



**The United Church  
of Canada  
General Council**

# **GC45 NAK02 Address Declining Membership by Expanding the United Church of Canada's Intercultural Ministry for Summer 2025**

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## **1. What is the issue? Why is it important?**

The United Church of Canada (UCC) is facing a significant challenge in maintaining and expanding its membership due to the declining population of congregants and the limited engagement with migrant and refugee communities. Figures from Statistics Canada show the United Church had about 1.2m members in 2023, a 40% drop from the 2m members in 2011.

The issue is important as Canada is becoming increasingly diverse, with growing numbers of migrants and refugees who seek a faith community where they feel welcomed and accepted. Expanding the church's intercultural ministry would address this decline, enhance the inclusivity of the UCC, and increase its relevance in Canada's multicultural society. To thrive in this diverse environment, the church may adapt its outreach and support systems to meet the needs of these communities.

## **2. What is happening now?**

Currently, the UCC has made bold strides in embracing intercultural ministry; However, these efforts may not be enough to address the changing demographics and needs of

Canadian society. The church's existing structure, lacking an intercultural council at the Regional level, may also limit its ability to effectively reach out to and integrate migrants and refugees.

Also, there is also no widely accessible platform, **such as a daily devotional, to provide spiritual nourishment that reflects UCC doctrines and values**, which could help deepen the faith experience for existing members and attract new ones.

### 3. What is the recommendation?

#### 1. **Establishment of Intercultural Ministry Leadership Teams at the Regional Level:**

We respectfully recommend the creation of an Intercultural Ministry Leadership Team in each regional council of the UCC. These teams would be tasked with developing strategies, providing resources, and supporting congregations in their efforts to engage with and include migrant and refugee communities. The teams would also be responsible for training church leaders and volunteers to become more culturally competent in their ministry practices

#### 2. **Publication of a United Church Daily Devotional:**

To promote spiritual growth and inculcate the core values of the UCC in new and existing members, we respectfully propose that the General Council considers the publication of a United Church Daily Devotional. This daily devotional, a list of reflections, prayers and selected Bible text, would be designed to provide members with spiritual guidance rooted in the UCC's principles of inclusivity, social justice, and respect for diversity. The content would reflect a range of cultural perspectives, **ensuring that it resonates with both long-standing members and newcomers from various backgrounds**. It could be available in digital and print formats to reach a broad audience and could be shared widely within congregations, online platforms, and social media to maximize its impact. Its authorship could rotate monthly between Regional Councils as the General Council deems fit.

### 4. Background information:

The UCC has long been committed to creating a church that is open, inclusive, and diverse, as demonstrated by its involvement in social justice initiatives and its progressive stances on a range of issues. This commitment is grounded in its affirmation of being an intercultural

ministry that welcomes a variety of expressions of faith.

From a six-year experience as a refugee worker in my congregation, I respectfully submit that there is still a need to more effectively engage with the evolving demographic landscape in Canada. Migrants and refugees, who bring rich cultural and religious traditions, often find it difficult to integrate into existing church structures that do not fully acknowledge or incorporate their experiences and perspectives. By establishing intercultural ministry leadership teams and a daily devotional, the UCC can more effectively bridge the gap between its values and the lived experiences of some of these diverse communities and importantly increase its membership.

## 5. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

This proposal directly aligns with the UCC's commitments to equity, inclusivity, and also to being an intercultural church that welcomes a variety of expressions of faith.

The establishment of Regional Intercultural Ministry Leadership Teams ensures that all congregations have the resources and guidance necessary to become truly inclusive and culturally responsive according to its own local diversity. It encourages the development of worship and ministry practices that honor the diverse identities of all members from the Regional level. The United Church Daily Devotional, by providing accessible spiritual guidance that reflects the church's core principles, would fill a need for new immigrants who come from a background of daily prayer and spiritual reflection.

Together, these initiatives support the UCC's mission to be a community of faith that welcomes everyone, values every culture, and advocates for equity in all aspects of church life.

### **For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

Please select the appropriate option and provide the key discussion points for items being forwarded to the General Council:

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree without forwarding to the General Council
- ☐ Disagree and forwarding to the General Council

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to: [GCinfo@united-church.ca](mailto:GCinfo@united-church.ca)

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