



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GCE44 GS 132 Funding for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation for March 2025

True Document Date: March 7, 2025

1. What is the issue?

The United Church of Canada has been asked, along with the Anglican Church of Canada and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, to contribute to the capital fund for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). Senior leadership of the three churches are proposing a joint contribution.

2. Why is this issue important?

The NCTR was established in 2015 to be the permanent home of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's records, to continue documenting the stories of survivors and of residential institutions, to be a centre of the educational efforts that are key to reconciliation, and to be a place of healing for Survivors and their families. In addition to archival holdings and an extensive oral history collection, the NCTR is home to the Bentwood Box which travelled the country with the TRC Commissioners gathering expressions of reconciliation (including the United Church's "broken chalice") and the ongoing National Student Memorial Register, naming children known to have died in residential institutions. We continue to share our records with the NCTR, including records from other colonizing institutions (not previously collected by the TRC), which we began digitizing in late 2021.

The NCTR has physically outgrown its current space on the grounds of the University of Manitoba (Treaty One Territory) and is planning for a new permanent home for these records and to provide space for its work. In November 2022, the Government of Canada invested \$60 million for this initiative, and the NCTR has since initiated a capital campaign for the remaining \$40 million. After an initial \$5 million investment from the Winnipeg Foundation, the NCTR began meeting with other potential donors, including our three churches.

The Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches have a long history of working together on issues related to the settlement agreement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We collaborate on many other issues and are now about to embark upon shared office space, bringing a new dimension of collaboration to our relationship. When each of the churches were approached by the NCTR in the summer of 2024 to explore how we might contribute to the capital campaign, senior leadership agreed that this should be another such collaborative effort.

The General Secretary proposes that the United Church contribute from its reserves to this effort. The other denominations will make their own contributions and the collective total amount would be publicly attributed to “The Anglican Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and The United Church of Canada.”

This proposal is rooted in the principles of reconciliation, Indigenous data sovereignty, and ecumenism: in the framework of the Lund principle, that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.

To not respond to this request in this manner would be to dishonour these principles to which we have so often and so publicly pledged. More specifically, to not respond to the call to build a proper home for Indigenous stewardship of materials related to the TRC helps open the door further denialism of residential institutions, which the Special Interlocutor on Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites calls on us to resist.

Support for the NCTR capital campaign would not in any way reduce the United Church General and Regional Council Archives’ continuing commitment to fully and directly sharing records with survivors and communities.

3. How might the General Council Executive respond to the issue?

The Executive of the General Council might:

- **direct the General Secretary to identify up to \$500,000.00 from the United Church reserves to add to a collaborative donation to the NCTR from the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches**
- **direct the General Secretary to work with Anglican and Presbyterian partners and the NCTR to announce this gift in an appropriate manner, and to encourage support for the NCTR across the church, in keeping with the NCTR's own plans for the capital campaign.**

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