

PROPOSAL TASK GROUP MESSAGE

Following the 39th General Council many voices were asking if it would not be possible to ensure that Proposals were better prepared so that Commissioner's could spend more time speaking of the merit of a Proposal and not spending so much time 'wordsmithing' and editing. The Executive approved a request from the General Secretary to gather a small group to assist in the preparation of materials for the Commissioners. This group has been known as a Proposal Task Group.

The Proposals before the General Council come from three sources: Conferences, the General Council Executive, and the General Secretary.

The Proposals Task Group, made up of some who will be providing leadership in the Commissions at the General Council, met in June to review the Proposals received. Within limitations they sought to standardize the format of the Proposals, allocate them to the Commons or to Commissions, identify Proposals which could be dealt with by consent, and offer alternative composite Proposals where more than one Proposal seemed to be getting at the same thing.

Typical changes that have been made by this group are:

- Clarifying who would do approved work on behalf of the General Council by adding words such as "direct the General Secretary, General Council to"
- using action words consistently, words such as 'direct', 'declare'
- using language consistent with polity i.e. "Authorize a remit" not "have a remit"
- adding words so that the required action can be understood when separated from the accompanying background.
- To reflect policy unless the requested action is to change policy.

Most Proposals are dealt with in Commissions, with the final decision being made in the Commission. Matters of particular significance to the denomination as a whole have been selected and directed to be dealt with in the Commons. The task group has also grouped and directed related Proposals to the Commissions.

Proposals identified to be dealt with by consent have been selected as they comply with existing policy and are consistent with previous actions that have had wide support. Where alternative composite Proposals are being offered they include the actions of the separate Proposals, the individual Proposals are included the workbook too, so that the body dealing with the work can choose how to use them. Proposals are printed on yellow paper. Consent and composite Proposals offered by the task group are printed on blue pages.

The objective of the task group has been to support and enable the work of the Commissioners. To the best of its ability, ready the Proposals without changing the nuance, the requested action or to reflect any judgement.

Paul Reed
Business Processes, 40th General Council

THE WORK OF THE COMMONS

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DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY

GCE 2 - Revision of Basis of Union to include First Peoples of Canada

Origin: Executive of the General Council

Financial Implications:

Staffing Implications:

Source of Funding:

It is proposed:

That the 40th General Council 2009

- 1. adopt as a policy that the presence and spirituality of First Peoples in the United Church and their historical context be acknowledged as a significant component to the Basis of Union, and that First Peoples be invited to become signatories to the Basis of Union; and**
- 2. direct the Executive of the General Council to establish a task group with a mandate:**
 - a. to initiate and oversee processes over the next triennium to assist the church in understanding and acknowledging the presence and spirituality of First Peoples, and their historical context, in the United Church;**
 - b. to develop recommendations for amending the Basis of Union in order to acknowledge the presence and spirituality of First Peoples, and their historical context;**
 - c. to develop a process by which First Peoples might become signatories to the Basis of Union**
 - d. with the task group to be composed of equal numbers from the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal membership of the United Church.**
- 3. Direct the Executive of the General Council to report to the 41st General Council 2012 with recommendations from the task group.**

Background

The Basis of Union is the basic document of the United Church that outlines the church's doctrine, polity, ministry and administration, and was approved by the denominations that merged to form the United Church in 1925. It has been revised from time to time since 1925 through the remit process within the church. The presence and role of First Peoples in the United Church is not now, nor has it ever been, reflected in the Basis of Union. First Peoples in the United Church have called out for justice and for mutuality in sharing in the life and work of the church in all its aspects. The interests of justice require that the presence and spirituality of First Peoples, and their historical context, be acknowledged in the Basis of Union as a significant component and signatory to the constitution of the United Church.

GCE 3 - New United Church Crest

Origin: Executive of the General Council

Financial Implications:

Staffing Implications:

Source of Funding:

It is proposed

That the 40th General Council 2009

- 1. approve the development of a new crest for The United Church of Canada that acknowledges the presence and spirituality of First Peoples within the United Church, and the fact that the United Church is built upon Aboriginal heritage and territory; and**
 - 2. direct the Executive of the General Council to establish a task group with the mandate of designing the new crest, with the task group to be composed of equal numbers from the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal membership of the United Church.**
 - 3. direct the Executive of the General Council to report to the 41st General Council 2012 with the recommendations of the task group.**
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Background

The church crest is the official signature of The United Church of Canada, placed on legal documents, ordination and commissioning certificates, and licenses to perform the sacraments, and serves as a spiritual and historic reminder of the three denominations that united to form The United Church of Canada in 1925. First Peoples in the United Church have called out for justice and for mutuality in sharing in the life and work of the church in all its aspects and the crest contains no acknowledgement of the presence and spirituality of First Peoples, and their historical context within the United Church, including the fact that the United Church is built upon the sacred land and territory of the First Peoples. The interests of justice require the United Church to adopt a new crest that recognizes the presence and spirituality of First Peoples, and their historical context within the church.

SK 6 – The Twenty Articles of Faith

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference, transmitted with concurrence
Wascana Presbytery

Financial Implications:

Staffing Implications:

Source of Funding:

Saskatchewan Conference proposes:

That the 40th General Council 2009:

- 1. Declare that The Twenty Articles of Faith in The Basis of Union are an historic document; and**
- 2. Direct the Executive of the General Council to arrange a suitable celebration honouring the significant achievement of that document in uniting several denominations**
- 3. Authorise a remit to remove the Twenty Articles from The Basis of Union; and**
- 4. Identify the Twenty Articles of Faith, the 1940 Statement of Faith, A New Creed, and A Song of Faith as expressions of the faith of The United Church of Canada in their time; and**
- 5. Request the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to determine what other expressions of Faith might be included with those listed above; and**
- 6. Authorize the Manual Committee to make the necessary changes in The Manual.**

Background

The Twenty Articles of Faith in *The Basis of Union* deserve to be honoured for achieving the significant purpose for which they were developed – that is, making it possible for three and eventually four denominations to become united; and work on those articles began before the turn of the 20th century, using the language and understandings of that time, leading to sufficient agreement to form the basis for the official act of union in 1925. Even at that time, there was not unanimity among the parties to the Union, but there was a desire to accommodate a variety of understandings while holding some in common. There is no stated evidence that those who either framed *The Basis of Union* or those who adopted it intended it to be for all time and, in fact, there is evidence to the contrary in that The United Church of Canada Act gives authority to General Council, “To legislate on matters respecting the doctrine ... subject to the conditions: First, that before any rule or law relative to these matters can become a permanent law, it must receive the approval of a majority of the Presbyteries, and, if advisable, pastoral charges also,” [Sections 24 (2) (a) and 28] thus indicating an expectation that there would, in the future, be cause for change to the Articles of Faith and other sections of *The Basis of Union*. Those who formulated the 1940 *Statement of Faith* were more explicit that there was an expectation of change, as indicated in the following quotation: “The Church's faith is the unchanging Gospel of God's holy, redeeming love revealed in Jesus Christ. It is declared in Scripture; it is witnessed to both in the creeds of the Universal Church and in the Confessions of the Reformed Churches; and it is formulated for a specific purpose in our Basis of Union ([www.united-church.ca/history/overview/basis of union](http://www.united-church.ca/history/overview/basis_ofunion)). **But Christians of each new generation are called to state it afresh in terms of the thought of their own age and with the emphasis their age**

needs. [Emphasis added.] This we have attempted to do for the people of The United Church of Canada - seeking always to be faithful to Scripture and to the testimony of the Universal Church, and always aware that no statement of ours can express the whole truth of God.” The Theology and Faith Committee, which worked on *A Song of Faith*, was not mandated to replace any other statement of faith, it explicitly reported that the proposal to 39th General Council 2006 was not intended to replace any other formulation, but observed, “Each statement—the Twenty Articles of Faith (1925), the *Statement of Faith* (1940), *A New Creed* (1968), and this current document—has its own particular character, use, and place in the church’s life. Each speaks to its time and context in its own way. Most members and adherents of The United Church of Canada are unfamiliar with the Twenty Articles of Faith, but are familiar with the *New Creed* and are becoming more familiar with *A Song of Faith* and both our language and our understandings have changed in the last 70 to 100 years.

Candidates for Ordered Ministry and for Designated Lay Ministry within the United Church are required, prior to their ordination, commissioning or recognition, to declare that they are in essential agreement with “the statement of doctrine of the United Church” (meaning the Twenty Articles – Sections 26 (d), 343 (a) viii); and this requirement places many candidates in a dilemma of conscience since their theological thinking is far removed from the expression of doctrines as found in the Twenty Articles of Faith. In recent years the Twenty Articles have been more a source of division than unity.

MEANING OF MINISTRY

Origin: General Secretary, General Council
The Meaning of Ministry Task Group

Report of the Meaning of Ministry Task Group

The 39th General Council 2006 directed that a process be developed to “engage the whole church in a time of discernment concerning the meaning of ministry in The United Church of Canada,” with particular attention to a theology of call and vocation, ordered ministry, lay pastoral ministry, lay ministry, and ecumenical implications.

The Meaning of Ministry Task Group framed questions within the context of an overriding issue stated as “In this ‘third generation’ of the United Church, what forms of leadership will best suit our time and our calling as we participate in God’s mission?” Responses were invited to four questions:

- Within the ministry of the whole people of God, what is the place and authority of those who undertake professional ministry?
- How might people be best educated, equipped, and supported for the role of minister today?
- How would you define the relationship to the church and its people of those you recognize as your ministers?
- How does our current practice of ministry equip us to be faithful disciples in today’s world?
- Respondents were also invited to name a question of their own and to respond to it.

The response to the Meaning of Ministry discernment process was smaller than expected. Some responses indicated that many found the questions convoluted and complicated. Others, however, expressed deep appreciation for the process and responded with significant depth of reflection. It should be noted that the response rate to major studies is usually low, generally between 150 to 200 responses. The number of responses to this study (approximately 100) makes it impossible to use frequency of response as an indicator of the mind of the church. However, the depth, clarity, and passion of many responses provide helpful insight into the challenges the church faces. The summary report of the discernment process is available for this report. See "Workbook 2 - Appendices - Appendix 2 Meaning of Ministry Discernment Process" at <http://GC40.united-church.ca/downloads/workbooks>.

The task group recognized that there are a number of initiatives currently in process in the church that seek to address concerns in ministry leadership. These include reviews of the candidacy, transfer and settlement, and admissions processes and the implementation of leadership outcomes, designated lay ministry, and a new recruitment program. This report, as was the discernment process itself, is addressed at more foundational issues. Some of these issues were identified at the start of the study; others emerged during it.

Challenges in the Meaning of Ministry

The task group believes that the most pressing issue facing the church in relation to ministry leadership is the need to prepare and enable new expressions and forms of ministry in a rapidly changing social context. The awareness that we are in “the third generation” of the church evoked the question for the task group in this way: “What forms of leadership will best suit our time and our calling as we participate in God’s mission?” The task group believes we can no

longer assume that congregations or community ministries as we have traditionally known them will be the only centres of activity of the church. The changing social context requires presbytery to be open to many new forms of ministry and mission, including the nurturing of emerging networks seeking to live faithfully in community. These ministries of “church beyond congregation” may be different from what we have seen in the past, and the challenge will be to find means through which such ministries will be an integral part of the church.

The task group also believes that the church needs to clarify the purpose and meaning of ministry in relation to the Reformed understanding of “the priesthood of all believers” and the specific roles of ordered and designated lay ministers. Honouring the “priesthood of all believers” by using the term “minister” to describe everyone who exercises ministry leadership has resulted in a blurring of distinction between ordered and lay leaders in the various ministries of the church. This is particularly a challenge because ordered and designated lay ministries in the United Church are not seen to be of a different character, but rather contained within the ministry of the whole people of God.

The task group also believes the church needs to find greater clarity between the different expressions of ministry, in particular the relationship between ordered and designated lay ministry. The lack of distinction has resulted in discontent. While many of the expectations and functions in pastoral/congregational ministry are the same for designated lay, diaconal, or ordained leaders, the preparation and compensation are different. In addition, ordered ministries assume a lifelong membership in presbytery, while designated lay ministers are members only during the term of appointment. The challenge is to find ways in which the differences among the various forms of leadership within our church can be named in a manner that is respectful.

Finally, the task group believes that significant attention must be focused on the capacity of presbyteries as the primary body in our church responsible for enabling leadership and ministry. Presbyteries are responsible for discerning, naming, and supporting local ministries, and the effectiveness of these ministries is directly related to the functioning of presbytery in its exercise of oversight, supervision, appointment (call), and support. The task group believes that the capacity of presbyteries to offer healthy, helpful leadership and oversight to the ministry of the church is critical to the faithful and effective practice of ministry. If presbyteries are to be effective, however, they must have adequate resources to fulfill this role.

Assumptions about the Meaning of Ministry

The task group identified the following assumptions on the meaning of ministry. These assumptions have served to guide the development of the proposed “Statement on Ministry” and the proposals addressed to the Executive of General Council:

1. The church is called to continually renew its understanding of ministry, opening itself to new expressions that serve the needs of the present day. There have been many changes in the practice and understanding of ordered ministry throughout the history of the church. In general, these changes have flowed from pastoral and social concerns rather than changes in biblical or theological interpretation. Ordered ministry has never been a doctrinally fixed reality.

2. The church speaks of there being one ministry of Jesus Christ into which all members of the church are called by their baptism. In this understanding, there is a fundamental unity of church members through baptism understood in the Reformed tradition as “discipleship” or “the priesthood of all believers.” All members of the body bring gifts for the exercise of the many expressions of the ministry of Christ’s church.

Within this ministry of the whole people of God, the church acknowledges particular gifts or charisms that call some members to ordered ministry within the community. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), a document of the World Council of Churches, states that the chief responsibility of ordained ministry “is to assemble and build up the body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, by celebrating the sacraments, and by guiding the life of the community in its worship, its mission and its caring ministry.” In The United Church of Canada, that description applies to both ordered and designated ministries.

3. The church exists in service of God’s mission, not for the sake of its own institutional life. The church can best be seen as a community of disciples on the way together following Jesus in God’s mission. The church is a community of people who support each other on the way, and has been given the scriptures, sacraments, and many other gifts to enable that support. All members of the community participate in its mission and ministry and are given gifts and talents for the faithful practice of discipleship. Ministry belongs to the community, and is always exercised under the authority of a community, in service to or on behalf of the community to assist and strengthen its members for faithful discipleship.
4. The most ancient expression of the community of faith in post-apostolic church history is the presbytery. In the early life of the church, local congregations existed in relation to each other within a presbytery and under the oversight of a bishop. It was the bishop who represented the unity of the church in the region, and was assisted by presbyters (elders) in the conduct of worship in local communities. In the Reformed tradition, the episcopal authority of the bishop is carried by the presbytery itself. Still, in our tradition, congregations do not exist in isolation and always function within the authority and oversight of a presbytery. The effective functioning of presbytery is central to the faithful expression of ministry in the life of the church.
5. Ministry must be responsive to the purpose and needs of the church in a specific time and place. Because the church is defined by God’s mission, the church and its ministry should be structured to carry out that mission. The context of the church’s mission and ministry has significant impact on understanding the specific nature of ordered and designated ministry.
6. Leadership and ministry are integrally connected. Leadership occurs when an individual person or a group of people acting together guides, directs, or influences a community. Sometimes leadership emerges informally and spontaneously. As an organization, the church has also developed formal leadership roles that respect the consensus of the whole community. These roles usually authorize individuals or groups to assume governance roles (representational decision-making) or functional roles (performing ministry tasks). Some leadership roles can be done voluntarily, such as serving on a governing board or facilitating a study group. Some leadership roles require material support and include professional

(employment) characteristics. Ordered and designated lay ministries are forms of leadership within the church that assume both governance and functional roles.

7. Many traditions have chosen to define ordered ministry by both a priestly function and a hierarchical responsibility, a sacramental ministry and decision-making authority given in some traditions to priests alone. Some have sought to further clarify the roles of clergy and lay leadership through distinctions between mission and ministry, defining the particular role of the laity as participation in Christ's mission but not in Christ's ministry. In most churches, these distinctions are breaking down. In The United Church of Canada, our changing needs and evolving context have given birth to new understandings of ministry leadership and the creation of designated lay ministries.
8. Traditionally, ordination, commissioning, and, more recently, designated lay ministry are always understood, not in terms of what they give to the individual, but in terms of a relationship with and responsibility within a community. Ministry leadership is exercised providing an oversight function in a collegial manner in the presbytery. With ordered ministry, this relationship is lifelong; with designated lay ministry, it is tied to appointment within particular times and circumstances.
9. The United Church of Canada recognizes one order of ministry with two expressions: ordained ministers of word, sacrament, and pastoral care; and diaconal ministers commissioned to the ministry of education, service, and pastoral care. The church also recognizes members who are designated to lay ministry within a pastoral charge or presbytery accountable ministry.
10. Ordered ministry and designated lay ministry emerge from a spiritual call experienced by the individual and nurtured and authorized by the community. The individual and the community discern together the authenticity of the call of God, exploring the specific functions of ministry, including the gifts and skills necessary to undertake the role.
11. The overwhelming reality of the church, in this time and place, is of something new coming into existence. In particular, existing paradigms of congregational identity are changing, and people no longer maintain formerly expected patterns of participation, yet there is a deep spirituality throughout society. We are challenged to re-image the nature of life in the church in the context of a significantly changing world and society. The United Church of Canada needs to experiment with new expressions of community and ministry leadership that honour our traditions and embrace and energize these expressions. These will include many forms of ministry, including traditional congregational and community ministries, and new expressions of community not yet envisaged.

Recommendations of the Task Group

The Meaning of Ministry Task Group is proposing the adoption of a "Statement on Ministry" as a guidepost to enable the church to clarify its understanding of ministry leadership. The task group hopes that it will provide greater clarity in the church's theological understandings of ministry and in the respective functioning of ordered and designated lay ministries, and the task

group hopes that it will lay a foundation for enabling the church to support the development of new and innovative expressions of ministry.

The proposed statement involves clarification in the theological understanding of ministry and in the practice of ordination/commissioning and designation. The “Statement on Ministry,” if adopted, will require revision of some practices and policies in the church. In particular, the statement implies that ordination and commissioning should continue to be celebrated at a Conference level, while designation of lay ministry should be the responsibility of presbytery. Furthermore, the statement clearly indicates that designated lay ministry is equivalent to appointment. With the conclusion of the appointment, membership in presbytery should end.

The task group believes that effective and contextually relevant leadership is critical to the future mission and ministry of the church. Clearly identifiable leaders set the tone, offer guidance and support, and invite openness to change. The leader or leaders can make the difference between a positive and engaged community and one that flounders, lacking vision and a mission directive. The task group also believes that there is a critical need for a more diverse community of leadership within the church, for more ethnic-cultural diversity at training facilities, and for greater support mechanisms for culturally diverse students in seminaries. In the context of a dramatically changing social context, the task group believes that awareness and sensitivity to social context is critical in ministry leadership and recommends that greater attention be paid in leadership training programs to community development methodologies.

The task group recognizes that the effective support of ordered and designated lay ministry leadership is closely interrelated to the effective functioning of presbytery. Strengthening the capacities of presbyteries is a critical need for the church, the task group believes, and requires the allocation of resources to ensure effective staff leadership for all presbyteries. The task group encourages the Executive to initiate study on the options available to achieve this objective, including a review of church structures.

As the church explores and prepares itself for the emergence of new expressions of ministry, the task group is drawn to the importance of using the gifts of ordered and designated lay ministries in relation to each other. The task group affirms the suggestions received in the discernment responses and elsewhere that lift up the possibility of models of congregational structures that involve one ordered ministry personnel, or a team of ordered ministry personnel working in partnership with designated lay ministers in serving a cluster of congregations. The task group believes that this model effectively brings together the specific and appropriate roles and gifts of ordered and designated ministries. The task group also believes that the increasing pattern of congregational use of part-time ordered ministry personnel is the major impediment to the exploration of these models, and a significant injustice to ministry personnel. The accompanying proposal requests that further exploration be undertaken on the model and on the implications of restricting the use of part-time ordered ministers in all but exceptional circumstances (where the ministry personnel themselves seek such a position for personal reasons.)

Proposed Statement on Ministry (*in Italics*)

The church is a community of believers (ecclesia) called into existence by the presence of Jesus Christ and the call to continue Christ's ministry in the world. Through the Spirit, who

enlivens and renews the church, all members are called to discipleship to contribute to Christ's ministry, the work of the church. The church is about God's mission in the world; that there will be shalom for God's creatures and healing for God's creation. Mission and ministry cannot be separated.

While all members share in Christ's ministry, the church from its earliest days has recognized that God calls some from within the community through specific gifts to ordered expressions of ministry. These ordered ministries are based in God's call and therefore serve to remind the community to whom we belong. The capacity to respond to God's call is tested by the community and is therefore a reminder that these ministries belong to the body of Christ. The United Church of Canada recognizes ordained and diaconal orders of ministry. The church also has recognized the emergence of lay expressions of ministry in local and time-limited contexts, and identifies them as designated lay ministry.

Ordered and designated lay ministries are called to distinctive roles of leadership within the church by virtue of their membership in a presbytery (or district). Through this membership, they are called to exercise governance and leadership, shared with elected elders, in the ministry of the church. Ordered ministers and designated lay ministers in paid accountable ministry positions are paid office holders within The United Church of Canada. While there may be elements similar to employment, the essential nature of the relationship is a covenant with the presbytery, pastoral charge or presbytery recognized ministry, and God.

The task group believes that the most accurate way of describing the accountable role of ordered and designated lay ministers is as office holders within the church. In paid accountable roles, they are therefore paid office holders. While there may be elements of this that are similar to employment, the essential nature of the relationship is characterized by an understanding of covenant. This emphasizes that they hold a distinctive leadership role and that they are not accountable solely to a congregation or pastoral charge. As presbyters, they carry responsibility for representing the oversight role of the presbytery within a congregation. As ordered and designated lay ministers, they are charged with building up the body of Christ both through encouragement and at times challenge and discipline. To do both effectively, it is important that their accountability be understood to be jointly held by both the congregation and the presbytery and that the presbytery have the capacity to fulfill its role of oversight and support.

The various ordered ministries of the church can be expressed in the following ancient expressions given current meaning: sacramental remembrance and enlivening worship (leitourgia); being faithful inheritors and communicators of the tradition (kerygma); responding to the needs of the community and the world (diakonia); nurturing faith, making the wisdom of the ages relevant for today (didache); and building up the community of faith as the beloved community of God (koinonia). The present social context of the church in Canada calls the church to acknowledge aspects of societal witness at the heart of ordered ministry (marturia); in other words, being sent into the midst of society as representatives of Christ and the church, in particular to bring the theological witness of the church into engagement in these contexts. Ordered and designated lay ministries always functions within and on behalf of the community and are constituted by the community.

The first five expressions of ministry are historically accepted. The sixth expression (*marturia*) invites the church to envisage ordered ministry leadership functioning in a broader, more open manner than has been done in our past. While new and experimental expressions of ministry have generally been enacted by presbyteries, congregations, or community ministries, the task group believes that the mission and ministry of the church in a changing social context can also be served by empowering ordered ministry personnel to be agents of the presbytery in experimenting with and in enacting new expressions of ministry.

Ministry is prophetic in character, meaning that it enables communities formed by God's Word and Spirit to resist the powers of evil, and to be living messengers of the kingdom of God that is to come. Ordered and designated lay ministries are called to leadership in forming the prophetic community by God's Word, in discerning the signs of the times and in presiding over the liturgy.

Ministry is representational in character, meaning that it is on behalf of someone else. It reflects the character of Jesus, who is among us as one who serves. Ordered and designated lay ministries are representative of the community of faith—the body of Christ—in words and action, and of the presbytery, which represents the unity of the church.

Ministry is relational in character in that it is based in the gifts of the Spirit given to build up the body of Christ. Ordered and designated lay ministries belong to the community and are brought into being in relationship with the community. Modelling the ministry of Jesus, ordered and designated lay ministries are also enabling in character, meaning that they are primarily focused on supporting and strengthening the ministry of the members of the community of faith.

Ministry is collaborative in character, in that the church's life is based in partnership. Ordered and designated lay ministries are always exercised in partnership with members of the community and collegially within the presbytery.

Ministry is accountable in character, in that it is exercised on behalf of and therefore with the authority of the faith community. Ordered and designated lay ministries in their various forms begin with a call that is tested by the community and is exercised under the discipline of a presbytery.

Ministry is of the heart and soul as well as of the mind. Spiritual depth, wisdom, sensitivity, and compassion are all attributes that define ministry, and are gifts or charisms of the Spirit that can be found in all effective leaders. Ordered and designated lay ministries require attention to spiritual life, authenticity, integrity, and passion.

Ordered and Designated Lay Ministries

The task group believes that it is critical in this time to define the respective functioning of ordered and designated lay ministries in the church. Designated lay ministries now potentially encompass a broad range of roles, including youth and music leadership, parish nurses, and lay pastoral ministry. To be recognized as a designated lay minister requires articulating a call to the specific expression of lay ministry, testing this call with the church, and completing a training

program. The challenge before the church is that many of these expressions of lay ministry overlap the roles of ordained and diaconal ministers, who fulfill far more rigorous educational and assessment processes. The task group believes that designated lay ministry fills a vital role in leadership in the church. Options that include requiring designated lay ministers to ultimately fulfill the same educational requirements as ordered ministers are not realistic and do not recognize the specific and important service provided by such ministry personnel. The task group believes that the difference between ordered and designated lay roles is found in the location- and time-specific nature of the respective roles and in the specific freedom provided to ordered ministry to represent the whole church and to engage the church in new expressions of ministry.

Ordered ministry and designated lay ministry are the offices of ministry leadership appointed within The United Church of Canada. They encompass ordained, commissioned, and designated lay ministries in which members of the church experience and discern a call to ministry, and are tested and authorized by the church to provide accountable leadership in the mission and ministry of the church.

Ordained and diaconal ministers are ordered by the denomination and serve the mission and ministry of the whole church. Preparation for ordered ministry involves a minimum of university theological study and an extensive assessment process. As such, ordered ministry personnel are seen to be those who carry the responsibility of inheritors and communicators of the tradition enacted either in word and sacrament or in education and service. Ordered ministers therefore maintain the historic connection of the United Church to the Church Catholic through the witness to apostolic succession and through the faithful interpretation of the living faith tradition. Ordered ministers in particular serve as the church's resident theologians, called to bring the church's theological heritage into the context of God's mission in the world.

Ordained ministers are formally called to word, sacrament and pastoral care but function in all aspects of ministry. This involves presiding in worship and sacrament, care for the faithful inheritance and communication of the tradition, nurturing and strengthening the beloved community of God, making the wisdom of the ages relevant for today, and being representatives of Christ in the world in seeking justice and wholeness for all of creation.

Diaconal ministers also function in all aspects of ministry but are called to a specific emphasis on education, service, social justice, and pastoral care. Diaconal ministry, rooted in the tradition and history of diakonia, encourages a growing faith, speaks truth to power, seeks mutual empowerment, proclaims prophetic hope, nurtures life-giving community, and fosters peaceful, right relationship within the church and the whole of creation.

By virtue of their training and recognition, ordered ministry personnel are representatives of the church, expressed through their life long membership in Presbytery. Consistent with the historic traditions of the church, ordination and commissioning take place through the laying on of hands and once enacted, ordination or commissioning is not re-enacted. Ordination and commissioning are liturgically enacted at a Conference level.

Their training and recognition by the denomination also affords ordered ministers flexibility in their exercise of ministry leadership, including the possibility of being retained on the role of ministry without appointment. Because their ordered ministry is to the mission and ministry of The United Church of Canada (within the Holy Catholic Church), their ordination or commissioning can function in any presbytery recognized ministry, or they may be retained on the roll of presbytery while engaging other vocational or personal activities. Ordered ministers, by virtue of their training and accountability, are entrusted to initiate new forms of ministry, including the possibility of non-stipendiary ministries authorized and accountable to presbytery.

The task group recognizes that this appears to be a significant departure from the traditional understanding within the United Church that ordered ministers fulfill a functional role in their ministries. The option for presbyteries to recognize and ordain or commission to presbytery recognized ministries accords significant freedom to presbyteries to authorize ordered ministry personnel to carry their ordination and commissioning into employment and organizational life outside traditional congregational or community-based ministries. General Council action and the subsequent Guidelines for Presbytery Recognized Ministry (approved by the Executive of the General Council in March 2009) offer the possibility of including voluntary leadership positions in presbytery recognized ministries. The task group recognizes that this could be seen as moving the church into a more ontological understanding of ministry, but believes that the historic debate between functional and ontological views of ministry is false and can be resolved by emphasizing that all ministry is accountable to and is enacted in relation to a community of faith. No ordered or designated lay ministry of the church can or should function in isolation from community. The question for the church is, What might these communities look like?

Oversight of presbytery recognized ministries may take many forms. In the situation of a closely related church institution, such as an educational centre, theological school, chaplaincy centre, or community ministry, the presbytery will likely recognize that the governance structure of such an institution adequately represents the mission and ministry objectives of the church. The presbytery then will covenant with that institution as the community of faith in which the ordered ministry functions. In most cases, this covenant of relationship will not involve the presbytery in oversight of the institution itself, but will require that the ordered minister exercise accountability to the presbytery for the faithful exercise of his or her ordination or diaconal vows, including participation in the oversight role of presbytery so that the mission and ministry of the whole church might be strengthened.

Examples of presbytery recognized ministries that are not church-related institutions could include a corporate chaplaincy, a business with an ethical mission objective, an academic or teaching position, or perhaps volunteer leadership in a community-based movement. In such a situation, the presbytery will explore with the ordered ministry personnel how the objectives of the institution, organization, or movement relate to his or her ordination or diaconal vows and how the participation will strengthen the mission and ministry of the church. It is expected that the organization will be both aware of and supportive of the individual expressing ordered ministry within its structures. In such a situation, the presbytery will establish a means of accountability for the ordered minister, which might range from an opportunity to meet

periodically with an appropriate presbytery committee to assisting the presbytery to actively explore options for new expression of ministry within the area.

The task group recommends that designated lay ministry personnel be eligible for appointment to presbytery recognized ministries only in situations where the presbytery is in a direct accountable relationship with the institution.

Ordered ministries encompass lifelong accountability and function everywhere.

The task group proposes that clarification on the church-wide role of ordered ministry means that ordination and commissioning should be liturgically celebrated and enacted at a Conference level.

Designated lay ministers are members of the church who exercise gifts for leadership in mission and ministry that emerge from within a local congregation or community ministry. Their ministries are presbytery recognized and serve local communities. Because their ministry emerges out of a local pastoral or ministry need, educational preparation may vary. Designated lay ministers are required to complete an educational program while under appointment, and completion of the program provides eligibility for subsequent appointments. While under appointment, designated lay ministers function in the aspects of ministry leadership relating to their appointment and they are also accorded membership in presbytery. At the end of an appointment, the authority for function concludes, as does presbytery membership. Because designated lay ministry is dependent on appointment, it is celebrated (re-enacted) at each appointment. The appointment of a designated lay minister is liturgically enacted by the presbytery either in a presbytery meeting or in the local ministry.

The task group proposes that recognizing the time-limited and localized nature of designated lay ministry means that designation should be understood as synonymous with appointment. While assessment for designated lay ministry will continue to be the responsibility of both presbytery and Conference bodies, liturgical recognition that an individual has completed the necessary processes to be recognized as a designated lay minister should be celebrated within the context of a specific appointment. This celebration or covenanting for designated lay ministry should take place by a presbytery either in a presbytery meeting or at a presbytery-led service in the congregation or community ministry and should be re-enacted at each new appointment.

The task group further proposes that *The Manual* be clarified to show that designated lay ministers hold dual membership in both a congregation and the presbytery during their time of appointment, and that at the conclusion of their appointment their membership in presbytery ends.

Designated lay ministry encompasses time- and place-limited accountability and function. Designated lay ministers are appointed to varied leadership in the ministries of the church specific to the work undertaken.

Accountable ministry takes form in The United Church of Canada in ordered and designated lay ministry roles. Ordered and designated lay ministers are called by God to exercise

leadership within the church. They respond to the yearning of the church to be faithful in its participation in God's mission in the world. To be faithful and effective in that mission, accountable ministers need to be grounded in their spiritual life; secure in their identity; passionate in their mission; and effective in their organization, directed toward equipping the members of the body for engaging the mission and ministry of Christ's church. Because of the importance of all of these tasks, the church recognizes ordered and designated lay ministers and holds them accountable for the faithful exercise of leadership.

Recommendations to the Executive of the General Council

The task group notes that the primary objective of this report, to prepare and enable the church to engage new expressions and forms of ministry leadership in a rapidly changing social context, is critically dependent on the effective functioning of presbyteries.

The task group therefore offers the following proposals to be brought to the Executive of the General Council through the General Secretary. (The Executive of the General Council in March 2009 postponed definitely dealing with these recommendations until the "Statement on Ministry" is considered by the 40th General Council 2009.)

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that the Executive of the General Council direct the General Secretary, General Secretary to:

- 1. explore options to strengthen and enhance the capacity of presbyteries to effectively exercise their oversight functions, in particular to encourage and support new expressions of ministry;*
- 2. explore structural and financial options that will allow for adequate and effective staffing for all presbyteries;*
- 3. ensure that educational outcomes in preparation for ministerial leadership move further in the direction of including community development strategies, collaborative approaches in leadership practice, and a focus on our evolving Canadian context as part of the core curriculum;*
- 4. ensure that course offerings in these areas be explored as continuing education opportunities for ministry personnel;*
- 5. ensure that initiatives in recruitment of ministry personal incorporate the opportunities for new expressions of ministry identified within this report.*

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that the Executive of the General Council direct the General Secretary to initiate revisions of The Manual that clarify the dual membership of designated lay ministers in both a congregation and their supervising presbytery, and that presbytery membership for designated lay ministers concludes with the end of appointment.

The General Secretary, General Secretary further proposes that the Executive of the General Council request the Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, and the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry, to explore options that limit the number of part-time ordained and commissioned ministries in such a way as to encourage the emergence of new models of congregational clusters, including the option of ordered ministry personnel working collaboratively with designated lay ministers in support of a cluster of congregations.

Membership of the Task Group

The Meaning of Ministry Task Group was composed of members representative of the Executive of the General Council (GCE), the Committee on Theology and Faith (CTF), the Permanent Committee, Ministry Employment Policy and Services (PC-MEPS), and the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry (PC-PMM).

Heather Burton (Chair)	OM	GCE
James Blanchard	Lay	GCE
Wendy MacLean	OM	CTF
Harry Disher	OM	CTF
Larry Derkach	Lay	PC-PMM
Christine Williams	DLM	PC-PMM
Wayne Flewelling	Lay	PC-MEPS
Elizabeth Brown	OM	PC-MEPS

Staff: Bruce Gregersen
Joe Ramsay

In addition, the task group met with representatives of Community, Intercultural, Francophone, Aboriginal, and Youth Ministries, and corresponded with the Emerging Spirit project.

GCE 5 - Statement on Ministry in The United Church of Canada**Origin:** Executive of the General Council**Financial Implications:****Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:**

It is proposed

That the 40th General Council 2009

1. **approve the following “Statement on Ministry in The United Church of Canada”**
2. **and direct the General Secretary, General Council, to undertake revisions to the policies of the church to ensure consistency with the intentions of the statement.**

Statement on Ministry in The United Church of Canada

The church is a community of believers (*ecclesia*) called into existence by the presence of Jesus Christ and the call to continue Christ’s ministry in the world. Through the Spirit, who enlivens and renews the church, all members are called to discipleship to contribute to Christ’s ministry, the work of the church. The church is about God’s mission in the world; that there will be shalom for God’s creatures and healing for God’s creation. Mission and ministry cannot be separated.

While all members share in Christ’s ministry, the church from its earliest days has recognized that God calls some from within the community through specific gifts to ordered expressions of ministry. These ordered ministries are based in God’s call and therefore serve to remind the community to whom we belong. The capacity to respond to God’s call is tested by the community and is therefore a reminder that these ministries belong to the body of Christ. The United Church of Canada recognizes ordained and diaconal orders of ministry. The church also has recognized the emergence of lay expressions of ministry in local and time-limited contexts, and identifies them as designated lay ministry.

Ordered and designated lay ministries are called to distinctive roles of leadership within the church by virtue of their membership in a presbytery (or district). Through this membership, they are called to exercise governance and leadership, shared with elected elders, in the ministry of the church. Ordered ministers and designated lay ministers in paid accountable ministry positions are paid office holders within The United Church of Canada. While there may be elements similar to employment, the essential nature of the relationship is a covenant with the presbytery, pastoral charge or presbytery recognized ministry, and God.

The various ordered ministries of the church can be expressed in the following ancient expressions given current meaning: sacramental remembrance and enlivening worship (*leitourgia*); being faithful inheritors and communicators of the tradition (*kerygma*); responding to the needs of the community and the world (*diakonia*); nurturing faith, making the wisdom of the ages relevant for today (*didache*); and building up the community of faith as the beloved

community of God (*koinonia*). The present social context of the church in Canada calls the church to acknowledge aspects of societal witness at the heart of ordered ministry (*marturia*); in other words, being sent into the midst of society as representatives of Christ and the church, in particular to bring the theological witness of the church into engagement in these contexts. Ordered and designated lay ministries always function within and on behalf of the community and are constituted by the community.

Ministry is prophetic in character, meaning that it enables communities formed by God's Word and Spirit to resist the powers of evil, and to be living messengers of the kingdom of God that is to come. Ordered and designated lay ministries are called to leadership in forming the prophetic community by God's Word, in discerning the signs of the times and in presiding over the liturgy.

Ministry is representational in character, meaning that it is on behalf of someone else. It reflects the character of Jesus, who is among us as one who serves. Ordered and designated lay ministries are representative of the community of faith—the body of Christ—in words and action, and of the presbytery, which represents the unity of the church.

Ministry is relational in character in that it is based in the gifts of the Spirit given to build up the body of Christ. Ordered and designated lay ministries belong to the community and are brought into being in relationship with the community. Modelling the ministry of Jesus, ordered and designated lay ministries are also enabling in character, meaning that they are primarily focused on supporting and strengthening the ministry of the members of the community of faith.

Ministry is collaborative in character, in that the church's life is based in partnership. Ordered and designated lay ministries are always exercised in partnership with members of the community and collegially within the presbytery.

Ministry is accountable in character, in that it is exercised on behalf of and therefore with the authority of the faith community. Ordered and designated lay ministries in their various forms begin with a call that is tested by the community and is exercised under the discipline of a presbytery.

Ministry is of the heart and soul as well as of the mind. Spiritual depth, wisdom, sensitivity, and compassion are all attributes that define ministry, and are gifts or charisms of the Spirit that can be found in all effective leaders. Ordered and designated lay ministries require attention to spiritual life, authenticity, integrity, and passion.

Offices of Ministry Leadership

Ordered ministry and designated lay ministry are the offices of ministry leadership appointed within The United Church of Canada. They encompass ordained, commissioned, and designated lay ministries in which members of the church experience and discern a call to ministry, and are tested and authorized by the church to provide accountable leadership in the mission and ministry of the church.

Ordained and diaconal ministers are ordered by the denomination and serve the mission and ministry of the whole church. Preparation for ordered ministry involves a minimum of university

theological study and an extensive assessment process. As such, ordered ministry personnel are seen to be those who carry the responsibility of inheritors and communicators of the tradition enacted either in word and sacrament or in education and service. Ordered ministers therefore maintain the historic connection of the United Church to the Church Catholic through the witness to apostolic succession and through the faithful interpretation of the living faith tradition. Ordered ministers in particular serve as the church's resident theologians, called to bring the church's theological heritage into the context of God's mission in the world.

Ordained ministers are formally called to word, sacrament and pastoral care but function in all aspects of ministry. This involves presiding in worship and sacrament, care for the faithful inheritance and communication of the tradition, nurturing and strengthening the beloved community of God, making the wisdom of the ages relevant for today, and being representatives of Christ in the world in seeking justice and wholeness for all of creation.

Diaconal ministry is called to function in all aspects of ministry named above but with a specific emphasis on education, service, social justice, and pastoral care. Diaconal ministry, rooted in the tradition and history of *diakonia*, encourages a growing faith, speaks truth to power, seeks mutual empowerment, proclaims prophetic hope, nurtures life-giving community, and fosters peaceful, right relationship within the church and the whole of creation.

By virtue of their training and recognition, ordered ministry personnel are representatives of the church, expressed through their lifelong membership in presbytery. Consistent with the historic traditions of the church, ordination and commissioning take place through the laying on of hands and once enacted, ordination or commissioning is not re-enacted. Ordination and commissioning are liturgically enacted at a Conference level.

Their training and recognition by the denomination also affords ordered ministers flexibility in their exercise of ministry leadership, including the possibility of being retained on the role of ministry without appointment. Because their ordered ministry is to the mission and ministry of The United Church of Canada (within the Holy Catholic Church), their ordination or commissioning can function in any presbytery recognized ministry, or they may be retained on the roll of presbytery while engaging other vocational or personal activities. Ordered ministers, by virtue of their training and accountability, are entrusted to initiate new forms of ministry, including the possibility of non-stipendiary ministries authorized and accountable to presbytery.

Ordered ministries encompass lifelong accountability and function everywhere.

Designated lay ministers are members of the church who exercise gifts for leadership in mission and ministry that emerge from within a local congregation or community ministry. Their ministries are presbytery accountable and serve local communities. Because their ministry emerges out of a local pastoral or ministry need, educational preparation may vary. Designated lay ministers are required to complete an educational program while under appointment, and completion of the program provides eligibility for subsequent appointments. While under appointment, designated lay ministers function in the aspects of ministry leadership relating to their appointment and they are also accorded membership in presbytery. At the end of an appointment, the authority for function concludes, as does presbytery membership. Because

designated lay ministry is dependent on appointment, it is celebrated (re-enacted) at each appointment. The appointment of a designated lay minister is liturgically enacted by the presbytery either in a presbytery meeting or in the local ministry.

Designated lay ministry encompasses time - and place-limited accountability and function. Designated lay ministers are appointed to varied leadership in the ministries of the church specific to the work undertaken.

Accountable ministry takes form in The United Church of Canada in ordered and designated lay ministry roles. Ordered and designated lay ministers are called by God to exercise leadership within the church. They respond to the yearning of the church to be faithful in its participation in God's mission in the world. To be faithful and effective in that mission, accountable ministers need to be grounded in their spiritual life; secure in their identity; passionate in their mission; and effective in their organization, directed toward equipping the members of the body for engaging the mission and ministry of Christ's church. Because of the importance of all of these tasks, the church recognizes ordered and designated lay ministers and holds them accountable for the faithful exercise of leadership.

This proposed statement is accompanied by a background report. An appendix is available on the web www.united-church.ca that provides a summary of responses to the discernment process on the Meaning of Ministry.

THE CANDIDACY PATHWAY

Origin: Executive of the General Council

Background

In May 2008, the Executive of the General Council directed the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry to review the current process by which members of the church become members of the Order of Ministry (diaconal and ordained ministers). The Permanent Committee established a Candidacy Review Working Group with the following representative membership: Stéphane Vermette (Ministries in French, Executive of the General Council); Danielle James (Intercultural Ministries); Kelly Hudson (Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry); Bob Lockhart (Education and Vocations Advisory Committee); Linda Lee Henriksen (Education and Vocations Advisory Committee); Lloyd Bruce (Education and Vocations Advisory Committee); Brenda Simpson (Aboriginal Ministries).

The original mandate of the Executive of the General Council for the Candidacy Review Working Group identified the following key values and desired outcomes.

Values

- Acknowledges and is grateful for God's gift of leaders to strengthen the church's participation in God's mission.
- Recognizes the growing diversity of contexts, situations, and cultural backgrounds of candidates, with attention to aboriginal, francophone, and intercultural ministries.
- Processes that are simple, streamlined and effective.
- Propose a system people can understand and trust.
- Propose a less regulatory culture.

Desired Outcomes

- enhances candidates' experiences of self-direction with support and accompaniment.
- improves efficient use of resources, people, money, energy, and time.
- strengthens the supervised ministry learning experience before ordination and commissioning
- contributes to and celebrates increased numbers of ordered leaders representative of diverse cultural heritages.
- contributes to increased numbers of ready and effective ordered leaders.
- enhances the intercultural church's joy in identifying and affirming new ordered leaders.

In March 2009, the Executive of the General Council received the recommendations of the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry that the work of the Candidacy Review Working Group be approved. The Executive of the General Council recommended that the General Council approve the policy directions and principles of the Candidacy Pathway and authorize the Executive of the General Council to take the necessary steps, including the issuance of required remits and revisions to *The Manual* at appropriate times, and to implement the policy directions. (For the full report as considered by the Executive of General Council, see "Workbook 2 – Appendices – Appendix 1 Candidacy Review" at <http://GC40.united-church.ca/downloads/workbooks>.)

The Executive of the General Council directed the General Secretary to prepare for the 40th General Council (2009) a report modified to articulate clearly and concisely the principles and policy directions of the Candidacy Pathway. What follows is the modified report.

Consultation and Research

The Candidacy Review Working Group undertook extensive research and consultation. Historical documents relevant to the candidacy process were reviewed (see Appendix B). The work of several consultations involving members of both the education and vocations networks and a creative “think tank” were also taken into account by the working group. As well, statistical data related to the current demographics of ministry personnel were reviewed. Informing the theological reflections of the working group were relevant sections of “A Song of Faith” and Articles XVII and XVIII in the doctrinal section of the Basis of Union, as well as the work of “ministry” groups that have reported to the General Council and included the current *Meaning of Ministry* report.

More than 60 people experienced in various aspects of the candidacy/education process were interviewed personally by an independent researcher and more than 40 online contributions were received (see Appendix C). The research data was extensive.

The following highlights serve, in the working group’s judgment, to prod the church to renew the candidacy process.

- The current candidacy process and procedures require many people offering large amounts of time and energy to ensure the church’s ordered leadership needs are met.
- The current candidacy process is cumbersome, administratively complex with many forms, and labour intensive.
- There are too many committees with members who need more training.
- Potential candidates are avoiding the process because it is at odds with the idealism of their call. It requires too much time and energy to complete.
- Candidates amass unwieldy student debts which are difficult to pay down when settled in ministry settings with relatively low remuneration.
- The candidacy process is seen as being “hoops oriented,” with many hurdles to be overcome in order to achieve the goal of ordination or commissioning.
- Supervised ministry education is crucial to the formation process. However, the present internship model results in an additional year (or two, in the 16 month internships) without proper remuneration, thereby increasing debt for students.
- The present internship model also requires students between second and third years of theological education to move to another community, contributing to disruption in home and family, and in ecumenical schools removes the student from their cohort.
- The current candidacy process does not adequately address the needs of minority ethnic candidates. There needs to be more intentionality in ensuring the church’s diverse leadership needs are met and systems are geared to diverse candidates.
- Discernment should not be a stage to be completed, but integrated throughout the whole process.

Theological and Biblical Roots

Throughout the ages, God has blessed faith communities, by encountering and transforming people in their being and doing. “God accepts us as we are, but never leaves us as we are!” Calling women and men, girls and boys from diverse socio-cultural experiences and backgrounds to exercise their gifts and talents in faithful response to God’s grace is part of God’s unending relationship with people of faith and of God’s mission to heal and bless Creation.

God’s call to specific ministries — ordered or lay leadership — is set in the context of the faith community, which itself is called faithfully to respond to God’s grace and generosity. The scriptures teach us that God is able to recognize gifts that at times the persons called or their family or neighbours might not even recognize. The church affirms the person’s call and seeks to help the person to respond to the call they experience. Hence, the processes whereby the faith community explores a person’s call are to be undertaken carefully, humbly, appreciatively, and joyfully.

Biblical narratives abound to provide food for thought and opportunity for further illumination as the church reflects on the Candidacy Pathway. Although the biblical narrative does not address the issue of “ordered ministry” directly, it does remind us that God calls individuals to serve in many ways. Stories of God’s amazing grace that informed the working group include:

- a) Instrument of God’s plan - Joseph (Genesis 37 – 45; especially 45:7-8)
- b) God calls Moses at the burning bush not consumed (Exodus 3 – 4:20)
- c) God calls Samuel in the temple at Shiloh (1 Samuel 3: 1- 18)
- d) God chooses David to be king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1-13)
- e) God calls Jeremiah to prophetic witness (Jeremiah 1:1-13)
- f) God calls Mary (Luke 1:26-38)
- g) Jesus calls and accompanies disciples (Matthew 4: 18-22; Luke 8:1-3)
- h) The Spirit leads the community to choose deacons (Acts 6:1-6)
- i) The Spirit Chooses an Exceptional “Outsider” (Acts 8: 26-40)
- j) The risen Christ confronts Paul (Saul) on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-31)
- k) Lydia responds to the call (Acts 16:11-15)
- l) The Spirit moves Priscilla and her husband Aquila (Acts 18)
- m) God’s call to “so great a cloud of witnesses.” (Hebrews 11 – 12:2)

The Context

The Candidacy Review Working Group has concluded that although aspects of the current candidacy process continue to have value and many people currently invest much of themselves in maintaining the process, the time is ripe and urgent for a new candidacy process, just as so many other church understandings and processes are being rethought and re-formed by the leading of the Spirit.

In part, this process of renewing the candidacy process is driven by the significant paradigm shifts the church has been experiencing in the late 20th and 21st century. We are leaving behind the church of Christendom (and some would say, the Christian era) and moving into the post-Christendom era, characterized by measured deinstitutionalization and recovery of the sense of movement – the Christian movement, with increased emphasis on God’s mission and less on the church’s institutional needs.

The United Church is transitioning from the modern era, with its clear-cut dividing lines, fixed truths, and technological solutions, to a post-modern era characterized by appreciation of mystery, welcoming of diversity, and a greater sense of humility about espoused truths.

The post-colonial reality is leading the church intentionally to move away from paternalistic systems of dominance and control toward patterns that cultivate relationships, enhance participation, share responsibility, and celebrate the rich demographic diversity of Canadian society.

The church is also coming to the realization that God's mission has not simply been "delegated" to the church as the sole or even primary vehicle of mission, but that God's mission by far transcends what the church is able to carry out. In many and diverse ways God is carrying out God's mission for the healing of God's beloved creation. Nonetheless, the Spirit continues graciously to call the church, as beloved community and as body of Christ, to participate faithfully in God's ongoing global and local mission.

These changes and other developments, including a significant shortage of ordered ministers, press the church to rethink its ways of being and doing, not least of which is the candidacy process by which the Order of Ministry (diaconal and ordained) is populated.

The following sections outline the working group's informed considerations about how the church can best do this. The Candidacy Pathway is the name the working group has given to the proposed process.

The Candidacy Pathway

A Candidacy Pathway, involving seven primary elements, is proposed to replace the current candidacy process. **The purpose of the Pathway is:**

- 1. to call forth,**
- 2. identify,**
- 3. accompany,**
- 4. equip,**
- 5. assess,**
- 6. authorize, and,**
- 7. celebrate**

those persons whom God calls to and endows for the Order of Ministry, offering diaconal and ordained leadership in Christ's diverse ministries contributing to God's mission in creation.

The Candidacy Pathway is a journey of faith and the process of formation by which the church community accompanies individual members who experience God's call to serve in the Order of Ministry. The proposed Pathway is a shared pilgrimage designed to assist those whom God has called and has gifted to arrive at the particular ministry God has in mind, with particular focus on the Order of Ministry. It is not designed to be a process that seeks to "weed people out." Rather, it seeks to help individuals test out their call within the context of a supportive community so

that they may contribute to the church's overall ministry whether as members of the Order of Ministry or not.

Convictions and Principles

The following identifies the key convictions and principles that serve as the basis for the Candidacy Pathway.

- We believe that God calls people to diverse ministries, including ordained and diaconal ministries, and that the church has a key role confirming the person's suitability, giftedness, and readiness for the call they have experienced.
- It is the responsibility of the whole church to encourage people to open themselves to the call of God and provide opportunity to consider ministry vocations.
- God's call is heard within diverse communities of faith and ministry settings.
- Discernment is a dynamic, life-long process of attending to the Spirit.
- God's call is directed to and heard by people of all ages, gender identities, sexual orientations, and cultural backgrounds.
- Persons responding to God's call to ministry leadership need the companionship and accompaniment of people in their home community of faith (congregation or other ministry setting) and their presbytery.
- United Church of Canada theological schools are key resources for theological education required for educated ministry leadership in the church.
- The church articulates the qualities and skills needed for Order of Ministry leaders in the Leadership Outcomes Framework approved by the Executive of the General Council.
- Both the ministry-based and campus-based models of theological education and preparation for ordered ministry are affirmed as valid alternatives for completing the church's educational requirements for ordered ministry.
- Supervised ministry education is indispensable in the formation of ordered ministers and crucial in determining effectiveness in and readiness for ordered ministry.
- Membership in The United Church of Canada is a prerequisite for a candidate seeking appointment to a pastoral charge or ministry.
- The new Pathway should contribute to lessening the burden of debt by candidates and reducing the amount of disruption to candidates' households caused by required moves from place to place.
- The Candidacy Pathway needs ongoing evaluation to ensure effectiveness for all concerned.
- The Spirit's leading is celebrated at all stages of the Pathway.

Proposed Policy Directions

New policy directions are required to create this Candidacy Pathway. Some of these policy directions require changes to *The Manual*, while others require a remit in order to amend the Basis of Union. The policy directions are identified with their 'location' on the Candidacy Pathway.

1. Call Forth: God calls persons to lead and serve

- All ministry settings share in the responsibility for calling forth the God-given gifts of the members of the Body of Christ and will be offered tools for this task.
- Ongoing discernment of God's call and one's faithful response to that call is vital to discipleship and to calling forth persons for ordered ministry.

- Persons active in United Church community ministries and congregations who experience God's call to ordered ministry may apply for identification as to promise and suitability for candidacy regardless of formal United Church membership status.
- One or more companions from the applicant's home ministry setting are named to provide support and mentoring.
- Presbytery/district education and students committees are re-mandated from screening and assessment roles to giving leadership in calling forth and accompanying potential and identified candidates.

2. *Identify: the church tests the person's giftedness for ministry and identifies candidates for the Order of Ministry.*

- A Conference board is created to determine promise and suitability for candidacy.
- The Conference board role is undertaken by skilled and trained persons, representative of the diversities of the church membership, and appointed by the Conference.
- When a person applies to the Conference board, identification as to promise and suitability for candidacy is determined using various tools, including vocational assessment tools, medical and psychological reports, a written application and interview.

3. *Accompany: the church accompanies candidates on the Pathway.*

- Following identification of candidacy, persons are accompanied by a formal 'Circle of Accompaniment' named by the person, by presbytery, and confirmed by the Conference board.
- The Circle of Accompaniment plays a crucial ongoing role in 'walking with' persons to support, discern, and mentor them throughout the Candidacy Pathway.
- Mechanisms will be in place to ensure a candidate's concerns about the process are heard and directed appropriately. The process for appeals regarding Decisions remains unchanged from *The Manual, 2007*, section 549. An individual may only appeal the appropriateness of the procedures used to arrive at the Decision.

4. *Equip: the church provides opportunities for candidates to be educated for ordered ministry.*

- With the Leadership Outcomes Framework as guideline, United Church of Canada theological schools will continue to be the key resource for theological education of candidates for ordered ministry.
- In keeping with the Association of Theological Schools guidelines, schools enhance curricula, with particular focus on integration through increased opportunities for reflection on the practice of ministry in field education requirements.
- Supervised ministry education continues to be a requirement for commissioning and ordination as follows:
 - In ministry-based education programs, the supervised ministry education requirement continues to be integrated into the five-year program and the requirement for a presbytery student supply appointment.
 - In campus-based education programs, the supervised ministry education requirement is fulfilled with a post-graduation, two-year candidate supply appointment.
 - Supervised ministry education may take place in pastoral charges, other presbytery-accountable ministries, and presbytery-recognized ministries.

- Supervised ministry education will include participation in a peer learning group for reflection on the practice of ministry and for support and mutual learning.
- Supervision by a trained supervisor of ministry candidates is required.
- Candidates must be members of the United Church in order to be appointed to a presbytery vacancy. The General Council minimum salary and allowances schedule for ministry personnel in pastoral relationships governs the remuneration for student and candidate supply appointments.
- The supervised ministry education appointment replaces the 8- and 16-month national internship program.

5. Assess: the church ensures candidates are gifted and prepared for ordered ministry.

- The Conference board has the primary role to identify promise and suitability for candidacy and to assess candidates' readiness for leadership in ordered ministry.
 - The Conference Board is responsible for assessing a candidate's growth in the Leadership Outcomes, for determining readiness for a Supervised Ministry Education appointment, and effectiveness in the practice of ministry.
 - Candidates for ordered ministry are interviewed on a regular basis and provide self-assessment reports, including a demonstration of growth in the Leadership Outcomes.
 - Upon completion of the assessment process, the Conference board provides a recommendation to Conference regarding commissioning or ordination.
- Candidates approved for commissioning or ordination are subject to the church's bylaws governing transfer and settlement.

6. Authorize: the church affirms the readiness of candidates for ordered ministry.

- The Conference makes the decision about candidates' commissioning and ordination.
- The Transfer and Settlement process authorizes the call or settlement of the candidate.
- Processes for ongoing and regular evaluation of the Candidacy Pathway are created.

7. Celebrate: the church gives thanks to God for those offering to serve in ordered ministry.

- Appropriate acknowledgement and celebration takes place at all stages in the Candidacy Pathway.
- Regardless of the direction God's call takes the person, the community of faith gives thanks for God-given gifts discerned, named, and offered to the church for contributing to God's mission in the world.
- Together with the Circle of Accompaniment and the presbytery, the home community of faith celebrates the person's response to God's call, identification of promise and suitability for candidacy for ordered ministry.
- Achievements in theological education and formation for ordered ministry are celebrated.
- Commissioning and ordination are celebrated by the church at an appropriate worship service held by the Conference.

Conclusion

The need to review the entire candidacy process has been felt and expressed extensively across the church. The Candidacy Review Working Group came to the strong conviction that the time is ripe for a new way of forming persons called to ordered leadership for the church. Both the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry and the Executive of the General

Council concur with the principles and policy directions of the Candidacy Pathway and recommend implementation.

Appendix 1

The Candidacy Review Report of the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry as considered by the Executive of the General Council at its March 28-30, 2009 meeting. See “Workbook 2 – Appendices – Appendix 1 Candidacy Review” at <http://GC40.united-church.ca/downloads/workbooks>.

Appendix B Historical Documents

1. Report of the Consultation on Ministry Vocations
Division of Ministry Personnel and Education
February, 1992
2. Evaluation of the Candidacy Process
Division of Ministry Personnel and Education
February, 1997
3. The United Church of Canada Ministry Needs in the New Millennium
Report commissioned by Division of Ministry Personnel and Education
February, 1997
4. Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century
Division of Ministry Personnel and Education
GC 37
5. Student Debt: A Whole Church Challenge
Faith Formation and Education Unit
GCE 2001
6. A Review of the Eight-Month Internship Program
Faith Formation and Education Unit
GC 38 2003
7. Report of the General Council Task Group on Simplifying Policies and Procedure
Related to Pastoral Relations, Pastoral Oversight and Ministry Vocations
GC 38 2003

Appendix C Research and Consultation

Telephone interviews were conducted with the following representatives:

- Deans and principals of theological schools 10
- Conference personnel ministers 5
- Conference executive secretaries/speakers 2
- Conference interview boards 3
- Conference internship & Educational Supervision Committees 5
- Presbytery/District Education and Students Committees 11
- Recent Discernment Committee members 3
- Current candidates 4
- Withdrawn candidates 1
- Current candidates involved in supervised ministry education 5
- Recently ordained/commissioned ministers 5
- Sponsoring congregations 2

• Learning Site Groups	3
• (Lay Supervision Team & Congregation Reflection Groups)	
• Educational Supervisors	5
Total	64

Online survey responses were received persons in the following categories:

- Ordered Ministry (diaconal and ordained, recent and long-term, old process and recent process)
- Candidates (diaconal, ordained, and withdrawn)
- Presbytery/District Education and Students Committees
- Conference Education and Students Committees
- Conference Internship and Educational Supervision Committees
- Conference Interview Boards
- Transfer and Settlement Committee
- Discernment Committee members and presbytery/district representatives
- Theological school professors
- Educational supervisors
- Lay supervision teams
- Sponsoring congregations

GCE 6 - The Candidacy Pathway**Origin:** Executive of the General Council**Financial Implications:****Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:**

It is proposed:

That the 40th General Council 2009 approve the following policy directions of the Candidacy Pathway and its purpose to call forth, identify, accompany, equip, assess, authorize, and celebrate those persons whom God calls to and endows for the Order of Ministry, offering diaconal and ordained leadership in Christ's diverse ministries contributing to God's mission in creation:

1. Call Forth: God calls persons to lead and serve

- All ministry settings share in the responsibility for calling forth the God-given gifts of the members of the Body of Christ and will be offered tools for this task.
- Ongoing discernment of God's call and one's faithful response to that call is vital to discipleship and to calling forth persons for ordered ministry.
- Persons active in United Church community ministries and congregations who experience God's call to ordered ministry may apply for identification as to promise and suitability for candidacy regardless of formal United Church membership status.
- One or more companions from the applicant's home ministry setting are named to provide support and mentoring.
- Presbytery/district education and students committees are re-mandated from screening and assessment roles to giving leadership in calling forth and accompanying potential and identified candidates.

2. Identify: the Church tests the person's giftedness for ministry and identifies candidates for the Order of Ministry.

- A Conference board is created to determine promise and suitability for candidacy.
- The Conference board role is undertaken by skilled and trained persons, representative of the diversities of the church membership, and appointed by the Conference.
- When a person applies to the Conference board, identification as to promise and suitability for candidacy is determined using various tools, including vocational assessment tools, medical and psychological reports, a written application and interview.

3. Accompany: the Church accompanies candidates on the Pathway.

- Following identification of candidacy, persons are accompanied by a formal 'Circle of Accompaniment' named by the person, by presbytery, and confirmed by the Conference board.
- The Circle of Accompaniment plays a crucial ongoing role in 'walking with' persons to support, discern, and mentor them throughout the Candidacy Pathway.
- Mechanisms will be in place to ensure a candidate's concerns about the process are heard and directed appropriately. The process for appeals regarding Decisions remains

unchanged from *The Manual 2007* section 549. An individual may only appeal the appropriateness of the procedures used to arrive at the Decision.

4. Equip: the Church provides opportunities for candidates to be educated for ordered ministry.

- With the Leadership Outcomes Framework as guideline, UCC theological schools will continue to be the key resource for theological education of candidates for ordered ministry.
- In keeping with the Association of Theological Schools guidelines, schools enhance curricula, with particular focus on integration through increased opportunities for reflection on the practice of ministry in field education requirements.
- Supervised ministry education continues to be a requirement for commissioning and ordination as follows:
 - In ministry-based education programs, the supervised ministry education requirement continues to be integrated into the five year program and the requirement for a presbytery student supply appointment.
 - In campus-based education programs, the supervised ministry education requirement is fulfilled with a post graduation two year candidate supply appointment.
 - Supervised ministry education may take place in pastoral charges, other presbytery accountable ministries, and presbytery recognized ministries.
 - Supervised ministry education will include participation in a peer learning group for reflection on the practice of ministry and for support and mutual learning.
 - Supervision by a trained supervisor of ministry candidates is required.
 - Candidates must be members of the United Church in order to be appointed to a presbytery vacancy. The General Council minimum salary and allowances schedule for ministry personnel in pastoral relationships governs the remuneration for student and candidate supply appointments.
 - The supervised ministry education appointment replaces the 8 and 16 month national internship program.

5. Assess: the Church ensures candidates are gifted and prepared for ordered ministry.

- The Conference board has the primary role to identify promise and suitability for candidacy and to assess candidates' readiness for leadership in ordered ministry.
 - The Conference Board is responsible for assessing a candidate's growth in the Leadership Outcomes, for determining readiness for a Supervised Ministry Education appointment, and effectiveness in the practice of ministry.
 - Candidates for ordered ministry are interviewed on a regular basis and provide self assessment reports, including a demonstration of growth in the Leadership Outcomes.
 - Upon completion of the assessment process, the Conference board provides a recommendation to Conference regarding commissioning or ordination.
- Candidates approved for commissioning or ordination are subject to the Church's by-laws governing transfer and settlement.

6. Authorize: the Church affirms the readiness of candidates for ordered ministry.

- The Conference makes the Decision about candidates' commissioning and ordination.
- The Transfer and Settlement process authorizes the call or settlement of the candidate.

- Processes for ongoing and regular evaluation of the Candidacy Pathway are created.

7. Celebrate: the Church gives thanks to God for those offering to serve in ordered ministry.

- Appropriate acknowledgement and celebration takes place at all stages in the Candidacy Pathway.
- Regardless of the direction God's call takes the person, the community of faith gives thanks for God-given gifts discerned, named, and offered to the church for contributing to God's mission in the world.
- Together with the Circle of Accompaniment and the Presbytery, the home community of faith celebrates the person's response to God's call, identification of promise and suitability for candidacy for ordered ministry.
- Achievements in theological education and formation for ordered ministry are celebrated.
- Commissioning and ordination are celebrated by the church at an appropriate worship service held by the Conference.

That the 40th General Council 2009 direct the Executive of the General Council, to develop a policy based on the aforementioned policy directions and an implementation strategy, including any required revisions to *The Manual*.

REPORT OF THE TRANSFER AND SETTLEMENT REVIEW TASK GROUP**Origin:** Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services**Summary**

The 38th General Council 2003 passed the petition “to closely examine the current Transfer and Settlement process to see if it is indeed a policy that serves the current needs of the church; and that if this examination determines that the Transfer and Settlement process no longer effectively serves the need of The United Church of Canada, that the General Council act immediately to develop a new policy that will effectively serve the needs of the whole church.” (2003-08-GC38-185, ROP 2003 p.104 & p. 636). The working group of PC MEPS to accomplish this was established in 2005 and did preliminary work with the hope reporting to the 39th General Council 2006. It became clear that this was too ambitious, therefore, the group was reconstituted as a Task Group of PC MEPS through the Nominations Committee.

The Task Group studied several previous reports concerning transfer and settlement and consulted with stake holders, including Chairs of Settlement Committees, Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committees, pastoral charges that had requested settlement within the period 2002 to 2007, individuals who had requested transfer and/or settlement during that same period of time, Theological Schools and websites of other denominations.

The major observations of the Task Group were:

1. The majority accepts, is satisfied with, and is well served by transfer and settlement.
2. There is significant minority that does not accept the system nor is it well served by it.
3. There is lack of consistency in choice in that pastoral charges may choose to go to settlement but Candidates for ordination and commissioning cannot.
4. There are varied needs for both pastoral charges and individuals that require different approaches.
5. The hope in *The Manual* to provide all ministry personnel with a pastoral charge and all pastoral charges with a minister is not being accomplished now, yet there is concern that if we let go of the policy of compulsion, that situation will become worse. Most of the other denominations we researched have systems of assisting Candidates to establish a first call that are more flexible than a policy of compulsory settlement.
7. There is need to explore different ways of being church and determining the viability of the increasing number of pastoral charges that seem to need more than the part time ministry positions they can afford. Exploration of that need goes far beyond the purview of this task group.

The Task Group has two major recommendations and several that would refine the processes if the first two are accepted. The two major recommendations are:

1. Retain the Transfer and Settlement processes, but change the policy to provide the flexibility that allows Candidates the same choice that is provided to pastoral charges, and no longer require individuals to agree to accept the Transfer and Settlement system at the time they become Candidates. Instead, by February 1 of the year of anticipated ordination or commissioning they must choose transfer and settlement or call/appointment. This choice would be final for that year.

2. *The Manual*, Section 29 (g) be deleted. It states, “Candidates shall not normally be placed into Pastoral Charges or other ministry settings where they have served a Candidate Supply or Student Supply appointment, or internship, field placement, or internship. Placements shall not be arranged or assumed prior to the annual placement meeting.”

Mandate

The mandate of this task group is to, “closely examine the current Transfer and Settlement process to see if it is indeed a policy that serves the current needs of the church; and that if this examination determines that the process no longer effectively serves the need of The United Church of Canada ... to act immediately to develop a new policy that will effectively serve the needs of the whole church.” (Petition #126 GC38, 2003) (Appendix A)

In order to accomplish this, the task group was to:

1. Review previous studies and or reports that have been carried out regarding transfer and settlement;
2. Design and carry out a process for wide consultation which will include such groups as:
 - a) Conference Executives or Pastoral Relations/Settlement Committees;
 - b) Candidates and faculty of the Centre for Christian Studies and various theological colleges;
 - c) Pastoral Charges that have applied for settlement during the period 2002 to 2007; and
 - d) Persons who have applied to be settled during the period 2002 to 2007.
3. Make recommendations regarding the policies of transfer and settlement to General Council through the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS.)

Members

Dwaine Dornan - Lay - Saskatchewan (GCE member of PC-MEPS)

Bill Ford – OM – Toronto (Chair of Transfer Committee)

Glenn Morison – OM- Manitoba Northwestern Ontario

Linda Thompson - Lay - Toronto

Alison West –OM – Saskatchewan, Task Group Chair (PC-MEPS member)

Staff :

Gail Franklin, GCO, MEPS Unit (Administrative Support)

Judith Hare CPM Manitoba Northwestern Ontario (Staff Resource)

David King GCO- MEPS Unit (Staff Resource)

Joe Ramsay GCO- MEPS Unit (Staff Resource)

Task Group History

Because of the heavy work load of the MEPS Permanent Committee and Unit, the task group to deal with Petition 126 was not established until 2005. In order to move the process as quickly as possible, a sub group of five members of the permanent committee was established in hopes of completing work in order to report to the 39th General Council 2006. This group did some

preliminary planning consisting of risk analysis, determining areas in and out of scope, listing stakeholders, reviewing previous studies, and planning consultations. The chair of the Transfer Committee was invited to the second meeting, and he shared some history and other information about the work of the Transfer Committee. The task group informed him of its plans.

Both time and budget constraints made it obvious that the group would not be in a position to report to the 39th General Council 2006. Therefore, it was decided to expand the group to include persons who were not members of the permanent committee. The first attempt to add two persons was not successful. The PC-MEPS became aware of criticism suggesting that the Transfer and Settlement Review Task Group was possibly predetermining the outcome of their work. Although the original group was acting to accomplish the intent of the petition without a specific result in mind, it was decided that, not only must we work objectively, but we must be seen to work objectively. Therefore, PC-MEPS decided to rework the mandate of the task group naming two of its members and requesting Committee Member Services to recruit three others during the 2006 fall nominations process.

At its first meeting in April 2007, the above named task group reviewed the work done by the previous PC-MEPS group, including distribution of previous studies, revision of the risk analysis and refinement of the consultation plan. The methods of consultation and analysis are indicated in a separate section below.

We noted that, although the original petition used both the words, “process” and “policy,” the direction given was to “closely examine the current Transfer and Settlement process to see if it is indeed a **policy** that serves the current needs of the church.” The second directive was, “that if this examination determines that the Transfer and Settlement process no longer effectively serves the need of The United Church of Canada, that the General Council act immediately to **develop a new policy.**” Notwithstanding the difficulty in totally separating process from policy, we determined that our primary task was to examine policy and was not to change the current processes concerning Transfer and Settlement.

Background

As noted in the first ‘whereas’ clauses in Petition 126, “the current Transfer and Settlement Process, defined in *The Manual*, was designed decades ago for a church in much different circumstances than today;” It is probably safe to say that it was one of the compromises needed to bring about the union of the three original denominations. Evidence suggests that it was a system that served the church well for many years.

At its April meeting of 1978, the Executive of the General Council directed that a consultation take place to consider, “the requirement of mandatory transfer and settlement of ordinands and those to be commissioned.” (G.C. Exec. Apr. 25-28/78) According to the background given for this decision, one of the major indicators for the need of such a study was the, “experience in recent years.” “Increasing numbers of ordinands have voiced their dissatisfaction with the requirement of mandatory Transfer and Settlement at the time of ordination.”

In 1979 the Division of Ministry, Personnel and Education (MPE) reported on the results of the study. Twenty five questions had been widely circulated to stakeholders and the report included

a summary of the responses. The report dealt extensively with responses to each question, but there was no evidence of specific recommendations. The materials in the report may well have been useful for the Task Group established by the 28th General Council 1980.

The task group established in 1980 understood its mandate to be, “to present a series of systems by which the church could deploy, or in other words, order gifts and assignments for its ordinands and commissionands.” Since the task group was mandated to present multiple options, it outlined twelve possible systems. However, the task group did offer its preference for one of the last three options presented: a system in which pastoral relationships matched by the transfer and settlement process is optional for all ordered ministers; refining and improving the present system; or a system where all ordered ministers are required to be settled to the wider church twice, the first within the first 15 years of ministry. Its report had noted that, “Although we received many responses from all parts of the church and while *all* responses described problems surrounding our present policies, *none* could offer any new system by which we could assign new ordinands/ commissionands to their first placement.” the 29th General Council 1982 apparently chose to remain with what was current then, but with some amendments to the process.

The 31st General Council 1986 again mandated the Division of Ministry, Personnel and Education to, “study the transfer and settlement process in the light of a theology of call to ordered ministry...”. A task group was established by the division at its annual meeting in 1988. Interestingly, this task group re-affirmed the last quotation in the above paragraph. In its survey it requested response to four possible systems:

1. Transfer/Settlement once, minister chooses time
2. Transfer/Settlement twice, minister chooses time
3. Settlement only for all changes in pastoral relations
4. Call only for all changes in pastoral relations

Not surprisingly there was no consensus for any of the four. In fact, there were more negative responses for each of the four than there were positive responses. The greatest support appeared to be for the first with 37.83 % positive responses reported. Only the fourth represented a departure from the policy of compulsory Transfer and Settlement, and it had the fewest positive responses recorded. The task group submitted six Resolutions to the 33rd General Council 1990 suggesting changes to processes but not recommending significant change to the basic policy of compulsory Transfer and Settlement.

A major revision of the processes of Transfer and Settlement was contained in the proposal for the Unified Placement Process which was adopted by the 37th General Council 2000 through Resolution 26 (amended). Our understanding is that this Service was to be implemented by the Division of MPE in consultation with the Transfer Committee. Search of minutes of GC37, GC38, GCE of November 2000, and Division of MPE February 2001 indicate several problems may have contributed to the failure to implement the Unified Placement Service. This was a time of major reorganization in both the structures of General Council and of the General Council Office. It was also a time when there was anticipation of moving from four courts to three. The remit to accomplish that failed. Part of the proposed changes required a remit, the results of which were not known until the 38th General Council 2003. There were also concerns raised by

the Transfer Committee about lack of previous consultation. Budget and time constraints probably also played a part in deciding to delay implementation until results of the remits were known.

The wording of Remit #4 accepted by the 38th General Council 2003 was:

The Transfer Committee mandate should extend to Presbytery accountable ministries and that the primary principle which the Transfer Committee uses in determining the transfer of candidates should be the matching of skills and gifts of the candidates with the needs and gifts of the Presbytery accountable ministries.

That change was made by the Manual Committee, but the whole of the Unified Placement Process, although it has elements worthy of consideration yet, has been lost in the transitions.

Theological Rationale

The United Church of Canada acknowledges, even celebrates, variety and diversity that is spoken of in scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 12 as "... varieties of gifts ... varieties of service ... varieties of working "... given "by the same God who inspires them in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good". It is implied that that variety has resulted in, among other things, the appointment or calling of individual parts within the body to various roles and functions within the body of Christ..." some apostles... prophets... healers... (1 Corinthians 12). By likening diversity to the parts of the body, scripture holds up for us the reality that such diversity necessitates consideration of the uniqueness of each part in the 'care of the body', in so much as, while all parts make a contribution to the body, it is not the same contribution by each particular part. Moreover, while all parts require care, attention and consideration, it is not the same type of care, attention or consideration required by each. Further still, notwithstanding the fact that all parts perform a vital function necessary for the common good of the body, the parts of the whole are each manifestly different. Paul's imagery of the body also reminds us that when one part rejoices, the whole body rejoices and when one part suffers, the whole body suffers.

Acknowledging that variety and diversity, and holding before us the implications that has for the common life of the church and the processes that the church has developed over time to assist in its communal life, the church has also coupled this with a desire to ensure that the biblical principles of fairness and justice for the body and its individual parts is also evidenced by how we live out our life and develop just systems of accommodation and integration for our denomination.

At its inception, The United Church of Canada adopted a system for aligning ministers and pastoral charges that merged and embraced two systems of its founding communions - a system of "Call" from its Presbyterian branch, and a system of "placement" from its Methodist forbearers. Each system considers, to some degree and in some way, variety in gifts: variety in callings; varieties in functions, offered by Candidates and various ministries. The denomination must seek a just balance when considering all parts of the body in its care.

The report "Unified Placement Process" (GC 37, 2000) acknowledges the biblical roots of the concept of "call" to ministry for all people. It also recognises that:

“The church designates those who have been ‘specifically called’ to various ministries ... While ... aspects of call rest solidly on biblical traditions, they are also articulated through the tradition of the church. ‘The church helps to mediate, shape, test and enable the fulfilment of God’s call to individuals...’ (Report of the Task Force on Ministry, 1977)

Throughout history, the United Church has continually sought to clarify ‘call’ and the ‘response’ of individuals and the church. The 33rd General Council 1990 adopted this statement:

In calling people into ministry, the Holy Spirit works in a variety of ways ... Ministry is not the responsibility of the Order of Ministry alone, but of all the people of God... It is important to acknowledge that an individual’s gifts and the Church’s needs should both be considered in responding to God’s claim. While suitability for ministry is not determined by family situation or finance, an individual’s readiness to respond to God’s claim cannot help but be influenced by one’s life situation. The task, then, for the Church and the person is to discern in what context the person’s ministry may most faithfully be exercised. (Theology of Vocation, 33rd General Council Record of Proceedings, p. 373)

Procedures

When the task group was first formed from members of the Permanent Committee on Ministry Employment and Services, (PC-MEPS), staff led the task group through three very helpful exercises. First we looked at the mandate and listed issues that should be considered in scope and those that should be out of scope. Second we did a risk analysis which helped us design our process. Third we listed who we considered to be stake holders in the issue at hand. Later, when the task group was reconstituted, this work was reviewed and edited slightly. This review provided guidance for the group in designing its consultations. The use of church-wide focus groups for broader consultation, which were part of the original plan, was not possible due to financial constraints.

The chair compiled a list of sections of *The Manual*, that refer to transfer or settlement or both (see Appendix B.) In addition, members had been provided with copies of reports from 1979, 1982, and 1986 regarding Transfer and Settlement so that we could have more background as we approached our task. As well as those documents, we read the 1993 Paper entitled “Anticipating Transfer and Settlement”, which had been prepared by the Transfer Committee, and the 2000 Report to General Council entitled, “Unified Placement Process.”

The chair of the Transfer Committee accepted our invitation to the September 2005 meeting of the task group. He provided more background for better understanding of the process.

Several factors led to expanding the group beyond members of PC-MEPS. Most significant was the fact that we had not gone beyond the permanent committee because we thought that, if we began immediately, we could do the work in time to report to the 39th General Council 2006. It

became clear that that was not possible, so we sought wider representation through Committee Member Services.

After reviewing the work of the original group, the newly constituted group decided to consult first with the Conference Personnel Ministers for assistance in seeking feedback from stakeholders. We then sent survey forms to:

- Chairs of Settlement Committees; (Appendix C)
- Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committees; (Appendix D)
- Pastoral charges that had requested settlement within the period 2002 to 2007; (Appendix E)
- Individuals who had requested transfer and/or settlement during that same period of time. (Appendix F)

Some questions required a rating response of 1 to 5. One indicates 'very ineffective' and 5 'very effective'

Principals of all United Church theological schools were later invited to share whatever information or wisdom they might have concerning transfer and settlement and its affect on students. (Appendix G)

The Task Group also wanted to know what policies other denominations used; therefore, we researched the following:

- The Anglican Church of Canada;
- The Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec;
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- The Free Methodist Church in Canada;
- The Presbyterian Church in Canada; and
- The Uniting Church in Australia.

Results

The Task Group was aware that the transfer and settlement process has two parts. All candidates experience the same transfer process conducted by the General Council Transfer Committee. The settlement process varies significantly from conference to conference. In the design of our questionnaire, we did not solicit evaluation of the two parts separately, but rather, of the entire transfer and settlement experience. However, the task group did receive distinct comments relating to both the transfer and the settlement processes.

Six (6) of the thirteen (13) Conference Settlement Committees responded to our survey. Five (5) of them provided numbers indicating that, in those conferences in the period 2002 to 2007, two hundred and sixteen (216) pastoral charges had requested settlement and one hundred and forty-one (141) had received settlement. In total sixty-five percent (65%) of the charges requesting settlement were settled and thirty-five (35%) were not. Percentages ranged from a high of ninety-two (92%) to a low of fifty-six percent (56%). Clearly, the major reason for settlements not occurring is lack of the required number of Candidates. Most Candidates who requested settlement were settled. For those who were not settled, limiting conditions or lack of appropriate fit were the reasons given. A few pastoral charges that did not receive settlement were later able

to call. Many received appointments, and many, particularly part time vacancies, remained vacant.

Four (4) of the Settlement Committees rated the process/policy as effective (either 4 or 5.) One rated it as 3 because some find it very positive and others very negative.

Thirty-two (32) of ninety-one (91) Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committees responded. (see Appendix H). Five (5) rated the process/policy as very effective, sixteen (16) as effective, seven (7) neutral, and four (4) ineffective. In other words, sixty-six per cent (66%) or a majority, rate it highly, and thirty-four per cent (34%) are less than enthusiastic. The majority of the comments related to the process, as opposed to the policy. Most were positive although there are a variety of concerns that relate to both process and policy. Limiting conditions result in many difficulties as do part time vacancies. Another general area of concern relates to the clarity and timeliness of paper work, including Needs Assessments.

Forty-two (42) pastoral charges responded to our survey representing ninety-two (92) settlements (see Appendix I for summary.) This group was the most positive regarding the process/policy. There were eighty-eight (88) responses about efficacy. Seventy-six per cent (76%) rated them as four (4) or five (5), while twenty-four per cent (24%) rated three or lower. Ten (10) of the settlements were for commissionands, one (1) was listed as other, and the other eighty-one (81) were for ordinands. Although the number of commissionands was too low to draw absolute conclusions, there appeared to be little difference in the rating percentages between settlements for ordinands and commissionands, except there were no ratings of three (3).

There were responses from one hundred and thirty-seven (137) individuals who had requested settlement in the years 2002 to 2007, all of whom had been settled. (see Appendix J for summary.) The level of dissatisfaction in this group was the highest of all groups surveyed. Forty-nine percent (49%) were satisfied to some degree, twenty-nine percent (29%) were dissatisfied and twenty-two percent (22%) were neutral. Diaconal ministers, although fewer in number than those who were ordained, gave more negative responses as a group. Only two (2) of ten (10) rated efficacy at 4 or 5, two (2) at 3 and six (6) lower.

Thirty-six (36) of the settlement pastoral relationships, reported by individual survey respondents, have since ended. Ten (10) of them ended in less than three years, sixteen (16) in three years, and ten (10) after more than three years. Twenty-nine (29) are continuing beyond three years.

There were some differences among the conferences. Clearly the level of individual satisfaction is the greatest in the Maritime Conference followed, to a lesser extent, by Saskatchewan. The lowest level appeared to be in Manitoba Northwestern Ontario. The lowest level of pastoral charge satisfaction was in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Appendix K lists specific comments about the process/policy from individuals categorized by the rating identified by the individuals. It is interesting to note that even those who rated the process/policy as either four or five had negative comments, suggesting changes are necessary.

In response to our request for wisdom from theological schools we received five responses. One indicated complete satisfaction with transfer and settlement process/policy. Their only suggestion was that it would be an improvement to have all the meetings at the same time. Another indicated a keen desire to see change moving in the direction of “post-testamur apprenticeship.” Three indicated a degree of satisfaction in that the system has and is serving many well. At the same time they identified a number of concerns and advocated a more flexible system. All three also gave specific examples of persons who were discouraged from candidacy because of the process/policy. Our task group had speculated about this but had no hard evidence until we received these responses.

In The Anglican Church of Canada, practices and procedures are established by the specific diocese. Candidates are Candidates of a specific diocese. Normally, ordinands are assigned to a curacy by the bishop following ordination.

Ordination. in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, “is the right and privilege of the local congregation.” There is no centralized placement procedure.

The final step in candidacy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada consists of a written examination and interview by the Examining Committee of the Candidate’s Synod. If this “Final Evaluation” is successful, the “Examining Committee” recommends the Candidate to the Synod Council and the bishop recommends the Candidate for call.

The Free Methodist Church in Canada, through the Ministerial Guidance and Placement Committee, appoints pastors to local churches.

Candidates in the Presbyterian Church in Canada may seek a call only after receiving a letter of permission from the college approximately three months before anticipated successful graduation. Upon graduation with testamur and receipt of a presbytery approved call, the Candidate may be ordained.

The Uniting Church in Australia uses a call system. The power of a congregation, Presbytery, or Synod to call may be delegated in whole or in part to an Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements.

Conclusions

1. Clearly the majority of both individuals and groups consulted accepts, is satisfied with, and is well served by transfer and settlement.
2. It is also clear that there is a significant minority that does not accept the system, nor is it well served by it.
3. There is lack of consistency. Pastoral charges may choose between requesting settlement or issuing a call, while Candidates are not given the choice to accept a call.
4. There are varied needs for both pastoral charges and individuals that require different approaches.
5. The hope expressed in *The Manual* - to provide all ministry personnel with a pastoral charge and all pastoral charges with a minister - is not being accomplished now, yet there is concern that if we let go of the policy of compulsion, that situation will become worse.

6. Most of the other denominations we researched have systems of assisting Candidates to establish a first call that are more flexible than a policy of compulsory settlement
7. There is need to explore different ways of being church and determining the viability of the increasing number of pastoral charges that seem to need more than the part time ministry positions they can afford. Exploration of that need goes far beyond the purview of this task group.

Recommendations

The task group recommends to the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services that:

1. Retain the Transfer and Settlement processes, but change the policy to provide the flexibility that allows Candidates the same choice that is provided to pastoral charges, and no longer require individuals to agree to accept the Transfer and Settlement system at the time they become Candidates. Instead, by February 1 of the year of anticipated ordination or commissioning they must choose transfer and settlement or call/appointment. This choice would be final for that year.
2. *The Manual*, Section 29 (g) be deleted. It states, "Candidates shall not normally be placed into Pastoral Charges or other ministry settings where they have served a Candidate Supply or Student Supply appointment, or internship, field placement, or internship. Placements shall not be arranged or assumed prior to the annual placement meeting."
3. Since candidates will now have the option of pursuing a call, the Transfer Committee will no longer use the formal term "limiting conditions." The process will continue to honour reasonable accommodation, especially, but not exclusively, related to human rights concerns.
4. An incentive to choosing transfer and settlement be established; for example, a General Council funded financial incentive for each of the first three years.
5. Such changes take effect for commission and ordained in the year 2011.
6. Such policy changes be evaluated, to determine whether they meet the diverse needs of the church, following five years of implementation.
7. The results of such an evaluation be reported to the following General Council.
8. The PC-MEPS initiate and encourage the communication and integration of this report with related work being done through the Executive of the General Council.
9. If a remit is required to implement these recommendations, that the results of the remit be implemented immediately upon receipt of the Decision.

GCE 10 – Transfer and Settlement Review**Origin:** Executive of the General Council

Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services

Financial Implications:**Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:**

It is proposed:

That the 40th General Council 2009 amend policies related to the Transfer and Settlement of ordinands and commissionands as follows:

- 1. Retain the Transfer and Settlement processes, but change the policy to provide the flexibility that allows Candidates the same choice that is provided to pastoral charges, and no longer require individuals to agree to accept the Transfer and Settlement system at the time they become Candidates. Instead, by February 1 of the year of anticipated ordination or commissioning they must choose transfer and settlement or call/appointment. This choice would be final for that year.**
- 2. Since candidates will now have the option of pursuing a call, the Transfer Committee will no longer use the formal term “limiting conditions.” The process will continue to honour reasonable accommodation, especially, but not exclusively, related to human rights concerns.**
- 3. Incentives to choosing transfer and settlement be explored.**
- 4. Such policy changes be evaluated, to determine whether they meet the diverse needs of the church, following five and ten years of implementation. The results of such an evaluation be reported to the following General Council.**
- 5. The Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services initiate and encourage the communication and integration of this report with related work being done through the Executive of the General Council.**

And further, that the 40th General Council 2009, authorise a remit to test the will of the church in respect to these amended policies and that the results of the remit be implemented immediately upon approval by the required majority of Presbyteries.

Authority and Actions

The 38th General Council 2003 passed the petition “*to closely examine the current Transfer and Settlement process to see if it is indeed a policy that serves the current needs of the church; and that if this examination determines that the Transfer and Settlement process no longer effectively serves the need of The United Church of Canada, that the General Council act immediately to develop a new policy that will effectively serve the needs of the whole church.*” (2003-08-GC38-185, ROP 2003 p.104 & p. 636). The working group of Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC MEPS) to accomplish this was established in 2005 and did preliminary work with the hope reporting to the 39th General Council 2006. It became clear that this was too ambitious; therefore, the group was reconstituted as a task group of PC-MEPS through the Nominations Committee.

The task group studied several previous reports concerning transfer and settlement, and consulted with stake holders, including chairs of Settlement Committees, Presbytery Pastoral

Relations Committees, pastoral charges that had requested settlement within the period 2002 to 2007, individuals who had requested transfer and/or settlement during that same period of time, theological schools and websites of other denominations.

Background

As noted in the first ‘whereas’ clauses in Petition 126, “the current Transfer and Settlement Process, defined in *The Manual*, was designed decades ago for a church in much different circumstances than today;” It is probably safe to say that it was one of the compromises needed to bring about the union of the three original denominations. Evidence suggests that it was a system that served the church well for many years.

At its April meeting of 1978, the Executive of the General Council directed that a consultation take place to consider, “*the requirement of mandatory transfer and settlement of ordinands and those to be commissioned.*” (G.C. Exec. Apr. 25-28/78) According to the background given for this decision, one of the major indicators for the need of such a study was the, “experience in recent years.” “Increasing numbers of ordinands have voiced their dissatisfaction with the requirement of mandatory Transfer and Settlement at the time of ordination.”

In 1979 the Division of Ministry, Personnel and Education (MPE) reported on the results of the study. Twenty five questions had been widely circulated to stakeholders and the report included a summary of the responses. The report dealt extensively with responses to each question, but there was no evidence of specific recommendations. The materials in the report may well have been useful for the task group established by the 28th General Council 1980.

The task group established in 1980 understood its mandate to be, “*to present a series of systems by which the church could deploy, or in other words, order gifts and assignments for its ordinands and commissionands.*” Since the task group was mandated to present multiple options, it outlined twelve possible systems. However, the task group did offer its preference for one of the last three options presented: a system in which pastoral relationships matched by the transfer and settlement process is optional for all ordered ministers; refining and improving the present system; or a system where all ordered ministers are required to be settled to the wider church twice, the first within the first 15 years of ministry. Its report had noted that, “*Although we received many responses from all parts of the church and while **all** responses described problems surrounding our present policies, **none** could offer any new system by which we could assign new ordinands/ commissionands to their first placement.*” The 29th General Council 1982 apparently chose to remain with what was current then, but with some amendments to the process.

The 31st General Council 1986 again mandated the Division of Ministry, Personnel and Education to, “*study the transfer and settlement process in the light of a theology of call to ordered ministry...*”. A task group was established by the division at its annual meeting in 1988. Interestingly, this task group re-affirmed the last quotation in the above paragraph. In its survey it requested response to four possible systems:

1. Transfer/Settlement once, minister chooses time
2. Transfer/Settlement twice, minister chooses time

3. Settlement only for all changes in pastoral relations
4. Call only for all changes in pastoral relations

Not surprisingly there was no consensus for any of the four. In fact, there were more negative responses for each of the four than there were positive responses. The greatest support appeared to be for the first with 37.83 % positive responses reported. Only the fourth represented a departure from the policy of compulsory Transfer and Settlement, and it had the fewest positive responses recorded. The task group submitted six Resolutions to the 33rd General Council 1990 suggesting changes to processes but not recommending significant change to the basic policy of compulsory Transfer and Settlement.

A major revision of the processes of Transfer and Settlement was contained in the proposal for the Unified Placement Process which was adopted by the 37th General Council 2000 through Resolution 26 (amended). Our understanding is that this Service was to be implemented by the Division of MPE in consultation with the Transfer Committee. Search of minutes of GC37, GC38, GCE of November 2000, and Division of MPE February 2001 indicate several problems may have contributed to the failure to implement the Unified Placement Service. This was a time of major reorganization in both the structures of General Council and of the General Council Office. It was also a time when there was anticipation of moving from four courts to three. The remit to accomplish that failed. Part of the proposed changes required a remit, the results of which were not known until the 38th General Council 2003. There were also concerns raised by the Transfer Committee about lack of previous consultation. Budget and time constraints probably also played a part in deciding to delay implementation until results of the remits were known.

The wording of Remit #4 accepted by the 38th General Council 2003 was

The Transfer Committee mandate should extend to Presbytery accountable ministries and that the primary principle which the Transfer Committee uses in determining the transfer of candidates should be the matching of skills and gifts of the candidates with the needs and gifts of the Presbytery accountable ministries.

That change was made by the Manual Committee, but the whole of the Unified Placement Process, although it has elements worthy of consideration yet, has been lost in the transitions.

Rationale

1. The majority accepts, is satisfied with, and is well served by transfer and settlement.
2. There is significant minority that does not accept the system nor is it well served by it.
3. There is lack of consistency in choice in that pastoral charges may choose to go to settlement but most candidates cannot.
4. There are varied needs for both pastoral charges and individuals that require different approaches.
5. The hope in *The Manual* to provide all ministry personnel with a pastoral charge and all pastoral charges with a minister is not being accomplished now, yet there is concern that if we let go of the policy of compulsion, that situation will become worse.

6. Most of the other denominations whose websites were consulted have systems of assisting candidates to establish a first call that are more flexible than a policy of compulsory settlement.
7. There is need to explore different ways of being church and determining the viability of the increasing number of pastoral charges that seem to need more than the part time ministry positions they can afford. Exploration of that need goes far beyond the purview of this task group.
8. There are certain hardships and costs associated with relocating a household as a result of transfer and settlement. Some recognition and accommodation (“incentives”) should be provided.

M&O 5 – Review of Requirements for a Discernment Committee process in relation to an Individual's call to Ministry**Origin:** Montreal & Ottawa Conference, transmit with concurrence

Rideau Park United Church

Ottawa Presbytery Action: Transmit with concurrence

Financial Implications:**Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:**

It is proposed:

That the 40th General Council 2009 direct the Executive of the General Council to review the requirements for the Discernment Committee process, particularly the requirements that Presbytery representatives must be in place and call the first meeting in order for the process to begin, and the length of the process.

Background

Section 22 of the *The Manual* stipulates that a Discernment Committee must meet with an Inquirer (a person who believes they have been called to ministry) periodically over a period of 12 months, and that the Discernment Committee must include one or two representatives of the Presbytery who shall call its first meeting. The last part of these requirements cannot always be met in a timely way. Lengthy delays, even a delay of a year, in commencing a discernment process can result when a Presbytery cannot keep up with the demand for representatives on Discernment Committees. It is important for the Inquirer to be able to organize and plan enrolment in theology school and their internship according to a particular timeline, yet this is very difficult to do when a significant delay happens. A delay in the start of the discernment process, even by a couple of months, can mean that at least one term if not a year of study or study and work, is missed. This can be particularly problematic when an inquirer has dependants to consider, must relocate in order to attend school, and/or has already planned an exit from an existing career. It is appropriate to ask Inquirers to go through a process of discernment with other members of their church and for Presbytery to exercise oversight of the process. Given the potential for delay in beginning the Discernment Committee meeting process when Presbytery cannot meet the demand for representatives in a timely way, it would be useful to review the requirement that Presbytery representatives be appointed to and call the first meeting of the Discernment Committee. It would be useful to consider also whether there should be more flexibility with regard to the length of the discernment period, e.g., by stipulating an eight to twelve month process.

M&O 5 – Révision des exigences du processus du comité de discernement d'un appel au ministère

Origin: Montreal & Ottawa Conference
Rideau Park United Church

Décision du Consistoire d'Ottawa: Approbation et transmission

Financial Implications:

Staffing Implications:

Source of Funding:

Que le 40e Conseil général 2009 demande au comité Formation et vocations ministérielles, Ministères pastoraux, de présence et de formation du Conseil général, de revoir les exigences du processus du comité de discernement, particulièrement en ce qui concerne la nécessité que les représentants-es du consistoire soient nommés-es et convoquent la première rencontre pour que la démarche soit officiellement entamée, ainsi qu'en ce qui a trait à la durée d'une telle démarche.

Contexte

- La section 22 du *Manuel* stipule qu'un comité de discernement doit rencontrer un-e postulant-e (une personne qui croit être appelée au ministère) régulièrement sur une période de douze mois, et qu'un tel comité doit inclure un-e ou deux représentants-es du consistoire qui convoqueront la rencontre initiale. Ce dernier élément ne peut souvent se réaliser dans un délai convenable. Des délais considérables, jusqu'à un an, peuvent survenir avant d'amorcer la démarche lorsqu'un consistoire ne peut fournir de représentants-es sur ces comités de discernement.
- Il est important pour les postulants-es de pouvoir se préparer et de planifier leur inscription dans une école de théologie ainsi que leur stage selon un échéancier défini : la chose s'avère ardue lorsque des délais importants s'accumulent. Un délai pour le début du processus de discernement, même de quelques mois, peut signifier qu'au moins une session sinon une année complète d'étude, ou d'étude et de travail, est perdue. La chose est des plus problématiques particulièrement pour les personnes qui doivent tenir compte des personnes dont elles ont la charge, qui doivent déménager pour poursuivre leurs études, ou qui ont déjà planifié leur retrait de leur carrière actuelle.
- Il est approprié de demander aux postulants-es de compléter un processus de discernement avec d'autres membres de leur paroisse et que ce processus soit supervisé par le consistoire. En tenant compte des possibilités de délai avant d'amorcer la démarche lorsqu'un consistoire ne peut fournir de représentants-es dans un laps de temps convenable, il serait pertinent de revoir l'exigence que des représentants-es du consistoire soient nommés-es et convoquent la première rencontre du comité de discernement. Il serait pertinent aussi d'évaluer s'il n'y a pas avantage à plus de flexibilité quant à la durée de la période de discernement, ex. en mentionnant une démarche de huit à douze mois.

PRIORITY SETTING**HAM 2 - A More Holistic United Church of Canada****Origin:** Hamilton Conference, with concurrence**Financial Implications:****Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:**

Therefore the Conference proposes

That the 40th General Council 2009:

1. **Affirms the first statement (We long for a deeper relationship with God) in the Call to Purpose: A Message From the Church to the Church as a guiding principle towards becoming a more holistic church in our next generation, seeking deeper relationship with God as we continue in missio dei, the sending God's mission of bringing good news and blessing to humanity.**
2. **Directs that current and future priority setting, planning and programs of the United Church of Canada, be clearly informed by the first statement in the Call to Purpose, with appropriate allocation of resources and calling, training and equipping leaders for the work of a more holistic United Church of Canada.**

Background

The 39th General Council 2006 in Thunder Bay was an important meeting, with the focus of work to be the discernment of a message of purpose for The United Church of Canada for its long-term future. By the end of its meeting, the 39th General Council had developed the document entitled "Call to Purpose: A Message from the Church to the Church." Although brief, one to two pages long, it is intended to be a guide for the future of the United Church for the setting of its priorities, plans, programs and actions. The Call to Purpose makes four statements, each with some elaboration and explanation, and ends with a prayer. These are the statements:

Call to Purpose: A Message From the Church to the Church**1. We long for a deeper relationship with God.**

We remember that we are created in love, by God, for God. We are called to devote time and energy listening to God's voice, reflecting on our life in Christ.

We want to learn and lean into spiritual practices of discernment, silence and theological reflection.

2. We long for deeper connection with one another.**3. We acknowledge the brokenness, pain, and fear we carry.****4. We believe that our spirituality and our prophetic voice spring from one source and are lived in one body.**

Following the 39th General Council meeting, the Executive of the General Council constituted a Priorities Task Group directed to lead a process to set priorities for the triennium at the May 2007 meeting of the Executive. The work of the Task Group was based on the Call to Purpose. The Executive (a) affirmed the Call to Purpose as a statement of the church to the church for determining the allocation of General Council resources, and (b) directed that planning for the period 2008-2010 give priority in four areas, specifically that which:

- Deepens our experience of intentional and authentic communities; stretches us to beyond the familiar expressions and concerns of our church; with particular concern for our commitment to youth and young adult ministry, becoming an intercultural church; and living with respect in creation;
- Supports and develops congregational ministries;
- Supports and empowers ministry personnel;
- Addresses the church's brokenness in the relationships with aboriginal peoples and moving towards healing and building right relations.

At its June 2007 meeting, the Executive approved the detailed planning document "Plans towards 2010" for implementation. The following themes in the document were stated to "inform all the priorities and in fact all the work of the church":

- Congregational Ministry
- Ministry Personnel
- Healing and Right Relations with First Nations Peoples
- Intercultural Ministry
- Care and Creation
- Youth & Young Adult Ministry

The 39th General Council devoted a great deal of time, effort and thought to the development of A Call to Purpose for the United Church. The Executive then moved diligently and swiftly to priority setting, planning and action. However, both the priority setting and planning by the Executive, as indicated above, are incomplete. Neither of these processes incorporated or made reference to the first statement in the Call to Purpose. If the plan design omits essentials from the General Council's guide for the long term future of the church, then it is inevitable that priorities, resource allocation and implementation will be flawed. Even more seriously, a long term vision for the church to take us into the next generation and beyond will not come about. Responses to immediate urgencies and voices of interest groups in the church system will consume the time, imagination and resources that could be devoted to how our church may be transformed.

Given the major purpose of the 39th meeting of the General Council and the first statement in the Call to Purpose, it is neither logical nor accurate to conclude in "Plans Toward 2010" that the six themes named in the plan, from Congregational Ministry to Youth and Young Adult Ministry, adequately "inform all the priorities and in fact all the work of the church." The first and greatest priority is missing.

Therefore, this proposal is submitted to the 40th General Council 2009 for the Council to ensure that the work begun by the 39th General Council 2006 with the Call to Purpose continues, and that the first statement in the Call to Purpose be incorporated in further priority setting, planning, programs and action.

M&O 11 - Maintaining our Justice and Global Commitments**Origin:** Montreal & Ottawa Conference, transmit with concurrence**Financial Implications:****Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:**

It is proposed

That the 40th General Council 2009:

- 1. affirm as a mission priority our engagement in seeking justice in Canada and with our Global partners.**
- 2. direct the Executive of the General Council to ensure that, given the significant reductions in financial support in the 2008-2010 triennial, there will be no further reductions in the next triennial to**
 - a. Mission Support Grants to congregations and community ministries in Canada**
 - b. grants to Global Partners and the work of overseas personnel**
 - c. staffing and program budget of the Justice, Global & Ecumenical Relations Unit (JGER)**

Background:

We believe the Spirit has consistently led the United Church to take a public stand for justice on human rights, peace, refugee, economic, and other issues. Our commitment to justice advocacy and global mission that forms and challenges us is central to our national identity as a denomination. Such engagement has led us to deeper understanding of the Gospel imperatives and the ongoing presence of Christ, the still-suffering servant among the poor and marginalized.

The Executive of the General Council decisions taken in June 2007 reduced in 2009 the Mission Support Grants to congregations and community ministries in Canada by \$900,000, and the grants to global partners and the work of overseas personnel by \$900,000 (each reduction is 15% of the 2008 amount). These decisions have significantly affected the historical priorities of The United Church of Canada and have resulted in a significant reduction of the church's involvement in social justice advocacy.

Diminishing grants to global partners and the work of overseas personnel reduces support at a time when developing countries are the most vulnerable to the effects of global crises. We are committed as a church to understand the meaning of "Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire" and yet opportunities for learning about mission and faith from our partners are being threatened.

There has been a groundswell of protest and outcry throughout the church against the Executive of the General Council decisions that eliminated 6 positions in the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit on Race Relations, Refugee and Immigration Advocacy, Ecological

Justice, Human Rights, Peace, Economic Justice and Social Wellbeing. Although 2 positions were created to address some of these concerns, there has been a serious loss in our ability as a church to maintain direct involvement in social justice advocacy. It was initially hoped that some of these engagements and educational work would be carried out through our participation in the ecumenical coalition Kairos. However, in the past 6 months, Kairos had to make serious budget cuts that have eliminated the Anti-Poverty Fund and 5 program positions that deeply affect their capacity to engage in social justice education and advocacy.

M&O 11 - Poursuite de nos engagements pour la justice internationale**Origin:** Montreal & Ottawa Conference**Financial Implications:****Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:****Que le 40e Conseil général :**

- 1. déclare comme une priorité missionnaire notre engagement pour la justice tant au Canada qu'avec nos partenaires internationaux.**
- 2. demande à l'Exécutif du Conseil général que, compte tenu des importantes coupures opérées pour la période triennale 2008-2010, il n'y ait aucune autre réduction pour les prochaines trois années dans :**
 - **les octrois du Soutien à la mission aux paroisses et aux ministères communautaires au Canada;**
 - **les octrois aux partenaires internationaux et pour le travail du personnel outremer;**
 - **le personnel et le budget d'opération de l'Unité Justice, mondialisation et relations œcuméniques (JGER).**

Contexte :

Nous croyons que l'Esprit a dirigé de façon soutenue l'Église Unie l'amenant à prendre publiquement position en faveur de la justice à l'égard des droits humains, de la paix, des réfugiés, de l'économie et d'autres enjeux de société. Notre engagement en faveur de la justice et de la mission mondiale nous façonne et nous relance tout à la fois, il est au cœur de notre identité nationale comme confession chrétienne. Un tel engagement nous a conduits à une compréhension plus complète des exigences de l'Évangile et de la présence continue du Christ, toujours Serviteur souffrant parmi les pauvres et les marginalisés.

En juin 2007, l'Exécutif du Conseil général a décidé de réduire les octrois du Soutien à la mission aux paroisses et ministères communautaires du Canada de 900 000\$, et les octrois aux partenaires internationaux et pour le travail du personnel outremer d'un autre 900 000\$ (15% de moins que le montant alloué en 2008 dans chacun des cas). Ces décisions ont entaché les priorités historiques de l'Église Unie du Canada et ont eu comme incidence une diminution significative de l'implication de l'Église dans la promotion de la justice sociale.

Des octrois décroissant aux partenaires internationaux et pour le personnel outremer diminuent notre appui au moment même où les pays en développement sont les plus vulnérables aux effets de la crise mondiale. Nous sommes engagés comme Église à comprendre ce que signifie « Vivre avec foi au sein de l'Empire » et pourtant nous mettons en péril les occasions d'en apprendre de nos partenaires sur la mission et la foi.

Une vague de protestation et d'indignation s'est soulevée à travers toute l'Église face à ces décisions de l'Exécutif du Conseil général d'éliminer 6 postes de l'Unité Justice, mondialisation et relations œcuméniques (JGER) : relations raciales, droit des réfugiés et immigration, justice

écologique, droits humains, paix, justice économique et bien-être social. Bien que 2 postes aient été créés pour reprendre certains de ces dossiers, il en résulte une perte sèche dans la capacité de notre Église à poursuivre son implication directe dans la promotion de la justice sociale. À l'origine nous espérions que certains engagements sur le terrain et une partie du travail d'éducation se poursuivraient à travers notre participation dans la coalition œcuménique Kairos. Toutefois, dans les derniers 6 mois, Kairos a dû effectuer des coupures budgétaires importantes qui ont aboli le fonds anti-pauvreté de même que 5 postes d'animation, amputant ainsi sévèrement sa capacité d'intervention pour l'éducation et la promotion de la justice sociale.

Décision de l'assemblée recommandée :

Que le Synode Montréal et Ottawa approuve et transmette cette proposition au Conseil général.

M&O 14 – General Council Processes**Origin:** Montreal & Ottawa Conference, transmit with concurrence**Financial Implications:****Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:**

It is proposed:

That the 40th General Council 2009 endorse the affirmations adopted by the General Council Executive in May of 2008, namely,

- 1. General Council discerns purpose, vision and direction that give expression to the mission of the Church**
- 2. The Executive of the General Council clarifies, deepens, and prioritizes the General Council work associated with the mission of the Church within the resource capabilities of the General Council**
- 3. General Secretary, General Council develops the operational plan and budget for the General Council responsibilities in living the Church's mission, for decision by the Executive of the General Council**
- 4. Recognize that discernment is an essential posture and practice of the General Council. We discern the way and will of God in order to live faithfully, to establish missional priorities, and to allocate resources. We discern the way and will of God through prayerfully attending to the voice of the Spirit, the voices within and beyond our faith communities, the gospel story revealed in Scripture, our histories and traditions, and the wisdom of creation. Recognizing that the large size of the group implies particular challenges, we affirm the importance of continued refinement of our discernment practices and special efforts in training. This should include a well-specified process for feedback leading to decision.**

And that the 40th General Council 2009 clarify the intent of the affirmations by including the word "priorities" following the word "vision" when describing the work of General Council such that it reads General Council discerns purpose, vision, priorities and direction that give expression to the mission of the Church.

Background:

In May of 2008, the Executive of the General Council, in considering the Principles for the Planning of the 40th General Council 2009, affirmed that the general framework for the work of the General Council Offices is as follows

- General Council discerns purpose, vision and direction that give expression to the mission of the Church
- The Executive of the General Council clarifies, deepens, and prioritizes the General Council works associated with the mission of the Church within the resource capabilities of the General Council

- General Secretary, General Council develops the operational plan and budget for the General Council responsibilities in living the Church's mission, for decision by the Executive of the General Council

In May of 2008, the Executive of the General Council, in considering the Principles for the Planning of the 40th General Council 2009, affirmed that discernment is an essential posture and practice of the General Council. We discern the way and will of God in order to live faithfully, to establish missional priorities, and to allocate resources. We discern the way and will of God through prayerfully attending to the voice of the Spirit, the voices within and beyond our faith communities, the gospel story revealed in Scripture, our histories and traditions, and the wisdom of creation. Recognizing that the large size of the group implies particular challenges, we affirm the importance of continued refinement of our discernment practices and special efforts in training. This should include a well-specified process for feedback leading to decision.

The M&O Conference believes that it is important to add the word "priorities" following the word "vision" in describing the work of General Council and General Council Executive

M&O 14 – Processus du Conseil général**Origin:** Montreal & Ottawa Conference**Financial Implications:****Staffing Implications:****Source of Funding:**

Que le 40e Conseil général fasse siennes les déclarations adoptées lors de l'Exécutif du Conseil général de mai 2008, à savoir :

- **que le Conseil général fasse un discernement du but, de la vision et de la direction qui expriment la mission de l'Église;**
- **que l'Exécutif du Conseil général clarifie, approfondisse et établisse des priorités pour le travail du Conseil général en lien avec la mission de l'Église selon les ressources disponibles au Conseil général;**
- **que la secrétaire générale du Conseil général élabore un plan de travail et un budget conformes aux responsabilités du Conseil général d'actualiser la mission de l'Église par les décisions de l'Exécutif du Conseil général;**
- **qu'il reconnaisse que la perspective et la pratique du discernement sont essentielles au Conseil général. Nous discernons le chemin et la volonté de Dieu afin de vivre avec foi, d'établir des priorités de mission et de répartir adéquatement les ressources. Nous discernons le chemin et la volonté de Dieu en écoutant dans la prière la voix de l'Esprit, les voix au sein et par-delà nos communautés de foi, la trame de l'Évangile révélée dans l'Écriture, dans notre histoire et nos traditions, et dans la sagesse de la création. Conscients du défi que pose le nombre de personnes rassemblées pour ce faire, nous reconnaissons l'importance d'améliorer continuellement nos pratiques de discernement et nos efforts de formation. Cela implique aussi un processus bien étayé de rétroaction (feedback) dans la prise de décision.**

Et que le 40e Conseil général clarifie l'intention de ces déclarations en incluant le terme « priorités » à la suite du mot « vision » dans la description du travail du Conseil général qui se lirait alors ainsi : « Le Conseil général fait un discernement du but, de la vision des priorités, et de la direction qui expriment la mission de l'Église. »

Contexte :

Attendu qu'en mai 2008 l'Exécutif du Conseil général, réfléchissant aux principes à considérer dans la planification du 40e Conseil général 2009, a déclaré que le cadre d'ensemble du travail des différents paliers du Conseil général est le suivant :

- Le Conseil général fait un discernement du but, de la vision et de la direction qui expriment la mission de l'Église.
- L'Exécutif du Conseil général clarifie, approfondit et établit des priorités pour le travail du Conseil général en lien avec la mission de l'Église selon les ressources disponibles au Conseil général.

- La secrétaire générale du Conseil général élabore un plan de travail et un budget conformes aux responsabilités du Conseil général d'actualiser la mission de l'Église par les décisions de l'Exécutif du Conseil général.

Et attendu qu'en mai 2008 l'Exécutif du Conseil général, réfléchissant aux principes à considérer dans la planification du 40e Conseil général 2009 a déclaré : « que la perspective et la pratique du discernement sont essentielles au Conseil général. Nous discernons le chemin et la volonté de Dieu afin de vivre avec foi, d'établir des priorités de mission et de répartir adéquatement les ressources. Nous discernons le chemin et la volonté de Dieu en écoutant dans la prière la voix de l'Esprit, les voix au sein et par-delà nos communautés de foi, la trame de l'Évangile révélée dans l'Écriture, dans notre histoire et nos traditions, et dans la sagesse de la création. Conscients du défi que pose le nombre de personnes rassemblées pour ce faire, nous reconnaissons l'importance d'améliorer continuellement nos pratiques de discernement et nos efforts de formation. Cela implique aussi un processus bien étayé de rétroaction (feedback) dans la prise de décision. »

Et attendu que le Synode Montréal et Ottawa croit qu'il est important d'ajouter le terme « priorités » à la suite du mot « vision » pour décrire le travail du Conseil général et de l'Exécutif du Conseil général.

Décision proposée à l'assemblée :

Que le Synode Montréal et Ottawa approuve et transmette la proposition au Conseil général.

Une Vision pour les Ministères en français dans l'Église Unie du Canada

Origin: Unité des Ministères en français (UMiF)

Rapport: «*Les Temps sont favorables...*»

« *L'Église Unie du Canada a hérité d'une grande responsabilité en ce qui a trait au travail en français... L'Église Unie du Canada qui, par la grâce de Dieu, travaille à faire sa part dans la construction du Royaume sur la terre, porte la responsabilité d'essayer d'aider à travers le Canada les gens de différentes cultures et langues à se comprendre. De la Baie des Chaleurs aux Iles de la Reine Charlotte, nous devons être une seule Église...* »

(Livre des rapports annuels, volume II, 1963)

« *...Qu'il soit résolu que l'Église Unie du Canada s'engage à devenir une Église interculturelle, et que la dimension interculturelle des ministères soit une priorité de notre dénomination, et ce, en vivant pratiquement ses engagements à la justice raciale, où l'on retrouve un respect mutuel dans la diversité ainsi qu'une pleine et équitable participation de toutes les composantes autochtones, francophones, des minorités et de la majorité culturelle dans la totalité de la vie, de la mission et des pratiques de toute l'Église.* »

(39^e Conseil général à Thunder Bay, août 2006)

Historique

Nous partons d'une *vision large* de l'Église Unie du Canada, appelée à actualiser pour aujourd'hui une compréhension renouvelée de l'Évangile et ce, au service de toutes les populations et cultures constituantes du pays, dans des relations justes, inclusives et mutuellement porteuses de vie. Il s'agit, dans une perspective de relance de notre mission commune en Jésus Christ, « de faire place égale dans le cercle – en dignité, valeur, respect et soutien – aux Premières Nations à qui Dieu a confié le soin de ce coin de Création, aux francophones dont les racines protestantes et le témoignage remontent aux origines de la présence française au pays, aux diverses et riches minorités culturelles en quête de dignité et de respect et vulnérables au racisme, à la majorité anglophone elle-même en transition identitaire; afin que toutes ces composantes de notre Église puissent ensemble, en interrelation de soutien mutuel, transformer l'Église et raviver son témoignage de l'Évangile ». (UMiF)

Nous tenons que les francophones protestants et la présence à la société francophone font partie de la question identitaire même de l'Église Unie du Canada. Afin de répondre à sa vocation d'être une Église Unie *contextuelle* au pays, notre Église se doit d'être présente de manière *crédible et engagée* au Québec et aux diverses sociétés francophones, et active dans sa compréhension et son soutien des ministères en français. Notre appel au Conseil général vise à ce que...

« L'Église Unie du Canada, comme Église nationale, *s'approprie dans son ensemble* les Ministères en français comme faisant partie intégrante de son identité, de sa mission, de sa vision d'avenir et de sa stratégie de présence et de développement ... » (UMiF). Le dernier Rapport sur les Ministères en Français au Conseil général date de 1982, à Montréal, soit il y a 27ans. C'est pourquoi nous partageons notre histoire peu connue afin de broser le contexte et la vision des recommandations présentées par ce Rapport.

1. Notre Histoire : « Nous nous souvenons »... pour imaginer l'avenir

L'accueil des Premières Nations

Kanata, nous rappelle notre frère et ancien modérateur Stan Mackay, en Cri signifie Terre Sacrée.

Les Premières Nations, dès l'arrivée des premiers européens, nous ont appris un grand amour pour cette « Terre sacrée » et pour ce pays que leur a confié le Créateur. Cet amour du pays marque les peuples francophones depuis le début de la présence européenne jusqu'à nos jours. Nos frères et sœurs autochtones ont partagé leur espace et nous ont appris à y vivre. « Nous nous souvenons », en tant que protestants francophones, que nous étions là dès ces premières rencontres, sur cette terre sacrée, désignée également comme terre de refuge pour les Huguenots persécutés. Ce sont nos racines. Le rappel de l'accueil généreux des Premiers Peuples, mais aussi des alliances conclues et brisées, de la lente dépossession de leur terre, de leurs droits et de leurs trésors identitaires et spirituels, leurs souffrances entraînées par l'exclusion, le racisme, les pensionnats, résonne profondément en nous et nous pousse aujourd'hui à retrouver le chemin des relations justes avec eux. De tout notre cœur, nous cherchons à marcher humblement avec eux pour célébrer leurs rêves de dignité et d'autonomie retrouvée, rechercher notre propre guérison dans un partenariat nouveau et mutuel.

Le partenariat entre les Ministères francophones, autochtones et interculturels et de communautés diverses, nous remet tous ensemble, avec toutes les autres composantes de notre Église, sur le chemin d'une Vision transformatrice de l'Église Unie du Canada, chemin d'espérance et de mission renouvelée.

Nos racines profondes

Fait peu connu mais bien établi, l'histoire des ministères en français au Canada a des racines aussi longues que celles de la présence française au 16^e siècle. À travers les histoires de Jean-François Sieur de Roberval (1534), Pierre du Gua Sieur de Mons, premier Gouverneur (1604), et bien d'autres Huguenots français, nous voyons des gens qui ont beaucoup contribué à l'établissement de la Nouvelle-France luttant pour une pluralité d'expression spirituelle et pour une société de droit et de tolérance. Dès les débuts, la Bible fut lue et priée en français et les psaumes réformés chantés sur les rives du Saint-Laurent jusqu'aux Grands Lacs, en Louisiane et dans les églises qui s'y sont formées. Ce fil de présence protestante d'origine française se trace tout au long de l'histoire de l'Acadie, du Québec, de l'Ontario français, et de l'Ouest. Tout comme en Europe, les franco-protestants furent mis à l'écart de la société et au Canada français et connurent même l'interdit d'hiverner. Ces protestants francophones durent choisir soit d'entrer dans une semi-clandestinité comme individus, soit de repartir en exil en Europe ou au Sud, soit d'aller se réfugier et prendre famille chez les Autochtones où ils furent adoptés. De cela aussi, nous nous souvenons avec reconnaissance

Un nouveau départ

Il faut attendre les années 1830, avec l'arrivée et le ministère de madame Henriette Feller-Odin et d'autres, pour que l'on voie ce fil regagner sa visibilité. L'établissement de la *French Canadian Missionary Society/La Société missionnaire canadienne française* (SMCF) en 1839, société missionnaire non dénominationnelle et œcuménique avant l'heure, basée à Montréal,

marque un nouveau et vigoureux départ. Une quadruple stratégie de colportage de bibles et d'éducation à la foi, de création d'écoles de rang pour les démunis, de postes de mission et de paroisses, porte fruit auprès d'une population délaissée et assoiffée d'Évangile. Nous voyons l'établissement de nombreuses paroisses et communautés francophones de l'Atlantique jusque dans l'Ouest canadien et même en Nouvelle-Angleterre. La fondation de paroisses, comme l'Église Unie de Belle-Rivière (1840), l'Église Unie Saint-Jean (Montréal 1842), l'Église Unie Saint-Marc (Ottawa 1867) et Saint-Paul de Namur (1870) fait partie de ce grand mouvement missionnaire de 1839 aux années 1880. Ce mouvement transformateur, dynamique, canadien français, donne naissance à un réseau d'environ 98 écoles, missions, charges pastorales et lieux de regroupements spirituels francophones à travers le Canada français. La SMCF, soutenue à l'origine par des Églises anglophones, congrégationalistes, méthodistes, presbytériennes et anglicanes, tombe victime du dénominalisme et voit, en 1875, celles-ci retirer leur appui, se partager le personnel et les avoirs de la Société missionnaire. Chaque dénomination prend le contrôle des ministères en français et entre en compétition les unes contre les autres. C'est un jour sombre pour les protestants francophones, qui marque leur dispersion et le démantèlement de leur « Grande Famille » en mission et le début de luttes contre le déclin et la marginalisation au sein de leurs Églises respectives.

Espérance et crise

Toutefois, dans les années qui précèdent l'Union de 1925, l'enthousiasme et l'espoir des francophones renaissent. Quarante-cinq (45) paroisses environ, autant de postes de mission, une douzaine d'écoles dont trois importantes, un lieu de formation théologique à McGill embrassent l'Union avec espérance. C'est sans doute la seule composante à décider à l'unanimité de se joindre à l'Église Unie du Canada; le vote fut superflu. Les francophones voyaient le fait de se joindre à l'Église Unie comme une deuxième chance de reconstituer « La Grande Famille » enfin ré-unie et d'opérer une vigoureuse relance des ministères et de la mission en français dans la nouvelle Église.

Mais très peu de temps après l'Union, les priorités de la nouvelle Église ne mettent que peu d'accent sur le soutien et le développement des ministères en français – et autochtones –. On ferme les écoles – sauf l'Institut Évangélique de la Pointe-aux-Trembles –, on diminue le soutien à la mission et aux ressources en français, on ferme le module francophone de formation théologique. L'éducation tant publique que théologique se fera en anglais, ce qui en fait tendra à assimiler les francophones de l'Église Unie et réduira et sa crédibilité auprès des francophones et ses capacités de faire du ministère en français. Moins de trente ans plus tard, les effets sont là : il y a une carence de leadership pastoral et il faut importer du personnel ministériel d'Europe. Une tendance qui ne s'inversera que dans les années 1980 avec l'arrivée de nouvelles vocations qui sont aujourd'hui constantes. L'œuvre francophone de l'Église Unie conçue dans l'enthousiasme va lutter contre un graduel déclin.

De la décroissance à l'espoir

Il nous faut cependant rappeler qu'à travers notre histoire comme Église, nous avons aussi vécu ensemble, francophones et anglophones, des moments et réalisations qui ont été des bénédictions et que nous voulons célébrer avec reconnaissance. Depuis les années 1970, l'Église Unie du Canada a créé de nombreux comités de travail et de réflexion sur les relations franco-anglaises, recherchant un dialogue exigeant, la compréhension, le respect, la justice et la réconciliation.

Signalons son appui clair aux droits linguistiques et culturels, sociaux et politiques des minorités francophones à travers le pays : appui aux Acadien-nes en 1980, et lettre pastorale face aux torts causés par le Grand Dérangement de 1755 (2005); mandat d'un groupe d'écoute des Québécois-es conduit par le modérateur, le Très Révérend Stan MacKay (1993); appui aux franco-ontariens, et aux Métis et franco-manitobain-es par la demande de pardon pour Louis Riel (1980); et reconnaissance des peuples à l'autodétermination (1972 et 1980).

Dans ces diverses initiatives, humblement et avec détermination, les francophones de l'Église Unie ont joué un rôle de pont et d'éveilleurs de conscience sur le plan social et œcuménique entre francophones et anglophones, mettant à profit, comme minorité, leur double appartenance et leur double solidarité de *francophones* dans une Église majoritairement anglophone et de *protestants* dans une société majoritairement francophone de culture catholique. Le Centre Dialogue (ministère de présence œcuménique et de justice sociale, années 80, Consistoire de Montréal) suivi du Projet Dialogue – Québec du synode Montréal et Ottawa (années 90), ont été exemplaires en ce sens.

Aux niveaux régionaux, la création de La Zone pastorale francophone (1971, Consistoire de Montréal); du Consistoire Laurentien en 1985 (Synode Montréal et Ottawa – M&O), du Comité des ministères en français (Synode M&O 2007) lieu de planification et de développement inter-consistoires. Célébrons aussi dans les Synodes des Maritimes et de Gitchi-Manitou ainsi que dans le Consistoire de Winnipeg, à partir de 2004, le développement d'initiatives, de groupes d'intérêt et de comités dédiés au développement des ministères en français.

À divers niveaux, l'Église Unie a également cherché à se doter d'instances officielles pour soutenir les ministères en français : au niveau national, le Working Unit for Ministries in French (Groupe de travail pour les ministères en français, WUMF - 1980), suivi du Comité permanent des ministères en français (COPERMIF, 1992), enfin en 2002, la création de l'Unité des Ministères en Français (UMiF) qui marque un progrès qualitatif concernant la présence, la visibilité et l'impact des ministères francophones dans l'Église Unie du Canada.

La présence de l'UMiF aux bureaux de l'Église Unie du Canada permet de sensibiliser le Conseil général aux initiatives et développement en français et de faire avancer concrètement notre Église de manière crédible. Toutes ces avancées n'auraient pas été possibles sans la présence continue et l'accompagnement de frères et de sœurs anglophones de toutes cultures qui ont toujours su garder et partager une vision de la place des francophones au pays et la responsabilité de développer des ministères francophones au sein de notre Église et pour son témoignage.

Reprendre notre place et notre mission

À cause d'un déclin constant depuis 1925, résultant d'un manque de vision, de leadership formé en français et d'investissement dans le développement, l'œuvre francophone de l'Église Unie du Canada, dans un pays officiellement bilingue, se trouve réduite aujourd'hui à un état **de masse critique minimale** (De l'information complémentaire accompagne ce rapport. Vous pouvez consulter l'annexe 4 du Cahier de travail no 2 - Une vision pour les Ministères en français sur <http://GC40.united-church.ca/downloads/workbooks>). Si nous voulons un réseau vivant et dynamique de ministères et nous engager dans un projet de redémarrage d'une nouvelle mission

en français, nous ne pouvons perdre encore d'autres ressources ou d'autres aspects essentiels de l'œuvre.

Il est aujourd'hui de notre responsabilité de dire à l'Église, solennellement et avec respect, que si l'Église Unie du Canada n'investit pas dans de nouveaux ministères, en moins de dix ans un réseau viable de ministères en français cessera d'exister comme composante co-fondatrice d'une Église qui se veut à vocation « nationale » au Canada. Si l'Église Unie du Canada veut remettre à plus tard le démarrage de nouveaux projets de mission au sein des communautés francophones, nous croyons que ce démarrage sera impossible avec moins de personnel, de communautés et d'effectifs que ce que nous avons aujourd'hui.

Cependant, nous avons espoir. Un de nos anciens a dit : « Nous croyons que nous ne sommes pas ici pour gérer le déclin de l'Église Unie, mais que Dieu a nourri notre résilience et notre espérance jusqu'à ce jour afin que, comme une poignée de braise, nous puissions de nouveau repartir le feu de l'Évangile et la Mission de Dieu ». *Les temps sont favorables!*

Nous croyons aussi que l'Église Unie, née d'une grande vision d'unité, de justice et de mission, est capable aujourd'hui encore d'actualiser sa vocation d'Église contextuelle nationale, d'embrasser de façon nouvelle la mission de réconciliation à laquelle Dieu nous appelle, et de choisir de re-développer les ministères en français. De concert avec le nouveau Conseil des ministères des Premières Nations, et l'Unité des Ministères interculturels et des communautés diverses, l'Unité des Ministères en français est un partenaire intégral et actif de la *Vision transformatrice* énoncée par l'engagement à la mission interculturelle de l'Église Unie pris par le Conseil général en 2006.

2. Notre contexte : Les Temps sont favorables ! Il est temps d'agir !

Nous vivons une situation nouvelle, un contexte nouveau et favorable pour l'accueil et la relance de la mission en milieu francophone. Une mission que nous voulons respectueuse des personnes et des identités, ouverte et dynamique et qui n'hésite pas à risquer des chemins nouveaux pour rejoindre nos contemporains. Nos expériences et les études sur le sujet (*Environics*) montrent que beaucoup de personnes, et en particulier les jeunes adultes de 20 à 40 ans, sont à la recherche de valeurs combinant spiritualité, écologie, justice et liberté, dans une atmosphère familiale dépouillée de jugement. En beaucoup d'aspects, c'est une « génération neuve », détachée de toute expérience d'Église : au Québec, le taux de fréquentation des Églises – toutes dénominations confondues – avoisine les 5 %, une chute de 60 % depuis 1965 ! Pas étonnant que cette génération cherche des repères spirituels et identitaires. Cette recherche est aussi présente au sein des diverses communautés francophones au Canada. Si cette génération ne connaît que peu ou pas l'Église, elle en a néanmoins une image figée et rigide, étroite et moralisatrice. En même temps, elle porte un regard curieux et intéressé sur l'univers spirituel et religieux. Le pourcentage des personnes en recherche spirituelle, notamment au Québec (environ 20 %) mais également ailleurs au pays, est significatif.

À son meilleur, l'Église Unie du Canada a des trésors qui semblent correspondre aux attentes de ces personnes. Lorsqu'elles découvrent son existence, elles sont profondément touchées par l'alternative crédible que leur offre notre Église : inclusivité et équité des genres, ouverture et accueil, liberté de penser et de prise de parole, diversité et ouverture théologique, participation

démocratique, option pour la justice sociale, économique et écologique. Les exemples de gens d'origines culturelles de plus en plus diverses qui viennent à nos paroisses « pour voir » ne manquent pas; plusieurs s'y joignent et y retrouvent la foi. Et ceux et celles qui choisissent l'Église Unie du Canada apportent un témoignage extraordinaire :

« L'Église Unie n'est pas au courant du trésor spirituel qu'elle détient... Aujourd'hui, libre de dire, de penser et d'actualiser mon potentiel, j'apporte mon aide lorsque les besoins sont requis avec les autres membres, et ma vie de foi est nourrie et vécue avec discernement. »

(Marie-Andrée B.)

« À l'Église Unie Saint-Pierre, je me sens chez moi comme jamais auparavant. » (Nicole H.)

« J'ai trouvé une Église pour le monde d'aujourd'hui. » (Stéphane G.)

« Je viens de Terre-Neuve et je suis Anglophone et je suis candidat au ministère ordonné à l'Église Unie Saint-Jean à Montréal.

Pendant le temps que j'ai fréquenté la paroisse Saint-Jean, j'ai beaucoup apprécié l'atmosphère de simplicité et d'humilité dans la communauté. Je n'en suis pas certain, mais peut être que ce sentiment plonge ses racines dans le fait que la partie francophone de l'Église Unie a toujours été minoritaire, et donc a plus l'expérience de la marginalisation. Dans cette communauté actuelle, je trouve qu'il y a moins de sentiment de peur face au processus de transformation qui se déroule dans notre Église. Peut-être quand on est habitué à l'idée d'être un groupe minoritaire, nous sommes plus prêts à accepter cet appel de devenir le levain dans la pâte. »

(Isaac M.)

« À 20 ans j'ai quitté un Dieu terrible, vengeur, dogmatique et pingre.

Après 35 ans d'abstinence de foi j'ai remis les pieds dans une église pour voir si Dieu avait changé. J'ai mis les pieds à Saint-Jean.

J'y ai trouvé une parole complètement différente de ce que l'on m'avait enseigné.

J'y ai trouvé l'ouverture.

J'y ai trouvé de bonnes et belles personnes.

J'y ai trouvé une belle église (Église Unie du Canada)

J'y ai trouvé la foi

J'y ai trouvé le sourire de Jésus.

J'y suis bien et je donne selon mes talents... » (Jean-Claude L.)

Nous avons des **défis de taille** à relever pour revitaliser notre mission et notre présence :

- Développer notre présence en milieu francophone : comme dénomination, chercher à créer de nouveaux ministères là où des possibilités et des efforts nouveaux se manifestent; explorer une variété de styles de ministères : redévelopper des paroisses, communautés de base, centres d'accueil et de prière, pastorale régionale itinérante, ministère de spiritualité et de justice sociale, etc.
- Présenter une image de l'Église Unie du Canada qui soit accueillante aux francophones, respectueuse de leur identité et non assimilatrice; dépasser la perception de nombreux francophones d'être une Église « pour les Anglais ».
- Assurer une plus grande visibilité de l'Église Unie du Canada dans les milieux francophones. Création de nouveaux ministères, communication de notre message, formation et utilisation

de notre leadership francophone et bilingue font partie d'une même stratégie de mission. L'Église Unie parmi les francophones est largement méconnue et certainement pas comme « Église à vocation nationale ».

Nous avons aussi de **grands atouts** :

- Une quête spirituelle nouvelle dans la société qu'il faut saisir comme don et appel de Dieu.
- De profondes racines identitaires franco-protestantes dans l'Église Unie comme dans la société – bien que largement méconnues.
- Comme Église prophétique et novatrice, une tradition de créativité et de mission capable d'inventer, de discerner les signes de l'Esprit, et de répondre de façon contextuelle aux questions spirituelles et sociales des gens de ce pays et de ce temps.
- Des nouvelles vocations au ministère ordonné et laïc, d'une diversité croissante d'origines culturelles, exprimant et la vitalité de nos communautés et la pertinence du message de l'Église Unie au Canada en contexte francophone.
- Des signes d'un intérêt renouvelé dans l'Église Unie à travers le pays pour la reprise du développement des ministères en français, notamment dans les synodes M&O, des Maritimes et de Gitchi-Manitou, à Winnipeg et dans d'autres lieux. Un intérêt profond pour le dialogue, le respect des identités, la réconciliation et la mission (Annexe C).
- Un nouvel esprit de prise en compte des ministères en français dans les programmes, collaborations et partenariats inter-unités aux bureaux du Conseil général.
- Notre décision de devenir une Église interculturelle – le partenariat solidaire avec les Premières Nations et les communautés culturelles diverses – nous offre une occasion unique de faire valoir les spécificités de notre identité francophone et d'en faire bénéficier l'identité et la riche diversité de notre Église.

Notre vision et notre plaidoyer pour notre Église est de repartir *tous et toutes* en mission, ce qui ne peut se faire qu'ensemble, comme dénomination et comme Corps du Christ, divers et uni. **Les temps sont favorables** à un nouveau départ de la Mission en milieu francophone, au Québec et partout où il y a une population francophone significative, tels dans les synodes M&O, des Maritimes, de Gitchi-Manitou et le Consistoire de Winnipeg.

3. Notre stratégie : de nouveaux développements pour les ministères en français

Ce rapport propose une stratégie intégrée de développement des ministères en français comprenant les éléments suivants :

1.0 Ressources humaines

Théologie : Les ministères sont un don de Dieu, offerts pour construire l'Église de Jésus Christ en vue de la Mission de Dieu, et comme tels doivent être utilisés à bon escient pour l'édification du Corps du Christ et son rayonnement dans la société et dans le monde.

Vision/Objectifs d'implantation : Utiliser au mieux les ressources humaines des francophones et personnes bilingues en les plaçant dans des contextes, paroisses, ministères où leurs dons, vocation, connaissance de la langue, de la culture et du contexte seront mis à profit pour le témoignage et le développement des ministères auprès des francophones.

Un kairos à saisir : Depuis une quinzaine d'années nous avons été béni par une reprise marquée des vocations au ministère, manifestant, d'une part, la vitalité de nos communautés de foi, et d'autre part, le fait que l'Évangile de Jésus Christ tel que présenté par l'Église Unie constitue une véritable option de vie parmi les francophones. Notre défi est de ne pas pouvoir ouvrir autant de postes que nous avons de vocations ni de pouvoir placer les candidats-es francophones au ministère dans des contextes favorables. Ce n'est faire bonne utilisation des dons que Dieu donne à l'Église.

À titre d'exemple, la paroisse Saint-Pierre de Québec a vu au cours des 13 dernières années cinq de ses membres être formés et ordonnés au ministère pastoral. Une agente de pastorale laïque est présentement en cours de discernement. L'Église Unie Saint-Jean a présentement un candidat au ministère en formation et deux autres qui ont exprimé leur vocation et sont en train de compléter les pré-requis éducatifs. L'Église Unie St. James de Montréal a aussi vu une de ses membres francophones être ordonnée. D'autres aussi sont en processus d'admission, provenant notamment de communautés culturelles francophones. À notre connaissance, un seul de ces récents ministres a été placé pour faire du ministère en français.

Les lieux de stages (éducation supervisée au ministère) et de placements en français sont deux éléments clés de la formation et de la bonne utilisation du leadership de l'Église. Ces deux dimensions font cruellement défaut, pèsent sur les vocations et bloquent le développement des ministères en français. Nous avons pu constater que, sans lieux de stage et sans débouchés de ministère en français, certaines personnes hésitent ou même renoncent à devenir candidat-e au ministère.

Le rapport présente des recommandations relatives aux :

1.1 Stages de formation des candidats-es francophones et bilingues

1.2 Placements des candidats-es aux ministères francophones et bilingues

2.0 Discernement du contexte, de la mission et de l'appel au ministère

Théologie : Un ministère d'accueil et d'accompagnement

En allant vers les autres, c'est vers Jésus Christ que nous allons. En répondant avec respect et hospitalité à leur quête, c'est à Jésus Christ que nous répondons et dont nous découvrons le visage multiple parmi nous. La découverte des autres – aux niveaux local et mondial – que Dieu a placé sur notre chemin, est aussi la découverte de Jésus Christ, en particulier parmi les plus vulnérables, marginalisés et ignorés auxquels il s'est identifié. (Matthieu 25)

Vision/Objectifs : L'Église Unie est invitée de façon nouvelle à considérer ses paroisses et ministères comme des lieux d'accueil, d'accompagnement et de mission pour tous et toutes. Cette inclusivité s'adresse également aux francophones et ne saurait être définie et limitée par la langue de la majorité, mais minimalement inclure les deux langues officielles du pays (dans les contextes où il existe une majorité ou une minorité francophone significative) et toutes les autres langues possibles; dans une véritable célébration des richesses et diversités culturelles multipliant les chances de « rencontres et de communautés authentiques ».

Cette intentionnalité d'accueil, d'hospitalité, d'accompagnement et de mission doit notamment se retrouver dans le processus d'évaluation des besoins (JNAC) et dans les termes de l'appel pastoral.

2.1 Rendre le JNAC plus explicite concernant l'inclusivité culturelle

L'esprit du JNAC est d'aider à construire « des communautés authentiques » en facilitant un processus de discernement de l'appel de Dieu à la mission dans un contexte de ministère spécifique mais à la fois large et inclusif.

Les recommandations de la section 2.1 stipulent que dans les contextes où il y a un potentiel d'accueil et de ministère auprès des francophones, ces données du JNAC soient intégrées dans l'énoncé de mission ainsi que dans la description du poste et des responsabilités de l'appel d'une personne ordonnée ou laïque; qu'un guide soit développé et un accompagnement offert aux paroisses concernées par leur consistoire ou synode.

2.2 Capacités linguistiques et culturelles pour l'appel à un ministère

L'Esprit de Dieu travaille dans le monde et au sein de la communauté entourant nos Églises. Aujourd'hui cet Esprit nous appelle de façon nouvelle à bâtir une Église diverse, culturellement inclusive et contextuelle. Afin de servir Jésus Christ et les besoins de la communauté, le leadership de nos Églises doit pouvoir se mouvoir avec aisance au sein de leur contexte de ministère et bénéficier de capacités linguistiques et culturelles pour exercer un ministère large et inclusif. Dans une perspective de témoignage et de mission, de tels requis normaux pour le service outremer doivent normalement s'appliquer aussi au Canada. Les compétences linguistiques et culturelles ont un grand impact sur la crédibilité de l'Église Unie et sur le développement des ministères en français.

Les recommandations 2.2 invitent les paroisses et ministères situés dans des contextes où le français est soit la langue de la majorité, soit celle d'une minorité significative, à faire du français un des requis de l'appel et encouragent le / la candidat-e à suivre une formation linguistique et culturelle en français défrayée par un fond national d'éducation permanente.

3.0 Éducation et Formation

Théologie : Discerner les dons, équiper les ministères

Dieu nous appelle à faire partie du ministère de Jésus Christ et pour ce faire, distribue des dons divers à l'Église pour sa vie, sa mission dans le monde et la sauvegarde de la Création. L'Église est appelée à la fois à discerner « les signes des temps » pour vivre en fidélité avec l'Évangile de Grâce, de Justice et de Paix, et à discerner les dons et ministères qui correspondent à des défis, des temps et des lieux particuliers.

Vision/Objectifs : La Vision transformatrice de l'Église nous apparaît effectivement comme un de ces signes des temps, comme une reprise actualisée du récit de Pentecôte, de la naissance de l'Église, où chacun et chacune pouvait communier au Christ vivant en étant saisi de son message chacun-e dans sa langue, sa culture, son identité... L'Unité des Ministères interculturels et des communautés diverses souligne à juste titre la diversification de la population canadienne et invite toute l'Église à l'ouverture, l'accueil inconditionnel et la transformation de nos relations de pouvoirs en des relations de respect, de justice et d'amour.

Pour ce faire, l'Église Unie doit pouvoir compter sur un leadership bien préparé pour son ministère et sa mission, en particulier s'assurer que les francophones et personnes bilingues aient accès à une formation adéquate, contextualisée, en vue d'équiper et de développer les ministères divers, laïcs et ordonnés, dont elle a besoin pour répondre à sa vocation et à l'appel de Dieu.

Tout en reconnaissant les progrès effectués au cours des dernières décennies, notamment par un accord intervenu entre le Séminaire Uni et l'Université de Montréal concernant la formation en français, nous devons continuer de construire sur cette base.

Les recommandations de la section 3.0 stipulent que L'Église Unie du Canada s'assure de la présence d'un centre et d'un programme de formation théologique en Français, et le développement d'un cours sur l'histoire, la culture et la sociologie religieuse des diverses communautés francophones ainsi qu'un programme de formation de superviseurs-es de stages.

4.0 Capacités linguistique et culturelle en français

Théologie : Dieu nous aime, nous visite et chemine avec nous en Jésus Christ pour partager, accompagner et vivre l'Évangile, pour écouter les rêves, consoler les affligés-es, appeler à choisir la Vie en justice et plénitude et offrir une pastorale incarnée, il nous faut parler la langue de ceux et celles à qui l'on s'adresse.

Vision/Objectifs : Nous voyons une Église Unie qui puisse accueillir, répondre, accompagner et témoigner auprès de tous et toutes, et spécifiquement, mais de manière inclusive, auprès des francophones, à travers des postes, un réseau de personnes et de communautés identifiées à travers tout le pays.

La capacité de parler le français, n'est pas un simple acte social, culturel ou politique mais ecclésiologique et fait partie de la vocation et de la mission de l'Église Unie au Canada tout entier; certains postes et certaines fonctions des bureaux de l'Église Unie doivent aussi pouvoir refléter cette réalité et offrir un service et un leadership en ce sens. Nous nous réjouissons de la bonne volonté croissante dans l'utilisation du français au sein des programmes de plusieurs unités et des bureaux du Conseil général. Il s'agit de faire un effort intentionnel pour que des postes précis, sélectifs, et certains porte-parole puissent fonctionner professionnellement en français, écrit comme oral, afin de répondre à l'intérêt actuel et aux besoins du développement des ministères en français.

Les recommandations de la section 4.0 demandent la mise sur pied d'un fond d'éducation permanente pour l'étude de la langue et de la culture française ainsi qu'une évaluation des capacités de travail en Français aux bureaux du Conseil général ainsi que la désignation sélective de postes où ces capacités sont nécessaires et requises.

5.0 Création de ministères en français

Théologie : L'Esprit de Dieu est vivant dans notre société et dans le monde; cet Esprit sème l'Amour, l'Espérance et nous appelle à aimer, prendre soin des Humains et de la Création afin que tous et toutes aient la Vie en abondance; c'est la Bonne Nouvelle de l'Évangile de Jésus Christ que nous devons vivre et annoncer ensemble.

Vision/Objectifs : L'Église Unie du Canada est appelée à célébrer aujourd'hui une compréhension renouvelée de l'Évangile, de sa mission et de sa place dans le contexte du pays entier comme au sein de l'Église mondiale, au service de toutes les populations et cultures constituantes. Cette célébration de l'identité de l'Église Unie du Canada, avec ses composantes des Premières Nations, des Francophones, des Communautés culturelles, de la majorité anglophone, nous appelle aujourd'hui à repartir ensemble dans la Mission de Dieu pour chercher et bâtir le Royaume et sa Justice.

Nous avons souligné que « Les francophones protestants et la présence de l'Église à la société francophone font partie de la question identitaire même de l'Église Unie du Canada qui, précisément pour répondre à sa vocation d'être l'Église Unie nationale au Canada, se doit aussi d'être présente de manière crédible et engagée aux sociétés francophones et active dans son soutien des ministères en français ».

Pour reprendre les mots de la modératrice Marion Best réfléchissant sur notre Église : « Les francophones n'ont pas prospéré au sein de l'Église Unie du Canada ». Dieu nous appelle aujourd'hui à inverser cette descente et choisir la mission.

« *Les Temps sont favorables* » et l'Église Unie du Canada se doit d'agir et d'investir dans de nouveaux ministères en français, afin de :

- répondre aux vocations qui naissent depuis plus d'une décennie;
- briser la spirale de la diminution des paroisses et ministères francophones de l'Église Unie;
- créer un réseau viable et dynamique de communautés et ministères francophones au-dessus de la masse critique actuelle;
- discerner les signes de l'Esprit vivant de Dieu qui sème une nouvelle soif de spiritualité et de recherche parmi les francophones et les gens de ce pays.

Nous croyons que nous avons, comme Église canadienne, atteint un point critique qui est aussi une chance, une espérance et une opportunité : celle de choisir de développer et de créer des ministères en français de manière intégrée et concertée comme Église Unie du Canada, plutôt que de risquer de les laisser disparaître.

De l'information complémentaire accompagne ce rapport. Vous pouvez consulter l'annexe 4 du Cahier de travail no 2 - Une vision pour les Ministères en français sur <http://GC40.united-church.ca/downloads/workbooks> présente une liste de nouveaux ministères émergents en attente d'appui en termes de ressources humaines et financières. Ces bourgeons naissants encore fragiles appellent un soutien et des investissements de notre Église afin qu'ils prennent vie et racines. **Pour pouvoir réussir et être efficace, la création urgente de nouveaux ministères, clé de voûte d'un ensemble de mesures, nécessite à la fois un acte de foi et le choix d'un soutien financier étalé sur plusieurs années.**

Ce rapport fait valoir que toutes les mesures mises de l'avant font partie d'un tout et sont des stratégies intégrées pour le développement.

Les recommandations de la section 5.0 promeuvent une stratégie intentionnelle, graduelle et soutenue de développement de 5 nouveaux ministères capables d'avoir un impact réel et

spirituel, concret et durable tant sur le secteur francophone de plusieurs régions du pays que sur notre Église comme dénomination. Des explorations préliminaires sérieuses nous indiquent qu'un tel effort financier est possible dans la situation financière actuelle. Il s'agit pour les instances décisionnelles de l'Église, d'en faire une priorité ecclésiologique.

Jésus dit encore :

Voici à quoi ressemble le Royaume de Dieu : une personne répand de la semence dans son champ. Ensuite, elle continue à dormir durant la nuit et à se lever chaque jour, pendant ce temps les graines germent et poussent sans qu'elle sache comment. La terre fait pousser d'elle-même la récolte : d'abord la tige des plantes, puis l'épi vert, et enfin le grain bien formé dans l'épi. Dès que le grain est mûr, la personne se met au travail avec sa faucille, car le moment de la moisson est arrivé. (Marc 4:26-29 TOB)

La Grâce de Dieu a pourvu en faisant pousser quête de sens et de spiritualité.

Il nous reste à répondre car,

Les Temps sont favorables.

Unités des Ministères en Français (UMiF)

A VISION FOR FRENCH MINISTRIES IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

Origin: Unité des Ministères en Français/ Unit for Ministries in French (UMiF)

“The time is right...”

“The United Church of Canada has inherited a great responsibility as far as French work is concerned. ... The United Church of Canada, which by the grace of God strives to have a share in the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, is faced with the responsibility of trying to help people throughout Canada, of different languages and cultures, to understand each other. From the Baie des Chaleurs to the Queen Charlotte Islands we must be one Church.”
(UCC Year Book, Vol. II, 1963)

“... That The United Church of Canada commit itself to becoming an intercultural Church, and the intercultural dimensions of ministries be a denominational priority in living out its commitment to racial justice, where there is mutually respectful diversity and full and equitable participation of all, Aboriginal, Francophone, ethnic minority, and Ethnic majority constituencies in the total life, mission, and practices of the whole Church.”
39th General Council 2006, Thunder Bay

Background

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. From the perspective of renewing our common mission in Christ, we believe in a Church that gives equal space in the Circle - in terms of dignity, value, respect and support - to the various groups that make up the country and our Church: the First Nations to whom God entrusted the care of this part of Creation; the Francophones whose Protestant roots and witness go back to the beginnings of the French presence in Canada; the various cultural minorities who contribute to our collective cultural richness and who are vulnerable to racism; and the Anglophone majority whose identity is also in transition. 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.

We believe that Francophone Protestants and The United Church of Canada’s participation in Francophone society are intrinsic defining elements of our Church’s identity. If our Church is to fulfil its calling to be truly contextual, The United Church of Canada must be a *credible* and *engaged* presence in Quebec and in Canada’s diverse Francophone communities, actively seeking to understand and support Ministries in French. Our call is that “The United Church of Canada, as a whole, choose to embrace Ministries in French as an integral part of its identity, its mission, its vision for the future; and its strategy of presence and development...”. (UMiF) .The last Report to General Council regarding Ministry in French dates back to 27 years ago, in Montreal in 1982. Hence, sharing our little known story and long journey, sets the context for the vision and specific recommendations of the present Report.

1. Our History: “We Remember”... the Past in order to Imagine the Future

The Hospitality of First Nations

Our brother and former Moderator, Stan Mackay, reminds us that in Cree *Kanata* means *Sacred Earth* or *Holy Ground*.

Ever since the arrival of the first Europeans to this country, First Nations peoples have taught us to show love and respect for our Sacred Earth and for this land that was entrusted to them by the Creator. This love for the land has left a lasting impression on the Francophone populations of this country. Our First Nations brothers and sisters shared their sacred space with us and taught us much about how to live within it. As Francophone Protestants, we remember that our roots in this land go back to these earliest encounters on this *Holy Ground* that also became a land of Refuge for persecuted Huguenots (early French Protestants). We remember the generous hospitality of First Nations peoples. At the same time, we cannot forget the history of suffering caused by social exclusion, racism and residential schools. All of these memories, as a minority, resonate profoundly within us and today compel us to seek the road to Right Relations with our First Nations brothers and sisters.

The partnership between Aboriginals, Francophones and Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry brings us all together, along with all the other constituencies and peoples that make up our Church, on the road to a Transformational Vision for the United Church of Canada. We believe that this is also a road to hope and renewed mission.

Our Deep Roots

It is a little-known but well-established fact that the roots of ministry in French can be traced back to the sixteenth century. Through the histories of people such as Jean-François Sieur de Roberval (1534) and Pierre du Gua Sieur de Mons (1604) – the first Governor General - we see that French Huguenots contributed a great deal to the founding of New France (Acadie, Québec, Ontario, Acadia and Western Canada) through their struggle to maintain a diversity of spiritual expressions and establish a society built on the rule of law and on tolerance. From the very beginning, the Bible was read and Reformed Psalms were sung in French in homes and churches from the shores of the Saint Lawrence to the Great Lakes and Louisiana. This thread of French Protestant presence was very strong indeed! In New France as it was the case in Europe, French Protestants were pushed to the margins of society or even denied the right to stay year round. Most were forced, either to live clandestinely, to go into exile in Europe or south of the border, or to seek refuge among Native peoples, where they were sheltered and adopted. This too, we remember with gratitude.

A New Beginning

It is not until the 1830's - with the arrival and ministry of Madame H. Feller-Odin and others - that we see this French Protestant thread re-emerge and reclaim its visibility. In 1839, the founding of the *French Canadian Missionary Society /La Société Missionnaire Canadienne Française* - a united non-denominational missionary society based in Montreal - marks a new and vigorous beginning for ministry in French. A four dimensional mission strategy that included door-to-door distribution of Bibles and Faith Education material, and the establishing of country one-room schools for the poor, mission posts and congregations, bears fruit among a population long abandoned and hungry for the Gospel. Many francophone congregations are founded

across Canada and in New England during this period. For example, congregations such as Église Unie de Belle-Rivière (1840), Église Unie Saint-Jean (Montreal, 1842), Église Unie Saint-Marc (Ottawa, 1867) and Saint-Paul de Namur (1870) all arise out of this dynamic and transformational French Canadian missionary movement which will also give birth to a network of 98 Francophone missions, pastoral charges, House churches and schools across French Canada. Originally, the *French Canadian Missionary Society* was supported by the members of the Anglophone Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches. However, when denominationalism prevails this joint support is withdrawn in 1875. The personnel and assets are divided up among the various groups. From this point on, individual denominations begin competing with one another in the area of ministry in French. This is a dark day that marks not only the breaking up of an ecumenical “Grande Famille” in mission work, but also the fragmentation and division among French Protestants and the beginning of their struggle against decline and marginalization within their respective denominations.

Great Expectations and Crisis

Nonetheless, in the years preceding the 1925 Church Union, there is renewed hope and enthusiasm among Francophones. Approximately 45 congregations, as many mission posts, a dozen schools – three of which are quite large – and a theological training programme at McGill University from the three participant denominations, embrace Union with great expectations. Francophones are probably the only group to decide unanimously in favour of joining The United Church of Canada. A vote was virtually unnecessary. Francophones saw joining The United Church of Canada as a chance to re-unite the “Great Family” and thus breathe new life into ministry in French within the new born denomination.

However, a couple of years after Church Union, it becomes evident that supporting and developing French and First Nations’ ministries is not a priority for the new Church. Schools are closed – except the Institut Évangélique de la Pointe-aux-Trembles. There is less support for mission work and resources for Francophones, and theological training ceases to be offered in French. Public and theological education will be offered in English only. As a result, there will be wide-spread linguistic assimilation of Francophones and the credibility of The United Church of Canada in French Canada will decrease along with its capacity for doing ministry in French. Less than thirty years later, the effects are felt: there is a shortage of pastoral leadership and ministry personnel must be brought in from Europe. This trend will only begin to be reversed in the 1980’s with a resurgence of vocations among French-speaking members of The United Church of Canada. However, despite the early enthusiasm for French work, and the recent increase in vocations, ministry in French in our denomination continues to struggle against slow decline.

From Decline to Hope

We must also remember, however, that throughout our history as a Church, Anglophones and Francophones have shared in many accomplishments that have been a mutual blessing. We wish to acknowledge these moments with gratitude. Especially since the 1970’s, The United Church of Canada has created a number of committees and working groups on French-English relations. These bodies have worked to achieve honest dialogue, mutual understanding and respect, while seeking justice and reconciliation. Most notably, The United Church of Canada has steadily shown clear support for the linguistic, cultural, and socio-political rights of Francophone

minorities across the country. The Church supported Acadians in 1980 and again in 2005 in a pastoral letter dealing with the harm caused by *Le Grand Dérangement*- the Acadian deportation of 1755. Support was also shown to Franco-Ontarians, and Métis, and Franco-Manitobans in a request for pardon for Louis Riel (1980). The United Church of Canada also recognized peoples' right to self-determination (1972 and 1980) and mandated a team under the leadership of the Right Reverend Stan MacKay for «Listening to Québécois Québécoises with a New Heart» (1993).

Humbly but consistently, Francophones of The United Church of Canada have played a bridging role as conscience-raisers on the social and ecumenical scene between Francophones and Anglophones, benefiting from, as a minority, their double-identity and their double-solidarity of *Francophones* in a Church which is majority Anglophone and *Protestants* in a society which is majority Francophone and culturally Roman Catholic. The common ecumenical “Christian Pavillon” of Expo 67, The Centre Dialogue (a ministry of ecumenical and social-justice oriented presence, 1980's, Montréal Presbytery) followed by Projet Dialogue-Québec of Montréal and Ottawa Conference (M&O) (1990's), are examples in this regard.

At the regional level, we see the creation of La Zone pastorale francophone (the Francophone Pastoral Zone - 1971, Montréal Presbytery); the creation of Consistoire Laurentien (Laurentian Presbytery) in 1985 (M&O Conference), the Ministries in French Working Group (M&O Conference – 2007) which is a place of inter-Presbytery planning and development. And since 2004, we also celebrate in Maritime Conference and Manitou Conference, as well as in the Winnipeg Presbytery, the development initiatives, interest groups and committees dedicated to the development of Ministries in French. There is new Life!

At a variety of levels, The United Church of Canada has equally sought to equip itself with official bodies to support Ministries in French: At the National Level, *the Working Unit for Ministries in French*/Groupe de travail sur le ministère en Français (WUMF – 1980), followed by the Permanent Committee of Ministries in French/Comité permanent sur les ministères en français (COPERMIF, 1992), and finally, in 2002, the creation of the Unit for Ministries in French/Unité des Ministères en Français (UMiF) which marks a qualitative new support and progress concerning the presence, visibility and impact of Francophone Ministries in the public witness and work of The United Church of Canada.

The creation and presence of UMiF allows a return to the vision, cohesion and support of local initiatives, the building of a new network of Ministries in French and a new collaboration and partnership between Units and their programmes. UMiF facilitates the sensitizing of the General Council on initiatives in French and helps project our Church forward in Francophone milieus. All of these advances would not have been possible without the continued presence and accompaniment of Anglophone sisters and brothers of all cultures who have always known to keep and share a vision of a place for Francophones in the country and the responsibility to develop Francophone Ministries at the heart of our Church's witness.

Reclaiming Our Place in Ministry and Mission

A triple lack of Vision, of Leadership trained in French, and of Investment in development, has meant steady decline for ministry in French since 1925. Today, French work in The United

Church of Canada – a country that has French as one of its two official languages – is reduced to a state of **minimal critical mass** (Additional background information is available for this report. See "Workbook 2 – Appendices - Appendix 5 – Vision for French Ministries" at <http://GC40.united-church.ca/downloads/workbooks>). If we wish to see a strong and vibrant network of ministries and embark on a new mission in French, we cannot lose any more of the ministries and resources that are absolutely essential to this work.

Today, it is our responsibility to say with solemnity, humility and respect that, if The United Church of Canada does not invest in new ministries in French, we believe that in less than ten years, one of the founding constituents of our national Church will cease to exist as a network of viable ministries. If The United Church of Canada delays in starting up new ministry and mission projects within Francophone communities, we believe that the possibility for renewal will have escaped us because the passage of time will only mean fewer personnel, ever-decreasing numbers, and communities that are less and less viable and less and less capable of responding to the new opportunities that presents themselves.

However, we have faith. One of our elders has said, “We do not believe that we exist to manage the decline of The United Church of Canada, but rather that God has nurtured our resilience and our hope to this day so that, like a few embers, we can rekindle the flame of the Gospel and the mission of God. *‘Les Temps sont favorables!’*- The Time is right!”

We also believe that The United Church of Canada – a denomination born out of a great vision of unity, justice and of mission – can still live out its vocation to be a national and contextual Church by embracing in a new way the mission of reconciliation to which God is calling us and by choosing to redevelop ministries in French. In 2006 the General Council adopted a *Transformative Vision* by committing itself to becoming a truly Intercultural Church. This vision will only come to fruition with the active support and full participation of the whole Church with the joint partnership of the new Aboriginal Ministries Council, the Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry Unit, and UMiF.

2. Our Context: A new spiritual quest, the Time is Right! It’s Time to Act!

We are living in new times. Our current context is ripe for new presence and mission among Francophones. This mission must be respectful of people and their identities, open, dynamic, and willing to risk new ways of connecting with our contemporaries. Our ministry experiences and research on the topic (*Environics*) show that today many people, and particularly young adults between twenty and forty years of age hold values that combine spirituality, ecology, justice and freedom. And these young adults want to explore those values in an atmosphere that is familial and non-judgemental. In many ways, this is a “new generation” in Canada, one that has virtually no Church experience. Currently, in Quebec, only about 5% of the population attends Church – all denominations combined - a drop of 60% compared to 1965. It is not surprising that today’s generation of Quebecers is searching for meaningful spiritual reference points. Studies have shown that similar situations exist elsewhere within Canada’s diverse francophone communities. It should also be said that, although this generation has little or no experience of the Church, they nonetheless have set notions and images about the Church: they see it as being fixed, rigid, narrow, and moralizing.

At the same time, Francophones are expressing a new curiousness and interest in the realm of spirituality and religion. Current research reports as well significant numbers of spiritual seekers in Canada, and in Québec about 20% of the population.

At its best, The United Church of Canada seems to match the expectations of this generation of spiritual seekers. When Francophones, from a growing diversity of cultural background, discover our Church, they are often profoundly touched by the credible alternative that The United Church of Canada offers them: a Church where they find inclusiveness, gender equality, openness and hospitality, freedom to think and to speak, theological diversity, democratic participation, and an option for social, economic and ecological justice. We are constantly experiencing people who come to our congregations “to check us out” and like what they see. As Church, we need to respond and engage at a deeper level and risk new approaches. A number of Francophones decide to stay and rediscover faith. Those who choose The United Church of Canada offer an exceptional testimony :

“The United Church is not aware of the spiritual treasure that it holds. ... Today, I am free to speak, to think and to realize my potential. When there is a need, I can bring my contribution along with other members and my faith is nourished and lived out with discernment.” (Marie-Andrée B.)

“At l’Église Unie Saint-Pierre, I feel more at home than I ever felt before” (Nicole H.).

“I found a Church for today’s world.” (Stéphane G.)

“I am from Newfoundland and I am Anglophone and a candidate for ordained ministry at Église Unie Saint-Jean (Montréal).

During the time that I have been attending the Saint-Jean congregation, I very much appreciated the atmosphere of simplicity and humility in the community. I am not certain, but perhaps this feeling finds its roots in the fact that the Francophone part of the United Church has always been a minority, and therefore, has more of an experience of marginalization. In this community, I find that there is less fear in facing the process of transformation that is taking place in our Church. Perhaps, when we are used to the idea of being a minority group, we are more ready to accept this call to become the leaven in the dough.” (Isaac M.)

«At the age of 20, I left a terrible God; vengeful, dogmatic and stingy.

After 35 years of abstinence from faith, I went into a Church to see if God had changed.

I went to (Église) Saint-Jean (Montréal).

I found there a Word completely different from what I had been taught.

I found openness.

I found good and beautiful people.

I found a beautiful Church (L’Église Unie du Canada).

I found faith.

I found the smile of Jesus.

I am well there and I give according to my talents...» (Jean-Claude L.)

We have before us **significant challenges** that must be taken up if we are to revitalize our mission and our presence in Francophone areas.

We are called to:

- expand our presence by creating new ministries in places with obvious interest and potential for ministry in French. To this end, several options lay before us: exploring a variety of styles and models of ministry; developing or redeveloping congregations, base communities, store front ministry, circuit ministry, ministries linking spirituality and social justice etc.
- present an image of The United Church of Canada that is attractive to Francophones: an image that respects their identity and culture, that is “non-assimilationist”, and counters the perception that The United Church of Canada is a Church for the majority Anglophones.
- increase the visibility of The United Church of Canada in French-speaking areas of the country. Creating new ministries, communicating our message, offering training and maximizing effective deployment of Francophone and bilingual leadership are all part of the same mission strategy. The United Church of Canada is little known among Francophones and certainly not known as a “national Church”.

We also have **significant** assets :

- a new spiritual thirst in our society that must be seized as a gift and a call from God;
- a French-Protestant identity that is not well-known but that is nevertheless deeply rooted in The United Church of Canada and in Canadian Society;
- a tradition of prophetic and innovative mission that is capable of discerning the signs of the Spirit and of responding to God’s call contextually to the present-day spiritual and social questions of people of this country;
- a stream of new vocations to ordained ministry and lay ministry, from a variety of cultural background, expressing both the vitality of our communities of faith and the relevance of the message of L’Église Unie du Canada in the francophone context;
- signs of a renewed enthusiasm in The United Church of Canada for the development of ministries in French. This is particularly the case in the M & O, Maritime and Manitou Conferences but is also true in Winnipeg Presbytery and in other areas across the country. There is also a sincere interest in dialogue, reconciliation, and mission work that is respectful of diverse identities (Additional background information is available for this report. See "Workbook 2 – Appendices - Appendix 5 – Vision for French Ministries" at <http://GC40.united-church.ca/downloads/workbooks>);
- a new willingness to consider ministries in French in the programmes, partnerships and collaborative efforts between Units of the General Council and at Church House;
- the decision to become an Intercultural Church. In the context of relationships of solidarity with First Nations and with the various Cultural Communities and the Majority Church that make up our Church and our country, we have a unique opportunity to highlight the specificity of our Francophone identity and contribution and, in so doing, to thus enrich the identity and the diversity of our Church.

Our vision and our call to the Church is that we *all* embark on a renewed mission – something that we can only do *together* as one denomination and as Body of Christ, diverse but united.

The time is right for a new beginning for mission to Francophones in Quebec and in other parts of the country where there is a significant French-speaking population - most notably, but not exclusively, within the bounds of Winnipeg Presbytery and the M & O, Maritime and Manitou Conferences.

3. Our Strategy: New Development for Ministries in French

This Report proposes an integrated strategy and measures for the development of ministries in French that include the following elements:

1.0 Human Resources: Rationale

Theology: Ministries are a gift from God offered to build up the Church of Jesus Christ and equip it to carry out God's mission in the World. As such, ministries must be used effectively for the strengthening the Body of Christ and its witness serving the world God so loves.

Vision/Policy Objectives: To make the best use of Francophone and bilingual human resources by placing them in contexts, congregations or ministries where their gifts, vocation, competence in the language, culture and context will benefit the witness and development of ministries to Francophones.

A Kairos moment to be seized:

In the last fifteen years, the Church has been blessed with a **notable resurgence in francophone vocations for ministry**, a situation that testifies not only to the vitality of our communities of faith, but also to the fact that the Gospel of Christ as it is presented by The United Church of Canada is a truly life-giving option among Francophones. The difficulty has been that we have had more Francophone vocations than we have ministry in French positions and we have not been able to place French-speaking candidates in favourable contexts. In the context of expressed need for new development, this shows a poor stewardship of the gifts bestowed by God.

As an example, the congregation of Église Saint Pierre in Québec City has seen five of its members trained and ordained to pastoral ministry over the past 13 years. One Lay pastoral minister is presently in discernment. Église Saint Jean currently has one candidate in formation for ministry and two others have expressed their vocation and are in the process of completing the educational prerequisites. Saint James United Church of Montréal also has seen one of its francophone members ordained. Others are also in the process of admission, coming most notably from francophone cultural communities. To the best of our knowledge, only one of these recent ministers has been settled where they may offer a ministry in French.

Having sufficient Supervised Ministry Education and Settlement sites is essential to the training and effective deployment of Francophone human resources. Currently, there is a critical shortage of appropriate sites. This situation weighs heavily on vocations and seriously hinders the development of ministries in French. Without the possibility for Supervised Ministry Education and new ministry openings in French, some Francophones hesitate or abandon all together the thought of becoming a candidate for ministry. This is a tragic waste of vocation from gifted people that our Church needs to address.

Thus, the Report formulates recommendations relative to:

- 1.1 Supervised Ministry Education for Francophone and Bilingual Candidates be accessible in French
- 1.2 Transfer and Settlement of Francophone and Bilingual Candidates for Ministry in appropriate contexts for developing ministries in French

2.0 Discernment of Context, Mission, and Call to Ministry: Rationale

Theology : A Ministry of Hospitality and Accompaniment

In approaching others, it is Christ we approach. In responding with respect and hospitality to their individual quest, it is to Christ that we respond and, in so doing, we discover the multiple faces of Christ among us. To discover the others that God has placed on our path is also to discover Christ, especially among those with whom he identified: those who are marginalized, vulnerable and neglected (Matthew 25).

Vision/Objectives : The United Church of Canada is invited to see its congregations and ministries as places of hospitality, accompaniment and mission for all. The articulation of this inclusiveness should not be defined by or limited to the language of the majority, but should be expressed minimally in both official languages (in places where there is either a majority or a significant minority of Francophones) and ideally in as many other languages as possible. This is a means of celebrating cultural diversity and multiplying opportunities to encounter others and create welcoming authentic communities.

This spirit of intentional welcome, hospitality, accompaniment and mission must be found in the JNAC process and in the terms of call to ministry.

2.1 Making the JNAC Process More explicit with respect to Cultural Inclusiveness in mission statements and strategies

The spirit of the JNAC process is to help build “authentic communities” by facilitating a process for discerning the call of God to mission in a given ministry context that is at once specific and broad and inclusive.

Proposals in section 2.1 recommend that in contexts where there is a potential for ministry in French, this information be integrated into the mission statement and job description outlined in extending a call to lay or ordered ministry personnel, that guidelines be developed and that appropriate accompaniment be provided for congregations in this discernment process.

2.2 A Mission Perspective : Linguistic and Cultural Competencies for a Call to Ministry

The Spirit of God is at work in the world and in the communities that surround our Churches. Today, this Spirit is calling us in new ways to build a Church that is diverse, and culturally inclusive and contextual. In order to serve Jesus Christ and the needs of the larger community, the leadership of our Churches must be able to move with ease within their ministry context and possess the linguistic and cultural competencies necessary for exercising a broad and inclusive ministry and developing God’s mission. Such requirements are taken for granted for overseas ministry and should be appropriated, when relevant, in the Canadian context. Linguistic and cultural competence have a great impact for the credibility and development of Ministries in French.

Proposals 2.2 invites congregations and ministries, with the support of Presbyteries and Conferences, depending of their specific context and call to mission, to consider making knowledge of French a requirement for call, and encourage ministry personnel to take appropriate language and cultural training supported by a National continuing education fund.

3.0 Education and Training : rationale

Theology: Discerning the Gifts, Equipping Ministers for contextual Ministry

God calls us to be part of the ministry of Jesus Christ and gives the Church varieties of gifts for its life and mission in the world, and for the stewardship of Creation. The Church is called to read “signs of the times” in order to faithfully live the Gospel of grace, justice and peace, and to discern the gifts and ministries that are needed to respond to the challenges in a particular time and place.

Vision/Objectives: The *Transformative Vision* of the Church is one of the signs of the times. It is a living out, in our time, of the story of Pentecost and the birth of the Church: where everyone, upon hearing the message in his or her own language, culture and identity, is able to find communion with the living Christ. The Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry Unit rightly emphasizes the diversification of the Canadian population and invites the whole Church to openness, unconditional welcome, and the transformation of our power relations into relationships of respect, justice and love.

In order to do this, The United Church of Canada must be able to count on leadership that is well-prepared for its ministry and mission. In particular, Francophones and people who are bilingual must have access to the kind of contextual theological training that will equip them to develop the various lay and ordered ministries in which The United Church of Canada must be engaged if it wishes to fulfil its vocation and answer the call of God in the Canadian context and beyond..

We recognize that significant progress has been made in this regard in recent decades (most notably with the signing of an agreement between The United Theological College/Le Séminaire Uni and the Université de Montréal with respect to education in French). We must continue to build on this foundation.

Proposals connected with section 3.0 recommend that the United Church ensure the existence of a Theological training programme in French, the creation of two courses bearing respectively on the Ministry of supervision and on the history and spirituality of French Canada (recommended funding).

4.0 Development of Cultural and Linguistic Competence in French : rationale

Theology: God loves us, visits us and journeys with us in Jesus Christ. If we are to live the Gospel by accompanying others on the road, listening to their dreams, comforting those who are afflicted, and calling people to choose a life of abundance and justice, we must speak the language of those with whom we seek to travel and accompany on the way.

Vision/Objectives: Ours is a vision of a United Church that can welcome, accompany, respond and witness to all the people of this country, and specifically – although not exclusively – to Francophones, through a network of identified and identifiable individuals, congregations and ministries from across the country.

In our Faith context, we believe that the ability to communicate and relate in French is not simply a social, cultural or political issue or necessity, but an ecclesiological question. It is part

of the very **vocation**, identity and mission of The United Church of Canada. Certain key positions and functions within the offices of The United Church of Canada must reflect this reality and offer service and leadership in this regard. There are encouraging signs of good will within the Programmes, Units and offices of the General Council. Our Church needs now to make an intentional effort to ensure that people in selected key positions and official spokespersons can professionally function in both official languages and enable the development and public witness of Ministries in French.

Proposals connected to section 4.0 recommend the creation of a National fund for French language and culture training for a five year period in addition to an audit regarding linguistic capacities and needs in Church House and selectively identifying positions requiring both French and English.

5.0 Creation of New Ministries in French : rationale

Theology: The Spirit of God is alive and at work in our society and in our world. This Spirit sows love and hope and calls us to love and care for our brothers and sisters and all of creation so that all may have life...and life in abundance! This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we are called to live and to proclaim *together* as Church.

Vision/Objectives: The United Church of Canada is called to celebrate a renewed understanding of the Gospel, of our place within the global Church, our mission, and our vocation of service to all of the country's constituent cultures and populations. This celebration of The United Church of Canada's unique identity – an identity that is enriched by the unique identities of First Nations peoples, Francophones, many diverse Cultural communities, and the Anglophone majority – calls all of us together to engage anew in God's mission of seeking and building the Kingdom and its righteousness.

We stated above that Francophone Protestants and The United Church of Canada's participation in Francophone society are intrinsic defining elements of our Church's identity. If our Church is to fulfil its calling to be truly *contextual and national*, The United Church of Canada must be a *credible and engaged* presence in Canada's diverse Francophone communities, actively seeking to understand and support Ministries in French.

To quote former Moderator, Marion Best, "Francophones have not thrived within The United Church of Canada." This does not have to be the case.

The time is right and The United Church of Canada must act now and invest in new ministries in French in order to:

- support the vocations for ministry that have been emerging for more than a decade;
- halt the downward spiral of Francophone congregations and ministries in The United Church of Canada;
- create a viable and vibrant network of Francophone communities and ministries beyond the current *critical mass*;
- discern the signs of the Spirit of the Living God that is generating a new thirst for spirituality among Francophones and seekers of all the communities that make up this country.

We believe that, as a Church, we have arrived at a critical point that is also an opportunity and thus, cause for hope. We, as The United Church of Canada, can choose not to let ministries in French disappear and work together for a new beginning, another chance for the mission that has been ours since the very beginning.

Appendix B (See "Workbook 2 – Appendices - Appendix 5 – Vision for French Ministries" at <http://GC40.united-church.ca/downloads/workbooks>) gives a view of ministries that are either emerging or on hold pending adequate human and financial resources. These budding ministries are fragile and if they are to take root and flourish, we must nurture and support them. The time is right to invest in our future. **Creating effective and successful new ministries requires not only an act of faith but also financial support spread out over several years.**

We consider that the measures outlined in this report are part of a whole that make up an *integrated strategy* for the development of new ministries.

The proposal of section 5.0 sets forth an intentional strategy of gradual and sustained development of 5 new ministries over a five year start up period, capable of having a spiritual, real, concrete, and lasting impact not only on the Francophone sector of our Church, but on the denomination's public witness as a whole. We understand this effort to be within the financial reach of our Church. The Church will need to decide on its priorities.

Jesus also said,

'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, without one knowing how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once one goes in with a sickle, because the harvest has come.' (Mark 4.26-29; NRSV)

God's Grace and Spirit have provided and have kept working in our midst.
The time is now for us to respond.
The kairos—time has come.

L'Unité des Ministères en Français (UMiF)
The Unit for Ministries in French

GCE 17 - Une Vision pour les Ministères en français dans l'Église Unie du Canada**Origine:** Exécutif du Conseil général

Unité des Ministères en français (UMiF)

Implications financières: Total de 3,52 millions sur 13 ans**Implications en ressources humaines:** Intégrées dans le travail actuel de 1,5 postes existants**Source de financement:** À être déterminée par l'Exécutif du Conseil général**Propositions :**

L'Exécutif du Conseil général propose

Que le 40^e Conseil général :**déclare que les ministères en français font partie intégrante de l'identité, de la mission et de la vision d'avenir de l'Église Unie du Canada;****engage l'Église à consolider et à développer les ministères en français de manière soutenue, avec l'objectif d'implanter au moins cinq nouveaux ministères en français;****reçoive le rapport « Une Vision pour les Ministères en français dans l'Église Unie du Canada », et confie ce rapport et ses recommandations à l'Exécutif du Conseil général afin qu'il les intègre à sa planification pour la prochaine période triennale;****et requiert que l'Exécutif fasse rapport de la mise en œuvre des recommandations de ce rapport au 41^e Conseil général.****Recommandations :****1. Maximisation du déploiement des effectifs en ressources humaines****1.1 Stages de formation des candidats-es francophones et bilingues**

- 1.1.1 les *politiques* et pratiques de l'ÉUC concernant les stages soient ajustées pour permettre des stages en contexte francophone ;
- 1.1.2 les stages incluent la possibilité de servir en français pour les candidats-es francophones et bilingues qui le demandent ;
- 1.1.3 un Fonds national soit créé afin d'aider au paiement de stages en français pour les paroisses et ministères qui seraient reconnus valables comme lieux de stage mais qui n'auraient pas le financement suffisant ;
- 1.1.4 l'Unité Ministères pastoraux, de présence et de formation (*CECM*), dans ses études et réflexions en cours concernant l'avenir et la restructuration des stages, intègre les éléments ci-dessus dans ses recommandations, en consultation avec l'UMiF et les autres unités concernées.

1.2 Placements des candidats-es aux ministères francophones et bilingues

- 1.2.1 les politiques de placement des candidats-es de l'ÉUC soient ajustées pour permettre des placements là où il y a des possibilités manifestes de ministère en français, y compris dans leur propre synode ;
- 1.2.2 les procédures et formulaires de placement incluent, pour les paroisses qui font une demande de placement, un engagement à faciliter le développement d'une pastorale en français dans les cas où les candidats-es sont francophones ou bilingues ;
- 1.2.3 le Comité de placement, dans le cas de candidats-es francophones ou bilingues, consulte expressément les synodes concernés avec haute proportion francophone (tels M&O, Maritimes, Gitchi-Manitou, ainsi que tout autre synode qui exprimerait un intérêt pour le ministère en français) ;
- 1.2.4 la possible restructuration des modes de placement intègre les éléments ci-dessus dans ses recommandations et politiques, en consultation avec l'UMiF.

2. Discernement du contexte, de la mission et des conditions d'appel au ministère

2.1 Rendre le JNAC plus explicite concernant l'inclusivité culturelle

- 2.1.1 le processus d'évaluation de la mission et des besoins du ministère paroissial et communautaire (JNAC) mette l'accent, dans les contextes où cela est pertinent, sur le potentiel d'accueil et de ministère auprès de la diversité culturelle du contexte, et spécifiquement auprès des francophones, et intègre ces données dans la déclaration de mission ainsi que dans la description du poste et des responsabilités de l'appel d'une personne ordonnée ou laïque ;
- 2.1.2 les synodes et consistoires des contextes où il y a un nombre significatif de francophones, notamment à l'intérieur des synodes M&O, des Maritimes et de Gitchi-Manitou, du Consistoire de Winnipeg et d'autres intéressés, veillent à ce que le processus de réflexion, d'analyse et d'évaluation intègre les facteurs contextuels en termes de populations et de diversité de culture, et inclue notamment la réalité francophone au sein de leur mission et témoignage, de même que les autochtones, les personnes de communautés culturelles diverses, et les personnes ayant des besoins spéciaux ;
- 2.1.3 le guide du JNAC soit moins général mais rendu plus explicite en ce qui concerne l'articulation d'intentionnalité de ministère et de mission auprès des francophones, ainsi qu'auprès d'autres communautés et cultures.

2.2 Inclusion des compétences linguistiques et culturelles pour l'appel à un ministère dans des contextes spécifiques

- 2.2.1 les paroisses et ministères situés dans des contextes où le français est soit la langue de la majorité, soit celle d'une minorité significative, considèrent faire du français un des requis de l'appel, ou du moins requièrent que le / la candidat-e suive une formation linguistique en français dans les deux ans suivant son entrée en fonction ;
- 2.2.2 les synodes M&O, des Maritimes et de Gitchi-Manitou accompagneront les consistoires, paroisses et ministères dans ce discernement contextuel des besoins linguistiques et culturels, avec le soutien de l'UMiF et en

collaboration avec l'Unité Ministères pastoraux, de présence, et de formation (*CECM*) et l'Unité Politiques et services concernant le ministère et l'emploi (*MEPS*) ;

- 2.2.3** la formation linguistique et culturelle en français sera pleinement éligible aux Fonds alloués pour la formation permanente (Education permanente), augmentée d'un Fonds national constitué spécifiquement à cet effet.

3 **Éducation et Formation**

- 3.1 l'Église Unie du Canada s'assure de la présence d'un centre et d'un programme de formation théologique dispensant une formation en français pour les candidats-es au ministère et les laïcs, avec un contenu théologique et pastoral comprenant une connaissance culturelle et linguistique du Québec et des diverses communautés culturelles francophones au pays ;
- 3.2 un cours sur l'histoire, la culture et la sociologie religieuse des diverses communautés francophones à travers le Canada sera mis sur pied, offert dans les deux langues officielles sur Internet, accessible, reconnu et crédité par toutes les écoles de théologie de l'Église Unie du Canada ;
- 3.3 un financement de dix mille dollars (10 000\$) sera accessible pour le développement d'un tel cours, et ce sous la supervision conjointe de l'UMiF et de *CECM* (objectif : offert en Septembre 2011 au plus tard) ;
- 3.4 un *Programme de formation de superviseurs-es de stages* sera offert en français afin que les candidats-es francophones et bilingues puissent avoir accès à une expérience de ministère au cours de leur formation pratique dans un contexte francophone ; de telles expériences formatrices marquent une vie, un ministère, et développent la confiance.

4 **Besoins et formation en français**

- 4.1 un Fonds de formation en français sera créé afin de financer la formation linguistique, en priorité, de ceux et celles dont le travail et/ou le ministère contextuel requiert une compétence de la langue française ;
- 4.2 ce Fonds sera administré par *MEPS*, comme une partie intégrée mais distincte du programme de formation permanente,
- 4.3 l'élaboration des critères d'attribution et la nature des programmes validés se feront conjointement avec l'UMiF ;
- 4.4 ce Fonds de formation linguistique en français rendra disponible vingt-cinq mille dollars (25 000 \$) par année pendant une période de 5 ans. Une évaluation sera tenue au cours de la cinquième année avant une reconduite éventuelle du programme.

4.2 Le français dans les bureaux du Conseil général

- 4.2.1** le *MEPS*, en coopération avec l'UMiF et en consultation avec d'autres Unités, identifiera certains postes précis où le français est utile et nécessaire, ainsi que d'autres où il serait souhaitable mais non requis,
- 4.2.2** que ce requis du français fasse partie des descriptions de compétences et des politiques d'embauche de l'Église, et mis en œuvre graduellement lorsque des postes sont déclarés vacants (ex. : certains postes dans la

Production de ressources, le Web, les Communications, le Développement des paroisses et ministères).

5 Création de ministères en français

- 5.1 Développement d'une stratégie intentionnelle, graduelle et soutenue de développement de nouveaux ministères capables d'avoir un impact réel et spirituel, concret et durable tant sur le secteur francophone de plusieurs régions du pays que sur notre Église comme dénomination ;
- 5.2 la création de l'équivalent de 5 nouveaux ministères à temps plein en français au cours des cinq (5) prochaines années suivant le Conseil général, de 2010 à 2014 inclusivement, afin de répondre aux possibilités réelles de développement, notamment, mais sans exclusion, dans les synodes M&O, des Maritimes, Gitchi-Manitou et du Consistoire de Winnipeg ;
- 5.3 l'équivalent de un (1) ministère à temps plein sera créé chaque année entre 2010 et 2014, ce qui permettra d'échelonnement les investissements financiers de manière graduelle et planifiée, de mettre en place le support nécessaire au niveau des communautés locales, des consistoires et des synodes, de recruter le personnel adéquat et d'apprendre des expériences, défis et réussites au fur et à mesure du développement des nouveaux ministères (voir le tableau et échéancier financier) ;
- 5.4 chacun de ces ministères sera soutenu pendant une période de cinq (5) ans, à raison de cent mille dollars (100 000\$) pour l'équivalent d'un poste à temps plein ;
- 5.5 après cinq (5) ans, chaque ministère verra son soutien diminué de \$ 20 000 chaque année pendant quatre ans (4) entre 2015 et 2022, pour arriver à un soutien local et autonome (voir tableau et échéancier financier).

Note : lorsqu'il est fait mention de l'équivalent à temps plein de cinq (5) ministères, ou de la création de l'équivalent de un (1) ministère par année, cela ne veut pas dire nécessairement que chaque ministère créé sera un plein temps. Certains projets visent un ministère à temps partiel. Dans les faits, selon les demandes, l'on pourrait voir la création de 6 ou 8 nouveaux ministères différents, équivalents au financement de 5 pleins temps.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
A	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000				
B		100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000			
C			100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000		
D				100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000	
E					100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000
Total	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	480,000	440,000	380,000	300,000	200,000	120,000	80,000	20,000

Total sur 13 ans \$ 3,52 millions

- NOTES:
- Le tableau ne tient pas compte de l'inflation.
 - Le 100 000 \$ comprend la portion salariale (employé et employeur) plus des ressources additionnelles de programme.

- Le projet suppose de nouvelles ressources de programme au niveau régional, y compris l'accès à un lieu de réunion et des revenus provenant de dons.
- Les débuts échelonnés permettront au synode et à l'UMiF de soutenir en priorité les nouveaux ministères pour leur première année de fonctionnement.

6. Procédure de mise en marche, d'évaluation et de partage des apprentissages

Suite au Conseil général, advenant une décision favorable, la Secrétaire générale et l'Exécutif du Conseil général détermineront la provenance des fonds ;

- 6.1 L'UMiF continuera de fournir un support d'accompagnement aux communautés, consistoires et synodes dans l'élaboration de leurs projets de ministères en français ;
- 6.2 Ces projets suivront la procédure normale d'appui aux niveaux des instances locales et régionales de l'Église (communautés locales, consistoires, synodes) et /ou de leurs comités autorisés ;
- 6.3 L'UMiF en collaboration avec *CECM*,
 - 6.3.1 recevra ces projets, approuvera leur appui, suivra leur évolution,
 - 6.3.2 développera en collaboration avec les instances locales des outils appropriés d'évaluation annuelle,
 - 6.3.3 partagera avec l'Église les apprentissages et les résultats,
 - 6.3.4 approfondira, avec les autres unités et instances et l'Église, une théologie contextuelle de notre expérience de développement et de mission,
 - 6.3.5 reliera cette expérience avec celle d'autres secteurs de l'Église en lien avec celle de l'Église mondiale en collaboration avec l'unité Justice, mondialisation et relations œcuméniques (*JGER*) ;
 - 6.3.6 continuera de développer des ressources et du matériel liturgique pour nourrir spirituellement ces nouveaux ministères.

Jésus dit encore :

Voici à quoi ressemble le Royaume de Dieu : une personne répand de la semence dans son champ. Ensuite, elle continue à dormir durant la nuit et à se lever chaque jour, pendant ce temps les graines germent et poussent sans qu'elle sache comment. La terre fait pousser d'elle-même la récolte : d'abord la tige des plantes, puis l'épi vert, et enfin le grain bien formé dans l'épi.

Dès que le grain est mûr, la personne se met au travail avec sa faucille, car le moment de la moisson est arrivé. (Marc 4:26-29 TOB)

*La Grâce de Dieu a pourvu.
Il nous reste à répondre car,
Les Temps sont favorables.*

Unités des Ministères en français (UMiF)

GCE 17 - Proposal for A Vision for French Ministries in The United Church of Canada**Origin:** Executive of the General Council

Unité des Ministères en Français /Unit for Ministries in French (UMiF)

Financial Implications: Total over 13 years \$3.52 million**Staffing Implications:** Integrated in present work of 1.5 staff**Source of Funding:** To be determined by Executive of the General Council

The Executive of General Council proposes

That the 40th General Council 2009

Receive the report “A Vision for French Ministries in The United Church of Canada” and commend the report and its recommendations to the Executive of General Council for incorporation into its planning processes for the next triennium,

Declare that Francophone ministries are an integral part of the identity, mission and vision for the future of The United Church of Canada, and

Commit the church to the continued strengthening and expansion of Francophone ministries, and to the goal of establishing at least five new Francophone ministries,

And request that the Executive report to the 41st General Council 2012 on the implementation of the recommendations of the report.

Recommendations:**1. Maximisation of Effective Deployment of Human Resources.****1.1 Supervised Ministry Education for Francophone and Bilingual Candidates**

- 1.1.1 that the *policies* and practices of The United Church of Canada be adjusted to facilitate Supervised Ministry Education in French-speaking contexts;
- 1.1.2 Francophone and bilingual candidates who request it, have the possibility of completing their Supervised Ministry Education in French;
- 1.1.3 a National Fund be created in order to help finance Supervised Ministry Education in contexts that could be recognised as valid learning sites, but that lack the necessary funding;
- 1.1.4 the Congregational, Educational, and Community Ministries Unit (CECM), in consultation with UMiF, include the above elements in its recommendations as it continues to study and reflect on the future and restructuring Supervised Ministry Education.

1.2 Transfer and Settlement of Francophone and Bilingual Candidates for Ministry

- 1.2.1 The United Church of Canada’s Transfer and Settlement policies be adjusted to prioritize settlement of Francophone and bilingual candidates in areas where there are obvious and discernable possibilities for ministry in French – including the candidate’s own Conference;

- 1.2.2 forms and procedures for settlement include an explicit agreement on the part of congregations requesting settlement to facilitate the development of ministry in French in the event that the person or persons settled are Francophone or bilingual;
- 1.2.3 when dealing with Francophone or bilingual candidates, the Transfer Committee expressly consult with Conferences in areas with significant Francophone populations (e.g. M & O, Maritime and Manitou Conferences) and any other Conference that expresses an interest in ministry in French;
- 1.2.4 in consultation with UMiF, the above elements be included in CECM's recommendations and policies that are part of any future restructuring of the Transfer and Settlement process.

2. Discernment of Context, Mission and call to Ministry Personnel

2.1 Making the JNAC Process More Explicit with Respect to Cultural Inclusiveness

- 2.1.1 in contexts where it is pertinent to do so, the process of evaluation of the mission and needs of congregational and community ministries (JNAC) include a focus on the potential for a culturally diverse ministry - especially the potential for ministry to Francophones – and that this information be integrated into the mission statement, job description, and responsibilities outlined in extending a call to lay or ordered ministry personnel;
- 2.1.2 Conferences and Presbyteries in areas with a significant number of Francophones (especially those within the bounds of Winnipeg Presbytery and M & O, Maritime and Manitou Conferences) as well as any others who are interested, ensure that contextual factors such as cultural diversity and special needs be included in the process of reflection, analysis, and evaluation of mission and witness;
- 2.1.3 the JNAC handbook be less general and offer more explicit guidelines with respect to the articulation of intentionality for ministry among Francophones and other communities and cultures.

2.2 Including Linguistic and Cultural Competencies for a Call to Ministry Personnel in appropriate contexts

- 2.2.1 congregations and ministries situated in areas where French is the language either of the majority, or of a significant minority, consider making knowledge of French a requirement for call, or at least, require that ministers and leaders take French-language training within the two years of their start date;
- 2.2.2 with the support of UMiF and in collaboration with CECM and MEPS (Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit), M&O, Manitou and Maritime Conferences accompany presbyteries, congregations and ministries in this discernment need for linguistic and cultural skills in a specific context of ministry.
- 2.2.3 training in French language and culture be fully eligible for financial support from funds allocated for Continuing Education.

3. Education and Training

- 3.1 The United Church of Canada ensure the presence of a centre offering a theological training programme in French for lay people and candidates for ordered ministry; that the content of such a curriculum include theological and pastoral training, as well as a

linguistic experience and cultural knowledge of Québec society and culture and of the diverse Francophone cultural communities in the country;

- 3.2 a course focusing in the history, culture, and religious sociology of the various Francophone communities across Canada be established in both Official Languages, offered on-line, and which would be recognized and accredited by all of the theological schools of The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada – the course to be offered not later than by September 2011 ;
- 3.3 ten thousand dollars (**\$10,000**) be made available for the development of such a course under the supervision of CECM and UMiF;- the course to be offered no later than Fall 2011
- 3.4 the Ministry of Supervision course be offered in French so that Francophone and bilingual candidates have access to an experience of ministry in a Francophone context as part of their practical training. Such training experiences shape lives, ministries and develop confidence.

4. **French-Language Training and needs**

4.1 **French Language training:**

- 4.1.1 a fund be established to offer financial support for French-language training - primarily for those whose work and/or ministry context requires competence in the French language;
- 4.1.2 this fund be administered by (CECM/MEPS) as an integral, albeit distinct, part of continuing education programmes;
- 4.1.3 the criteria for determining the allocation of funds and the types of language programmes that are eligible be established jointly with UMiF;
- 4.1.4 That the French-Language Training Fund make available twenty-five thousand dollars (\$ 25,000) a year for an initial period of 5 years. A review and evaluation will be conducted during the fifth year before a possible renewal of this programme.

4.2 **French in the General Council Offices**

- 4.2.1 MEPS, in cooperation with UMiF and in consultation with other units, identify the precise positions where French is useful and/or necessary in order to function professionally as well as other positions where it would be an asset, but not a requirement;
- 4.2.2 this information become part of the skills profiles and hiring practices of the Church that are put in place gradually as vacancies are declared. (This is particularly relevant, for example, to certain areas and positions in resource development, web-design, public communications, and development of congregations and ministries.)

5. **Creation of New Ministries in French**

- 5.1 an intentional strategy of gradual and sustained development of new ministries, capable of having a spiritual, real, concrete, and lasting impact not only on the Francophone sector of our Church, but on the denomination's public witness as a whole;
- 5.2 the creation of the equivalent of five (5) full-time ministries in French in the five (5) years following the 40th General Council (2010-2014, inclusive) in order to respond to the

- identified potential for development – particularly, but not exclusively, in M&O, Maritime and Manitou Conferences and in Winnipeg Presbytery;
- 5.3 the creation of the equivalent of one (1) new full-time ministry each year between 2010 and 2014. In this way, the financial investment can be planned and made gradually over the five-year period (see the table of the investment calendar); the necessary support can be put into place at all levels (by local communities, Presbyteries and Conferences); adequate personnel can be recruited; and learning can be shared from the experiences, successes and challenges that arise as ministries are developed;
- 5.4 that each new ministry be funded for a period of five (5) years with a budget of one hundred thousand dollars (\$ 100 000) - for the equivalent of a full-time position;
- 5.5 that after five (5) years, the financial support for each ministry decrease by twenty thousand dollars (\$ 20 000) each year for the four years between 2015 and 2022 (see table showing investment calendar) to achieve autonomous local support.

Note: although the recommendations speak of the equivalent of five (5) full-time ministries and the creation of the Note equivalent of one (1) full-time ministry a year, this does not mean that all of the ministries created will be full-time. Some proposals are for part-time ministries. We could possibly see the creation of more than five new ministries with funding equivalent to that of five full-time positions.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
A	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000				
B		100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000			
C			100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000		
D				100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000	
E					100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	80,000	60,000	40,000	20,000
Total	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	480,000	440,000	380,000	300,000	200,000	120,000	80,000	20,000

Total over 13 years \$3.52 million

NOTES:

- Chart does not reflect increases for inflation.
- 100,000 includes salary components plus some additional resources for programming.
- Project assumes additional regional resources for programme including meeting space and income through offerings.
- Staggered beginnings allow resources of Conference and UMiF to be focused on starting up ministries during first year of operation. Also allows for learning from experience of start up programmes.

6. Recommendations for the Implementation Process, Evaluation and Sharing Learnings

Following the General Council, and conditional to its approval of the recommendations to approve the creation of new ministries, the General Secretary and the General Council Executive will determine the source(s) of funding;

- 6.1 UMiF will continue to accompany and support communities, Presbyteries and Conferences in developing proposals for ministries in French;
- 6.2 These proposals will follow the normal endorsement procedures at the local and regional levels of the Church (the local community, the Presbytery and the Conference and/or their authorized committees).
- 6.3 In addition, UMiF, in collaboration with CECM will:

- 6.3.1 receive and approve these proposals,
- 6.3.2 follow and accompany their evolution and, in collaboration with local decision-making bodies, will develop tools for annual evaluation;
- 6.3.3 share results and learnings with the wider Church;
- 6.3.4 develop, with the other Units and decision-making bodies of our Church, a contextual theology of our experience of doing new development work and mission;
- 6.3.5 in collaboration with Justice Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit (JGER) for mutual learning, relate these experiences to those of other sectors of The United Church of Canada as well as to those of the Global Church;
- 6.3.6 continue to develop resources and liturgical materials for the spiritual nurture of these new ministries.

Jesus also said,

'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, without one knowing how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once one goes in with a sickle, because the harvest has come.' (Mark 4.26-29; NRSV)

God's Grace and Spirit have provided and have kept working in our midst.
The time is now for us to respond.

The kairos—time has come.

L'Unité des Ministères en français (UMiF)
The Unit for Ministries in French

GENERAL COUNCIL OFFICE

M&O 15 – Future Location of General Council Office

Origin: Montreal & Ottawa Conference, transmit with concurrence

Financial Implications:

Staffing Implications:

Source of Funding:

Montreal and Ottawa Conference proposes that

That the 40th General Council 2009

direct the Task Group working on the future location of the General Council office to consider the National Capital Region as a possible future location for the General Council office

Background:

Currently there is a Task Group working on the General Council office location options when the current lease at 3250Bloor Street West concludes in 2015.

There would be merit in considering the National Capital Region as a possible future location for the following reasons:

1. having the General Council offices in the national capital would facilitate ongoing conversation and presence in the milieu of the Capital of our country. General Council staff who have responsibility for liaison work with government regularly must travel to Ottawa.
2. Many of the national social justice coalitions have their offices in Ottawa and locating in the same city would facilitate communication and cooperation.
3. Ottawa is direct flight accessible from most parts of the country
4. Ottawa is a working bilingual context
5. There could be possibilities to explore partnerships with other national denominational offices which are also contemplating relocation and considering Ottawa as an option

M&O 15 – Relocalisation du bureau du Conseil général

Origin: Montreal & Ottawa Conference

Financial Implications:

Staffing Implications:

Source of Funding:

Le Synode Montréal et Ottawa propose que

Le 40e Conseil général (2009):

demande au groupe de travail sur la relocalisation du bureau du Conseil général d'envisager la région de la capitale nationale comme lieu possible d'implantation.

Contexte :

Un groupe de travail sur les possibilités de relocalisation du bureau du Conseil général en 2015, à la fin du bail au 3250 Bloor Street, est présentement à l'œuvre.

Envisager la région de la capitale nationale comme lieu possible d'implantation est opportun pour les raisons suivantes :

1. la présence des bureaux du Conseil général dans la capitale nationale favoriserait la poursuite des échanges et la visibilité [de l'Église] dans la capitale de notre pays. Le personnel du Conseil général responsable des relations avec le gouvernement doit se rendre régulièrement à Ottawa;
2. Plusieurs des coalitions nationales de justice sociale ont leurs bureaux à Ottawa; notre présence dans la même ville simplifierait les communications et la coopération;
3. Ottawa bénéficie de vols directs provenant de la plupart des régions du pays;
4. Ottawa offre un contexte de travail bilingue;
5. D'autres Églises nationales songent à une relocalisation et considèrent l'option d'Ottawa; des possibilités de partenariat pourraient être envisagées.

MNWO 3 – Re-location of the General Council Offices and Archives to Winnipeg, Manitoba

Origin: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, Transmitted with concurrence

Financial Implications: N/A

Staffing Implications: N/A

Source of Funding: N/A

Therefore the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario proposes

That the 40th General Council 2009 of The United Church of Canada accept this invitation of the Conference in partnership with the University of Winnipeg to relocate the national offices of the General Council and the United Church Archives to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Whereas the prairie culture of “can do” has proven to be influential in vitalizing church institutions, and;

Whereas Winnipeg is a visible and lively ecumenical community, home to national offices of many denominations, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and Mennonite Central Committee, and many ecumenical organizations, including the Canadian Food Grains Bank, the most broadly ecumenical social justice agency in Canada, and;

Whereas Winnipeg is a centre for nurturing ecumenical and denominational theological inquiry, through organizations such as The Winnipeg Theological Cooperative, and its member schools (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Mennonite, Anglican, Salvation Army, Evangelical, and United Church (3 schools), and;

Whereas Winnipeg has a rich cultural fabric and a vibrant and diverse population, able to attract and sustain a well educated labour pool, and;

Whereas Winnipeg is located in the middle of Canada, making it a central hub for air transportation and time zone access, and;

Whereas the church is called to be wise stewards and good managers of its resources, and;

Whereas Winnipeg’s commercial and residential real estate market is one of the most economical in Canada, enabling Winnipeggers to have a higher standard of living on the same salary compared with cities like Toronto, and, enabling organizations to easily find affordable and attractive office space, and;

Whereas The University of Winnipeg, (United Church affiliated), has demonstrated a sustained commitment as a leader in shaping Winnipeg as a city known for cultural diversity and respect, peace and justice, achieved through strong public institutions, and;

Whereas Winnipeg has a climate that builds character and fosters community;

COM 2 - Commons Consent

That the 40th General Council 2009 approve the requests for action in the following proposals, and direct the Executive of the General Council to ensure that such actions are taken as requested in the proposals.

COM 1	M&O 15; MNWO 3
GCE 19	Nominations to the GCE and Committees of GC

COM 01 - M&O 15 and MNWO 3

That the 40th General Council refer to the General Secretary, General Council, Proposals M&O 15 and MNWO 3 and all other suggestions of site location for the relocation of the General Council Office.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEES

Origin: Executive of the General Council
Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee presents to the General Council recommendations for appointment to the Executive of the General Council and to those committees which report to the General Council.

The Nominations Committee follows spiritual discernment practices to recommend members for appointment to the committees and task groups of the General Council and as representatives of The United Church of Canada to our partner organizations. Following the guiding principles adopted by the Executive of the General Council, the Nominations Committee recruits, selects, supports and recognizes over 500 active members for approximately 70 committees, task groups and representative roles.

During the 2006-2009 triennium, the Nominations Committee has considered the expressions of interest or nominations of 636 people and has made 426 recommendations for appointment. Over 70% of those who expressed interest during this triennium have been appointed to serve. The Nominations Committee continues to work with the Conferences to assist in directing the call and gifts of church members to the faithful service of the church through the General Council or other courts of the church.

The Nominations Committee also continues its efforts to lift up the gifts of members throughout the church and bring diverse voices, gifts, and experiences to the service and leadership of the committees and task groups of the General Council and its Executive.

The Nominations Committee is inspired by Paul's words to the Romans 12:4-8 ("one body in Christ...gifts that differ"), and seeks a comprehensive approach to recruiting, selecting, supporting and recognizing those who are elected or appointed to serve as members of all councils, committees or groups of the General Council; one that is:

- Informed by the Spirit
- Accountable to the General Council
- Sharing in Leadership
- Open and Transparent
- Inclusive
- Flexible
- Continuously Improving

(From "Guiding Principles, Practices and Processes for Members of Committees and Task Groups" approved GCE 2004-04-23-115)

1. Nominations to the Executive and the Committees of the General Council

The Nominations Committee proposes:

That the 40th General Council 2009, appoint the following people to the Executive of the General Council and the committees of the General Council with the stated terms:

40th Executive of the General Council

Moderator

- *To be named*

Immediate Past Moderator

- David Giuliano – OM MNWO (2012)

General Secretary, General Council

- Nora Sanders

Conference Representatives – *as named by Conferences*

- Florence Sanna – OM N&L (2015)
- Claude Hender – Lay N&L (2015)
- Shirley Cleave – Lay Mar (2012)
- David Hewitt – DM Mar (2015)
- Brian Cornelius – OM M&O (2012)
- Charlotte Griffith – Lay M&O (2015)
- Bruce Hutchinson – Lay BQ (2012)
- John H. Young – OM BQ (2015)
- Barbara White – OM Tor (2012)
- Lynella Reid-James – Lay Tor (2015)
- Lewis Coffman – Lay Ham (2012)
- Thom Davies – OM Ham (2015)
- Sharon Willis-Whitwell – OM Lon (2012)
- Charles McMillan – Lay Lon (2015)
- Cindy Désilets – OM Mtu (2012)
- Bill Rogers – Lay Mtu (2015)
- Betty Kelly – Lay MNWO (2012)
- barb janes – OM MNWO (2015)
- Linsell Hurd – OM Sask (2012)
- Beverly Kostichuk – Lay Sask (2015)
- Louise Rogers – Lay ANW (2012)
- Armand Houle – OM ANW (2015)
- Heather Burton – OM BC (2012)
- Alvin Dixon – Lay BC (2015)
- Allan Sinclair – OM ANC (2012)
- *To be named* – Lay ANC (2015)

Chairpersons of Permanent Committees (2012)

- Tracy Murton – Lay Sask, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
- Christine Williams – DMP M&O, Programs for Mission and Ministry
- Donald Hunter – Lay Tor, Finance
- Paul Stott – Lay Tor, Governance and Agenda
- *To be named* – Aboriginal Ministries Council

Members at Large (2012)

- Sheryl Johnson – Lay MNWO
- Ted Kostecki – DMP Lon
- Mary Royal – OM ANW
- Colin Phillips – Lay Tor

Francophone Constituency (2012)

- Darla Sloan – OM M&O
- Nicole Beaudry – Lay M&O

Ethnic Ministries Constituency (2012)

- Emmanuel Ofori – OM M&O
- Amber Ing – Lay Ham

Representative to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches

- Carmen Lansdowne – OM BC

Interim Sub-Executive of the General Council (December 2009)

- *To be named* – Moderator
- David Giuliano – Immediate Past Moderator
- Nora Sanders – General Secretary, General Council
- Heather Burton – OM BC
- Louise Rogers – Lay ANW
- Betty Kelly – Lay MNWO
- Barb White – OM Tor
- Bruce Hutchinson – Lay BQ
- Brian Cornelius – OM M&O
- Shirley Cleave – Lay Mar
- Amber Ing – Lay Ham, ethnic ministries constituency
- Darla Sloan – OM M&O, francophone constituency
- Paul Stott – Lay Tor, Permanent Committee on Governance and Agenda Chairperson

Archives and History Committee (41st General Council 2012), as named by Conferences

- Bruce Kearley – OM N&L
- Phyllis Stopps – Lay Mar
- Margaret Gosselin – Lay M&O
- Karen McLean – Lay BQ
- Mary Gooley – Lay Tor
- Robert Stevenson – Lay Ham
- Eva Archibald – Lay Lon
- W. Gailand MacQueen – OM Mtu
- Earl Gould – OM MNWO
- Darlene Goodwillie – Lay Sask
- Donna Krucik – DM ANW
- Donna Runnalls – Lay BC
- Maureen Scott Kabwe – DMC ANC
- Jean Barman – Academic Community Representative

Audit Committee (41st General Council 2012)

- Jack Page – Lay Mtu
- Bruce Richards – Lay Sask
- Ken Robinson – DMC Sask
- Janet Stockton – Lay Tor

Judicial Committee – as named by Conferences

- J. Derek Green – Lay (2012), Newfoundland and Labrador
- Donald Lockhart – Lay (2012), Newfoundland and Labrador
- Patricia Ritchie – OM (2012), Newfoundland and Labrador
- Florence Sanna – OM (2018), Newfoundland and Labrador
- Maggie Coffin-Prowse – Lay (2015), Maritime
- Steven Longmoore – OM (2018), Maritime
- Susan MacAlpine-Gillis – OM (2018), Maritime
- Kerri Seward – Lay (2018), Maritime
- Helen Barkley – Lay (2015), Montreal and Ottawa
- William Bruce – OM (2018), Toronto
- Ellen Mole – Lay (2018), Toronto
- Penny Keel – Lay (2018), Toronto
- Ian Gordon – Lay (2012), Hamilton
- Margaret Bain – OM (2015), Hamilton
- Deborah Deavu – DM (2015), Hamilton
- Murray Lapp – Lay (2015), Hamilton
- Scott Campbell – Lay (2015), London
- Bob Gibson – OM (2018), London
- Brad Morrison – OM (2018), London
- Glenna Beauchamp – OM (2015), Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
- Jeff Cook – OM (2015), Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
- Charles Huband – Lay (2015), Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
- Kirk Windsor – Lay (2015), Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
- Laura Sundberg – OM (2012), Saskatchewan
- Margaret McKechney – OM (2018), Saskatchewan
- Elizabeth Brown – OM (2012), Alberta and NorthWest
- James H. Hillson – OM (2018), Alberta and NorthWest
- Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier – Lay (2018), Alberta and NorthWest
- Ben McKay – Lay (2018), Alberta and NorthWest
- Gary Gaudin – OM (2012), British Columbia
- Ruth Wright – OM (2018), British Columbia
- Robert Wright – OM (2018), All Native Circle
- Betty Lou Skogen – OM (2018), All Native Circle
- Donald Little – Lay (2018), All Native Circle
- Cynthia Grandejambe – Lay (2018), All Native Circle

Theology and Faith Committee (December 2009)

- Arlyce Schiebout (OM BQ), interim reappointment as Chairperson

2. Recognition of Service of Members of Committees and Task Groups of the General Council (for information)

We extend gratitude for the service of the following people who completed or ended their terms on the Executive of the General Council or one of the committees of the General Council during this past triennium.

Executive of the General Council

- Peter Short – OM Mar, Immediate Past Moderator
- Fannie Hudson – Lay N&L
- Scott Parsons – OM N&L
- John McGonigle – DM N&L
- Andy Wright – OM N&L
- Mary-Beth Moriarity – OM Mar
- Lynn Boothroyd – Lay M&O
- Paul Reed – OM BQ
- Paul Stott – Lay Tor
- Heather Leffler – OM Ham
- Charles (Chuck) Scott – Lay Lon
- Dorothy Hemingway – Lay Mtu
- Caryn Douglas – DM MNWO
- Dwaine Dornan – Lay Sask
- Donald Koots – OM ANW
- Marion Carr – Lay BC
- Tarance Whiteye – Lay ANC
- Leah Weiss (Halliday) – Lay ANW, Member at Large
- Allan Buckingham (Seal) – Lay ANW, Member at Large
- Anne-Marie Carmoy – Lay M&O, Francophone constituency
- Stéphane Vermette – OM BQ, Francophone constituency
- Jim Blanchard – Lay Mar, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services
- Diane Dwarka – Lay MNWO, Programs for Mission and Ministry
- Martha ter Kuile – OM Tor, Governance, Planning and Budgeting Processes
- Debra Bowman – OM BC, Chairperson of General Council Business Table

Archives and History Committee

- Peter Douglas – OM MNWO, Chairperson
- Nora Barber – Lay BQ
- Twila Buttimer – Lay Mar
- Sheila Johnston – Lay ANW
- Elizabeth Lundy – Lay Tor
- Marvin Mackie – Lay Sask
- Patricia Wotton – OM MNWO
- Nancy Christie, Academic Community Representative
- Anne Urbancic, Academic Community Representative

Audit Committee

- Edward Hooey – Lay Tor, Chairperson
- Sandro Colasacco – Lay BC
- Stewart Hudson – Lay Mar
- K. John Wallace – Lay Mtu

Judicial Committee

- Allan Austin – Lay Tor

- Angela Bailey – OM M&O
- Beverly Brazier – OM Mar
- Evelyn Buckley – Lay ANW
- Norman Carruthers – Lay Mar
- Sharon Copeman – OM BC
- Terrence Deline – OM BQ
- Connie Dieter-Buffalo – Lay ANC
- Sheila Duffin – Lay Lon
- Mary Dunbar – Lay BQ
- Kevin Fenwick – Lay Sask
- Calvin Ferrier – Lay Mtu
- J. Malcolm Finlay – OM Tor
- Gwyn Griffith – Lay Tor
- David Hewitt – DM Mar
- Sharon Hurd – Lay Sask
- Graeme Keirstead – Lay BC
- Don Koots – OM ANW
- Don Laing – OM Sask
- Norma Lickers – Lay ANC
- Douglas Mann – Lay BQ
- Stan McKay – OM ANC
- Doreen Moffat – OM M&O
- Robert Shnell – Lay ANW
- Bernice Saulteaux – OM ANC
- Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa – OM Lon
- Hector Swain – OM N&L
- Bruce MacLeod Thomson – OM Mtu
- Cheryl Vickers-Adams – Lay BC

General Council Agenda and Planning Committee

- David W. Giuliano – OM MNWO, Moderator
- Michelle Slater – OM BC, Chairperson
- Debra Bowman – OM BC, Business Table
- Ha'eis Clare Hill – Lay BC, Worship
- Paul Reed – OM BQ, Business Processes
- Anna Marie Constantin – OM BC, Children in Council
- Cheryl Perry – DMP BC, Children in Council
- Karen Bridges – DMP ANW, Youth Forum
- Jim White – Lay BC, Aboriginal ministries
- Larissa Kanhai – Lay MNWO, Ethnic Ministries
- Anne-Marie Carmoy – Lay M&O, Francophone Ministries
- Karen Medland – OM BC, Local Arrangements
- Kent Israel – OM BC, Local Arrangements

Faithfully Submitted,

Paul Stott, Chairperson
Nominations Committee

Nominations Committee Members:

Lynn Boothroyd (M&O)	Betty Kelly (MNWO)	Stéphane Vermette (Francophone)
Heather Burton (BC)	Don Koots (ANW)	Tarance Whiteye (ANC)
Shirley Cleave (Mar)	Heather Leffler (Ham)	Andy Wright (N&L)
Cindy Désilets (Mtu)	Chuck Scott (Lon)	Diane Bosman (staff)
Dwaine Dornan (Sask)	Allan Sinclair (ANC)	Sarah Bernath (staff)
Bruce Hutchinson (BQ)	Paul Stott (Tor)	

Code: Ministry stream

DM = Diaconal Minister
DMC = Designated Lay Minister – Conference Recognized
DMP = Designated Lay Minister – Presbytery Recognized
OM = Ordained Minister

Code: Conferences

ANC = All Native Circle
ANW = Alberta and Northwest
BC = British Columbia
BQ = Bay of Quinte
Ham = Hamilton
Lon = London
M&O = Montreal and Ottawa
Mar = Maritime
MNWO = Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
Mtu = Manitou
N&L = Newfoundland and Labrador
Sask = Saskatchewan
Tor = Toronto

GCE 19 - Nominations to the Executive of the General Council and Committees of the General Council

Origin: Executive of the General Council
Nominations Committee

Financial Implications: N/A

Staffing Implications: N/A

Source of Funding: N/A

The Executive of the General Council proposes

That the 40th General Council 2009

1. **appoint the people named in the Report of the Nominations Committee to the Executive of the General Council and the committees of the General Council with the stated terms**
 2. **acknowledge with gratitude the service of those members who completed or ended their terms on the Executive of the General Council or one of the committees of the General Council during this past triennium.**
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Background

The members proposed for appointment to the Executive of the General Council and the committees of the General Council recorded in the Report of the Nominations Committee have been named through the nominations processes of the Executive or of the Conferences,