some cultural minorities in the church were experiencing inequities in the church, our intercultural commitment is therefore offered as a vision of transformation for the whole church—where the intercultural dimensions of ministries become a denominational priority in living out the church’s commitment to racial justice, and where racial and cultural power imbalances are redressed.

In 2006, “intercultural” was initially defined as “mutually reciprocal relationships among and between cultures.” This was an interim description until the intercultural vision could be more developed and contextualized to experiences of people within the United Church. Also, in 2006, the intercultural vision focused primarily on racial, linguistic, and cultural minority communities;

since then, the intercultural vision—and the description of what “intercultural” means—has expanded considerably:

To become an intercultural church is to respond to the call to live together in intentional ways that engage in mutual recognition, respect, and understanding of difference; and, through intentional self-examination, relationship building, and equitable access to power, we as the church seek to be fully committed and faithful in our response.

For further discussion of the terms “culture” and “intercultural,” see [Appendix B](#).

A process of church-wide transformation

In 2009, at the 40th General Council, a report was written by the newly formed Task Group on Intercultural Ministries; the report was entitled “Intercultural Ministries: A Process of Church-Wide Transformation.” In this report, the importance of transforming church structures and systems was re-emphasized, and cultural empire was identified as a challenge to becoming a truly transformed intercultural church. In describing the scope of intercultural ministries, the report reflected that “the church affirmed that this commitment will be a process—a prayerful journey of transformation—affecting all areas of the church’s life.”²

This report also reflected on the following:

The anticipated transformation is such that it will change some of our ways of being church together. The church’s processes, policies, and procedures will all be examined through an intercultural lens; this will, in turn, affect how we articulate theologies, how we make decisions, and how we proactively create spaces for diverse cultural groups to participate fully in decision-making processes within the church.

Becoming an intercultural church is a call to transformation. To truly be a transformed church, based on justice, equity and the redress of power, several areas of the church will be affected. Becoming an intercultural church is both a vision of what we hope to become, and the process of our faithful response to this call.

In reaffirming its intercultural commitment, the United Church has expressed that some things will change:

As the church risks letting go of some structures, traditions, and manifestations of cultural empire, there will inevitably be grief, as there is with any kind of change. Yet, the promise of transformation and our theological understanding of new life means that, as some old things pass on, new things will also come to life.³

Living into a renewed commitment

This report, therefore, seeks to offer in-depth policies and processes that can lead toward church-wide transformation. It seeks to breathe new life. Becoming an intercultural church requires some policy shifts, and it also requires attitudinal shifts. The report is offered in humble faith with the understanding that transformation is of the Spirit, and that as faithful followers, we too can be transformed—and can also be agents of transformation.

² Intercultural Ministries: A Process of Church-Wide Transformation (Interim Report). 2009. *Record of Proceedings*, p. 639.

³ Intercultural Ministries: A Process of Church-Wide Transformation (Interim Report). 2009. *Record of Proceedings*, p. 640.

It is through interrelationships of mutual support that all of the components and constituencies of our Church *together* will be empowered to transform the Church and renew its witness to the Gospel for the 21st century....

Ours is a broad vision of The United Church of Canada as a Church called to live out a renewed understanding of the Gospel in our contemporary context. We share a vision of a United Church that serves all populations and cultures that make up the country through relationships that are just, inclusive, and mutually life-giving.⁴

A story from a candidate for ministry...

People sometimes say to me: “What? You go to church? You, the marginalized one, with your handicap and your homosexuality?” I chose the United Church because it recognizes the beauty of my whole person—including those more marginal parts of me—that I am also entirely made to receive and give love in that which makes me unique, but also because I am proud of the way the United Church applies itself imitating Jesus, living Jesus’ teachings instead of imposing its version of the truth. The United Church is not perfect, but it admits it. It’s humble, capable of asking forgiveness, of inviting people to come and change it, make it better, make real what the Spirit is inspiring us to live now.

1. Biblical context

The call to become an intercultural church is not one solely in response to changing racial and cultural demographics. Rather, becoming an intercultural church is a faithful response to being the church that moves us back to the very beginning of our faith.

The Bible was written in the context of racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity. In the beginning, God created the Earth. And God said the creation was very good; it was also diverse and interdependent. Each part of God’s creation reveals unique aspects of Creator.

We read in the Bible hopes that there are no longer strangers and aliens (Leviticus 19:33–34). Isaiah prays for a house of prayer all of God’s peoples (Isaiah 56:6–8) and offers a vision where the wolf and lamb lie down together in the peaceable kingdom (Isaiah 11:1–9).

Through the story of Pentecost (Acts 2), we read that the early church was born into a culturally and linguistically diverse context. At Pentecost, each person heard the gospel spoken in their own language. Thus God’s Spirit—working with people from many nations—set in motion the early Christian church. Cultural and linguistic identities were left in place, but unified in a new, and larger, expression of common humanity.

Jesus himself worked in the context of diversity—a culturally Jewish man who started a church, and who lived and worked with society’s most marginalized peoples. Jesus himself broke barriers of race, class, gender, and social norms to create a community of believers where all were welcome. Through the interaction with the Canaanite or Syrophoenician woman (Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30), Jesus’ own assumptions were challenged. Jesus enabled encounters with marginalized and diverse peoples to shape and change him.

Diversity is central to our faith, and central to what it means to be the church.

⁴ A Vision for French Ministries in The United Church of Canada. 2009. *Record of Proceedings*, p. 730–31.

2. Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church

God exists in community, and we are invited to be in community together.

Individually and in community, we do everything through the lenses of our cultures: there is no such thing as a culture-free perspective. Our experiences and understandings are shaped by our cultures. Since we cannot capture the complexity of God through our limited cultural understandings, our understanding of God is limited when we see this God through only one dominant cultural perspective. Instead, our understandings of God and our scriptures can be deepened when we come together, as disciples of Jesus Christ, in all of our differences and diversities to acknowledge intercultural reality and richness.

We strive to become an intercultural church to deepen our understandings and experiences of God and of one another. Within The United Church of Canada, a variety of cultural expressions of faith are affirmed and welcomed. Part of the vision of the intercultural church is to create a space where we can sustain our own cultural identities while also affirming those of one another.

An intercultural church is one that is:

welcoming. It:

- is open, accepting, joyful, and life-giving;
- trusts that God's Spirit opens all to new and different experiences, however challenging, painful, and uncomfortable at times;
- seeks to use inclusive and expansive language in worship and community life, and honours diverse language in policy statements and official declarations;
- maintains a commitment to mutuality, inclusion, and radical welcoming as part of the church's mission and ministry.

relational. It:

- affirms, honours, and treasures the God-given differences present in the context of its communities—recognizing that there are a variety of cultural expressions of faith;
- offers a positive vision of community as a whole, with critical engagement within and between cultural perspectives;
- recognizes reciprocal relationships among and between one another, and our responsibilities to live in right relationship with all of creation;
- strives to become a culturally diverse and multilingual community.

adaptive. It:

- lives with God's grace enabling it to accept mistakes, and learns and grows from the past;
- opens itself to be vulnerable;
- continually affirms diverse cultural identities to avoid assimilation into dominant cultures;
- is not afraid to engage in transformation of heart, mind, structure, and policy—including continually adapting to change when change is called for.

justice-seeking. It:

- steadfastly and authentically seeks to share resources, redress power imbalances, and challenge systemic injustices, while seeking full and equitable participation of all—both inside and outside of the church;
- faithfully addresses racism and White privilege;
- recognizes the churches' complicity in historic injustices and tries to do things differently;
- commits itself to becoming a globally minded, inclusive, and justice-seeking community.

intentional. It:

- seeks to be enriched by different cultural perspectives, and knows that what we hold in common does not deny difference;
- creates spaces for courageous conversations;
- proactively cultivates diverse leadership, particularly within cultural communities that have been historically minoritized and underrepresented;
- engages in self-examination, life-long learning, and reflection through ongoing prayer, education, training, consultation, monitoring, and evaluation of its intercultural engagement.

missional. It:

- seeks to discern, acknowledge, and embody biblical and theological bases for becoming an intercultural church;
- affirms that the God of mission has a church in the world, and that we—in all our differences—are active participants in God's mission.

3. Theological basis

With all of these degrees of difference, what might an intercultural theology for The United Church of Canada encompass? Of note, one of the early assignments of the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries was “developing a theology of inclusion, and a theology of intercultural ministries in a Canadian context.” This section of the report seeks to respond to that early assignment.

The problem of inclusion

It is our observation that there are times when the United Church describes itself as an inclusive church. Over time, however, we as a task group have realized that there are problems with the word “inclusion.”

When one is “included,” it means that someone else has the power to include—and exclude. There are power imbalances implied in the word and process of “inclusion.” To say that someone can be included names a particular place of privilege. It might involve a person saying that another is welcome into their space—it implies a host and a guest.

But “inclusion” is not necessarily mutual, and it is not always transformative. Someone can offer to include another, without making any other changes in their way of being. Inclusion does not necessarily mean mutuality, or that a hospitable or equitable space has been created. Often, instead, a minority person (or community) is invited into a culturally dominant space, without any other changes to help them feel at home.

To then develop a theology of inclusion was problematic, because it wouldn't address these power differentials and issues of privilege. Rather than developing a theology of inclusion, we thought it would be helpful to instead focus on a theology of intercultural ministries in the Canadian context.

Theological touchstones

When the task group began our work on a theology of intercultural ministries in the Canadian context, we grappled with questions of theological difference. We represented very diverse racial, cultural, and linguistic communities, and each of us came with differing understandings and experiences of colonialism, oppression, and systemic issues. We also had a wide degree of theological diversity within our membership.

With all of this difference in community, how would we then have a conversation about theology of intercultural ministries in the Canadian context, and still come to consensus for moving forward? We soon realized that a theological exercise around *identity* would be helpful; it would also help us to have conversations about *difference* with some common understandings.

So we began a process to develop several theological “touchstones”—some basic theological tenants that we came to consensus on. Seven touchstones were developed by the group in total. This process took considerable time, but by wrestling with what the theology of the group was, we were able to develop some basic understandings that helped us to live into our intercultural and theologically diverse space.

Some of the touchstones were seemingly simple, such as this one: “In God all things are possible. God makes all things new and cannot be captured in any human construct.” Each such touchstone, however, had a lengthy explanation behind it, to offer further context and meaning. The conversation about the context and meaning was particularly valuable for us to come to some common understandings.

What we later realized would be most helpful to share in this report would not be the individual touchstones themselves, but rather, the process of developing the touchstones. To develop the touchstones, with the question of cultural diversity always in the back of our minds, we then asked each other questions such as: What is our understanding of God and of how God works in the world? Who is Jesus for us? What do we understand and how do we reflect on the scriptures, the Trinity, issues of diversity, church, and community?

Through this process of creating the touchstones, we also came to a clear understanding that theology is about God, and the way in which we present our language. And, because our understandings of God were shaped by our diverse cultural experiences, the way in which we were doing theology was also going to be different.

We realized that, since theology is contextual, there will be many different theologies—not one intercultural theology. In fact, the group developed a new term—intercultural *theologizing*—with the understanding that “theologizing” was a verb and not a noun. It meant that the process of our understanding of God would continue to change, and so our theology would also continue to change.

After considerable contemplation, we affirmed that offering neither one intercultural theology nor many intercultural theologies would suffice, because as soon as they were written and understood, they could continue to change as our context and understandings changed.

With the process of developing the touchstones, and moving away from describing intercultural theologies, we recognized that we did not need to recreate new theologies. Instead, much of the theological basis for becoming an intercultural church was already written and affirmed by the church in earlier statements of faith.

Intercultural theologies

In thinking forward, the task group thought that it would be most helpful to reference the past—and two important statements of faith. One is *A New Creed*; the other is *A Song of Faith*.

From *A New Creed*, the following had particular resonance for the theological basis for becoming an intercultural church:

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.

Through these statements from *A New Creed*, it is affirmed that there is dynamism, and that it is God who works in us to create something new. The “newness” of becoming an intercultural church is not based on our own limited cultural understandings, but rather, because God’s Spirit has already been working within all of us to reconcile, recreate, and renew ourselves, our communities, and our churches.

It is through our belief and trust in God that we are active participants in God’s mission.

Becoming an intercultural church is not an end-goal in itself. Rather, becoming an intercultural church is one process through which God works in us to bring about transformation for us all.

Another statement from *A Song of Faith* also lent itself to further theological reflection on becoming an intercultural church:

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.

These lines from *A Song of Faith* encompass so much of what it means to become an intercultural church. For example, the vision for becoming an intercultural church is grounded in commitments that the church has already made, and in the work of our ancestors in faith. We too are part of the communion of saints, and the newness that we anticipate comes because of our faithful gospel living and the movement of God's Spirit among us.

It also acknowledges that the church has not always lived up to its vision, and that God's Spirit can reorient the church. The transformation comes by honouring what has happened before, by living with grace, and by challenging privilege.

The church has a purpose—God's mission lived out. And the good news is that a community of people who call themselves “church” also resist and challenge the systemic issues of exploitation, marginalization, and violence. The community is instead one of faith and love, where gifts are offered.

The church community is also adaptive: it lives with God's grace enabling it to accept mistakes, and learns and grows from the past.

The task group realized that with these two statements from the church's past, there was no need to create something new. Instead, intercultural theologies are grounded in something old from our own church traditions.

4. Reclaiming the church's intercultural identity

The early Christian church—as referenced in the book of Acts—struggled with how to embody community when there were so many degrees of difference (i.e., racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious). Some might argue that part of the reason why our church today still struggles with these very same issues in community is because of a resistance to change in our ethos.

We believe that what we are being called to do today, is to reclaim what church is. The church is a gift left by Jesus' descendants. Being church is a gift of the Holy Spirit and a gift from God. Church is not a human invention. But we as humans are still struggling to find what church is and what it means in our culture, context, and time.

We note that reclaiming interculturality from the past and working toward transformation can be both difficult and scary.

And yet, since we are reclaiming the church's intercultural identity, the phrase "intercultural church" is somewhat redundant. To be the church is to be intercultural. If there is no diversity, if there are no degrees of difference that are embraced, then perhaps we are not faithfully living into what it means to be the church.

Within one church family, there are many cultural communities. Culture is complex and layered (even if all people might look the same).

For example, Edward T. Hall was one of the first to say that culture can be likened to an iceberg—he reflected that ten percent of culture is found above the surface; ninety percent is found below. The ten percent above the surface is what is seen and understood first—the external cultures, which are often observed with the senses: things that one can see, hear, touch, taste, or smell. These aspects of culture are explicitly learned, conscious, easily changed, and represent objective knowledge. A celebration such as a cultural dinner would be an example of a surface culture.

When one first enters into another culture, one is usually first interacting only with the top ten percent—literally, the tip of the iceberg! Sometimes, people make assumptions or develop ideas about another cultural community without really understanding the internal or deep culture that makes up the majority of that culture's values and beliefs.

However, 90 percent of culture is found below the surface. This includes the beliefs, patterns, values, and myths. These are internal cultures, and they are implicitly learned, unconscious, difficult to change, and express subjective knowledge.

Becoming an intercultural church is trying to make change at this deeper level—and affecting this area that is potentially difficult to change.

A recent national survey in 2010, called "Beyond the Welcome: Churches Responding to the Immigrant Reality in Canada"⁵—which included more than 300 interdenominational church leaders across Canada—noted the challenge for churches is negotiating which cultural norms from the past they should hold on to and which to let go of. It reconfirmed that the process of adapting to change can be easy or difficult.

This is the kind of transformation that is called for—and yet, it is difficult.

⁵ World Vision Canada, 2010. "Beyond the Welcome: Churches Responding to the Immigrant Reality in Canada."

The United Church of Canada has also acknowledged this difficulty in its own history. For example, at the 35th General Council in 1994, it was noted:

Simply to tinker with structures without addressing the deeper convictions, attitudes, and values which inform those is not an adequate response to the concerns being raised by those in ethnic ministries.⁶

More recently, research within the United Church, the Emerging Spirit project found “deeply rooted congregational cultures highly resistant to change” and worked to help congregations “break out of established cultural patterns that no longer connect to those outside the existing membership of the church.”⁷

As a result, to focus *only* on policy solutions will never effect the kind of deep and transformative change for which we are striving. In addition, we are all being called to deeply examine our attitudes, values, and personal around difference—and risk doing things differently to create a better space of belonging for all.

Story from a task group member...

I kept a particular paper from our last task group meeting. The paper had on it the words “inspire” and “culture.” This particular day—when we were at the Deaf Cultural Centre—I learned that the signs used in American Sign Language have shape, depth, and texture. Since then, what has gone through me is an awareness of my own difficult spaces, as we talk about changes transformation and taking steps forward. For some time, I have wanted to learn more about Deaf culture but found it challenging—I later recognized that the difficulty is about me acknowledging the challenge of stepping forward.

5. Identity and connection

Becoming an intercultural church is central to issues of identity and connection. Identity has particular resonance for minoritized communities.

To value strong understandings of identity means engaging with marginalized (and/or new) communities challenging false assumptions of equality and entrenched cultural patterns. It means creating space for much greater diversity to emerge than most congregations have been prepared to accept.⁸

For example, a recent paper on “Identity and Mission” states that identity “is also expressed in the struggle by marginalized communities within larger dominate cultures to assert distinctiveness both to challenge oppressive characterizations of the community and to seek greater self-determination.”⁹

Terence Anderson, in his paper “Our Defining Center,” reflections on the question of who we are, as The United Church of Canada, and writes that this is a key question of identity. For example, according to Anderson,

⁶ “The proposed model for the Ethnic Ministries Council of The United Church of Canada”, p. 246. 35th General Council of The United Church of Canada, 1994. *Acts and Proceedings*, p. 246.

⁷ Gregersen, Bruce, 2011. “Identity and Mission” discussion paper, p. 5.

⁸ Gregersen, Bruce, 2011. “Identity and Mission” discussion paper, p. 4.

⁹ Gregersen, Bruce, 2011. “Identity and Mission” discussion paper, p. 3.

“the much discussed pluralism of our society heightens the identity problem. When we are safely ensconced in a relatively homogeneous society, it is possible to function just fine without addressing identity questions.”

He goes on to say:

“For those belonging to minority cultures, or minority denominations, identity issues have always been unavoidable. They have to keep asking themselves, will we assimilate to the majority culture and no longer be a distinctive people? Or will identify with our ancestors and carry forward in new ways our unique heritage?...

The identity questions before us can legitimately focus on boundaries—who and what belongs?”

The question of boundaries and belonging also speaks to the concept of “identity politics.”

6. Called to be the Church

Becoming an intercultural church is a key aspect of identity and connectionality for The United Church of Canada.

The words of *A New Creed* name what being called to be the church involves:

We are called 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.

Using the framework of the creed, our group spent considerable time discerning what practical steps correspond with each section of the creed. In fact, we found that the same broad topic might fit in multiple places. Because there is no such thing as a cultural-free perspective, we found that there are many different ways of looking at the same thing, since we can look at it through multiple perspectives¹⁰.

To become an intercultural church is to respond to the call to live together in intentional ways that engage in mutual recognition, respect, and understanding of difference; and, through intentional self-examination, relationship building, and equitable access to power, we as the church seek to be fully committed and faithful in our response.

May the lived experience of respectful relationship in this task group, may the findings and questions we have raised, the stories we have shared and proposals recommended all reflect Holy Grace and a faithful response to the Call of God. Amen.

¹⁰ To help illustrate this, our task group developed an “intercultural wheel,” so that if one item is first viewed through the lens of a particular part of *A New Creed* that we acknowledged that we could easily look at that same item through a different part of the creed and have different perspectives emerge.

The elected members of our task group have been:

Susan Beaver
Helen Bickle
Thierry Delay
Gisèle Gilfillan
Sarah Harrington
Ettie Gordon
Su Won Hong
Elaine Jacobs
Danielle Ayana James
Victor Kitagawa
Marie-Claude Manga
Emmanuel Kwadwo Ofori
Martin Rumscheidt

Staff support to the task group was offered by:

Michael Blair
Adele Halliday (staff resource)
Maggie McLeod
Darla Sloan

Past staff support persons have included:

Pierre Goldberger
Laverne Jacobs

Appendices

Appendix A: Action Items for Living into Transformation

Governance Structures and Processes

1. Direct the Executive of General Council, through its Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda, to:
 - explore models of consensus decision-making used by other Christian communities (such as the Canadian Council of Churches; the World Council of Churches; the World Communion of Reformed Churches; and the Uniting Church of Australia) for their major meetings and gatherings,
 - make a recommendation by January 2013 to the Executive of General Council on a model of consensus for use by its committees and task groups, and by all courts of the church—including General Council and its Executive, Conferences, presbyteries/districts, and pastoral charges,

- decide on, and implement, appropriate methods for training elected members serving on committees and task groups on the model of consensus decision-making, including writing relevant supporting documents.

2. Commit to adopting consensus as the official decision-making process of The United Church of Canada, and that consensus will replace the current Rules of Debate and Order (prescribed in Appendix III of *The Manual*) for the 42nd General Council—and all subsequent General Councils—as well as for future meetings of the Executive of General Council and of all of the Permanent Committees.
3. Direct the Executive of General Council, through its Permanent Committee on Governance & Agenda, to ensure that:
 - in each triennium in which they are serving, all elected members nominated to national committees and task groups of the General Council undergo at least one full day of anti-oppression training that focuses on issues related to intercultural engagement, gender justice, racial justice, socio-economic class, intergenerational diversity, disabilities, and alternatives to empire,
 - any anti-oppression training makes use of the integrated lens already developed for committee use, and other related United Church tools around anti-oppression,
 - an additional day of training is offered for all chairs of national committees and task groups on anti-oppression processes for meetings,
 - the anti-oppression training is developed in consultation with the program staff at the General Council Office related to the work of intercultural engagement, gender justice, racial justice, intergenerational diversity, and empire,
 - tools are developed to evaluate how the training is being implemented, integrated and utilized, and that offer critical self-analysis,
 - after the training takes place in each triennium, a report is given to the Executive of General Council that references the evaluation tool and makes recommendations about the next steps for training.
4. Encourage all Conferences and presbyteries/districts to deliver anti-oppression training for elected members serving on Conference and presbytery/district committees, so that in each triennium in which they are serving, all elected members nominated to Conference and presbytery/district committees and task groups undergo at least one full day of anti-oppression training that focuses on issues related to intercultural engagement, gender justice, racial justice, socio-economic class, intergenerational diversity, disabilities, and alternatives to empire.
5. Direct the Executive of General Council, through its Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda, to research a diversity of ways to make meetings of General Council committees and task groups more accessible and equitable to a broader range of people by:
 - consulting with people who are currently underrepresented in the governance structure—such as youth and young adults, shift workers, racialized peoples, people who speak English as an additional language, people who are Deaf, and people with disabilities—to gather their insights about accessibility and making attendance at meetings more accessible,

- offering clear directions on alternative meeting days and times that will increase the participation of underrepresented groups and of people who may not be available for multi-day in-person meetings,
- presenting options that offer translation and interpretation for meeting participants who may not speak English fluently.

6. Direct the Executive of General Council, through its Nominations Committee and Member Engagement Services, to:
 - ensure, through questionnaires/tools, that all elected members are willing to engage self-analysis and critical reflection as part of their nominations process, and encourage all people to self-identify their cultural identities when being nominated to committee and/or task group work,
 - develop a process for succession planning that will enable building and investing in a pool of diverse leaders of elected members—with an emphasis on underrepresented and minoritized peoples—and working with them to continue to build effective leadership skills for future opportunities including offering new and dynamic opportunities for leadership development, orientation, experiences and further training,
 - have an initial goal that by the 43rd General Council, at least one-third of the elected members serving on national committees and task groups will be from racialized as well as other minoritized communities,
 - report to the 42nd General Council on plans and progress.
7. Direct that the General Secretary, General Council:
 - offers affirmation and thanks for the work that has already been done around writing in plain language, including the work done related to the simplification of *The Manual*,
 - develops a plain language policy for communications of The United Church of Canada.
8. Direct the Executive of General Council to set aside a special protected yearly fund to provide simultaneous translation and interpretation at national events and national meetings of committees and task groups to enable the fuller participation of peoples who do not speak English fluently.

Ministry and Employment

9. Name that the Executive of General Council affirms the current Employment Equity policy section of The United Church of Canada's Human Resources Policy Manual for the General Council Office and Conference office staff, and direct the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS) to create a task group (with intentional inclusion of people of diverse cultural identities, people of varying socio-economic backgrounds, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, racialized peoples, peoples of diverse gender identities including women and transgendered people, and people who are Deaf) to focus on the development of specific and tangible strategies in these United Church workplaces to:
 - increase the participation of people of diverse cultural identities, people of varying socio-economic backgrounds, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, racialized peoples, peoples of diverse gender identities including women and transgendered peoples, and people who are Deaf in the calling, appointment, development, and advancement of staff,
 - offer specific benchmarks to measure progress,

- examine and eliminate systemic and deliberate barriers for recruitment, employment, development, and promotion of underrepresented groups,
- create ways to increase the outreach efforts and composition of applicant pools,
- develop guidelines for conducting interviews with intercultural awareness—including having racially and culturally diverse hiring committees,
- continue to operationalize the anti-racism policy and the guidelines from The United Church of Canada on “Ending Racial Harassment: Creating a Healthy Workplace”,
- create proactive plans to connect with and increase the hiring of “at-risk” racialized youth from low-income and impoverished backgrounds for staff positions—including summer positions—at the General Council Office, and minimize the hiring of General Council Office staff relatives for these positions,
- offer updated language that reflects the wording currently in use by the United Church when referring to people in the Employment Equity policy,
- report on the plans developed for implementation of the above at the 42nd General Council,
- implement monitoring mechanisms, which would include reporting to each subsequent General Council about plans and progress in relation to Employment Equity.

10. Through its Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee and the Executive of General Council (through its Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services and its Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry), create a framework to explore the mutual recognition of ministry with other Reformed traditions that make up the World Methodist Council, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and global partners of The United Church of Canada.

11. Explore methods to ensure that there is intentionality and partnership between the General Council Office, the Executive of General Council (through its Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services) and other courts of the church to:

- assess the admissions processes, and identify potential barriers faced by ministry personnel who come to Canada from global partner communities and are seeking admission to The United Church of Canada,
- effectively engage and create intentional spaces of invitation for immigrant ministry personnel—who are already in Canada—in the life of the church,
- identify ways to increase recruitment of ministry personnel from marginalized communities.

12. Having recognized that some racialized ministry personnel experience isolation in ministry in a unique ways, direct the Executive of General Council, through its Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services—in partnership with Conferences—to examine and implement additional support systems for racialized ministry personnel by:

- working with General Council Office staff to implement mandatory intercultural competencies and anti-oppression training for racial majority congregations hiring racialized ministry personnel by doing intentional work with the hiring congregation and presbytery/district on intercultural, identity, racial justice, and other equity issues,
- encouraging congregational members, staff, and ministry personnel to undergo training in intercultural awareness and intercultural conflict resolution,

- on a regular basis, bringing together all self-identified racialized ministry personnel in the Conference to support one another, talk about their experiences, and develop additional processes around isolation in ministry,
- exploring additional systems of support for the congregation and racialized ministry personnel.

Congregational Development

13. Encourage presbyteries and districts to provide opportunities for congregations to explore ways in which they might embrace the focus on intercultural ministries and understand their own cultures in their local contexts through training and workshops commending the Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church for study and reflection, and embracing the focuses of the Commitment to Inclusion and Covenanting for Life.
14. Encourage Presbytery Oversight Committees to use resources related to the Commitment to Inclusion and Covenanting for Life as part of their presbytery oversight visits as tools to ask and engage congregations in questions around diversity.
15. Given the changing cultural and racial demographics in Canadian society, the increase in immigration from different parts of the world, and the reality that few United Church congregations are geared specifically toward some of these new immigrant communities, direct the development of a new mission strategy for effectively engaging with diverse cultural and racial immigrant Christian communities in Canada.
16. Direct that the Executive of General Council create a task group on property sharing—based on an acknowledgement that the oversight of property is both a congregational and presbytery responsibility—including representation from Conferences and presbyteries, and including culturally diverse additional resource people as needed, and membership from the Permanent Committee on Finance, the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry to focus on:
 - amending the regulations on property sharing where two or more United Church worshipping communities are sharing property that moves beyond a landlord/tenant relationship while taking into consideration the ministry and mission needs of both communities,
 - developing models for culturally sensitive and appropriate forms of memorandums of understandings or covenants that will apply to the different parties in the relationship,
 - offering options for congregations that will be continually sharing space beyond three years so that a different type of agreement is developed, which is not based on a rental or tenancy or like agreement.
17. Declare that The United Church of Canada will move toward intercultural conflict resolution throughout the life and mission of the whole church in all of its courts by:
 - directing the Executive of General Council to develop processes for intercultural conflict resolution and restorative justice for use in all courts of the church,
 - making appropriate changes to the *Dispute Resolution Policy Handbook* to reflect these intercultural processes,
 - clearly naming that for a person to be eligible to serve as a Conflict Resolution Facilitator in The United Church of Canada, they must meet the current requirements for becoming

- a Conflict Resolution Facilitator, as well as undergo specific training on intercultural conflict resolution,
- ensuring that any conflict or dispute involving congregations currently designated as diverse cultural identities, Aboriginal, Ethnic Ministries, Deaf, or Ministries in French, be resolved with the presence of at least one person who has been specifically trained in intercultural conflict resolution.

18. Call the United Church to an emphasis on the priority of intercultural worship, and direct the General Secretary, General Council, to ensure that there are adequate resources to meet this call through:

- broadly sharing the principles of intercultural worship,
- encouraging the development of intercultural worship resources for congregations for wide dissemination,
- making such resources available in many languages of the church by inviting the sharing of resources by diverse cultural communities,
- making available a consultant—who has specialized training in intercultural worship—who can work directly with congregations across the country that want to make their worship services more intercultural.

Faith Formation and Education

19. Direct that the Executive of General Council explore the establishment of a yearly, ongoing monetary fund for scholarships through The United Church of Canada Foundation for historically underrepresented peoples—including peoples who are racialized, Aboriginal, Francophone, Deaf, or have disabilities—who are members of The United Church of Canada and are interested in pursuing a degree at a doctoral level in order to build up resources and create a diverse community of knowledge.

20. Direct the Executive of General Council, through its Permanent Committee on Ministry Employment and Policy Services, to:

- create intentional and ongoing opportunities for the mentorship of people from underrepresented groups who are interested in paid accountable ministry within The United Church of Canada, in consultation with members of those underrepresented groups,
- incorporate an intentional intercultural component as part of the candidacy process,
- develop policies that require all United Church candidates to spend intentional time in a culture other than their own and considering the global reality in Canada, through intentional field placements, and intercultural internships throughout places in Canada—including but not limited to community ministries or the All Native Circle Conference—and that the General Council Office be considered as one prospective internship site.

21. Direct the General Secretary, General Council, to discern the most effective approach for offering a United Church of Canada certificate program on intercultural ministries, by working cooperatively and in partnership between the General Council Office and United Church-affiliated education centres.

22. Direct the General Secretary, General Council, to facilitate a gathering of United Church faculty once in each triennium to focus on addressing intercultural issues in the curriculum.

Appendix B:

Understanding “culture” and “intercultural”

Understanding culture

Culture is often described as the shared, and often unspoken, understandings in a group. Some people say that it is what you know—that everyone else also knows. Culture is a series of lenses that shape what we see the world around us, and how we perceive, interpret, and where we draw our boundaries. For all of us, it may be possible that there are times when our “cultures” may appear invisible to us—sometimes it is when someone is removed from a culturally familiar environment that they realize some of their cultural boundaries. Still, for all of us, culture shapes our ideas of what is important, influences our attitudes and values, and animates our behaviours.

Cultural identities can include groups which share commonalities of age and generation, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, geographic ties, political affiliation, faith community, language, rural and urban, and much more.

Culture is about much more than food, clothing, and festivals. Instead, all of us belong to multiple cultural communities. And, our collective cultures are shaped by our diverse experiences, interactions, relationships, communities, and identities. As such, culture is fluid, and can change depending on time and context.

Each of us belongs to more than cultural communities—for example, a person is not just their racial identity alone—and so everyone has some experience in transitioning between different cultural boundaries and communities.

As we become more aware of cultural lenses—our own and others’ lenses—we recognize that there is no such thing as a culture-free perspective¹¹.

Understanding intercultural

Because our understanding of culture is broad—our understanding of intercultural must also be broad.

Initially described as “mutually reciprocal relationships among and between cultures,” our description of what intercultural means is now much broader.

We would now define intercultural as the following:

To become an intercultural church is to respond to the call to live together in intentional ways that engage in mutual recognition, respect, and understanding of difference; and, through intentional self-examination, relationship building, and equitable access to power, we as the church seek to be fully committed and faithful in our response.

¹¹ Adapted from: Michelle LeBaron & Venashri Pillay, “Conflict, Culture, and Images of Change”, pgs 14-15. In *Conflict Across Cultures*, Intercultural Press, Boston, 2006.

Appendix C:

Demographic & Statistical Context

When The United Church of Canada first made a commitment to becoming an intercultural church in 2006, the leadership for the intercultural vision was initially given to cultural and linguistic minority communities. As such, to offer context for what intercultural means today, it seems fitting to first initially on Aboriginal, Francophone, racialized, and linguistic minority communities in the United Church.

It is important to note that understanding of “intercultural” is indeed now much broader than racial and linguistic groups only; however, focusing on these communities of difference can help deepen our understanding of the cultural context in which we find ourselves today. It is for illustrative purposes that this report will offer background information on race and language as a lens through which we can better understand the church’s attitude towards difference.

Several recent national surveys and statistics have helped to paint a picture of the current Canadian context, and the realities facing Canadian churches.

According to Statistics Canada, the numbers of First Peoples in Canada is growing. The most recent census, from 2006, stated that 1,172,790 people reported Aboriginal identities—which includes First Nations, Métis or Inuit peoples. This is an increase from 976,305 Aboriginal peoples in 2001, and 799,010 in 1996¹².

Further, the Aboriginal population is growing much faster than the non-Aboriginal population: “between 1996 and 2006, it increased 45%, nearly six times faster than the 8% rate of growth for the non-Aboriginal population over the same period¹³. ”

There were also large numbers of Aboriginal peoples present in the church in 1925, at church union:

By the time of Church Union there were Methodist and Presbyterian Indigenous congregations from Quebec to Vancouver Island, all under the denominational Boards of Home Missions ... approximately sixty-one Indigenous congregations, predominantly Methodist, entered the United Church of Canada in 1925¹⁴.

In addition to growing numbers of First Peoples on the land, the church has been, and continues to be shaped by migration. A World Council of Churches report¹⁵ states the following:

Migration is a global phenomenon. Today, globally around 250 million people are labelled migrants. A recent BBC report stated that at the start of the 21st century one in every 35 people is an international migrant.

¹² Statistics Canada. “The Daily”. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/080115/dq080115a-eng.htm>, accessed on 8 November, 2011.

¹³ Statistics Canada. “The Daily”. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/080115/dq080115a-eng.htm>, accessed on 8 November, 2011.

¹⁴ Task Group on the Basis of Union and the Crest. 2011.

¹⁵ World Council of Churches. 2010. Report of the Consultation on Mission and Ecclesiology of Migrant Churches. Utrecht, the Netherlands. 16-21 November, 2010, p.1.

Locally, according to Statistics Canada, new immigrant peoples will account for 22% of the total Canadian population in 2017¹⁶. This means that nearly 1 in 5 persons in Canada is born outside of Canada. The last time immigrant communities comprised such a high percentage of the Canadian population was in the early decades of the 20th century, between 1911 and 1931¹⁷—the very time in which The United Church of Canada was born.

Another report by Statistics Canada, names that more than 200 ethnic (sic) origins were reported by the total population of Canada in 2006, including Aboriginal peoples¹⁸. This is contrasted by the reality that in 1901, the Census recorded only 25 different ethnic groups in Canada¹⁹. These current racialized communities are ethnoculturally diverse, and not just limited to Canada's largest urban centres²⁰.

All of this takes place in a country which is officially bilingual—French and English—and where Francophone peoples live all over the land. Currently, French is the first official language spoken for nearly 5% of the Canadian-born population—outside of Québec²¹.

The United Church of Canada is also ethno-culturally diverse. According to a national recent Identity Survey (which was conducted in 2011), the picture of the United Church's cultural reality is one where there are many languages spoken and used in worshipping communities, many new immigrants, and the majority of respondents trace their history in Canada to only one or two generations past.

Canada has been changing, and continues to change. What is important about this statistical overview are it's implications for church.

For example, the World Council of Churches report²² offers the following reflection on the growing number of “migrant/multicultural” churches in the global north, including Canada:

These ecclesial communities invite the established local churches to enrich their understanding of Christian self-identity, ecclesiology and mission, challenging the assumptions of migration of the colonial and post colonial era, and its impact on church and global relationships. The gifts and challenges these migrant/multicultural churches provide demand a re-imagining of mission, evangelism and being church.

What does it mean to be church, in the midst of growing difference among Canadian society and church attendants? How are churches responding? The World Council of Churches report

¹⁶ Statistics Canada. Ethnocultural diversity in Canada: Prospects for 2017 (Accessed June 29, 2011).

¹⁷ Statistics Canada. Ethnocultural diversity in Canada: Prospects for 2017 (Accessed June 29, 2011).

¹⁸ Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic, 2006 Census (Accessed June 29, 2011).

¹⁹ Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic, 2006 Census (Accessed June 29, 2011).

²⁰ Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic, 2006 Census (Accessed June 29, 2011); Statistics Canada. Ethnocultural diversity in Canada: Prospects for 2017 (Accessed June 29, 2011).

²¹ Statistics Canada. Statistical Portrait of the French-Speaking Immigrant Population Outside Quebec (1991 to 2006). Written by René Houle and Jean-Pierre Corbeil. www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-641-x/89-641-x2010001-eng.htm (Accessed November 10, 2011).

²² World Council of Churches. 2010. Report of the Consultation on Mission and Ecclesiology of Migrant Churches. Utrecht, the Netherlands. 16-21 November, 2010, p.3.

reflected on “the sobering necessity to raise awareness and educate both church and society on issues of migration, religious and cultural diversity.”

For the United Church, reflecting the changing Canadian reality is also what is required to be faithful to its “of Canada” identity and certainly faithful to the world’s diversity that is God’s gift. It is why intercultural work is increasingly important in the life of the United Church and will play such a significant role at this coming meeting of the General Council.²³

A recent national survey in 2010, called “Beyond the Welcome: Churches Responding to the Immigrant Reality in Canada”²⁴—which included more than 300 interdenominational church leaders across Canada—confirmed the need for better engagement of the immigrant reality. This report noted that churches only offer a superficial welcome to immigrant communities. In this same report, it shared that “59% of respondents said their leaders occasionally or never spoke of the benefits that cultural diversity brought to their church congregation”²⁵.

These statistics help form a basis for our desire to become an intercultural community.

For example, in a paper written on Identity and Mission²⁶ in 2011, it states that “the United Church will need to find ways of beginning new intercultural congregations to be able to fully engage the changing nature of Canadian society.”

And, some in the church are open to this kind of change—in the United Church’s Identity Survey: only about half of respondents want to worship in a church where others are mostly like them.

Even with these statistics in mind, it is important to note that intercultural is not the same as ethnicity. Further, becoming an intercultural church is broader than a sole focus on racial identity, ethno-cultural communities, and immigration; however, this remains an important grounding and aspect of what it means to create intercultural communities.

It is also interesting to note, however, that for The United Church of Canada, some of these realities are not new. For example, in 1972, the Executive of the Division of Mission in Canada in its September meeting established a Task Force on Immigration and Minority Ministries. (Notably, this is one year after Canada officially became a multicultural country.) In 1976, British Columbia Conference established a Task Force on Ethnic Minority Ministries. From 1989-1990, The United Church’s mission theme was “Multicultural Canada”, and the *Mandate* special edition in 1989 had as its theme “Canada’s Cultural Mosaic”.

In terms of other degrees of difference within the church, some insights could be offered around diverse communities—such as communities including people who are Deaf, or who represent diverse social classes, or people with disabilities.

²³ Gregersen, Bruce, 2011. “Identity and Mission”, p. 4.

²⁴ World Vision Canada, 2010. “Beyond the Welcome: Churches Responding to the Immigrant Reality in Canada”.

²⁵ World Vision Canada, 2010. “Beyond the Welcome: Churches Responding to the Immigrant Reality in Canada”, p. 27.

²⁶ Gregersen, Bruce, 2011. “Identity and Mission”, p. 3.

For example, in 2011, The United Church of Canada conducted a national survey of United Church members. Of those who responded to the church's Identity Survey, 5.3% stated that they are a person living with a disability. The survey went onto to state that people with a disability in the United Church are less comfortable participating in events outside of regular worship services and that their involvement has tended to decrease recently more than others. Persons with a disability also express discomfort with expressing opinions to others in United Church; people living with disabilities are often on the margins of church life.

From the period of the early 1970s to present, there have been many meetings and reports on immigration, cultural difference, and diversity. Yet, these important moments in the church have not yet resulted in church-wide transformation. The church has been aware, but has not yet taken enough action in this area of ministry.

Hence, the purpose of this report is to offer specific policy direction around what it means for The United Church of Canada to become an intercultural community. Many of the directions are focused at a national, Conference and presbytery level.

Appendix D:

The Circle Process

As a task group the way we did the ‘circle process’ evolved during the course of our meetings together. The circle was chosen as the meeting format because it not only lends itself readily to working amid diversity it is also a beautiful tool that enables those who participate in it to foster deeper relationships with others and self. By its nature, in the circle, all persons are equal, each has a voice (even in making the choice to pass or not be heard at a particular time gives the ‘speaker’ a sense of empowerment and belonging), and each is valued as an individual with a contribution to make to the whole.

As a tool, the circle creates a safe space (sacred space) where persons can share (open up) without fear of being interrupted or put down. In such an atmosphere participants learn to respect others, respect what they have to say, (in turn) each learns what they have to say is valued thus creating a sense of trust and security.

The circle is especially good for dealing with contentious issues because it creates a very respectful atmosphere in which the likely hood of getting back and forth argument and speakers vying to make points heard is minimized – ideally not engaged in.

Visually the circle invokes a sense of communion, equality, value, and common purpose amongst those gathered.

The essential/basic elements that undergirded our work circle were:

- The ‘circle process’
- Our covenant
- Intercultural Conflict Resolution Process

The basic format for the ‘circle process’ for members of the task group went thus:

- Gathering
- Welcome/Worship
- Renewal of Covenant
- Check in
- Overview of Meeting Agenda
- Agenda items – task group work
- (from time to time we broke from the circle to work in smaller groups – which then reported back to the whole)
- Worship

The ‘circle process’ used by the task group saw members gather around a worship centre (prepared to celebrate the liturgical season or predominant meeting theme). The meeting was in the context of worship with worship at the beginning and end of each day.

Following words of welcome task group members engaged in Worship – prepared by group members around the season or theme incorporating visuals, language, practices from the varying cultural backgrounds

Before the invitation to ‘check in’ (a way for members to enter into ‘circle space’ by sharing something of what they brought to the meeting with them) the covenant (our agreement of how we would work together) was renewed – sometimes by individuals reading separate pieces – sometimes in unison. During ‘check in’ as well as during work times varying ways to speak in the circle were utilized – sometimes moving clockwise – other times counter clockwise; sometimes using the technique of mutual-invitation,^{i[i]} at other times using a ‘pop-corn’ technique.^{ii[iii]} Whichever technique was used to talk in the circle care was taken that only one person speaks while all others listen (there was no dialogue as in ordinary conversation). Silence was respected “...leaving room for Spirit, who has a different sense of time...”^{iii[iv]}

After all had had an opportunity to ‘check in’ the Agenda for the meeting was reviewed with adjustments made where needed. Here persons in the circle had opportunity for input using the same respectful ways of communicating as described above.

Work in the circle was carried out in like manner. If a decision was required members moved around the circle as many times as necessary for consensus.

When conflict arose in the circle techniques of intercultural conflict resolution were invoked – a time of learning as well as a time of restoration of relationship.

As the model for meeting used by The Intercultural Task Group the circle became a place of gathering, a place of sharing joy and sorrow, a place of work, a place of healing, a place of forming deep bonds of friendship in an intercultural context.

^{i[i]} A technique in which one speaker then invites another to speak

^{ii[iii]} A technique where persons speak one after another in no particular order in the circle – only when no other person is speaking

^{iii[iv]} From Covenant for the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries

ADDENDUM G

MINISTRY COMPENSATION REPORT

Summary of Theological Principles

We live with a constant tension between confidence that we are richly blessed within this, God's realm, and the realization that human structures do not always encourage or allow an equitable distribution of enough for all. The compensation policy of The United Church of Canada cannot be established outside of the context of the contemporary economic culture. However, the Church is called to model a policy that does not encourage endless competition for higher earnings or measure personal value by one's earnings but seeks to promote just and fair, equitable and consistent practices that are sustainable for ministry personnel and for local ministries. (A fuller exploration of theological principles is available as an appendix.)

Guiding Principles

The compensation structure shall:

1. be consistent with the priorities of The United Church of Canada;
2. promote just, fair, equitable, sustainable, and consistent compensation practices for both ministry personnel and local ministries;
3. be easy to understand and administer, and allow for appropriate oversight;
4. be comprehensive and incorporate all compensation allowances;
5. maintain the primary responsibility for the financial support of ministry personnel with the pastoral charge or other ministry unit, subject to minimum standards;
6. ensure that ministry personnel be compensated at a level commensurate with the cost of living in the region in which they serve;
7. provide a means to recognize additional skills, experience, education, responsibility, etc.

Mandate

The Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (Permanent Committee) formed the Ministry Compensation Task Group (Task Group) at their January 2009 meeting with the following mandate:

1. review issues related to a comprehensive salary, redesigned salary structure, and augmenting compensation in exceptional circumstances initiatives;
2. identify factors that may influence the implementation of these initiatives;
3. provide guidance for the development of policies to address issues related to the implementation and administration of the initiatives;
4. oversee the development of these policies and report progress to the Permanent Committee;
5. recommend policies for approval by the Permanent Committee;
6. recommend on other issues as assigned by the Permanent Committee.

Scope

The Task Group was formed to advance work on three outstanding recommendations in the Compensation Models report to the 39th General Council in 2006 (see Background below).

The task group focused on cash compensation made up of base salary, housing/housing allowance and the Income Tax Act's provision for a Clergy Residence Deduction (CRD). Other employment related costs (books, continuing education, travel, etc.) are reimbursed as an employment expense and are not part of compensation.

It was not part of the mandate to determine if the existing minimum salaries are appropriate. Rather, these were accepted as the base for the recommendations going forward.

Background

In April 2003, the Compensation Models Project was initiated to address the compensation practices of the church as they impact ministry personnel in response to the many issues raised over the years in this regard. This initiative resulted in four recommendations presented to General Council 39²⁷ in 2006:

1. To implement a centralized payroll service for all pastoral charges and other related employers;
2. To pay ministry personnel a comprehensive salary instead of a base salary plus housing/housing allowance;
3. To redesign the salary structure with minimum and maximum salaries in each category, with a greater differential in the salaries for Order of Ministry and Designated Lay Ministers (previously Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associates) and that does not provide for the accumulation of service credits before Designated Lay Ministers (previously Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training/Staff Associates) become Recognized;
4. To set up a centrally administered vehicle to augment compensation for those (a) in exceptionally high-cost, remote locations and (b) clergy couples where one is restricted from claiming the full clergy residence deduction.

These recommendations were approved in principle by the Council and referred “*...to the Executive of the General Council for consideration and action...*” (GC 39 2006 – 177). The November 2006 meeting of the Executive directed that the payroll service be implemented as a first step. 92% of eligible pastoral charges are now enrolled in the service.

In January 2009 the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services initiated the Ministry Compensation Task Group to address the remaining recommendations approved by the 39th General Council. The Task Group met 11 times in person or by conference call. They presented a final report to the Permanent Committee in January 2012.

Research and Deliberations

The research techniques utilized include:

- analysis of qualitative information provided by both ministry personnel and members of congregations collected through the Collaborative Research Project of the Permanent Committee;

²⁷ The Executive of the General Council proposed that no action be taken on a fifth recommendation to develop a denominational salary administration system.

- analysis of statistical data related to local cost of living obtained from Statistics Canada through the Conference Board of Canada;
- analysis of actual base salary and related housing data by category;
- a review of compensation practices in other Canadian denominations;
- a review of findings in related research papers;
- consultation on the Clergy Residence Deduction.

Comprehensive Salary

Practices in other denominations were researched. Most of the 10 denominations surveyed currently have a system similar to that of the United Church, base salary plus housing. Respondents in the Collaborative Research Project were generally split when asked if they supported a comprehensive salary and the consolidation of compensation-related allowances. This may have been influenced by a concern that doing so would mean that ministry personnel would no longer be eligible for the Clergy Residence Deduction (administered by the Canada Revenue Agency). This is not a correct assumption. Eligibility for the Clergy Residence deduction is not related to a housing allowance but to status and function tests determined by the Canada Revenue Agency. Ministry personnel currently eligible would continue to be eligible under a comprehensive salary. The Task Group concluded, however, and the Permanent Committee concurred, that a comprehensive salary still has merit. The United Church often breaks new ground and it is anticipated that other denominations will be interested in this new model if it is adopted. A comprehensive salary is consistent with the guiding principles that were established. The benefits of transparency and clarity would be evident with a robust communication strategy.

The proposed model would not introduce new costs in most instances as it has been constructed to match current minimum salary standards. There may, however, be a slight increase in CPP/QPP premiums if the current base pay is below the maximums for these benefits.

For those living in a manse, the implementation would require some adjustment. The pastoral charge should have already established the fair rental value of the manse, including utilities paid by the pastoral charge. If the ministry personnel remains in the manse, s/he would pay rent to the pastoral charge or, if not, would look for alternative housing if it is available. As is the case today when a pastoral charge faces this situation, some decisions will be required. If the manse is rented to the ministry personnel or anyone else, the pastoral charge becomes a landlord and must abide by provincial landlord and tenant legislation. Another option that could be considered is the sale of the manse. Many pastoral charges have taken this route so there is expertise in the church to help with this. A resource guide would be developed to assist pastoral charges in this process.

Redesigned Salary Structure

The recommendation of the Compensation Models Project adopted by General Council 39 in 2006 included the concepts of a:

1. minimum and maximum salary for each category;
2. modest recognition of regional cost of living differences;
3. greater differential in salaries for Order of Ministry and, what was then, Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associates; and
4. provision that those not yet recognized would not accumulate service credits.

Research revealed that:

- no denomination surveyed has a maximum salary;
- there is a fairly even split of opinion about a maximum salary among United Church members responding to the Collaborative Research Project;
- most other Canadian denominations set salary, at least in part, based on the level of education acquired before ordination, commissioning or recognition;
- all denominations reflect years of experience in the salary structure;
- other elements recognized in the salary structure of some denominations include number of staff supervised, size of congregation and prior experience that relates directly to skills useful to ministry personnel;
- the base salaries being paid in June 2011 according to data from the pastoral charge payroll service range up to 150% of the minimum in category F (applicable to those with 14 or more years of service);
- other categories where ministry personnel have shorter service, base salaries range from 108% of minimum (category A) to 122% of minimum (category E);
- most other denominations handle regional differences through a housing allowance.

1. The question of **a maximum salary** for each category for each pay zone was considered. In the end, both the Task Group and the Permanent Committee concluded that, while sound in principle, this is not the time to implement a maximum: respondents to the Collaborative Research Project were divided on the question of a maximum; the Executive of the General Council has not shown strong support for a maximum; other denominations do not have a maximum; the current payroll data indicates that there is not an exaggerated disparity of salaries within the increment categories; and there are so many other changes proposed to salary, pastoral relations, oversight and discipline and church processes. Another factor, though not a deciding one, is the difficulty in providing effective oversight of alternative, “below the radar”, means of circumventing a maximum.

It is important to encourage discussion between ministry personnel and their pastoral charges about compensating above the minimum. Resources will be developed to support this discussion and to assist local ministries and their ministry personnel to discuss an appropriate level of compensation commensurate with the responsibilities of the position and the skills and education of the person in the position.

The 39th General Council motion referred the accepted principles “...to the Executive of the General Council for consideration and action....” It is proposed that it is within the Executive’s scope of consideration to not proceed at this time to institute a maximum salary for each seniority category.

2. Four models were considered for providing **modest recognition of regional cost of living differences**. Each allowed for the local cost of living to be recognized by the pastoral charge or presbytery. Collective experience suggested that this often results in inconsistent applications that result in inequities and the perception that the application of compensation policies is unfair.

The Conference Board of Canada was engaged to draw data from Statistics Canada on costs of living across the country. This research examined the cost of buying a house in the area of each pastoral charge. Since the cost of housing is the major influence on local cost of living, this was deemed to be a good proxy for estimating the local cost of living. This basic data was adjusted to take into account added costs such as for remote areas. “Remote areas” was defined as more than a 2½ hour drive from a population centre of at least 5,000.

According to this data, the cost of buying a house in the vicinity of our pastoral charges ranges from \$13,500 to \$1.6 million. The national distribution of the local costs of living was assessed and grouped into five zones. The dollar span of these groupings still needs to be confirmed. For sample purposes, the cash housing allowance data for full time ministry personnel from the pastoral charge payroll service for June 2011 was collected:

Pay Zone	Cost to Buy a House ²⁸	Pastoral Charge Count	Actual Housing Allowance Median ²⁹	Actual Housing Allowance Data Count
1	Up to \$80,000	208	\$7,904	16
2	\$80,000 - \$220,000	1097	\$13,200	352
3	\$220,000-\$360,000	586	\$17,400	239
4	\$360,000-\$500,000	189	\$21,600	84
5	Over \$500,000	123	\$22,800	57

Working on the assumption that the current housing allowance represents the fair rental value in the area of the pastoral charge, the median was deemed to be a reasonable estimate for the local cost of living. With adjustment for more remote locations and input from presbyteries to identify any recent spikes or significant drops in cost of living, it was concluded that assignment to one of five “pay zones” would produce a fair and equitable comprehensive minimum salary standard commensurate with the cost of living in the vicinity of the pastoral charge.

Each pastoral charge would be assigned to the pay zone which includes the cost of buying a house in the area of the pastoral charge. For instance, if that cost was \$236, 000, the charge would be assigned to pay zone 3. If, however, the cost was \$69,000, that charge would be assigned to pay zone 1.

The result is a salary schedule where the minimum for each category is comparable to the existing minimum plus the median housing allowance applicable to each pay zone. If this structure was in place for 2012, the comprehensive salary for pay zone 1 for Order of Ministry would be derived as follows:

²⁸ As an indicator of local cost of living.

²⁹ Median is the value in the middle of a range of housing allowances. Outlying values do not have an undue influence on the median. In contrast, an average gives an equal weight to each housing allowance in the range, even one significantly higher or lower than all the others.

Years of Eligible Service – Increment Category						
Order of Ministry	1–2 (A)	3–4 (B)	5–7 (C)	8–10 (D)	11–13 (E)	14 + (F)
Existing Minimum	\$32,841	\$34,319	\$35,797	\$37,276	\$38,753	\$40,230
+Pay Zone 1 housing median	+\$7,904	+ 7,904	+\$7,904	+\$7,904	+\$7,904	+7,904
= Pay Zone 1 comprehensive salary	\$40,745	\$42,223	\$43,701	\$45,180	\$46,657	\$48,134

Looking at all six increment categories, the minimum salary schedules for Order of Ministry for each pay zone would be as follows:

	Years of Eligible Service – Increment Category					
Order of Ministry	1–2 (A)	3–4 (B)	5–7 (C)	8–10 (D)	11–13 (E)	14 + (F)
Pay Zone 1	\$40,745	\$42,223	\$43,701	\$45,180	\$46,657	\$48,134
Pay Zone 2	\$46,041	\$47,519	\$48,997	\$50,476	\$51,953	\$53,430
Pay Zone 3	\$50,241	\$51,719	\$53,197	\$54,676	\$56,153	\$57,630
Pay Zone 4	\$54,441	\$55,919	\$57,397	\$58,876	\$60,353	\$61,830
Pay Zone 5	\$55,641	\$57,119	\$58,597	\$60,076	\$61,553	\$63,030

While mostly a cost-neutral change, some pastoral charges will have a marginally higher cost than the current compensation (current base salary plus housing allowance). Care with an implementation strategy will be required. For those where the minimum for the applicable pay zone is marginally lower than the current sum, grandparenting to maintain the current level of compensation could be required.

Since local cost of living can change over time, the assignment of pastoral charges to zones will need to be reviewed on a regular basis, such as every three years, to ensure the salary schedule continues to reflect the local cost of living. This would be done by going back to the Statistics Canada data. In between, presbyteries would be encouraged to notify the General Council Office if the local cost of living changes significantly between reviews.

3. The Statement on Paid Accountable Ministry adopted by the 40th General Council informed the consideration of the recommendation of the 39th General Council that there be a **greater differential in salaries for Order of Ministry and Recognized Designated Lay Ministry**. The Statement acknowledges a difference in roles with regard to Order of Ministry and Recognized Designated Lay Ministry. The General Council also indicated that it was not entirely comfortable with the presented statement and directed that further work be done. This review has indicated that there are many viewpoints that are yet to be resolved and that further study is

needed. The Task Group and the Permanent Committee concluded that the current differential should be maintained until this further discernment is complete.

4. The final item in the original recommendation was to include a provision that **those not yet recognized would not accumulate service credits**. The Task Group felt that it was appropriate to expand this consideration to include all four paths people can take to become Ordained, Commissioned or Recognized: Ordained-Campus based; Ordained-Ministry based; Diaconal; and Recognized Designated Lay Ministry. Each one has a different duration and a different mixture of education and work experience. Some people progress on a full time basis and some part time. Some move between full time and part time and some move between paths. In practice, there are many permutations. The only constant is that they are not “fully fledged” until Ordination, Commissioning or Recognition. As a result, it is recommended that those in the preparation streams should not accumulate service credits for the purposes of moving through the categories until they are Ordained, Commissioned or Recognized. While this is an extension of the principle approved by the 39th General Council, the Permanent Committee believes it is consistent with the principle approved.

In the interests of simplification, it is recommended that the existing four minimum salary schedules be replaced with one with two steps for each pay zone: one for the first two years of paid employment while not yet Ordained, Commissioned or Recognized, and one for all years after the first two. The minimum salaries for each step would be less than the minimum salaries for Recognized Designated Lay Ministry. If this recommendation is accepted, the salary schedule would look something like this, modified to be consistent with the pay zone concept:

YEARS OF PAID EMPLOYMENT	1-2	3+
Not yet Ordained, Commissioned, Recognized	\$31,082	\$32,480

Clergy Couples and the Clergy Residence Deduction

The Task Group reported that the recommendation to augment compensation for clergy couples in relation to the Canadian tax provisions of a Clergy Residence Deduction weighed heavily with it. One member and one staff resource to the Task Group have a clergy spouse.

More time was spent studying this item than any other. Not all clergy couples believe that they are treated unfairly but those who do, strongly believe it has an impact on the covenantal relationship in which they serve.

Research and discussion made it clear that this is a much more complex issue than it appears on the surface. The relationship between a housing allowance paid by the pastoral charge as part of overall compensation and the eligibility for the Clergy Residence Deduction (as determined by Canada Revenue guidelines) is not well understood. The impact on net pay of claiming a Clergy Residence Deduction when filing one’s income tax return is heavily influenced by individual clergy housing choices, whether as a one clergy household or as a clergy couple household. It is not one fixed value.

The Clergy Residence Deduction is the lesser of the fair rental value of the home (plus utilities) and 1/3 of total clergy earned income from church employment. Earned income is defined by the

Canada Revenue Agency as base salary plus housing. When two clergy live in the same house the Clergy Residence Deduction is the lesser of the fair rental value and 1/3 of their combined clergy incomes.

In situations where the fair rental value is high, clergy couple households are able to claim a larger Clergy Residence Deduction than a one clergy household living in a house of the same fair rental value.

However clergy couple households find that, unless the fair rental value is so high that it equals or surpasses 1/3 of their combined clergy incomes, their total Clergy Residence Deduction is less than what it would have been had the tax law permitted each to claim the deduction without regard to the other's claim. In the view of many clergy couples, this is where the inequity lies.

Others see no inequity, as both clergy couple households and one clergy households are subject to the same limitations: That is, the Clergy Residence Deduction depends on the fair rental value of the house they have chosen and the fraction of their clergy income that the fair rental value represents.

Four possible responses were identified:

1. provide a top up based on a fixed percentage of income;
2. each clergy couple determines and reports their shortfall;
3. ensure a minimum benefit related to the Clergy Residence Deduction;
4. provide no financial adjustment.

Each of the first three responses would create new inequities and would be difficult and expensive to administer. The estimated cost of option two, based on 65 clergy couples is \$550,000. The estimate for option three is \$350,000 and for option one \$400,000 annually. In addition, there would be administrative costs estimated to be between \$30,000 and \$50,000. It should be noted that the exact number of clergy couples is unknown but is believed to be more than 65.

Each of these possible responses would require the couple to submit personal tax information to an administrator (the local pastoral charge, an officer at the Presbytery, the Conference or the General Council) to determine the amount of a supplement. This would put the church in the position of attempting to compensate for an arbitrary variable over which it has no control – the Income Tax Act's Clergy Residence Deduction provision. Tailoring compensation policy to one type of tax deduction and not to others (such as the number of dependents, education, or disability) introduces an inconsistent variable to the compensation formula.

An additional consideration is that a parallel issue exists for clergy whose non-clergy spouse is eligible to claim the residence as an employment expense. While only one is paid by the church, his or her household is also subject to the limitation of the lesser of the fair rental value of the residence and 1/3 of the combined eligible household income. It is difficult to determine how the church would compensate these clergy to adjust for the limitation. It is the church's responsibility to compensate each ministry personnel in a consistent manner. What the Canada Revenue Agency allows in terms of deductions is outside the church's purview.

It became very clear that the Clergy Residence Deduction is widely misunderstood by ministry personnel and church members. It is recommended that a resource to inform clergy couples on how to optimize the Clergy Residence Deduction be created.

As a related issue, compensation of staff in the General Council and Conference Office stream includes a discounted salary paid to ministry personnel who are eligible for the Clergy Residence Deduction. As this is inconsistent with the rationale for not providing a financial adjustment to clergy couples, it is recommended that this policy be re-evaluated to determine if it remains defensible.

High Cost, Remote Areas

The second part of the original recommendation with regard to augmenting compensation related to those living in high cost, remote areas. This is generally viewed as those areas that are not accessible by road. The idea was to create a centrally administered fund to pay ministry personnel an additional flat amount per year to cover the higher cost of living and have additional funds available to cover emergency situations like a death in the family or a medical emergency.

One of the guiding principles is that “The primary responsibility for the financial support of ministry personnel is with the pastoral charge or other ministry unit, subject to certain minimum standards.” With the recommendation for a redesigned salary structure that incorporates zones based on local cost of living, the cost of living in remote areas would already be captured in the assignment to the appropriate pay zone. Thus a centrally administered fund to augment minimum salaries is not necessary.

However, extraordinary costs can be incurred when emergency situations like a death in the family or a medical emergency requiring immediate and expensive transportation to a larger transportation or medical centre. It is recommended that a fund be established to assist with such emergency situations for ministry personnel in these designated remote pastoral charges. A set of criteria to define eligible situations and amounts of financial assistance appropriate to each situation would be established and administered by the Financial Assistance programme of the Ministry and Employment Unit.

Implementation Considerations

Some aspects of the recommendations, if adopted, could require support for implementation:

- a resource to support pastoral charges with manses;
- a resource to help clergy couples understand and optimize the Clergy Residence Deduction;
- a comprehensive communications strategy to introduce and support ministry personnel and pastoral charges through the changes;
- a resource to assist with discussion of compensation above the minimum levels.

A number of aspects could require grandparenting or transitioning for some ministry personnel when:

- a ministry personnel’s comprehensive salary is less than the minimum salary based on the zone to which the pastoral charge has been assigned;
- the manse has an exceptionally high fair rental value;

- a comprehensive salary will have an impact on Pensionable Earnings used for pension and group benefits purposes resulting in a value lower than the current Pensionable Earnings;
- those not yet Ordained, Commissioned or Recognized but presently in paid employment in the church and accruing service credits for movement though the categories.

If the recommendations are approved, proposals for resolving these issues will be developed for the consideration of the Executive of the General Council. It is anticipated that the new compensation structure could be implemented for 2014.

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ADDENDUM H

COVENANTING FOR LIFE

In 2009, General Council declared that:

- “it seeks a renewed vocation for engagement in God’s mission, justice seeking, and transformative ministry that will enable the people of the United Church to live faithfully in the midst of empire.”
- strengthened right relationships with global partners and marginalized peoples in Canada are essential to live faithfully in the midst of empire.
- “reflection and action for living faithfully in the midst of empire are vital to
 - supporting the renewal of congregations, community ministries, educational institutions, and the whole church
 - the ongoing discernment of the vision and purpose of the church, the functioning of its governance bodies and structures, as well as its financial decisions”

As well, General Council 40 also directed General Council Executive to:

- develop and implement a program that fosters a vocation for living faithfully in the midst of empire and engages all the people and the courts of the church
- report to the 41st General Council 2012 with a plan of action concerning both the proposed Covenant and the means by which the United Church can continue its transformation as a people who seek to live faithfully in the midst of empire

Covenanting for Life

Introduction: What does empire have to do with our life as a church?

In a time when

- human activities are altering the Earth's climate in ways that threaten human and other forms of life in the most vulnerable parts of the world
- global and national economic systems continue to erode the middle class, and deepen the poverty of those already suffering while producing increasing amounts of wealth for fewer and fewer people,
- the Aboriginal peoples of this land and others continue to live in conditions of abject poverty
- those who denounce the human rights violations, defend the environment and push for social change are increasingly becoming targets of violence

How are we as a people of faith to respond?

As followers of Jesus, who believe that:

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 (*Song of Faith*).

How are we as disciples to respond?

As people of the Spirit who seek to discern her “faithful and untameable” movement in the world in

- those of many faiths and people of good will around the world who work to mend God's creation
- partners of the United Church local and global who proclaim God's good news for the marginalized, and seek to embody God's liberating vision
- actions of local congregations, ministries, and courts of the church that seek to embody the possibility of transformation

How can we deepen our involvement in this movement of the Spirit?

As people of the United Church who

- opt for a prophetic role for the national church
- are dedicated to living their faith through community, right relationships, and the quest for social justice (Identity Survey 2011)

We seek to discern concrete steps through which the denomination can seek to live out our commitment to live faithfully in the midst of empire.

Background: General Council 39 and 40

In 2006, General Council 39 recognized the church's "explicit complicity" in empire and called on courts, mission units, and related bodies to "covenant to live faithfully in the midst of empire." The term "empire" offered the church a way to describe the manners in which injustice and suffering have been created, perpetuated, and deepened through systems: economic, social, and political. It called us as disciples of Christ to resist current forms of empire as Jesus resisted the Roman empire of his day. Its implications for the church have been developed through recent biblical scholarship on the historical Jesus and used by global and ecumenical partners to describe contemporary sources of oppression and the challenge to Christians based on the "view from the South." The term provokes and challenges us, as a church located in the global North.

In 2009, General Council declared that "it seeks a renewed vocation for engagement in God's mission, justice seeking, and transformative ministry that will enable the people of the United Church to live faithfully in the midst of empire." It declared that "reflection and action for living faithfully in the midst of empire are vital to

- supporting the renewal of congregations, community ministries, educational institutions, and the whole church
- the ongoing discernment of the vision and purpose of the church, the functioning of its governance bodies and structures, as well as its financial decisions"

It committed the church to support the Aboriginal Ministries Circle, Council, and National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering with the active partnership of the Aboriginal peoples of the United Church and strengthened right relationships with global partners and marginalized peoples in Canada and the embodiment of the church's commitment to becoming an intercultural and racially just church. (Information on the actions required to live out the church's commitment to the Aboriginal Ministries Circle, Council, and National Spiritual Gathering, as well as the next steps in the journey to become an intercultural church, can be found in their respective reports).

As well, General Council 40 mandated an education process for engaging with the proposed "Covenant for Life in Creation," and directed the Executive of the General Council

- to develop and implement a program that fosters a vocation for living faithfully in the midst of empire and engages all the people and the courts of the church
- to report to the 41st General Council 2012 with a plan of action concerning both the proposed Covenant and the means by which the United Church can continue its transformation as a people who seek to live faithfully in the midst of empire

Renewing our Vocation for Mission as a Changing Church

At General Council 40, commissioners were invited by the Moderator, David Giuliano, to describe the future of the church in six-word stories. The evening session at General Council was marked by a recognition that the challenges facing the church mean that we must let go of much, hold fast to our essence, and risk boldly for the future. Acknowledging the anxiety about the future of the church present at every level, the same General Council declared that the United Church "seeks a renewed vocation for engagement in God's mission, justice seeking, and transformative ministry" and that "reflection and action for living faithfully in the midst of

empire are vital to supporting the renewal of congregations, community ministries, educational institutions and the whole church.”

This action plan presents proposed concrete next steps for a renewed vocation for engagement in God’s mission. The following steps are proposed across different areas of the church.

Action Plan

1. *Support for Congregational Involvement in Justice Seeking and Transformational Ministry: Covenanting for Life Animation Program*

Since General Council 40, the Covenanting for Life Working Group established by the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry has developed an action-reflection program to enable courts and ministries of the church to engage with the proposed Covenant for Life in Creation (see attached) and to foster a vocation for living faithfully in the midst of empire. Aimed principally at presbyteries and congregations, the program invites them to

- renew established or build a new relationship with a marginalized community (local or global)
- take actions that care for creation
- become more radically inclusive (anti-racist, intercultural, or open to sexual diversity)

Based on this engagement they are invited to provide feedback on the proposed “Covenant for Life in Creation.”

This active process of covenanting is distinct from other requests for feedback on statements. It offers the church the opportunity to deepen or become involved in the transformation and resistance to empire that is needed to be faithful. It seeks to avoid “revolutionary theology” in which justice is seen to be accomplished through feedback about and the passing of a statement. Rather, it seeks to promote the living out and embodiment of these statements.

In 2011, there were over 1600 visits to the Covenanting for Life pages on the United Church website. Since October 2010, 31 workshops in nine Conferences focusing on different aspects of living faithfully in the midst of empire have been facilitated by the Education for Justice Animator. They have included youth events, Conference workshops, workshops at national conferences and congregations, events with United Church Women’s groups, webinars, Education Centre events and others. (See Appendix A for a chart that lists workshops and events held and includes some feedback highlights),

Web-based materials to support engagement in the action reflection Covenanting for Life program became available in February 2011. Requests for Covenanting for Life presbytery/district workshops began in spring 2011 and increased into the fall. To date 12 Covenanting for Life presbytery workshops have been conducted. Even though the deadline for feedback was October, requests for workshops continue to be received. Given:

- the short timeline for presbyteries and congregations to become involved in the Covenanting for Life program and give feedback regarding the Covenant (materials became available in February 2011 and the deadline for feedback was October)
- the fact that deeper engagement is part of the process for giving feedback
- that staff resources are available to animate the Covenant thru March 2013

this report recommends that the Covenanting for Life animation program continue during the next triennium. Continuing the Covenanting for Life program will also provide the opportunity to make adjustments to the program based on learnings from this triennium.

2. Forms of Ministry/Local Expressions of Church

Within the United Church, the principal locus for local ministry has been the congregation. Our polity, structure, and culture reflect this. Other denominations around the world have experience with a greater number of non-congregational ministries in their midst. These ministries are understood to be valuable ways in which church is lived and expressed locally.

Within the United Church there are currently 65 community ministries in 11 Conferences. These ministries walk side-by-side with those who live with the realities of poverty and hunger, health problems and barriers to services, inadequate and unaffordable housing, social exclusion, neighbourhood violence, precarious and under-employment, and racial discrimination and youth hopelessness. These ministries have not always felt that they have been fully recognized as local expressions of the church and yet have much to offer the church as it struggles with the viability of congregational ministry and its relevance to changing local communities.

In response to a recent survey of community ministries, many indicated a strong desire to find ways to strengthen connections with local congregations and presbyteries. Closer connections would benefit them through increased prayer support, mutual learning about how faith relates to action and action to faith, through the recognition of community ministry as an equally valuable expression of church, as well as increased human connection through volunteer involvement in programs and on boards. Community ministries felt that they had much to offer congregations and presbyteries as they face current challenges. This included: skills in community development, participatory organizational development, and building community from the ground up; possibilities for deeper connection to their community; experience in welcoming newcomers and diversity; increased focus on mission; experience in navigating the tension between charity and advocacy and justice; and finding the points of connection and dissonance. One respondent noted:

“We are noticing that many congregations that are struggling with attendance are looking at developing their own outreach ministries, we feel we can contribute to that with our knowledge and experience as well we see opportunities for partnering on projects etc....” Pauline Pratt, House of Lazarus, Mountain, Ontario

Strengthening these connections is an important part of building a renewed vocation for engagement in God’s mission, justice seeking, and transformative ministry locally and supporting experimentation with new forms of what it means to be church. Other initiatives such as the establishment of New Ministries Formation Fund by the General Council Executive and The Edge: A Network for Ministry Development (a living web of new and renewing ministries and leaders in the power of the Spirit, following Christ, embracing God’s mission in the world) are other key aspects of this work. However, given the United Church’s primary focus on congregations as local expressions of church, an exploration of the ways in which changes in our structure, polity, and culture of the United Church could better support the birth of innovative, contextually relevant, transformative, and justice-seeking ministries is a crucial step.

3. Renewal of Engagement with Mission at Presbyteries

Current discussions about the location of different pastoral relations responsibilities found in the “Pastoral Relations Principles, Model and Policy Recommendations” made to the General Council Executive Meeting in November 2011 by the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services are also a manifestation of the changes afoot in the church at the present moment. These recommendations propose to divide pastoral relations responsibilities of presbyteries and conferences in new ways. While on the surface not directly related to the renewal of a vocation for engagement in God’s mission, changes to the pastoral relations responsibilities that presbyteries are tasked with could potentially free up energy in this court for increased support for “the mission and ministry of local ministries within their bound.” At the same time, since 2007, the Partners in Mission Unit has been tasked with the job of increasing congregations’ capacity for involvement in justice making. This particular juncture presents an opportunity to explore what types of supports, programming, and collaboration between the General Council program units, Conferences, and presbyteries could strengthen presbyteries’ role in promoting congregational involvement in transformative ministry and justice making.

4. Leadership Formation for a Renewed Vocation

A key aspect of renewing the church’s vocation for engagement in God’s mission is through strengthening leadership formation for justice seeking and transformative ministry. Theological Colleges and Schools, Education Centres, and the Units of General Council play important and distinct roles in this area. They bring different resources and opportunities. Increased collaboration among these bodies in the context of the challenges faced by the church and decreasing resources is critical and is proposed in this report.

5. Governance for a Renewed Vocation

In order to avoid the problems inherent in revolutionary theology (the idea that justice is accomplished by the church through the passing of resolutions), it is important to move from declaration to concrete action. As noted above, General Council 40 2009 declared that “reflection and action for living faithfully in the midst of empire is vital to the ongoing discernment of the vision and purpose of the church, the functioning of its governance bodies and structures, as well as its financial decisions.” Discerning how governance and financial decisions can be intentional in reflecting our commitment to living faithfully in the midst of empire is not always easy. Since before 2000, the budget-making processes of what is now the Partners in Mission Unit have been guided by a set of theological principles and rationale that act as a set of questions or lenses through which proposals and reporting are examined. This report recommends that a similar set of principles and questions be developed to intentionally guide budget-making processes and reporting for the General Council Office budget as a whole, enabling the assessment of the budget to be a key tool in renewing the church’s engagement in mission.

In addition, General Council 40 2009 passed a resolution from Maritime Conference that directed the Executive of the General Council to

- 1 a. analyze the structures and processes of The United Church of Canada using the principles and tools of the “Living Faithfully in Midst of Empire” resources. Such an analysis would consider, but not be limited to: the degree to which structures and practices exhibit networking and are non-hierarchical with respect to power sharing;*

and whether decision-making is promoting distributive justice, inclusivity, and is based within the principles of global and local sustainability.

- b. identify any places where Empire is being expressed;
- 2 a. to examine the nature, authority, accountability, and other issues related to church governance, in light of *Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire and Mending the World*,
- b. to note any differences between present governance structures and those mandated by the Manual, and policies that have informed our practices historically,
- 3. to bring feedback and recommendations to the 41st General Council 2012 as to areas requiring change

Given the United Church's declared commitment to living faithfully in the midst of empire, it is important that the General Council Executive develop a process to implement this mandated work during the next triennium. This could include ensuring that General Council Executive decision-making processes explicitly name those affected by decision-making processes, and that those affected have input into these processes. This is especially important with regard to those who have been historically marginalized within the church, and partners of The United Church of Canada. It could also require that reports of Permanent Committees to General Council Executive explicitly name how their recommendations promote equity and systemic justice for marginalized groups in the church and the world, and how these groups have had access to discussions regarding particular issues. Other important steps toward enabling the church's governance bodies to reflect the church's commitment to live faithfully in the midst of empire are also found in the report of the Intercultural Task group.

6. Strengthening Right Relationships with Global Partners and Marginalized Peoples in Canada

In November 2008, the General Council Executive approved principles for global partnership for The United Church of Canada. The principles include a recognition that “right relations are at the heart of God’s mission”:

“...that no one community has the full resources needed for God’s mission... that wisdom, vision, activity, creativity, and friendship are all needed for the fullness of God’s purposes... Most important, our experience has taught us the importance of partnership in God’s mission as a faithful check on our tendency to view the world and God’s mission through perceptions moulded by complicity in empire. In other words, partners need each other to see the world and themselves more clearly. The church is called, therefore, to seek partnerships in all aspects of its participation in God’s mission.”

It is at General Council meetings where the church endeavours to discern the vision and purpose of the church for the next triennium. It is therefore important that we avoid trying to see ourselves and our role in God's mission without the input of others especially given that past understandings of the church's role have been complicit with the empires of the day. As the partnership principles affirm, right relationship "flows from an understanding that relationship is central to the nature of God."

ADDENDUM I

TOWARD 2025: A JUSTICE SEEKING/JUSTICE-LIVING CHURCH

The Permanent committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry, in reviewing its work through the 2009-2012 triennium discerned a common thread that linked each aspect of its work. Given its mandate to ensure that work comes before the Executive in an integrated manner it undertook and offers this report as one means of fulfilling that direction. The report will continue to serve as a working document for the PCPMM. It also believes that it can assist the General Council and its Executive 1 in their deliberations on the identity of the church.

A. Executive Summary:

Why an Integrative Report?: A Contribution to Discussions about United Church Identity & Preparations for the Church's Centenary

This report being presented provides an integrative framework for four areas of work mandated by previous General Councils: Becoming an Intercultural Church, Commitment to Inclusion, Indigenous Justice and Right Relations and Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire. They have been knit together in an integrative framework because they relate one to the other, the completion of one is linked to another, and progress in one area strengthens work in another. Taken together they contribute to a unique and more holistic understanding of this area of the work charged to the General Council Office and other courts and ministries of the church, an area which could be named the challenge of being a “justice-seeking/justice-living church”:

Woven together these areas of work produce a new vision of a diverse justice-seeking–justice-living church engaged in the world for love, justice, and the integrity of creation, transformed from the inside out and from the outside in. It’s a compelling vision of a church willing to risk discipleship in today’s world and seeking to embody the transformation it has already proclaimed, open to and inviting others to join in and change the journey. It unites areas which have defined the United Church as a denomination—the apology to Aboriginal peoples, the honouring of diverse sexual orientations, and social justice, with new and growing areas of challenge for the church such as becoming an intercultural church, honouring all gender identities and our commitment to inclusion... It is justice-seeking in that it seeks to become a different kind of church in the future; it is justice-living in that it takes concrete actions to change and begin to live into that reality now.

The Covenanting for Life Working Group of the Permanent Committee for Programs for Mission and Ministry understands the development of this integrative framework report as being a key step in living out the church’s commitments made at the 2006 and 2009 General Councils to live faithfully in the midst of empire. It pulls together key areas of work necessary for the church to live out this commitment. As part of the church’s declared commitment to live faithfully in the midst of empire, they offer this integrative report as

- 1) a contribution to the church’s discussions of its denominational identity and
- 2) a proposal that being and becoming justice-seeking/justice living be part of an intentional plan to prepare for and celebrate the church’s centenary in 2025.

B. A Church with a Purpose

*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.

(“A Song of Faith” 2006)

From its inception, the United Church has believed that God cares about the world around us and calls us to promote love and justice in it. For example, in 1934, in the midst of the massive unemployment, poverty, and hunger of the Depression, The United Church Board of Evangelism and Social Service produced “Christianizing the Social Order.” United Church ministers and members were urged:

“to put forth every effort to study and understand the existing social order... in the light of Christian standards; to arouse the Christian conscience when injustice and intolerable conditions are discovered; to seek through study and conference measures which appear most likely to alleviate the evils and prevent their recurrence.”

The United Church has also been marked by a struggle to embody God's love for all within its own structures and life. These struggles have mirrored the struggle for full life within wider society by minoritized³⁰ or discriminated groups. As well, a growing awareness began in the 1960s about the ways in which humans' inherent “right” to dominion over the Earth was an environmentally destructive concept. New theological understandings emerged of our responsibilities to live as partners in Creation and to do advocacy for ecological justice. These areas of struggle within the church and engagement with the public sphere have been marked by a commitment to ecumenism since the founding of the church, and to interfaith dialogue and action that intensified after the appointment of the first full time interfaith position in the 1970s.

In 2006, the General Council approved “*A Song of Faith*” as a statement of faith [that] 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.

³⁰ Describes social groups who have, based on economic, social, or other criteria, been defined as minor or in a subordinate position by social processes that benefit the dominant group.

It speaks of a church with a purpose. The preamble of A Song of Faith also asserts, quoting the 1940 “Statement of Faith,” that “The church’s faith is grounded in truths that are timeless. These truths, however, must be embraced anew by Christians of each generation...” The Song of Faith also clearly calls us to discipleship in the face of the injustice present in the world: As followers of Jesus, who believe that:

*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 .*

Finally *A Song of Faith* sings of “God of the Spirit” “faithful and untameable” that moves the “human heart”, transforming us and the world. The church is to embody “the loving Spirit of Christ”.

In 2025, the United Church will celebrate its centenary. This will be an opportunity for the church to celebrate its history. It will be a time to assess what we have become and are becoming, how well we have embodied the call of the Spirit to be a church with a purpose and how our understanding of God’s mission has evolved. The time between General Council 41 2012 and the 2025 centenary offers a unique opportunity for preparation. This report outlines how a cross-cutting focus on becoming a justice-seeking/justice-living church could contribute to preparations for the centenary.

C. The Call and Context:

1. Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire

The report to General Council 39, “Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire,” documents how economic globalization continues to destroy the environment and increase the pain and misery experienced by the vast majority of God’s people. The experience, analysis, and theological reflection of global and ecumenical partners describe the creation of a “civilization of inequality.” The destruction of, and continuing threat to, all life means that we are at a critical time for the discernment of the gospel as followers of Jesus. At issue is the liberating good news the church professes.

The term ‘empire’ is used to describe the ways in which power is exercised unjustly and causes suffering and disempowerment through interconnected systems that benefit a minority of people. Empire can be found in relations between states, international trade agreements, and institutional governance, including within the church as well as interpersonal relationships. It affects all levels of human relationships, and all people participate in empire in some way. “Empire” helps us understand that injustice is often caused by different systems working together in interlocking ways. It helps us to see how power is used, abused, or concentrated to benefit the minority

through these systems. An empire lens helps us broaden our understanding and analysis, so that our actions, strategies, and solidarity contribute to transforming systems that oppress ourselves and others.

For example, when the case of a particular woman who has been beaten by her husband is viewed through the lens of empire, we understand that it is not only a personal act by an individual, but that it is made possible by a number of factors which could include: cultural norms that cast men as superior to women and normalize violence as a response by men, unequal access to well-paid jobs that may place women in a position of economic inferiority, the historical lack of response by legal systems to protect women, and the idea that what happens at home is a private matter and not a matter of public interest, among other factors.

General Council at its 2006 meeting confessed its explicit complicity in empire. The last Council meeting declared that:

- reflection and action for living faithfully in the midst of empire is integral to the ongoing discernment of the vision and purpose of the church
- The United Church of Canada seeks a renewed vocation for engagement in God's mission, justice seeking, and transformative ministry that will enable the people of the United Church to live faithfully in the midst of empire

The “empire” work calls us to “be nonconformist and transformative communities because life is not possible unless we undertake transformation that addresses the roots of injustice” (p. 48, “Living Faithfully,” Ofelia Ortega.) We are not only called to become agents of transformation, but, as church, to be a space of transformed non-empire-like relations.

2. Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools

Transformation includes our Church’s relationship with the First Peoples of this land. The 1986 Apology to First Nations Peoples by The United Church of Canada confesses that “(W)e imposed our civilization as a condition of accepting the gospel” and concludes with, “(W)e ask you to forgive us and to walk together with us in the Spirit of Christ so that our peoples may be blessed and God’s creation healed.” To walk together in the Spirit of Christ requires a renewed relationship of respect, equality, trust, and justice.

The journey of living into that new relationship is broadening and deepening the understanding of the United Church not only of the damaging impact of the Indian residential school system on families, communities ,and cultures but of the other forms of dispossession, domination, and injustice that have marked the colonization of North America. Most of those issues, such as unresolved land claims, unfulfilled treaty rights, social inequities, and racism, remain largely unaddressed. A renewed relationship of respect, equality, trust, and justice will require that the church stand in solidarity with those who struggle against the continued imposition and impacts of Empire.

The commitment to live out its apologies and into “right relations” will be a long term challenge and defining characteristic of the United Church for decades to come. Such a change in relationship may well challenge, at a fundamental level, the church’s traditional role, self-image and understanding of the gospel. Is the church willing to wean itself from the benefits of privilege that come with being part of the dominant culture so that it can truly stand with the

poor, the marginalized and the oppressed? ” Can our acknowledgment that our understanding of “mission” has too often been imbued with a sense of spiritual and cultural superiority, and resulted in the domination, dispossession and destruction of others, provide the impetus to move us beyond words to actually change our behaviour while exercising greater caution in assuming that we are privy to God’s “mission”? Can we use the term “mission” at all, given the historical baggage the word carries for those who have borne its negative impacts, and when the past understanding has not been fully unpacked, and there has been no inclusive process by which the word is “reclaimed”?

These are difficult questions for the church to risk asking as it looks towards 2025. Further, what lessons from our work on right relations with First Peoples can we carry over as we work to build right relationships with other diverse communities that have also experienced historic injustice?

3. Becoming an Intercultural Church

In 2006, The United Church of Canada made a commitment to becoming an intercultural church. The commitment was offered as a vision of transformation:

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.

The vision of transformation was offered for the whole church. Initially, however, leadership for developing the intercultural vision was given to cultural and linguistic minority communities, understanding that insightful leadership can come from those who have been marginalized.

In 2009, at the 40th General Council, a report was offered called “Intercultural Ministries: A Process of Church-Wide Transformation.” In this report, the importance of transforming church structures and systems was re-named, and cultural dominance was identified as a challenge to becoming a transformed intercultural church. This report also offered reflections on transformation:

The anticipated transformation is such that it will change some of our ways of being church together. The church’s processes, policies, and procedures will all be examined through an intercultural lens; this will, in turn, affect how we articulate theologies, how we make decisions, and how we proactively create spaces for diverse cultural groups to participate fully in decision-making processes within the church.

Becoming an intercultural church is a call and renewed commitment to transformation. To truly be a transformed church, based on justice, equity and the re-dress of power, several areas of the church will be affected. Becoming an intercultural church is both a vision of what we hope to become, and the process of our faithful response to this call.

Because our understanding of culture is broad—culture is often the shared and unspoken understandings in a group—our understanding of what intercultural means is also broad.

To become an intercultural church is to respond to the call to live together in intentional ways that engage in mutual recognition, respect, and understanding of difference; and, through intentional self-examination, relationship building, and equitable access to power, we as the church seek to be fully committed and faithful in our response.

Intercultural has to do with deepening our understanding of difference. It is grounded in commitments that the church has made—around racial justice, inclusion, equity, and as a justice-seeking church. It also brings us back to the very beginning of our faith. It is much broader than race and ethnicity alone; instead, it calls us all to change as we try to faithfully be the church.

Becoming an intercultural church moves us back to the very beginning of our faith. The Bible was written in the context of racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity, and the early church was born in a space rich with multiple layers of difference. Diversity is central to our faith, and central to what it means to be the church.

One expression of this is the “A Vision for French Ministries in The United Church of Canada,” which was approved at General Council 40. In this report, in 2009, the United Church declared “that Francophone ministries are an integral part of the identity, mission and the vision for the future of the United Church” and committed itself to strengthening and expanding Francophone ministries.

4. Commitment to Inclusion

General Council 40 declared that in

matters respecting doctrine, worship, membership and governance, The United Church of Canada is opposed to discrimination against any person on the basis of age, ancestry, colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender identity, language, marital status, place of origin, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or any other basis by which a person is devalued. (Commitment to Inclusion, General Council 2009)

And committed The United Church of Canada to

journey to where there will be no discrimination in any aspect of church life and strongly urge each court, congregation and other ministries to embrace this commitment.
(Commitment to Inclusion, General Council 2009)

By embracing this commitment, The United Church of Canada is affirming that it has heard and recognized the cry of groups historically marginalized and minoritized by church and society. It is a decisive step further into our commitment to live faithfully in the midst of the empire: we are committed to announce the good news of the Gospel of equality of all human beings and that all are invited and have a place at the table. To embody this call for equity and respect for differences within the body of Christ is foundational to our identity as a denomination. It moves us to transform systems and attitudes that produce injustice within the church and broader society and is part of our commitment to becoming an intercultural church where there is full participation for all peoples and all relate to each other in mutuality.

As part of this work, a national consultation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirited people in the church and allies is currently underway to identify the ways in which heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia still exist as current barriers to full participation.

This process will produce a report and specific recommendations to General Council 41 2012. In addition, the Trans/Gender Diversity Task Group is assessing the reality of this community and will present significant proposals at General Council for courts of the church to ensure the full membership of peoples of all gender identities.

D. “A Real Change of Heart and Institution”

“As followers of Jesus, we believe the church does not exist as an end in itself, but is a community of people that is invited to see glimpses of the work God is doing in the world and called to give it meaning and help it happen. We believe that God’s mission is about seeking and sharing abundant life for the whole world. As Jesus says in John 10:10, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

“Planning for a Future Grounded in Faith and Action: The General Secretary’s Advice to the Executive of the General Council for Consideration May 1–3, 2010”

At this moment in our history we are being invited to reflect on the core elements of our denomination’s identity. The denomination is being challenged to explore questions such as:

- What is it that so defines us that unless we follow its leading, a core sense of who we are is undermined?
- What are those elements that make us distinctive as a denomination?
- What are those elements of our identity that invite participation from secular society?
- What are those elements of our identity around which we are able to build a movement of passion and energy to live out God’s call to us as disciples?

Indeed, the results of the United Church identity survey conducted by Jane Armstrong Research Associates in 2011 indicate that constituents identify faith translated into action at a local level as a key part of what it means to be United Church and see hope for the renewal of the denomination in the 21st century at the national level in a prophetic role. One in 10 United Church survey respondents indicated that “they had advocated on behalf of the church by writing to an elected official about a church sponsored issue, a rate much higher than that present in the wider Canadian population.”

As the General Secretary stated in her report “Planning for a Future Grounded in Faith and Action,” the United Church faces a “profound moment in the life of our church.” The challenge is to refocus the church away from institutional survival, protection, and control and toward greater openness for movements in support of God’s mission. It invites us to “let go of structures and processes that do not advance, and may even hinder, God’s mission” and invites us into “into new ways of being and acting together.”

The report “Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire” critiqued a United Church tendency to practice revolutionary theology in which justice is felt to be accomplished by the church by the passing of resolutions. It called for a “real change of heart and institution” a sustained new reformation of the church energized by the Spirit and embodied in, among other things, the living out of resolutions already approved throughout the church and in our lives.” It argued that the path of transformation needed to live faithfully in the midst of empire could not be marked by resolutions passed, but what was needed was the living out and embodiment of these resolutions.

As a church we may feel that success has been accomplished once a resolution has been passed. However, especially in areas which require us to change accepted practice, beliefs, and ways of being church, the hard work begins with efforts to implement the resolution. Transformation in the direction of God's call of love and justice can be difficult, requires institutional will, an examination of root causes, and a vision held firmly during the years of effort it takes to achieve.

Preparations for the church's centenary in 2025 offer an opportunity for us to live into this change of heart and institution, to refocus from institutional survival, let go of structures that hinder our discipleship in today's world, and find new ways of being and acting together. It is an opportunity to be intentional about the changes we want to see between now and 2025 and the steps we need to take to get there. Key elements of becoming the church we want to celebrate in 2025 include working toward the commitments the church has made to be a justice-seeking and justice-living church as part of

- living faithfully in the midst of empire
- building right relations with indigenous peoples
- becoming an intercultural church
- eliminating discrimination within the church

E. Toward 2025: Justice-Seeking/Justice-Living Church

The different areas of work outlined above in this report present us with threads that are interconnected, that support each other. As stated earlier, the completion of one is linked to another; progress in one strengthens work in another.

The work of living faithfully in the midst of empire requires us to understand the forms and manifestations of systemic oppression in our day, to attend to the voices of those who are suffering including that of creation. It calls us to follow the example of Jesus' resistance to the Roman Empire and resist, challenge, and build alternatives to today's forms of empire.

Consequently, as The United Church of Canada, a critical piece of the church's struggle to live faithfully in the midst of empire involves the continuing construction of a new relationship with Aboriginal peoples in Canada that calls the church deeper into the struggle for justice for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. "Living Faithfully" also calls us to embody life giving alternatives within the church itself, to transform ourselves. A key element of this call to embodiment in the church today includes the transformation into an intercultural church where the intercultural dimensions of ministries are a denominational priority in living out its commitment to racial justice, where there is mutually respectful diversity and full and equitable participation of all, and where racial and cultural power imbalances are re-dressed. In addition, progress to live out the commitment to inclusion made at General Council 40 2009 in order that we may reach a time when no discrimination exists in any aspect of church life is also a critical part of the church's embodiment of a space that is an alternative to empire.

Likewise, other areas of the work outlined above are linked to one another. It is hard to imagine a church that is truly intercultural in the Canadian context that does not develop a new relationship with Indigenous peoples that addresses the dispossession and domination that they have suffered within Canada. The church's commitment to inclusion: i.e. the elimination of "discrimination against any person on the basis of age, ancestry, colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender identity, language, marital status, place of origin, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or any

other basis by which a person is devalued” is an essential element to becoming intercultural church and a key part of living into right relations with Aboriginal peoples.

Woven together these areas of work produce a new vision of a diverse justice-seeking–justice-living church engaged in the world for love, justice, and the integrity of creation, transformed from the inside out and from the outside in. It’s a compelling vision of a church willing to risk discipleship in today’s world and seeking to embody the transformation it has already proclaimed, open to and inviting others to join in and change the journey. It unites areas which have defined the United Church as a denomination—the apology to Aboriginal peoples, the honouring of diverse sexual orientations, and social justice, with new and growing areas of challenge for the church such as becoming an intercultural church, honouring all gender identities and our commitment to the inclusion of all peoples. It is justice-seeking in that it seeks to become a different kind of church in the future; it is justice-living in that it takes concrete actions to change and begin to live into that reality now.

Some elements of an integrated vision of the United Church as a justice-seeking/justice-living church are:

- With others, the United Church seeks to construct relations that produce life, in systems, institutions, and practices. It challenges and seeks to reverse historic and still present relations of domination and oppression globally, within Canadian society and within the United Church. It connects those across the country and around the world involved in this struggle.
- With others, the United Church seeks to build systems and practices that honour and protect the gift of creation. It challenges exploitation, oppression, and destruction of creation locally, nationally and globally.
- Locally and nationally, the church struggles openly with the fact that we both benefit from and are oppressed by forms of empire. We seek to create alternatives and challenge exploitation, heeding the call of partners and those marginalized locally, nationally, and globally
- The United Church constructs new ways of being church so that all may shape and have a place at the table. It eliminates current practices that replicate relations of domination and disfavour historically underrepresented groups and First Peoples.
- Equality among diverse groups within the church is produced through the church’s lived practices of equity, respect, and justice. The full contribution and participation of those who have been historically underrepresented and minoritized in the church, including Aboriginal peoples, is part of the day to day workings of the church.
- Our practices and being as a church embody the respect for difference and foster true interchange among people of diverse identities—linguistic, cultural, racial, gender, sexual orientation, disabled/abled, deaf and hearing, settler/immigrant/Indigenous, members/adherents, and partners.

As noted earlier, the United Church has come to a moment when it is facing profound change which calls on us to draw deeply from the faith that runs through us and invites the church to risk boldly:

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.

Nestor Miguez, "Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire," General Council 2006

It is important that the elements of a justice-seeking/justice-living church do not remain as ideals that we ascribe to and claim as part of who we are, but rather that we seek to define concrete steps necessary for us to live out these characteristics. In this time and place, with who and what we are, with an understanding of the root causes of injustice in the world and our complicity in them as well as the barriers that those who are historically underrepresented and minoritized in the church encounter, what steps can we take to embody this vision? We do this, knowing that manifesting God's abundant love by becoming an agent of transformation in the wider world and by transforming ourselves, will not be easy. But we also know, as stated by the "Song of Faith," that God is the source of love and grace for this journey:

*Yet evil does not—cannot—
undermine or overcome the love of God....
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...*

ADDENDUM J

REVIEW OF CANADIAN PARTNERSHIPS 2012

Executive Summary

WE BELIEVE the church is about God's mission in the world, one of healing and justice for all creation, and that this work is surely to be lived out and realized with others. In many varied and rich ways the work of the church, including The United Church of Canada, is accomplished through working with others, including by relationships that we know as partnerships.

This report is the work of the Task Group for the Review of Canadian Partnerships. It follows the 2009 report *Reviewing Global Partnership in the Context of Empire*, a far-ranging review of the theology, principles and practice of global partnerships in the United Church of Canada. The work leading to this report was structured by asking critical questions: What does partnership look like in Canada? Who are our partners? How important is partnership to the identity and purpose of the United Church of Canada? What are the principles underpinning practices of partnership? What theology guides those practices?

The living out of the church's work in the world in relationship with others, the Task Group found, has significant implications for understanding the nature and purpose of the church. An

important part of this is the new identity into which God is inviting the church. Two theological images help us in considering the implications: The first is biblical, that of Jesus as a border-walker. It is an invitation to discipleship, to following Jesus to the places where God is active. The second, discussed at the conclusion of this report, is drawn from the environment and ecology, the role of an *ecotone* to be a place which marks out and brings together ecologies.

The report begins with a theological reflection on the work of the church through its peoples' encounters with others, by walking the borders of human experience, with the revelatory implications for our time. The mandate of the Task Group is discussed, followed by an analysis of what is meant by partnership in the context of the United Church of Canada in society today. The forms (or "streams") of our church's partnerships are then considered, an historical exegesis of United Church partnerships is presented, and the role of community ministries in partnerships is critically addressed. The report discusses the implications of partnership for the church today, employing the metaphor of *ecotones* and concludes by offering principles for the more effective realization of partnerships.

1. Introduction

We believe that the church is about God's mission in world, a mission which encompasses healing and justice for all creation, which the United Church of Canada lives out through partnerships with others. How might we understand partnership anew and as a central mark of the emerging church for our time and place?

In his book, *Gospel Light - Jesus Stories for Spiritual Consciousness*³¹, John Shea, describes Jesus as a border walker. He tells a story that relates to the incident in the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman along the border region of Tyre and Sidon (two wealthy Roman port cities now in modern Lebanon). We recall that the people of Canaan were considered different from Israelites, viewed as a people apart for religious, social and perhaps cultural reasons – a people “across a border.”

If all we knew about Jesus were his walking habits, it would be significant. Jesus is a border walker. If you want to find him, you will find him walking along the border. Borders are places where people either come together or split apart, join or divide. St. Paul, who knew – as we are trying to know – the spirit of Jesus, thought Jesus walked on three borders. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither free nor slave, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ.”...

Behold a Canaanite woman, living in those borders, coming forward, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me. My daughter is terribly troubled by a demon.”
He gave her no word of response.

We are told to behold the Canaanite woman for she is the bearer of the revelation. Something is about to happen and she is the catalyst of the event. Pay attention to her.

³¹ *Gospel Light - Jesus Stories for Spiritual Consciousness*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 1998

She too is a border walker, and this is a story of a border walker meeting a border walker. Of the two border walkers we are not left in doubt about who is most assertive. The woman is sketched as coming forward. If a confrontation is going to take place, she is going to initiate it. She is noisy, crying out as she is coming forward. You can feel that something is about to happen.

She may be both assertive and noisy, but she is also insightful. She knows who Jesus is. She calls him “Lord, Son of David”, a comprehensive set of titles. Jesus is Lord, and therefore meant for all people. But he is also Son of David, coming from a definite people with a particular heritage and distinctive tradition. Jesus is universal yet particular.

This is essentially the divine-human condition. Because we are related to God we are united to all that God sustains. Therefore there is a universal quality to us. But we are also particular and concrete, a definite gender, a unique personality, and a member of a specific ethnic group. We are this one thing and not something else. It is a universal-particular paradox of each person that the Canaanite woman, who is the bearer of revelation, sees in an intensified way in Jesus.

There are many stories about Jesus walking along borders or Jesus telling stories about people walking along borders. In addition to the borders noted by Paul (ethnicity, domination, and gender) Jesus also walks the borders between sick and well, pure and unpure (the lepers on the edge of town, crossing over the Sea of Galilee to the country of the Gerasenes and encountering the man possessed by the Legion of demons), the poor and the rich.

Luke speaks of Jesus “increasing in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour”. This increase in wisdom and in favour can perhaps be attributed to Jesus’ walking on the borders of life. It is on the borders, in human encounters and relationships that he was stretched and grew. This is most clear in the story of the Canaanite woman where Jesus initially did not respond. It was a border he was hesitant to cross. “I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Jesus says, stating what he understood as the border of his ministry.

But then we remember that she, the Canaanite woman, is the bearer of revelation in this story. She is the catalyst for Jesus’ new self-understanding. Her need invites him to take that step into the place of transition where, for the sake of abundant life, Jesus steps across previously self-imposed limits to his ministry and begins to broaden his understanding of the wideness of God’s mission.

What if we were to see the church’s ‘partners’ as bearers of revelation, as God’s catalysts for change calling us, “the church,” to re-visit and re-vision our understanding of identity for the sake of God’s mission? And when we are wholly/holy opened to the presence and possibility of God-with-us permeating through these partnerships, justice and mercy flow. Our partners offer us critical experiences and perspectives, new borders to cross, new margins to inhabit, where they ask for the truth of us to come forth. This truth at the margins is where God is revealed.

Borders become meeting places.
Communion replaces separation.
Diversity of life flourishes.

Perhaps at no point in our history has there been a greater need for people and organizations of good will to work together for the sake of our global survival, for the sake of the world that God loves so dearly. And perhaps the call to risk in partnerships is God's way of calling the church to something altogether new.

What might this new thing be? What might God have in mind in the call to the church to risk itself for the sake of God's mission? What images or metaphors might help us to discern what the church can and should be in the future?

Partnership, the Task Group believes, has significant implications for understanding the nature and purpose of the church; that is for discerning the new identity into which God is inviting the church. The Task Group believes that there are two images that help to give deeper meaning to partnership in the Canadian context. The first is a biblical image, that of Jesus as a border-walker. It is an invitation to discipleship, to following Jesus to the places where God is already active. The second metaphor, offered in more detail in Chapter VII below, is appropriately drawn from the environment and ecology. It is the role of an *ecotone* to be a place which bridges ecologies. It describes the edges between communities and environments.

It is at the edge of a forest and meadow where a doe gives birth to a fawn because there is both food and shelter. Marshes where fresh and salt water meet are ecotones and among the most vibrantly diverse places on earth. It is at the edges between ecologies where change and growth is most evident. In other words, ecotones are places where life thrives, and where the processes of evolution are most active.

How these images help us to understand partnership, and how partnership has and can shape the identity of the United Church is the focus of this paper.

2. Mandate of the Review

In 2009 the Executive of General Council approved the document "Reviewing Global Partnership in the Context of Empire." This major report on the theology, principles and practice of global partnerships was one of a number of critical reports by the United Church on global partnership undertaken over the past 85 years. Each has sought to define the nature of global mission in a current moment.

The 2009 report identified four questions that framed its review:

1. What theology of partnership can most faithfully inform the work of The United Church of Canada in its practice of partnership today?
2. What principles of partnership can be identified as arising from the current context and theological affirmations?
3. What practice of partnership would best facilitate the participation of the whole church in God's mission?
4. What special implications might the results of the above three questions have to the practice of partnership in the Canadian context?

In reflecting on the fourth question above, the final report contained the following paragraph:

“The task group recognized the complexity of trying to address the many expressions of partnership in Canada and determined that it could not do so within the limited scope of this review. Such an undertaking would of necessity involve other connections within the General Council Office, different survey methodologies, and broader fields of consultation. The task group does, however, believe that the learnings of this review, while focused on global partnership, can offer insight into the nature of partnerships in Canada. The task group recommends, therefore, that further work be undertaken on the theology, principles and practice of partnership in the Canadian context.”

This *Review of Canadian Partnerships* follows from this earlier study and has been mandated by the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry.

In beginning this work, the current Task Group recognized immediately that while there has been a long history of exploration and reflection on the meaning of global partnerships, little or no work exists that explores the nature of Canadian partnerships. At times, it appears that there existed in the church an informal understanding that the term “partnership” should be applied solely to global relationships. Perhaps because of this and perhaps because Canadian expressions of partnership were much more informal and varied than global expressions, there is no history of review nor one of definition.

This review to some extent builds on the learnings of the global practice but in many ways it is breaking new ground. What does partnership look like in Canada? Who are our partners? In the shifting patterns of church life today, how important is partnership to our identity and purpose? What are the principles that undergird our practice of partnership? What theology guides them? What is it that we can do best with others?

The Task Group which undertook this work began with a hunch that partnership is a defining characteristic and practice of the United Church. But it also recognized that the church is in transition, perhaps more so than at any previous time in its history. Some have come to speak of this time as an epochal shift or a great emergence, affecting not just the United Church but all churches. The church that we know today will not be the church of the future.

With this awareness the Task Group has sought to lift up the church’s history of partnership in Canada, and to ask what might it look like in the future? We ask what partnership means to being church today? What expressions of partnership make us who we are? Or, in other words, what do we understand about the nature of the church that invites us to journey at the borders, to risk relationships outside our places of comfort for the sake of God’s mission?

In undertaking the work, the Task Group initially focused on an attempt to describe the nature of Canadian partnerships. It soon realized that this apparently simple task was in reality quite complicated. There were far too many shades of relationship to lend itself to simple descriptions. Organizations such as the Canadian Council of Churches and most Outreach Ministries, that the Task Group first assumed were partners, in fact rejected that such a description. In the 2009 study of global partnership, ‘otherness’ was quite clear. Most, but not all such partnerships, exist outside of Canada and the relationship is almost uniformly defined by a funding agreement. Canadian based partnerships proved to be much more subtle. Questions around the definition

emerged. Does the language of partnership work for an organization that the United Church helped create, fund and on whose board a United Church representative sits? Does partnership imply at least a level of equity of relationship between two parties? What then of very small, almost single staff organizations with whom the church works and supports?

Yet the Task Group is convinced that there is such a thing as Canadian partnership and furthermore, that the lived expressions of these partnerships reveal something significant about the identity and work of The United Church of Canada. This report offers this insight as its most important conclusion.

To undertake this review the Task Group needed first of all to have a working definition of partnership in the Canadian context. It offers the following:

A Working Definition of *Canadian Partnerships*

“Partnership” is a term that can be used to describe a wide range of relationships undertaken by church communities. For the purposes of this review of Canadian Partnerships, the focus will be on relationships undertaken for common action with others who seek after justice, wholeness and love for the whole creation.

Four key qualities flow from this definition: external, collaborative, justice making and common action.

External:

The use of “*others*” in the definition implies relationships external to The United Church of Canada. In other words, partnership involves moving outside of the church to establish relationships with an organization external to itself. These partners include faith-based as well as civil society organizations.

Collaborative:

Second, “*with*” points to relationships which are collaborative in nature; relationships which involve participation with others in determining what actions might be jointly undertaken. For the purposes of this study, programs operated by a church, which are service based to individuals and do not involve shared decision-making are not defined as partnerships.

Justice Making:

Third, partnerships are defined for the purposes of this study as those “*who seek justice, wholeness and love for the whole creation*.” Understood in its broadest Christian context, justice (sometimes called justice/love) is about the mending of a broken world. God’s shalom is sometimes used to speak of the restoration of the wholeness of God’s creation. Partnership, in the context of this study, is about relationships that seek after the healing of creation in its broadest and fullest sense.

Common Action:

Finally, “*common action*” implies partnerships that result in engagement and action. While it is impossible to fully define what action means, it perhaps can be understood through the methodology of “See” “Judge” and “Act.” Partnership, defined as common action implies a

component of seeing the realities of a broken world, assessing or judging the causes of the brokenness and choosing to act together toward healing the brokenness.

3. The Context of the Review

“The world is in serious trouble,” began a major report to the 34th General Council in 1992, “therefore churches should join together with peoples of good will for the cause of peace, justice and the healing of God’s creation.” *Towards a Renewed Understand of Ecumenism*, and later its successor document *Mending The World*, introduced the concept of “Whole World Ecumenism.” When formally adopted in 1997 by the 36th General Council the concept was controversial, and to some extent still is, with ecumenical partners and yet consistent with much of the history of the United Church.

“Whereas traditional ecumenical activity has been church centred, placing emphasis on the churches as they relate to one another both in matters of faith and service, the broader ecumenism is world-centred, placing emphasis on churches relating to the world beyond themselves, to persons involved in other religious traditions, ideologies, and secular agencies. In this understanding of “whole world ecumenism,” the churches are called to make common cause with individuals and institutions of good will who are committed to compassion, peace and justice in the world.”

The ecumenical scandal of our time, the report argued, was not the disunity of the church but rather its institutional preoccupation in the face of the suffering of the world.

By implication the report identified God’s mission with healing and justice not just for the world’s suffering but for the world itself. While the church had been engaged for several decades before in working for ecological justice, this 1992 report marked a distinctive acknowledgment of an understanding of God’s mission as focusing on the mending or healing of all of creation.

The understanding of God’s mission at the heart of the purpose of the church came from an earlier watershed document in the life of the church, the Report on the Commission on World Mission in 1968. The report focused on global mission and lifted up the shift in understanding from “mission to” toward the affirmation that “missio Dei”, God’s mission, was at the heart of the shared work between Northern and Southern churches. The report laid the foundation for the use of the language of partnership in a global context. At the crux of the use of the term is a clear understanding that churches from throughout the world were not defined by being initiators or recipients of mission but rather as equal partners in God’s mission.

While the concept of *missio Dei* has been in widespread use throughout the world church for over 40 years, it is only now becoming a much more widely used and understood concept. Its implications are encapsulated in the following statement: “*It is not that the Church of God has a mission in the world, but that the God of Mission has a church in the world.*” This phrase not only turns upside down any understanding that the church exists for itself but also that it alone has the mandate of carrying out God’s purposes. The United Church, we believe, would affirm an understanding to the statement as follows: “... the God of Mission has a church, and people’s movements, non-governmental organizations, and temples and... so on.”

This leads to the question, “If we believe that the church is about God’s mission in the world, and that God’s mission encompasses healing and justice for all of creation, then who else is about this work, and how might we work together?” It is this question that is at the heart of the church’s commitment to partnership.

Canada, while clearly privileged in the global context, faces significant challenges. Globalization has changed the face of the Canada, by 2031 the euro-dominant culture will be a minority and temples and mosques dominate the landscape replacing the grandeur of cathedrals. Canada’s social systems are under stress with increasing costs in health and social services hitting the wall of deficit reductions. Recent changes in the criminal code will dramatically impact levels of incarceration. Changes in immigration policies will reduce access to those most in need of protection. The lack of a national housing policy means increasing numbers of Canadians will suffer from inadequate housing. Levels of poverty are increasing while wage disparities widen.

The Occupy Movement, both in Canada and around the world, has identified global inequality as one of the pressing social challenges of our time. While this inequity was, in the past, represented by divisions between south and north, today it is represented by the 1% for whom the economic systems of the world work, and the 99% who are left to struggle with the failures. Young people who have been the face of the movement are the very ones who know that our economy no longer works for the vast majority of the world’s people.

The increasing disparity between rich and poor is also reflected in the declining resources available to non-governmental organizations and people’s movements to effect and motivate change or to counter massive propaganda machines designed to support the economic interest of the powerful. An example of this is the immense campaign against human responsibility for climate change and against the need for curtailing carbon emissions. Organizations and individuals that argue for actions are systematically undermined and ridiculed.

It is in this context that churches can offer meaningful partnerships with social movements and organizations that seek the transformation of our world. Churches, in contrast to many other organizations, generally do not depend on government funding and so have freedom to speak, educate and organize. While churches may seem to be on the margins of our society, they still carry a measure of privilege and power. To what extent is the church willing to risk its reputation for the sake of joining together with others for the sake of the world and its peoples, for the sake of God’s mission? This is the question that underlies any consideration of partnership in the context of the world that we know today.

Otto Scharmer, an M.I.T. professor, in his ground breaking work on theories of leadership writes:

“We live in a time of massive institutional failure, collectively creating results that nobody wants. Climate change. AIDS. Hunger. Poverty. Violence. Terrorism. Destruction of communities, nature, life—the foundations of our social, economic, ecological, and spiritual well-being. This time calls for a new consciousness and a new collective leadership capacity to meet challenges in a more conscious, intentional, and strategic way. The development of such a capacity will allow us to create a future of greater possibility.”

Paul Hawken, the author of *Blessed Unrest*, writes in a similar way about a new convergence of environmental, social justice and indigenous peoples' organizations that is creating the largest social movement in history, seeking to "restore grace, justice and beauty to the world."

Both authors, writing from significantly different but secular places, point to the need for a new collective capacity, in the words of Adrienne Rich, to "reconstitute the world."

"My heart is moved by all I cannot save:
So much has been destroyed
I have cast my lot with those
Who, age after age, perversely
With no extraordinary power
Reconstitute the world."

4. Streams of Canadian Partnerships

The Task Group in beginning its work identified over forty partnerships held at the national level of the church. It recognized that there were many more at other levels of the church, well beyond the capacity of the Task Group to identify and document. In reviewing the range of national partnerships, the Task Group discerned five major streams that point to the breadth of relationships in Canada. While the examples, found in [Appendix A](#), that illustrate each of these streams are drawn from national relationships, the Task Group believes that they also represent the breadth of relationships that exist throughout the church. Although the work the church shares with individual partners often fits into one main stream or focus, it is true that some organizations partner across several categories. The following outlines the main streams that the Task Group has identified.

1. Advocacy and Justice

Partners in this stream vary in size from small justice-focused organizations, like the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, to large organizations, both ecumenical and civil society, such as KAIROS and the Canadian Council for International Co-operation.

Some of these partners work in direct solidarity with people in marginalized communities in Canada where issues of poverty, violence, abuse and ecological degradation are common. The experiences and analysis of these groups often serve the church in contributing to policy development and advocacy for social change in our society. Other partners in this stream help the church to develop ways to take these human and ecological rights concerns into the public arena. This collaborative work is non-partisan political activity for the sake of building healthy and sustainable communities. Advocacy with these partners builds a strong consensus from which to engage elected members of Canada's government, including Members of Parliament.

2. Research and Policy

This stream of partners includes organizations and coalitions with the expertise to undertake research and develop social policy regarding current justice issues that affect Canadian society. Sometimes, these policy briefs and proposals are submitted to Parliamentary committees or government ministries as a way to propose alternative or more complete policy responses to an issue the government is working on.

These policy papers also offer further or more specific thinking and challenge to existing UCC policies or practices such as food sovereignty, peace, climate justice, and corporate social responsibility. The policy work of our partners often serves to address gaps in our own UCC policy, and in the policies of the federal government, offering much needed expertise on important issues. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Pembina Institute, and Project Ploughshares are three of our partners in this stream.

3. Education and Theological Reflection

The partners within this stream offer spaces for theological reflection and scholarship on a variety of ecclesiological, missiological and social justice issues. These include organizations such as the Student Christian Movement, the Churches Council for Theological education in Canada and the Centre for Asian Theological Study Advisory Committee. Through theological reflection on current issues these partners sometimes challenge latent and prevalent Christian theologies that themselves may promote social injustice. Most often, these partners produce papers, offer perspectives, communicate within and beyond church circles, and organize seminars and learning opportunities that generate critical theological thinking. In turn this new thinking leads to new understandings about the church and the world that serve to undergird our ministry practices.

4. Congregational Engagement for Justice-making

These partners are either single or multi-focused on social justice issues that are of concern to the United Church. These organizations and coalitions develop justice resources and design education and advocacy programs that encourage the engagement of members to act for just change in the public arena. Usually this work is meant to raise consciousness, educate, build skills and equip groups for advocacy. Materials also often stress spiritual formation, discipleship and integrity. Resources from the Churches Council on Justice and Corrections and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission help congregations to grapple with issues of faith and justice and encourage people to act locally, nationally and internationally.

Resources for congregational engagement may be developed with partners through the collaborative work of staff and elected members, or they may be developed independently, and then integrated into the programs of the United Church. These are resources that are distributed through Infopak, referred to in Mandate, incorporated into UCC publications and web materials.

5. Community Support

This stream of partners includes organizations that, with The United Church of Canada, focus on building support for individuals, groups and congregations facing injustice, persecution, and poverty. First Nations band councils, camps, and inner city community ministries, as well as organizations for migrant workers and new immigrants, are also found in this category. These groups work at a grass roots level in solidarity with victims of systemic injustice. They often provide basic needs and services, as well as support programs that help guide folk through the complicated maze of social programs while empowering them to find healing and wholeness.

5. A Theology of Partnership from the Perspective of the Marks of the Church

Imagine *partnership* as a critical, new mark of the emerging church. To speak of “marks of the church” evokes deep Christian experience of the four traditional attributes of the church expressed in the Nicene Creed as *one, holy, catholic* and *apostolic*. Theologians through time and today continue to interpret these marks of the church, re-visioning them in language to guide congregations and people of faith on their missional journey.

There is growing consensus that the traditional marks must be re-imagined to equip the church for the 21st century. The creedal marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity, are seen, not as static descriptions, but identity-shaping faith declarations that lead to action. In this spirit of faith in motion, Jurgen Moltmann³² pairs each mark with an action that describes the dynamic nature and purpose of the church where its marks are read as both promise and hope. Similarly, Hans Kung³³ stresses the importance of reading these creedal marks as both sign and task.

Postcolonial feminist theologians use a contextual approach to help sharpen the church’s understanding of the marks of the church. They express their hope for the church through new perspectives that privilege the voice of those who are alienated and marginalized in our society and through the self-examining church that critiques itself and risks for social justice. Letty Russell³⁴ who envisions an inclusive church in the round emphasizes that unity includes action for justice. Holiness includes the experience of shared suffering. Catholicity includes connection to the world as well as orthopraxy in service. Apostolicity includes, ‘constancy in advocacy for justice’’ These creedal signs re-visioned are both gift and task focused on justice and speak to the essence of partnership.

The United Church of Canada’s poetic statement of faith, *A Song of Faith* (2008) affirms the traditional marks of the church established by Christ and grounded in the biblical narrative interpreted through the contextual lens of Canada’s particular social, cultural, political and historical location in the 21st century.

A Song of Faith re-imagines the traditional marks of the church. The church is *one*, “seeking to continue the story of Jesus by embodying Christ’s presence in the world.” It is *holy* because “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...”. The breadth of *catholicity* finds expression when “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 depth of *apostolicity* embraces our spiritual heritage because “our ancestors in faith bequeath to us experiences of their faithful living; upon their lives our lives our built.”

If *partnership* is becoming a sign of the emerging church, how do we undertake the action of *partnering* so that sign and task witness to the outreaching community of redemptive love and justice-making of our Triune God? What biblical story, image or ancient poetry calls us to

³² citation

³³ citation

³⁴ citation

partnership in our self-understanding and missional journey as church in the Canadian context today?

The story of the Cananite woman and Jesus reminds us of all the border places where we as Church might be hesitant or resistant to cross. Yet as border-walking people of faith, guided by the Spirit, these border places of challenge present opportunity. Communion can replace separation for the sake of God's world.

In *Mending the World* the Church is called into partnership by both affirmation and imperative. We believe God calls us “to work in partnership with all who seek the health and well-being of the whole creation.” The imperative: a Church which gives priority to seeking the common good in the world requires “the assembled resources of a broad partnership.” To the church in Corinth, Paul writes of assembled resources as spiritual gifts, varieties of services and activities, animated by God for the common good. No one religious community or social action group can accomplish the missional task alone. Do we dare to become border-walking people, open to partnerships of risk and opportunity for the well-being of God's good creation?

Moving forward requires humility and hope. *Partnership* acknowledges our limitedness yet confirms our identity. Unity born of *partnering* seeks not to shape others to become like us, but calls us to learn from difference and even be transformed by it. Church includes and is shaped by its relationship with people, particularly those on the borders of society and on the margins of the church.

Marilyn Legge³⁵, among others writing critical theologies today, offers a new model of “non-coercive social cohesion,” which also addresses the need to foster new ways of belonging. For Legge it happens through celebration of difference. Borders may become the creating force for Canadian churches emerging into God's future.

In *partnership* as sign and gift there is mutual relationship where difference is accepted, respected, and celebrated. In *partnering* as an expression of diverse community in unity, we invest, not in the building up of our own kingdom, but in the “kin-dom” movement begun by the Three-in-One who risked all for love of us.

6. The Role of Community Ministries in United Church Partnership

The United Church of Canada is made up of more than congregations. The ministries of the church also include administrative ministries (such as General Council and Conference offices), ministries such as camps and campus ministries, and equally as important to the identity and work of the Church, community and social justice ministries.

In *The Manual*, the term, “Outreach Ministries,” now called “Community and Social Justice Ministries”, are defined as a ministry other than a Pastoral Charge or Mission, that is recognized by the Presbytery or the Conference in which it is located or by a General Council working unit

³⁵ citation

as a valid expression of enabling ministry and that receives financial assistance or supervision from a Presbytery, a Conference, or a General Council working unit.³⁶

Community and Social Justice Ministries vary in the types of gifts and services they are able to provide. Most offer support to those seeking basic need requirements such as food, clothing, shelter, pastoral care, advocacy services, and spiritual guidance. In many cases, these ministries provide services in situations and to communities that congregations are not able to engage. Conferences and Presbyteries enter into accountable and covenantal relationships with these ministries and in doing so affirm that they are an integral part of the church. Increasingly many of these programs have ordered ministers as part of their staff, providing pastoral and sacramental care to the participants of the ministry.

In the process of this review of Canadian partnerships, the Task Group initially assumed that Community Ministries could be defined as partners of the United Church. It did so in part because it understood that many of these ministries had multi-million dollar budgets with only a small percentage provided through direct church funds, in most cases today usually less than ten percent. The Task Group however, soon recognized that the language of partnership did not work in defining many, if not most, of these community ministries. Many struggle in fact to resist just such a definition, arguing that they are full ministries and expressions of the church. Some do see themselves in a partner relationship for a variety of reasons, most often because they have developed into community based organizations with community boards with limited or no direct accountability to the church. Many however, even in spite of their size and the extent of their programs, see a close connection to the church as vital to their mission.

Most see themselves as expressions of the church which are, by their very character, agents of partnership into local communities. Community and Social Justice Ministries are therefore the part of the church most likely to partner with local faith groups, provincial labour organizations, anti-poverty groups, health, disability groups, coalitions and a wide variety of local government and non-governmental organizations. It is through such relationships that The United Church of Canada is able to faithfully and more fully make a difference in the lives of vulnerable people

While Community and Social Justice Ministries are agents of partnership on behalf of the United Church, the Task Group also recognized that something more was being revealed through their story. A distinctive characteristic of most United Church community ministries, the Task Group believes, is a desire to move beyond providing service to those in need, to building communities of people empowered to address systemic inequities affecting their own lives and that of their communities.

The question the Task Group has pondered is, if Community and Social Justice Ministries are seen as full “ministries” of the church, what does that say about our understanding and identity as “church”? Are they extensions of congregational ministry, or do they push the central understanding of what it means to be ecclesia/church in this time? One clue toward an answer can be found in the emerging issues of church membership.

³⁶ The Manual 2010, p. 39.

Traditional understandings of church membership involve a profession of faith and participation in a congregation, which is formally understood to be community constituted by Presbytery meeting for worship. Membership in the church has historically been defined through connection to a congregation with the exception of ordered ministers whose membership rests in a Presbytery. These classic forms of membership however are no longer working. Formal membership in a church holds little meaning for younger generations. Congregations struggle to maintain historic membership rolls, and frequently have individuals serving in governance positions who are not formal members but who would resist any suggestion that they are ineligible to serve because of this.

More specific to the focus of this study, there are many people today who find their place of engagement with the church not in traditional congregational life, but through new forms of ministry, in different expressions of community. Some see their church identity with the whole of the United Church, with its sense of justice and community witness. Others have found their relationship with a local congregation no longer possible but strongly wish to maintain their deep connection with the mission and vision of the United Church. All of this has led to interest in exploring new more flexible, organic understandings of membership. The intention here is to point to the contribution and place of community ministries in this ongoing exploration of membership and new forms of ministry life.

While historically, Community Ministries have spoken of “clients” who are served by the ministries, many today are beginning to reframe their understanding of the individuals who participate in their programs and therefore reframe the meaning of the organizations themselves.

Some community ministries propose that they can be seen as worshiping communities. In this understanding, those who in the past might have been seen as clients can be rightly seen as members who choose to align themselves with the mission of the ministry. In most congregations there are a variety of people bringing many different needs and understandings to their participation. Children, who do not come with an “adult” faith, nevertheless are welcome as full members of the church. Many congregations welcome as members people with significant social needs who at any particular moment might be present only to receive support and help. Similarly, community ministries bring together communities of people, each with different levels of understanding and need.

What does it mean, then to speak of Community Ministries as new expressions of church life? What does it mean to our traditional understandings of membership to see participation in a community ministry as a legitimate place to practice ones membership in the United Church? Is this a place where the most vulnerable people in our society might in fact be bearers of revelation for the church in this time?

United Church community ministries are linked across the country by a network called “Energy from the Edges.” The Task Group believes these ministries are calling out to the church to be willing to risk new forms of life and membership, to be willing to be transformed by the weakest members of our society. They are calling out to congregations, members, and all those committed to seeking justice and love, to join them on the edges of our society as the place where God is present and active.

7. A Church of the Edges: Metaphors for understanding the role of the United Church in partnership today.

We began this report by referring to the work of John Shea inviting us to see Jesus as a “border walker.” Borders define our places of comfort and safety. They mark the “land” of our community and create the spaces which we choose to protect and preserve. The United Church is generally not comfortable speaking of borders. The practices of membership have always been more flexible and open than bounded. A center post (often understood to be Jesus) to which members are invited to get as close to as they can, rather than a corral which constrains, has been the more common way of speaking of the life of the church. Yet borders exist in other ways.

Churches are more than just their individual members. As institutions, they have practices and programs that reveal their character. How they choose to be present in the society which surrounds them, speaks about how they understand their borders. Are they willing to engage the issues of their neighbourhood? Are they good and effective citizens? What concerns do they express for the truly pressing questions of the day? To what extent are they prepared to work together with others for the causes that matter? How much are they prepared to risk, in controversy, reputation and in treasure, for the sake of the common good? These are all questions about borders, and the permeability of borders. To see Jesus as a border walker is to begin to understand the importance of reflecting on how borders define the church’s life today.

In more traditional church terms, border-walking is an image of discipleship, of what it means to follow Jesus. But there is another aspect to partnership that speaks of how we understand the church itself. This is the language of ecclesiology, or what we believe to be the nature of the church. Ecclesiology is today receiving significant attention in global ecumenical spaces in part from a sincere desire to move forward on deep ecumenical questions. Common understandings about the nature of the church can help resolve ancient division. But interest in the topic also reflects a growing perception that the church is in the midst of a profound shift or emergence into something new.

The Task group believes this to be true for The United Church of Canada. We cannot know at this moment what these shifts mean for the future of the church. We do know that we will be a different church, perhaps smaller, but hopefully more diverse both in people and in forms of ministry. As we enter this transitional time, the images of the church that we hold can make a significant difference to what we will become.

With this in mind this report has lifted up the traditional marks of the church, one, holy, catholic and apostolic, not as static descriptions but as calls to active participation in God’s mission. To see the church through the lens of God’s Mission means to structure the church as a place where wholeness of life can be nurtured and where diverse communities can connect and interact. The report has also emphasized that God’s purposes are not fulfilled by the church alone, and this means that God is present and active throughout the world, where life is finding new energy, and change brings new hope. It is this belief that that is the foundation of the church’s commitment to partnership.

But what does this say about the nature of the church itself?

The Task Group has been challenged by the work and vision of community ministries and the questions of membership that they raise. Old patterns of membership are no longer working, something new needs to emerge, but by what principles will they be determined? Will new understandings of membership be developed as a means to protect the institutional life of the church (for example, who gets to control property) or will they be developed in such a way that the church is fully about enabling God's mission in the world?

With this in mind, the Task Group offers the vision of the church as a place of intersection between those who actively are working for and seeking justice and peace for the world, and the millennia old testimony to a God who desires that all creation be healed and restored to wholeness. In other words, the vision of a church that commits itself to partnership with the untold number of environmental, social justice and indigenous peoples' organizations that, in the words of Paul Hawken, are "creating the largest social movement in history, seeking to "restore grace, justice and beauty to the world."

Following Jesus as a border-walker speaks of the form of discipleship that is needed for our time. But what images are helpful for understanding the nature of the church for this particular moment in history. The Task Group believes that the ecological term *ecotone* offers an insight into thinking about the nature of the church in new ways.

Ecotones are ecological place of transition, where one type of landscape meets another. They are the transitional areas between adjacent communities, ecosystems, or habitats; the boundary or border zone which encompasses an area of intersection between ecological communities. Ecotones are about edges and the transformational possibilities which become apparent across the edges between ecologies where change and growth is most evident. In other words, ecotones are places where life thrives, and where the processes of evolution are most active.

To speak of God's church as an ecotone, is to value partnership as critical to its life and purpose. It is in moving outside of itself, in seeking collaboration with others for the common cause of God's mission, that the church can offer itself and become an ecotone for the world.

To see the church in this way requires truly believing that God is present and active outside the church. It means that the wisdom of the church, its insights, and its life depends on the gifts of others. The church cannot contribute to the common good without valuing what others bring into its life and the life of the world.

It suggests that issues of membership are not simply about the way the church defines its own life. Greater flexibility and varieties of forms of membership will likely be required as the church increasingly sees its role through the lens of partnership in God's mission. Traditional patterns of exclusion must give way to invitations to those who share in the healing of creation whoever they may be in Canadian society to see themselves aligned with the work of God's community. To be an ecotone suggests that the United Church be a place where the story of God's love for the world meets the vibrant activism of those who seek the transformation of the world.

The story of the Canaanite woman as the catalyst for transformation and revelation speaks to this truth. So also true partnership emerges as the church and its partners meet at the edges, on the margins, and across borders to discover God revealed in justice and peace for our world.

8. Principles for the Practice of Partnership in Canada

The Task Group, following the example of the Global Partnership Review, wishes to offer principles for the practice of Canadian partnership. It does not expect these principles to limit the ways in which different parts of the church choose to enact or practice partnership. Instead, it offers these principles as one way in which the church can reflect on and celebrate the importance of Canadian partner relationships, and become intentional about how they are lived and honored.

1. God calls the people of The United Church of Canada to incarnational ministry for the healing of the world; to be a healing presence of God in our world.
2. Partnership is a key expression of incarnational ministry and requires of the church a deep compassion for the world and its peoples, and willingness to risk in relationship.
3. Partnership finds expression in all areas of the church. Partnerships are manifestations of the call to work wherever there is a need to advance God's presence, to seek justice and walk with others seeking dignity, the liberation of the oppressed, the empowerment of the disadvantaged and advocacy for those diminished and on the margins of our society. No single structure can accommodate the rich varieties of partner relationships. Partnership is an undertaking of the whole people of God, open to all people engaged in the life and work of the United Church.
4. Partnership requires courage, including the courage to enter into relationships which seek to transform society and relationships in order to confront principalities and powers.
5. Partnership requires trust and reciprocity, humility and self-reflection. The failures of the church's mission history must be critically understood. Partners help us challenge long held but unhealthy understandings, theologies and worldviews. However, this history must not prevent the church from acting boldly in partnership.
6. Justice and charity are both important objectives of partnership. The relieving of suffering is always the first call to justice. It can never be sufficient for us to say that response to the urgent or immediate needs of others is for someone else.
7. The foundation of partnership is right relationship. This is a conscious arriving at mutuality and reciprocity, jointness of action and accountability, openness, honesty, solidarity and integrity, to name some the qualities of such relationships. Canadian partnerships aspire to be lived expressions of right relationship, an essential value the United Church holds as it seeks to root itself in Canadian society.
8. Effective partnerships are celebrated and held up for respectful, open and trusting mutual assessment, including the sharing of successes with others locally and across the Church. Partnership always involves the equipping of those who participate as representatives of the church, through education, appropriate support and accountability.

9. The effective sharing of resources, time, talent, and money, is an integral part of partnership. We achieve a greater result in working jointly with others for God's calling than we can hope to do by ourselves.
10. We are called into partnership with people of our own and different faiths and beliefs. Equally, we understand that many important partner relationships are found with persons and groups who are part of secular society.
11. Our calling to undertake God's purposes through partnership requires a commitment to ecological justice, including understandings and practices that promote a healthy and sustainable environment.

Appendix A

SNAPSHOTS OF CANADIAN PARTNERS

Each of the examples below illustrate one or more of the five major streams, representing the breadth of relationships that exist throughout the church.

- Advocacy and Justice
- Research and Policy
- Education and Theological Reflection
- Congregational Engagement for Justice-making
- Community Support

SOME SNAPSHOTS:

Canada Without Poverty:

Canada Without Poverty is a federally incorporated, non-partisan, not-for-profit and charitable organization working to address the structural causes of poverty by raising awareness, educating and inspiring others to support its eradication in Canada. Founded in 1971 as the National Anti-Poverty Organization, it changed its name in 2009 to Canada Without Poverty.

Launched in May 2009, *Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty-free Canada*, is a multi-year, multi-partner, non-partisan campaign. This campaign's vision is to make Canada poverty-free, socially secure and cohesive, by 2020. On December 5, 2011, the *Dignity for All campaign for a poverty-free Canada* hosted "What's next? How do we Address Poverty in Canada" in Ottawa. There was a lively and engaging conversation on where we go from here on the poverty front in light of the recent federal government reports on the issue. Featuring a panel of MPs, a person with lived experience of poverty, and a representative from Dignity for All, there were opportunities to hear perspectives, share ideas, and ask questions about what next steps are needed to address poverty in Canada.

Canadian Council for Refugees

The Canadian Council for Refugees is a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada. The membership is made up of organizations involved in the settlement, sponsorship and protection of refugees and immigrants. The Council serves the networking, information-exchange and advocacy needs of its membership.

Trafficking happens in Canada. But Canadian law does not protect trafficked persons. Currently, women, children and men who are trafficked into or within Canada often fall between the cracks in the system. Detained and deported, they may be treated more as criminals than as victims of a crime. Legislative amendment is needed to bring a permanent and fundamental change in policy so that trafficked persons in Canada are protected. The CCR is calling for measures to adequately protect the rights of trafficked persons in Canada, in particular through legislative amendment. The CCR also urges Canadians to educate themselves about the realities of trafficking and to take action in favour of the rights of trafficked persons. The CCR has developed a Proposal to amend the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. The proposal would provide temporary and permanent protection to trafficked persons. The CCR is calling on Parliamentarians to turn this proposal into law.

Canadian Food Grains Bank:

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of Canadian churches and church-based agencies working to end hunger in developing countries by increasing and deepening the involvement of Canadians in efforts to end hunger. The Foodgrains Bank collects grain and cash donations, provides funds and expert advice for projects submitted by member agencies and their partners, manages the procurement and supply of food commodities, and engages in public policy and education activities related to hunger and food security.

Growing Projects are a way for people to contribute grain and other agricultural commodities to help people who are hungry around the world. A typical project involves a group of people working together to farm a common plot of land. After harvest, the production is donated through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to our church members for overseas food aid and agricultural development projects. Many supporters who are not farmers have invented their own form of project. Some urban churches have been linked to rural churches. There are hundreds of active growing projects across the country.

Canadian Health Coalition:

The Canadian Health Coalition is a public advocacy organization dedicated to the preservation and improvement of Medicare. Membership is comprised of national organizations representing nurses, health care workers, seniors, churches, anti-poverty groups, women and trade unions, as well as affiliated coalitions in 9 provinces and one territory.

There are serious concerns about the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Europe, on behalf of the big pharmaceutical companies, is pushing for Canada to lengthen the period of its monopoly drug patents and delay the availability of lower-priced generic drugs. Canada's high prescription drug prices are already a barrier to medically necessary medicines for millions of Canadians, and CETA

will only make the situation worse. A second threat to Canada's public health care system in the CETA negotiations is the European demand that Canada weaken NAFTA protections that shield Canada's health care system from international trade deals. The Canadian Health Coalition fought hard to get these protections and wants them strengthened, not eroded. The Canadian government must negotiate a carve-out for Canada's health care system that says "*nothing in the CETA shall be construed to apply to measures adopted or maintained by a party in relation to the health sector or public health insurance.*" Canadians want the public health care system protected and improved, not traded away.

The Church Council on Justice and Corrections:

The Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC) is a national faith-based coalition of eleven founding churches, incorporated in 1972. It is primarily by education, advocacy and community development initiatives that CCJC tries to foster healthier communities and crime prevention through social responsibility. CCJC works with both multi-faith and non-religious partners and has achieved international recognition for its contributions to creative thinking about criminal justice.

The Collaborative Justice Program: The following letter provides an introduction to the purpose of this program and its effectiveness. "*The purpose of this letter is to state how very impressed we are with the Collaborative Justice Project and their staff. We became aware of the program after we... had been the victims of a robbery. Everything about the process, the initial meeting with you and our family, the ongoing communication, the meeting with the accused, and the subsequent updates have been excellent. The biggest benefit, of course, is that as a family we have received understanding, support, the chance to process the effect of the crime on our lives, and, ultimately, the opportunity to meet with the accused and say and hear what needed to be said and heard. This is an experience of closure to the episode that the traditional criminal process does not offer. We believe that the benefits are tremendously significant – to us and to the perpetrator – and more broadly and perhaps more importantly, to our community and society.*" - Sincerely, S. W.

Faith and the Common Good:

FCG is an initiative asking Canadians what values we believe should form our communities. It is intentionally inter-faith and inter-cultural in its organisation and objectives because this is Canada now, and increasingly will be in the future. Through dialogue, research, network building, education, and advocacy, FCG works to build a process to bring the diversity of Canadian perspectives into a voice of common concern for social, economic and ecological well-being for all.

The *Solar Audit* is a fee for service offered through FCG's Greening Sacred Spaces program. The Solar Audit involves a walk-through of your faith community building by a professional solar auditor who makes a case for or against solar in the building. "*Being called green has come as a surprise to us.... We became green when all of us, together, sought a balance between what we need to live, and what God has given us to live on... We enjoy the light and power that we have the privilege to use now, and leave for the generations to come... Learning to live with respect in God's creation has transformed*

our faith community, and connected us with many new friends. We believe what we have done, and are doing, can be done by people of all kinds of faith and any sort of good will, anywhere on earth... ” - Laidlaw Memorial United Church, Hamilton

First Nations Pictograph:

Chief Pasqua's Pictograph is a drawing on two paper panels that shows the things that Treaty 4 was to provide for the First Nations people. It is of tremendous historic value because it is thought to be the only record of the treaty created from the First Nations perspective. It would have been created in the time period leading up to the signing of Treaty 4, sometime from 1874-77. Chief Pasqua was one of the original signatories to Treaty 4.

In the 1800's the pictograph was taken to Britain and kept in private hands until it was put up for sale years later. A number of groups in Saskatchewan worked together to secure the funds to purchase it and ensure it was returned to Canada. Lorne Carrier of the Saskatchewan Museums Association co-ordinated the project, working closely with Chief Elaine Chicoose and Delbert Pasqua (a descendant of Chief Pasqua). Representatives of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, and the United Church of Canada (SK Conf) met together several times to strategize how to obtain the pictograph and to seek out sources of funding. Saskatchewan Conference contributed \$5,000 and the General Council contributed \$15,000 as part of the total of approximately \$200,000 that was needed to purchase the pictograph.

The repatriation of the pictograph was celebrated at a ceremony held at the Treaty 4 Governance Centre on June 21, 2007. Those who participated in the project were recognized at that ceremony. Saskatchewan Conference received a plaque recognizing the United Church's participation in the project. The pictograph is housed at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum

The Student Christian Movement of Canada:

SCM Canada is a youth and student led grassroots network passionate about social justice, community in diversity, and radical faith in action. SCM students are active in liberating theology, progressive spiritual activists inspired by the Christian tradition to fight oppression and struggle for a better world.

Every November, a caravan sets out from Canada on a journey to Fort Benning, Georgia, joining many thousands of activists and peacemakers in a massive vigil and gathering. SCM has taken dozens of students to the base, inspired to action along the way by spiritual activist communities. As one participant writes: *“What happens at Fort Benning happens in Canada – like it “happens” – though differently – in Latin America. The ideologies that support militarism circle the globe, just as the work for resistance. And this year, again, I have returned with a more nuanced analysis of global political dynamics, creative, life-giving methods to resist and new models for living. The connections I have made cause me to feel linked into the global community of those seeking just alternatives. My faith in the reality of change has been nourished. Amen, let that change be so! - SJ”*

Truth & Reconciliation Commission:

The TRC has a mandate to learn the truth about what happened in the residential schools and to inform all Canadians about what happened in the schools. The Commission hopes to guide and inspire First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and Canadians in a process of truth and healing leading toward reconciliation and renewed relationships based on mutual understanding and respect.

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hosted their second Youth Retreat in November 2011. The retreat was held in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, and brought together youth from Waycobah First Nation School and Halifax West High School. The focus of the retreat was to provide an opportunity to further understand the impact and legacy of the Residential School System while developing ways to communicate such information to the greater Canadian public. The students participated in a multi-media project to help spread awareness about the Residential School System, its legacy and how we are all impacted. Prior to the youth retreat participants attended the Atlantic National Event in Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 26 – 29, 2011, where they conducted interviews and recorded Survivor statements.

St. James United Church, Etobicoke, ON

Occasional Partners: For each of the four communion Sundays, we designate a charity which will benefit from a portion of our outreach offering (a percentage of that offering is designated for the ministers' discretionary fund). Where possible, we try and have a representative make a presentation to the congregation, the Sunday before Communion Sunday. Recently we supported AURA, Out in the Cold.

Ongoing Partners: There are groups who use our facility which also have a natural connection to the programs of the church. For example, one of the KAIROS chapters meets at St. James, and our Justice Working Group has a number of members who participate in KAIROS, and we benefit from the information that KAIROS provides the group. Our Food Basket has a number of partnerships with organizations, some which are related to the participants, like local churches and Muslim associations, benevolent groups looking to make a difference like a local Buddhist group, local grocery markets, and politicians.

Supported Partners: Members of our Justice Working Group in particular are involved in a number of different initiatives and organizations, the group seeks to support its members and these groups in whatever way we can. Through this we have partnered with GAN, a justice group made up of local churches, political associations, rallies, etc. One of the central ingredients for St. James is its Charism of what has been called tacit Permission Giving (which sometimes gets challenged by the need for keeping the Status Quo). It is the sense that you can bring your project/interest here and as much as we are able at a given time, we will explore it with you, which is why we have such a diverse number of ministries here.

St. Aidan's United Church, Victoria, BC

Community Centre: There are a number of ways St. Aidan's partners with our local community. The first is that the new building (1992) was designed to be a community centre. Currently the church has 140 outside user groups listed. At the same time, St. Aidan's was

designated to be an assembly centre in the event of an earthquake. There is an earthquake storage bunker located on the church property, maintained by the Mt. Tolmie Community Association.

Thrift Shop: Fifteen years ago, it was felt that the church could have an outreach to the community through a Thrift Shop. Today there are 30 volunteers who staff the Thrift Shop each Wednesday and over 300 people pass through the doors each day they are open. Not only does the Thrift Shop provide bargains, but there is also coffee and conversation available and the Thrift Shop has become “church” for many people.

Where the Thrift Shop really partners with the community is working with the Salvation Army, Transition House for Battered Women, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, The Compassionate Warehouse (sends container shipments to the global south), and the University Chaplaincy programme providing over 500 boxes of clothing and household items each year. A call will go out from a particular community organization and the Thrift Shop will empty their shelves of that item responding to the call. The Thrift Shop is called the “Friendly Octopus” because of the many ways it reaches out.

Healing Touch Ministry: St. Aidan’s also runs a Healing Touch Ministry for the community and the library is open to the community with its catalogue online.

Coffee House: We are currently exploring a partnership with Saanich (the district in which the church is located) some sort of coffee house, however we are meeting with a bit of resistance. (I am told that homeless in our community are rounded up by the police and taken and dropped off in downtown Victoria, however I haven’t seen any evidence of this.)

Spiritual Discussion Group: Every two weeks we offer a spiritual discussion group for community men who are at risk (usually recovering addicts). This is unofficially partnered with AA, SA and NA groups who tell members of the existence of the group.

Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble:

Affirm United works to promote greater awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity issues, end discrimination against people in church, society and our own organization, and help people of all sexual orientations and gender identities find support and community within the United Church of Canada.

An openly gay minister, Rev Sarah Bourcier-Miller knows how important it is to the LGBTQ community to be welcomed and for many in the community their experience with the church has not been a positive one. As a young theology student, Bourcier-Miller was on her way to becoming a minister in the Presbyterian church, but when she came out the response was less than welcoming. She left the church, "I was hurt," she said. Affirm United, which was formed in 1982, maintains a list of affirmed churches across the country. Bourcier-Miller specifically sought one out. "*I went to an affirmed church and it was like coming home,*" she said. A proud member of the United Church since 1999, she finished her education and went on to become a minister in her new home. On Sunday, June 26, 2011 she watched as her congregation celebrated officially becoming an Affirming Ministry.

KAIROS:

Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives brings together eleven churches and religious organizations in faithful action for ecological justice and human rights. One of its main goals is to grow movements and that means bringing people together across borders and issues so that they might challenge and inspire each other for greater social change.

In the fall of 2011, KAIROS brought global partners—women human rights defenders from the Philippines and the Democratic Republic of the Congo--to meet with Indigenous and migrant women who are also defending human rights in their communities in Canada. It was called *Living Courage: Dialogues with our Sisters* and the connections were profound. Women of courage meeting women of courage across great difference, but finding common language of both struggle and hope. For churches and ecumenical networks in Canadian cities, large and small, hosting these dialogues was a privilege and an opportunity to show visible solidarity in a growing movement for human rights, for women's rights, and finding community with each other.

Stella Burry Community Services

Stella Burry is a leading social services agency in St. John's, Newfoundland providing programs for adults and youth who have experienced personal or family breakdown brought about by mental health issues, addictions, abuse, illiteracy and the lack of education as well as poverty.

HOPEworks is a part-time pre-employment preparation program for individuals who have experienced serious mental health issues and who have had little or no work experience. Before becoming involved in the program Elizabeth spent twenty years in and out of juvenile centres and jail. She never held a job longer than four months. Finally after years of doing nothing, just getting into trouble, she knew she had to get her life in order. After the program her life changed so much. *“They cared enough to help me again. I now have a job. I feel like I am finally doing something good for myself. Finally I feel worthy. I am very happy about my life today and I know that I can accomplish anything I want. Someday, I would like to talk to teenagers who are in trouble with the law. Stella Burry believed in me ... and helped me believe in myself.”*

Appendix B

A History of United Church Partnerships in the Canadian Context

In the opening years of the 21st century The United Church of Canada (UCC) is challenged to reaffirm its relevance and mission as part of the Missio Dei. So too, a hundred years ago the three founding denominations of the UCC sought to understand and live into God's mission in the changing context of the 20th century. And just as “partnership” helps give expression to current mission thinking, working for “social betterment” spurred these denominations to collaborate with emerging social reform movements and organizations to help realize their image of God's reign in the Canadian context.

A brief review of how these denominations engaged with others, and within their denominations, on these social betterment priorities helps to identify the founding ethos and institutional

development of The United Church of Canada. As the Canadian welfare state creaked into existence over the first 70 years of the 20th century the UCC can be seen as a major advocate for its development, and critic of economic and political indifference or abuse that needed regulation and reform. In recent decades we've witnessed the unraveling of these policies and programs that have made Canada a respected and caring nation. As we go forward we remember the decades of struggle, collaborative social engagements and political lobbying that was seen as realizing God's mission in the Canadian context.

Before turning to this period in the 20th century it should be remembered that the church was not always engaged in social change. As E. H. Oliver in his book, *The Social Achievements of the Church*, notes at times the church has been a conservative force resisting change, sometimes moderating, other times reactionary, and only recently engaged in social change. He says that it is only in the 20th century that Protestants have begun to work to "Christianize the whole social order." (Oliver, 1930. 5) According to Oliver, it was the industrial revolution that pushed the church to act.

The effort to Christianize the whole social order has been only a comparatively recent development, an ideal programme set up by most of the Protestant churches, provoked to do so by the Industrial Revolution, the accentuation of wealth and poverty, the political economy in the state, its favoured wealth and industry, and new Science which seemed to endanger the idea of the worth of individuals. (Oliver. 165)

The exploitative conditions created by industrial developments and the state's complicitous relationship with capital provoked Protestants to examine this social situation in light of their rediscovered social Christian theology and values. Their efforts to organize society based on Christian social values came to profoundly shape the theology and practice of the three denominations that formed The United Church of Canada.

Church Union Movement

While the idea of church union had been around since the 1880s, it was not until 1902, when Principal William Patrick of the Presbyterian Church took the opportunity at the General Conference of the Methodist Church to again propose the idea of union, that the time seemed right for "the forging of a new instrument for social betterment." (R.J. Wilson, 1929. 33) These social betterment objectives of union marked a shift in theological thinking from 19th century emphasis on predestination and Christian perfection to a more evangelical liberalism or social gospel theology that put new emphasis on divine eminence, a more critical approach to the Bible, and realization of God's kingdom on earth through participation with other social reform movements and organizations in transforming Canadian society. As John Webster Grant said,

Union was to reflect the spirit of the age, fulfilling human aspirations as much as biblical prophecies. It was to embody the rising social gospel that understood the kingdom of God not merely as the transformation of society through the conversion of individuals but as the inauguration of a new political and economic order. Above all, many unionists urged, the United Church should be rid of the shackles of the past and free to seek new solutions for emerging problems. Union was to represent not merely the fulfillment of an old dream but the birth of new possibilities. (Grant, 1990. 126)

Of particular importance in shaping the ethos of the United Church was the strong role that the Boards of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS) played in the years preceding union and then after union in 1925. Inherent in their name and mandate (evangelism and social service) was a creative tension and reframing of these words. This tension of balancing evangelical practice (concern for personal salvation) and social service/action in one portfolio spurred the church's zeal to be a spiritual and social organizing force in Canadian society.

BESS secretaries writing their annual reports on evangelism often described efforts to broaden evangelical definitions to be action oriented. In their social service reports they offered commentary on the connection of social service to faith as the root of their action. In this late Victorian Christian context this two-sided approach helped to draw the extremes of evangelical pietism and radical social action into the mainstream functioning of the church and its mission. The resulting evangelical zeal for Christianizing the social order became a central tenant of church union. Today, we'd shy away from "Christianizing" language because of its imperialistic implications but the intention of investing in society the values of Jesus towards mutuality (love with justice), equity and a redistributive ethic (i.e. progressive taxation) remain relevant to our present context.

The Canadian church union movement was further encouraged by the growing worldwide ecumenical movement. Other liberal Protestant churches in western countries were also involved in union talks and even grander schemes about a worldwide church. A unique twist in the Canadian story is that the UCC movement leaned towards the "life and work" end of the ecumenical discussion more than the dominant "faith and order" end. John W Grant reports that most church unions were being considered for theological and ecclesial logical reasons, whereas the UCC broke new ground with its emphasis on the church's role in social transformation. The UCC provided a trail-blazing example for the 1937 *Life and Works* conference in Oxford, England, where the church's relation to community and state were central questions.

Looking more closely at these social better objectives the founding denomination's BESS began to collaborate with others in forming the Social Service Council of Canada (SSCC). This Council helped pioneer the practice of social work in Canada and became the church's main voice in advocating for social and economic reforms.

The Social Service Council of Canada

The SSCC was launched in 1913 as the successor of the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada. The earlier Council was formed in 1908 by an alliance of church and labour who had come together to lobby for the Lord's Day Act. The nascent labour movement had joined with the churches on the "Sunday observance" campaign because of their own efforts to win workers the right to a day of rest and re-creation. Their success spurred both church leaders and labour leaders to become more involved in social reform issues. As the SSCC formed, it broadened its collaborations to include organizations such as The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, The Dominion Grange and Farmers' Association, The Canadian Purity Education Association, The Dominion Women's Christian Temperance Union, and a number of other Christian denominations.

An important first step was to hold the first Social Service Congress in Ottawa, March 3-5, 1914. It is recognized by historians of Canadian social work as a premier event in bringing public

attention to the problems of the emerging urban-industrial society and in developing the practice of social work in Canada. It was the first large-scale national gathering of social welfare advocates from across the country with parliamentarians, labour and church leaders.

An impressive list of speakers included Prime Minister Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the leader of the opposition. Both political leaders accentuated the importance of the gathering and its potential impact on social legislation.

The editorials in the Ottawa papers spoke highly of the event. The *Ottawa Citizen* reported:

The Congress was, to its mind, one of the greatest assemblages ever held in Canada to grapple with the social and economical problems confronting all nations of the civilized world. Never in Canada has there been a gathering which attracted so many eminent clerics of all denominations, labour leaders, socialists and champions in a variety of reform movements. (6 March 1914)

In a number of speeches these prominent social sector leaders, including clergy, called upon the state to take an increased role in social welfare responsibilities. While it would take almost 30 years before the state saw itself as having these responsibilities, these early calls to action lay the groundwork for the Canadian welfare state. In the meantime, they suggested that “morally-driven solutions can be found” to assist those in need and address injustices in Canadian society. The list of issues discussed at the congress included topics such as a weekly rest day, aboriginal concerns, radical tendencies among workers, child welfare, problems in urban and rural life, commercialized vice and the white slave traffic, immigration and humanizing of religion, temperance, prison reform, and gambling.

In a speech by Rev. C.W. Gordon (better known in the 1920s as novelist Ralph Connor), *The New State and the New Church*, he describes the new movements in science, industry, the state, and the church that promised to make Canada a very different place. He did not think that the state or church was dealing with these new changes adequately. Gordon suggested that the state begin to think of itself as an organism—“an organism as opposed to a mere aggregation of units—it is a thing with life in it, that its members are held together by bonds that are vital; and for the good of all, not all for the highest good of one, nor all for the highest good of a few, but all for the highest good of all.” (SSCC. 1914. 193) He asserted that both state and church had failed to develop institutions and attitudes appropriate to the common good of all. Further, he criticized the economic elite’s dominance of the state and the church’s exercising authority through a wrathful God. He urged the church to overcome its 19th century pietistic ethics and become a religious institution inspired by the concrete realization of God’s reign on earth, particularly in Canadian society.

The concluding resolutions of the congress point to a list of social and economic policy reforms that will occupy the church and its social reform collaborators for the next fifty years (and even to the present day). These include:

- a Royal commission to deal with the question of unemployment
- an old-age pension system
- creation of the Canadian Department of child welfare, pensions for needy mothers
- extension of the franchise to women
- the policy of fitting our Indian wards for full citizenship as soon as possible the formation of a Canadian Association of friends of the native races

- the establishment of a Bureau of social surveys and research by the Social Service Council of Canada

Post-Congress Developments

By 1918 the SSCC had reached a peak in its own institutional development. It had established regional offices across the country and became a hub for all kinds of research and action on issues. In addition to provincial councils, 21 national affiliates (such as the Canadian Prisoner Welfare Association, the Canadian Association of Trained Nurses, the National Council of Women, and the Victorian Order of Nurses) joined the churches in directing the SSCC. It began publishing *Social Welfare* in late 1918. In the first year six articles concerned industrial matters, seven dealt with social questions such as housing, abolition of poverty, social insurance, and one declared for universal peace. Over the next year, 55 articles were written on social questions, 36 on industrial matters, and 23 on moral reform. The only change in this mix of articles over the next decade appears to be a decrease in the number pertaining to moral reform (drinking, gambling, sexual vice) and an increase in articles on social questions. *Social Welfare* did not engage in much theological or political speculation but remained focused on being a legitimate source of factual information on social and economic concerns. (*Social Welfare* 1918-32)

The SSCC sought solutions to these problems through the application of scientific means of social work and through democratic participation of communities; this extended to advocating for industrial democracy. At this point in Canadian history there were few expectations that the state would do more than regulate the worst abuses. Therefore, the SSCC sought to provide churches and social work organizations with analysis of the problems they were facing and recommended methods of addressing these problems. Inevitably, this involved seeking regulatory legislation to prohibit the worst abuses; but primarily it sought community-based methods of improving the conditions of those living in hardship.

In the years between the initial agreements on church union and its actual consummation (1908–1925), the SSCC functioned as a bridge among the UCC denominations as they worked together towards social betterment. Its collaboration with a variety of groups and movements challenged the churches to keep their constituencies engaged in social reform issues. It provided an early model of an ecumenical coalition, serving the churches by providing well-researched materials and articulate spokespersons to lobby governments. By the time of church union, this experience put the Board of Evangelism and Social Service at the forefront in providing key leadership to the new church. Moore, who had been general secretary of the Methodist BESS became general secretary of the General Council, D .N. McLachlan of the Presbyterian Church took charge of the new BESS. George Pidgeon, also of the Presbyterian Church, became the first moderator, followed by S.D. Chown of the Methodist Church. Both Pidgeon and Chown had long associations with social service work in the church.

In Richard Allen's *The Social Passion*, he describes the moderating and intellectual qualities that these progressive BSS secretaries brought to the new church as a “new, more radical and realistic social Christianity.” (Allen 1973. 311) He credited them with bringing a broad range of social reforms within the sanctions of Canadian Protestantism, and for bringing the multitude of social programs making up the Canadian welfare state into the main channels of Canadian social attitudes. Through their diligent work throughout the courts of the church and in numerous public forums they spoke of the connection between faith and its concrete ramifications in

building a democratic, mutuality-based, and redistributive social order. In other words, they sought to institutionalize³⁷ their social passion in the structures of the church and society. (Allen 352)

Responding to the Great Depression

While the momentum of this progressive reform work established the UCC as a major cultural force in Canadian society when the economic collapse of the 1930s arrived the church suffered like most other volunteer organizations. For instance, ministers' salaries were cut by one-third, and the church was forced to operate with a large deficit budget. Missionaries were called back from overseas; educational and welfare operations were handed over to government agencies. Church finances were greatly affected in spite of the 10% increase in membership and 19% increase in the number of pastoral charges, support for the Mission and Maintenance Fund fell 49% and support to Home Missions fell 58%. The church was having a hard time meeting its own institutional needs aside from the increased need for relief assistance. While money was in short supply, people contributed in numerous other ways. The Yearbooks and Annual Reports provide details of hundreds of boxcars filled with clothing and food from Ontario being sent to destitute farm families in the West. Thousands of unemployed men were fed at church sponsored soup kitchens. Food hampers were supplied to impoverished families and pastoral care given to people facing cutbacks, layoffs, and disillusionment with the state of the economy.

Congregations across the country offered practical assistance throughout their communities. This need to cut back internally and to stretch dollars and volunteer efforts also led to strong criticism of the economic causes of this hardship. Even during the supposedly good economic times of the 1920s, the UCC knew from its members, missions, and associations with social service and social reform movements, that many Canadians were not benefiting from the run-up in the stock markets. After the collapse in 1929, and throughout the 1930s, it was widely accepted that capitalism was not working. As years went by, the economy remained stalled with capitalist and political elites (often the same people) remaining aloof and militantly resistant to change while the hungry and desperate increased their demands for change. In 1935, unemployed men and women from across the country organized the "March on Ottawa" to demand government action. It was a time of bold pronouncements and calls for radical changes.

The Commission on *Christianizing the Social Order* was organized by the BESS to help UCC members understand the socio-economic crisis and give some direction as to the church's views on these matters. The presentation of this commission report in 1934, at the heart of the Great Depression, solidified the church's critique of capitalism and presented a positive social and economic vision of how society could be organized. As the lead question of the study guide asked: "what did Jesus mean in bidding us pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"... Dare we pray those words and leave society as it is?"

Of equal importance, 10 years later during World War II, the Commission on *Church, Nation and World Order* (CNWO) affirmed and promoted the basic tenets of the postwar Canadian welfare state. Each commission had a distinctive theological perspective, method of researching,

³⁷ In social policy terminology a distinction is made between *institutional* and *residual* welfare state policy. Residual refers to "means-tested" welfare that puts the onus on recipients to prove their need whereas an institutional understanding does not stigmatize those in need and recognizes the social factors in poverty. While Max Weber categorizes Protestants as being residual-minded, the UCC's policies and actions demonstrate that not all Protestants take that perspective.

consulting, and drafting of the report that matched their time and context. In both cases, widespread consultation with partner social reform organizations in Canadian society were essential to the formation of the church's recommendations.

The Commission on *Christianizing the Social Order*

The first section of the CSO report affirms a progressive-radical social gospel theology asserting the social transformation impetus of Jesus and the organizing role of Paul in bringing this message to a wide cross-section of peoples. The second section draws upon the analysis of professors of economics from the University of Toronto who categorize the advantages and disadvantages of capitalism. The two advantages were decreased physical exhaustion by workers and the increase in a middle class in Canada. The five “defects” or “disorders” of capitalism were:

1. fear and insecurity
2. recurrent and widespread unemployment
3. inequitable distribution of national income
4. spiritual deprivation
5. social conflict

Going further they explore some of the destructive underlying values of capitalism which lead them to conclude:

The combination of these various elements, the false view of wealth and of property, the covetous desire for acquisition, the desire for power and domination, and the search for privileged position in the quest for gain, has produced in the world of business an unsocial attitude to life, not it is true shared by all, but by its prevalence dragging into conformity with itself many who in aim and spirit are alien to it.... Against a civilization thus debased the Church must set herself in uncompromising opposition. (CSO. 243)

It's hard to imagine a stronger critical statement from a commission comprised of people with differing theological and socio-economic views. While this criticism is reminiscent of earlier critiques of capitalism by social gospellers such as Salem Bland, to have a representative group from the wider church make a similar statement reflects the institutional acceptance of this criticism. Furthermore, to have the church's views publicly presented under the names of Sir Robert Falconer and Walter Brown, presidents of the University of Toronto and Victoria University brought high-profile public consideration of the church's statement and helped legitimate it among middle-class Canadians. It sent a strong public message that the economic status quo was unacceptable and that middle-class Canadians were pressuring for radical alternatives.

In a third section on the church's response, the commission is less directive on how the national church should respond beyond its resounding critique of the current economic context. This may have been because *communism* and *corporative nationalism* (fascism) were also offering strong critiques of western economic systems. They distinguish their perspective by asserting the role of democracy in creating a just society.

They are more encouraging about organizing at the local level; suggesting clergy and congregations hold public forums and work with others for reforms. This was an obvious follow-

on from their earlier consultative process in which they had engaged groups across the country in discussing the content areas of the report. Articles in local papers and in Year Book and Annual Reports point to discussions across the church following the 1934 report. Some took exception to its critique of capitalism while others such as the newly formed *Fellowship for a Christian Social Order* thought the church should go further. As Professor John Line of Emmanuel College says in a paper commissioned by the FCSO, there is a need to strengthen the connections between religious practice and social transformation. He pointed out that the “nature of the social order” was a religious issue because “an economic world different from the present, one made from humane and just, ruled by friendliness and providing amply the means of life for all... would be revelatory of God.” (John Line, “The Fundamental Unity of Spiritual and Social Religious Values,” Address to Ministerial Association, March 1931)

The Commission on *Church, Nation, and World Order*

Later in the 1930s when the federal government was becoming more open to an understanding of the state’s role in providing more broadly for its people, the UCC offered significant briefs to government commissions such as the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations. Keynesian economics was demonstrating that governments had a positive economic role to play by working towards full employment and getting as many people as possible participating in the economy. “New Deal” ideas and policies in the United States also made Canadian politicians more open to socialist ideas. While few welfare state reforms were actually instituted until after the Second World War, and a number not until the 1960s, the door had been opened to a different view of the state and the social sectors (including the church) relationship to it.

The Commission on the *Church, Nation and World Order*, reporting in 1944, represented this shift in the church’s relationship to the state. The radical social gospel theology and critique of capitalism was mostly replaced by a neo-orthodox theology (a renewed emphasis on a divine-individual ethic rather than a social transformation eschatology) and a critique of social and economic reforms that were in the public realm for discussion. To formulate the church’s positions an elaborate consultation and drafting process was organized over four years. The BESS produced a “source book” that contained a number of significant political, economic and social policy documents that was widely distributed throughout the church for study. Regional groups that included community representatives from the social services, labour, academics, and reform movements were organized to systematically work through these documents and to add regional social and economic interests to their reporting. For instance, the Ottawa group had representation from groups like the National Child Welfare council and so wrote more extensively on social policies. After two years of consulting, the drafting of the reports began. This took over a year and went from nine pages to over seventy as more and more people had input to the document. Another year was then dedicated to further study and building support of the document throughout the church and community. In this way the UCC acted as a strong mediating³⁸ influence in middle-class Anglo Protestant society and beyond.

The Canadian Welfare State and Beyond

As Canada entered into its welfare state era after the Second World War the church adopted a more reform-minded approach to its public advocacy. While it continued to draw upon its wide

³⁸ Sociologists Berger and Neuhaus utilize this term to describe “those institutions standing between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life.” (Berger and Neuhaus, 1977, 2)

network of congregations, missions, and partnerships with social service agencies and social reform movements, its approach to government was more of supporting certain policy directions and arguing against residual types of welfare reform or regressive economic policies. For instance, in the long years of debate about health care initiatives it argued for publically-funded hospitals and later for the medicare system. It endorsed a much more robust level of public funding and against the doctor-driven insurance plan that came to be adopted in the late 1960s. But during these prosperous economic times and relatively progressive government policies and programs in Canada, the UCC had more confidence in the democratic processes of change and felt its voice was generally heard along with all the other “interest groups” of the day. Its energies were more focused on supporting widespread congregational development to meet community needs in the growing suburbs of Canadian cities.

As mentioned at the beginning of this history, the socio-economic context changes in the 1970s and Canadians have witnessed the systematic dismantling of the welfare state developed over all those years in the 20th century. In response is the whole story of the partnerships that formed the thirteen ecumenical coalitions in the 1970s and 1980s. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to detail this rich experience of partnership it is another example of how the UCC, and other Canadian denominations, worked with a wide group of interest groups, as they were called in this era, to again resist the abuses of capitalism and the increasing indifference of governments to the welfare of *all* its citizens. Again, in the world ecumenical movement Canadian coalitions were seen as leaders in how the churches could collaborate and seek social and economic reform in Canada and in solidarity globally.

This history has given more weight to the formative years of the UCC since this history is less well known and it shows that *partnership* is fundamental to the ethos and lived ethic of this denomination. From the challenge in 1902 to join together for the social betterment of the country, through its mediating influence mid-century, and into the coalition work of late, the UCC has sought to be an embodiment of a social gospel theology/ethic that lives the Lord’s prayer, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven.”

ADDENDUM K

REPORT ON CONSULTATIONS REGARDING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND HEALTHY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

Report on consultation with the wider church on wisdom and viability on the proposed model

ORIGIN: GENERAL SECRETARY, GENERAL COUNCIL

Key Findings (*from the Survey Monkey and staff resourced consultations*):

1. Defined Implementation Plan

While there is an overall agreement with the broad principles outlined in the report, there is a high frequency of questions regarding a defined implementation plan and an overall lack of clarity about the intended changes for pastoral charges and presbyteries.

2. Financial Considerations

There is significant feedback around funding and the reallocation of existing resources. Many respondents agreed that they would support the proposed changes if the funding arrangements did not come at the expense of increased financial hardship for pastoral charges or the elimination of regional staff supporting mission.

3. Simplification of Processes and Procedures

Many respondents identified that congregations and presbyteries are ill equipped to manage the increasing demands of pastoral relations and oversight and discipline responsibilities. There is an overall agreement that the simplification of these complex procedures and the support of a staff person would allow the freeing of volunteer resources for presbyteries and would enhance ministry and mission priorities for pastoral changes

4. Division of Responsibility amongst the Courts

There is a lack of understanding with how the Conference would be responsible for the oversight and discipline process and pastoral relations processes. It was felt that the original report did not adequately clarify the proposed role of presbytery and how the staff person would be accountable in resourcing the courts.

Because of this lack of clarity there is concern for the centralization of power in this staff position, and how this staff position would adequately relate to ministry personnel in large geographic areas or regional contexts.

5. Regional Adaptations

Ministry personnel identified that they would show increased support for the proposed changes if flexibility were given to Conferences to adapt the model to suit specific regional difference and needs. This feedback was consistent with face-to-face consultations with Conferences and presbyteries.

Some respondents acknowledged that the report did not offer sufficient latitude and recognition for presbyteries which modelled effective practices.

6. Professional Staff

There is general disagreement about the proposed ratio of one staff member to seventy-five ministry personnel and the qualifications needed by this staff position to effectively resource programs.

However, there is large and consistent support for trained accountable staff members responsible for this work and resourcing ministry personnel.

Background:

In November 2011, the Executive of General Council received from the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services the report “Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships: A proposal for the initiation, support, accountability, and conclusion of paid accountable ministries in The United Church in Canada.” The Executive directed the General Secretary to initiate consultation with the wider church on the wisdom and viability for some or all of the proposed model and, based on the outcomes of the consultation, to develop

options for possible implementation for report at the March 2012 meeting of the Executive of General Council.

This was the fourth round of consultation in the development of these proposals. The first was in the summer and fall of 2010. The second was a major research project which surveyed 1,700 ministry personnel and leaders of pastoral relations and oversight committees in winter 2011. The third was a focus group to test the conclusions of that research project.

Following the meeting of the Executive of General Council, the General Council Office staff developed a Survey Monkey and resource package as a vehicle for this round of consultation. An invitation for church members to respond to the Survey Monkey was repeatedly posted on The United Church of Canada website and email invitations were sent to all Conferences and Presbyteries. Also, Conferences and presbyteries were presented with the opportunity to invite General Council Office staff to resource these consultations.

To substantiate the feedback and narrative responses received through the Survey Monkey, commentary from consultations and focus group sessions were used. The feedback received from this round of consultation has provided additional detail to the results of the Survey Monkey. Furthermore, this has provided an opportunity to collect feedback from Conferences where survey participation was low.

Staff resourced consultations were held with all Conferences and some presbyteries. The exception to this is Saskatchewan Conference which convened and resourced its own consultation. In this round of consultation, a slide show presentation was developed to encourage small group conversation and focus group questions. At the time of writing this report, 17 consultations were resourced by staff

- Hamilton Conference Executive
- Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference Executive
- Manitou Conference Executive
- North Bay Presbytery
- Bay of Quinte Conference
- Montreal Presbytery
- Ottawa Presbytery
- Conference Executive Secretaries
- Conference Personnel Ministers
- Maritime Conference
- Yellowhead Presbytery
- Toronto Conference
- Vancouver School of Theology
- British Columbia Conference
- All-Native Circle Conference Staff
- Newfoundland and Labrador Conference
- Huron Perth Presbytery

Over 400 lay leaders and ministry personnel participated in these consultations. Plenary presentation, small group discussion, pro and con debates, and written comments were features.

In addition, many pastoral charges and presbyteries held their own consultations using the resource package developed by the General Council Office staff. And nearly 800 people participated in the Survey Monkey.

Analysis:

Distribution of Responses

When assessing the feedback of the Survey Monkey, respondents are in overall agreement with the recommendations outlined in the “Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationship” report. There is strong consensus and support for the following recommendations of the proposed model:

- the separation of oversight and discipline responsibilities for ministry personnel;
- its emphasis on collegiality;
- an increased focus on mission and ministry at the level of pastoral charges and presbytery;
- transition from volunteers to paid, accountable staff support and;
- additional professional support for pastoral relations processes.

Questions and polls included in the Survey Monkey were developed to estimate the overall support for the proposed model and the specific reasons for objections that would assist with revising the proposed model or inform possible funding and implementation strategies.

Specific questions were included to identify the challenges experienced by ministry personnel and lay volunteers with the current pastoral relations model and determine how these procedures and policies could be improved.

Respondents were provided with several questions to provide narrative responses. When evaluating these more than 1,300 narrative responses, it is clear that the Survey Monkey provided a useful tool for collecting substantive feedback on the proposed model, a contextual basis for implementation strategies, and insight into how the proposed model would be exercised in a local context or pastoral charge.

The distribution of responses to the proposed model can be outlined in four broad categories:

- Category A: In agreement with the proposed model and/or having minor reservation
- Category B: In some objection to the proposed model
- Category C: In objection to the proposed model
- Category D: No opinion on the proposed model.

These categories were repeatedly used to assess overall support and objection with the proposed model and its specific recommendations.

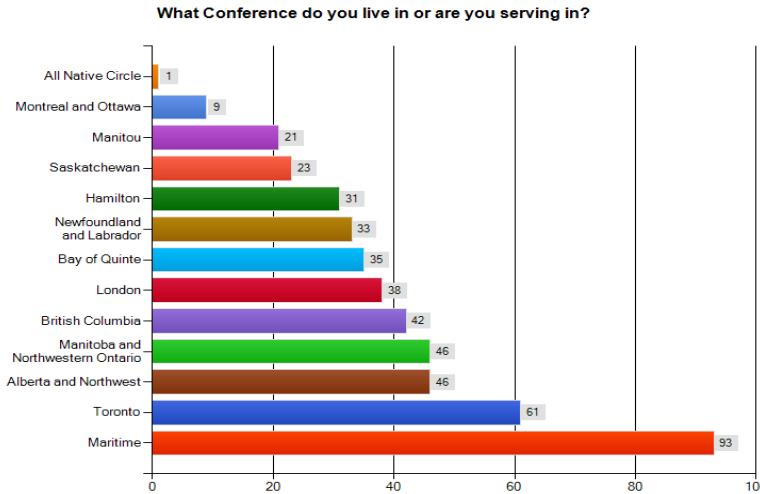
Survey Resources

At the beginning of the Survey Monkey, respondents were given an opportunity to review the “Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationship” report and a slide show presentation on the proposed changes. Over 67.1% of the total respondents reviewed these documents before completing the survey.

Survey Participation

At the time of writing this report, the Survey Monkey had received 772 respondents, 367 full completed surveys, and an excess of 1,300 narrative responses on the proposed model and its changes. Respondents to the Survey Monkey were primarily ministry personnel and lay volunteers currently active with congregational councils, boards, sessions and presbytery.

The distribution of responses by Conference is:

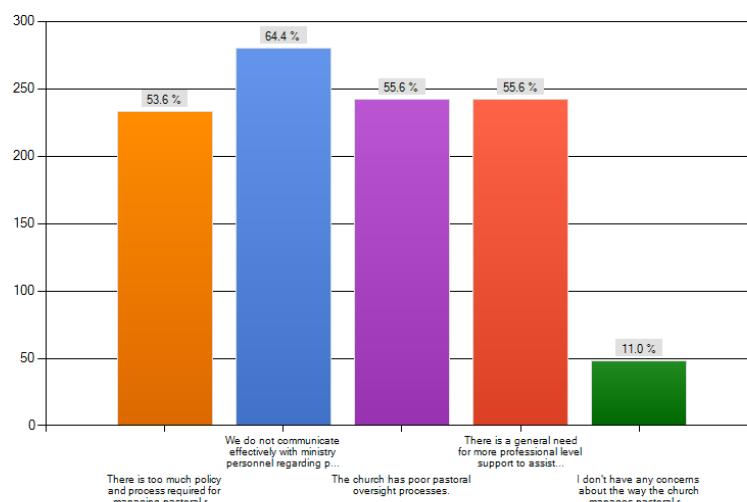


Current Pastoral Relations Model

Respondents were asked to indicate agreement with and provide commentary on current concerns with how the Church manages pastoral relationships and pastoral relations processes. From the following concerns, respondents were allowed to select all that applied:

- Ministry personnel do not communicate effectively with ministry personnel (64.4%)
- Poor oversight processes (55.6%)
- More professional level support to assist pastoral charges (55.6%)
- Too much policy and process required for managing pastoral relations (53.6%)
- I don't have any concern about current pastoral relations processes (11%)

Our research found there are many concerns about the way the church currently manages pastoral relationships; some of these concerns are mentioned in the report. Do you agree with any of these concerns? (Select all that apply.)

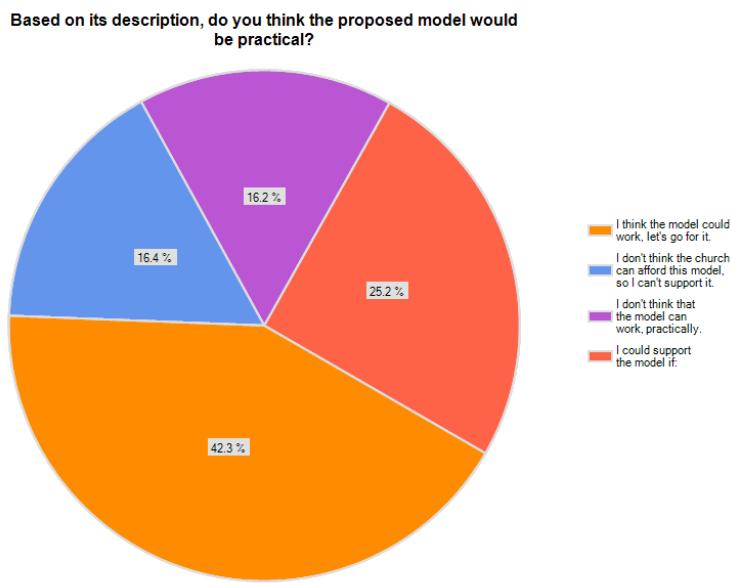


Respondents were provided with the opportunity to offer narrative feedback on their specific concerns not included in the survey options. From these responses, several concerns highlighted the need for staff support with knowledge of employment standards, how the current model drained excessive amounts of volunteer time and energy, current processes are cumbersome and redundant, and how policies are too time consuming and prohibitive for small presbyteries.

Support for Proposed Model

At various stages of the Survey Monkey, respondents were asked to rate their support or disagreement with the proposed model. The distribution of responses to this question are:

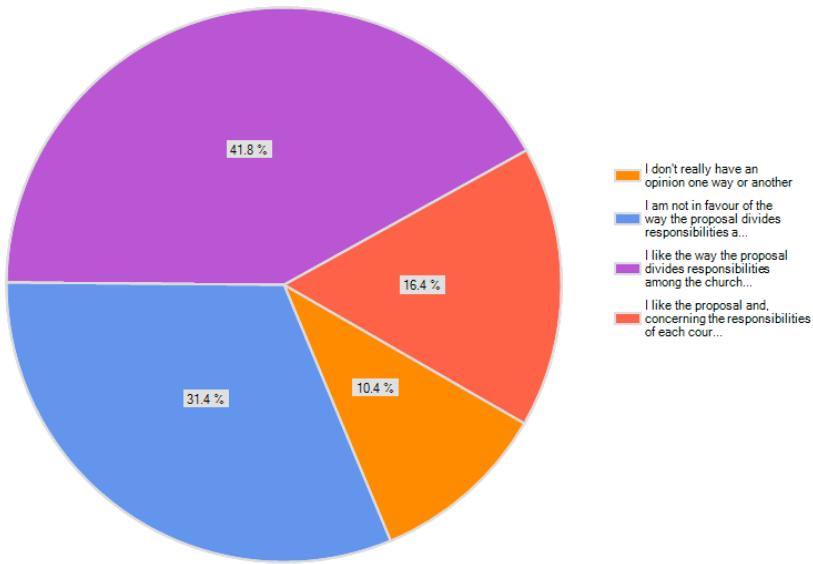
- 73.2% strongly agree or somewhat agree with the proposed changes (Category A)
- 15.6% somewhat object with the proposed model (Category B)
- 14.5% strongly object with the proposed changes (Category C)
- 1.7% do not have an opinion on the proposed changes (Category D)



After registering narrative responses on the practical aspects of the proposed model and concerns with specific recommendations, there was an increase in support when respondents were asked if the proposed pastoral relations model would be practical or effective in addressing issues with current model.

- 67.4% agreed that the proposed model could work or could support the proposed model if minor changes were made.
- 16.4% agreed that the Church could not afford this model
- 16.2% agreed that the proposed model could not work practically

At the broadest level, what is your reaction to the division of responsibilities described in the summary above?



Of the respondents that submitted narrative responses to this question, many celebrated how this model would create more effective pastoral relations processes, provide additional staff resources deployed to presbytery, and free volunteer time for mission and ministry focussed work.

Concerns with Proposed Model

The primary issue that respondents had with the proposed model was the funding proposal for new staff positions and the possible funding implications that this would have for pastoral charges and presbyteries. While respondents did acknowledge that new staff positions would be a valuable support to pastoral relations processes and free volunteer time and energy, there was clear concern that the report had inadequately considered the financial cost of these positions, the ratio of one staff resource to seventy-five pastoral charges, as well as the time and demand of pastoral relations work.

Additionally, there were concerns with the implementation plans of the proposed model, accountability for new staff position, the perceived loss of episcopal power of presbytery and the centralization of pastoral relations and oversight and discipline responsibilities at the court of Conference.

Conclusions:

While a few participants in the in-person consultations felt strongly that the current pastoral relations practices are sound and sustainable, most felt that they are not, that significant change is necessary, and that greater staff resourcing is required. That said, and said clearly, there is also reluctance to engage more change and to incur new financial costs.

It was interesting to hear students at the Vancouver School of Theology reflect on the proposed model. They spent little time critiquing the current model or the detail of the proposed model. Instead their focus was on the opportunities that could be gained for presbyteries to become forums of collegiality and support and to be places of vital conversation about mission and

ministry. They were excited at how presbytery's vital engagement with pastoral charges would invigorate and animate pastoral charges in their mission and ministry.

Leaders of intercultural and racialized ministries spoke about the valuable support trained staff would be in assisting their congregations to establish themselves in the United Church and to support their ministry personnel leadership.

Cautions raised were that in the interests of securing efficiencies in our pastoral relations practices we not compromise the relational quality of pastoral relations. Clearly if adopted, care will have to be taken to design processes and procedures that continue to draw upon the wisdom of the local ministries and of the presbyteries and staff would need to be well ensconced in the ethos and spirit of the United Church. Cautions were also frequently raised that funding for this model not come at the expense of resources for public witness and mission animation.

Others spoke about the need for there to be considerable latitude for adaptation of relational and discernment processes and prescriptive policy for formal and disciplinary processes.

There is a desire that if substantial change is approved by the General Council, that it be implemented in stages, with extensive consultation with the Conferences, and in ways that allow for continuous review and revision.

Detailed accounts of the consultations and of the Survey Monkey results and comments are available. Feedback that is received between the preparation of this report and the meeting of the Executive of the General Council will be accounted for at the time of the meeting.

ADDENDUM L

PROPOSED SITE FOR GENERAL COUNCIL 42

Background:

The site of the meeting of General Council has rotated from west, to central, to east to central regions of Canada. The 42nd General Council 2015 is scheduled to be hosted in the eastern region of Canada. The following Conferences are candidates to host: Maritime and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Requests for Proposals was circulated and also offered an additional option for considering a proposal for a permanent location for this meeting.

Only one proposal was received. With great excitement Newfoundland and Labrador Conference have offered to hold the first and only General Council in the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference since the 21st General Council, which was held in 1964, in St. John's Newfoundland. At that General Council, the Rev. Ernest M. Howse, a former Newfoundland was elected the Moderator. This reains a proud and historic memory for those who were there and for those who have heard the stories. The proposal notes "It would be an honour and privilege for our Conference, fifty-one years later, to host the 42nd General Council.

The proposal is for the meeting to be held at the Grenfell Campus of Memorial University. Facilities at the adjacent Pepsi Centre would also be used.

A site tour has been completed. It has been confirmed that these venues offers all the needed accommodations and amenities to host this meeting.

The 45th Anniversary of the United Church Women was successfully held at this venue.

A challenge of this site is that the travel costs are anticipated to be \$222,000 higher than the travel to General Council 41 in Ottawa. It is anticipated that a meeting at this location would required a budget of \$1,300,000 to be comparable to past General Council meetings. The budget for the 41st General Council is \$1,074,000.

The recommendation is to accept this invitation and to work to find ways to reduce the cost, such as holding a smaller meeting, knowing a budget of up to \$1,300,000 could be required to host at this site. After this meeting, perhaps it is time to consider if we can continue to move this large meeting to different venues across the country and if it possible to look at hosting a smaller meeting of the General Council?

A sincere thank you is extended to Newfoundland and Labrador Conference for presenting a thorough and exciting proposal.