

Title: GS1 – Ratifying and Enacting Remits Authorized by the 40th General Council 2009

Originating Body: General Secretary, General Council

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that:

The 41st General Council 2012:

- a) **ratify the following Remits authorized by the 40th General Council 2009, all of which have been approved by a two-thirds majority of the presbyteries, and declared in effect by the Executive or Sub-Executive of the General Council:**
 - 1 **Election of Lay Representatives to Presbytery**
 - 2 **“Appointed,” “Chosen,” “Elected,” “Selected”**
 - 3 **Transfer and Settlement to be Optional;**

- b) **enact the following Remits authorized by the 40th General Council 2009, all of which have been approved by a majority of the presbyteries:**
 - 4 **Frequency and Timing of Conference Meetings**
 - 5A **Appointment of Designated Lay Ministers**
 - 5B **Presbytery Membership of Designated Lay Ministers; and**

- c) **enact the following Remits authorized by the 40th General Council 2009, all of which have been approved by a majority of the Presbyteries and Pastoral Charges:**
 - 6A **Declaration of Church Doctrine [Articles of Faith and 1940 statement of Faith]**
 - 6B **Declaration of Church Doctrine [Articles of Faith and “A New Creed”]**
 - 6C **Declaration of Church Doctrine [Articles of Faith and “A Song of Faith”]**

Background:

The following are the voting results for the remits authorized by the 40th General Council 2009:

Remits to Presbyteries (85)		For	Against
1	Election of Lay Representatives to Presbytery	75	01
2	“Appointed,” “Chosen,” “Elected,” “Selected”	72	03
3	Transfer and Settlement to be Optional	61	16
4	Frequency and Timing of Conference Meetings	67	02
5A	Appointment of Designated Lay Ministers	67	04
5B	Presbytery Membership of Designated Lay Ministers	64	06
Remits to Presbyteries (85) and Pastoral Charges (2223)			
6A	Declaration of Church Doctrine [Articles of Faith and 1940 statement of Faith]		
		Presbyteries	72
		Pastoral Charges	1,364
			05
			261
6B	Declaration of Church Doctrine [Articles of Faith and “A New Creed”]		
		Presbyteries	74
		Pastoral Charges	1,509
			03
			120
6C	Declaration of Church Doctrine [Articles of Faith and “A Song of Faith”]		
		Presbyteries	69
		Pastoral Charges	1,286
			08
			334

For Remits 1, 2 and 3, the Executive/Sub-Executive of the General Council declared that each of these remits had passed by a 2/3 majority of presbyteries by the specified return date. These remits are now in effect but are subject to ratification by the 41st General Council 2012.

Remits 4, 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B and 6C were all approved by a majority of the courts entitled to vote on them. These remits are not in effect as they are subject to enactment by the 41st General Council 2012.

Title: GCE 1 – REF GCE58 2012 – The Basis of Union and Crest

Originating Body: The Executive of the General Council

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Executive of the General Council proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012

- 1) accept the Report from the Task Group on the Basis of Union and Crest; and**
- 2) forward it to the General Secretary, General Council for implementation.**

Background:

The 40th General Council (2009) approved a motion that acknowledges the presence and spirituality of Aboriginal people in The United Church of Canada as a significant component to the Basis of Union, and directed that Aboriginal people be invited to become signatories to the Basis of Union. It also directed that a new United Church crest be developed that acknowledges the presence and spirituality of Aboriginal people in the United Church.

The Task Group to Revise the Basis of Union and the United Church Crest was established by the Executive of the General Council to develop recommendations to realize these goals.

The task group was mandated to:

- initiate and oversee processes over the triennium to assist the church in understanding and acknowledging the presence and spirituality of Aboriginal people, and their historical context, in the United Church
- develop recommendations for amending the Basis of Union to acknowledge the presence and spirituality of Aboriginal people, and their historical context
- develop a process by which Aboriginal people will be invited to become signatories to the Basis of Union
- oversee the design of a new crest that acknowledges the presence and spirituality of Aboriginal people in the United Church, and the fact that the United Church is built on Aboriginal heritage and territory

The Task Group is made up of six members: three who self-identify as Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) and three who self-identify as non-Aboriginal.

The members are: Ray Jones, Brian Goodings, Louise Loucareas, Gerald Hobbs, Michael Blair, Stan McKay and Jim Angus. Nora Sanders, General Secretary, and Maggie McLeod, Executive Minister, Aboriginal Ministries Circle are resource staff.

The Work of the Task Group:

The Task Group discerned early in the process that the nature of this work is not to rewrite history; rather to create opportunity to raise awareness for the United Church of Canada's need

to grapple with a history of exclusion. The Task Group acknowledges that those who went before us and created the original document, held integrity in what they attempted to do in their time. And so, The Task Group will recommend to General Council 41 fresh insights and understandings to the historical context at the time of union through a series text insertions for placement into the Introduction, Declarations, and Formation sections of *The Manual*.

The proposed insertions:

- Recognize the limitations shaped by a form of Christianity rooted in European origins;
- Convey a growing awareness of how this may continue to hamper our embrace of diversity as a fundamental spiritual reality;
- Express a desire to open ourselves to this dimension of God's call;
- Acknowledge how practices of The United Church of Canada resulted in the exclusion of Indigenous (and other) peoples from visioning, leadership, and decision-making;
- Offer a movement toward addressing the struggle and an invitation to covenant.

The Indigenous voice reminds the church of its commitment to becoming intercultural; and its invitation for the Aboriginal, Francophone, Ethnic and other minority constituencies to lead the way.

The recommended crest changes are as follows:

The Task Group recognizes that the oval shape of The United Church of Canada crest (outline of a fish), the "X" at the centre, the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, and the three symbols associated with the three communions—Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian that united to form The United Church of Canada in 1925 are important spiritual and historic reminders. With this in mind the Task Group recommendations to General Council 41 include the following changes to the United Church of Canada's crest:

1. That the crest reflects the four colours of the Indigenous medicine wheel: yellow, black, red and white in acknowledgement that The United Church of Canada was founded and continues to exist on Indigenous land.
2. The Latin words *ut omnes unum sint* (*That all may be one.*" John 17:21) that surround the symbols on the crest be supplemented with Canada's Aboriginal peoples understanding of this phrase "All my relations." which encompasses Christ's vision.

The Task Group presented to the Executive of the General Council in November, 2011 a new mock-up of The United Church of Canada crest that includes the Latin phrase **Ut Omnes Unum Sint** (That all may be one), and "**Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren** (the Mohawk version of "All My Relations").

The above recommendations will not require Remits.

Title: GCE14 – REF GCE60 2012 – Doctrine of Discovery

Originating Body: The Executive of the General Council

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Executive of the General Council proposes that:

The 41st General Council 2012:

1) adopt this statement:

That The United Church of Canada:

- i) Expresses solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of the world and supports the rights of Indigenous Peoples to live in and retain their traditional lands and territories, to maintain and enrich their cultures and to ensure that their traditions are strengthened and passed on for generations to come;**
- ii) Joins the World Council of Churches in denouncing the Doctrine of Discovery as fundamentally opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and as a violation of the inherent human rights that all individuals and peoples have received from God;**
- iii) Urges various governments in the world, including the government of Canada, to dismantle all legal structures and policies that are based on, or influenced by, the Doctrine of Discovery, to better empower and enable Indigenous Peoples to determine their own aspirations and issues of concern;**
- iv) Affirms its conviction and commitment that Indigenous Peoples be assisted in their struggle to involve themselves fully in creating and implementing solutions that recognize and respect the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to exercise their right to self-determination and self-governance;**
- v) Requests the governments and states of the world, including the government of Canada, to ensure that their policies, regulations and laws that affect Indigenous Peoples comply with international conventions and, in particular, conform to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Labour Organization's Convention 169;**
- vi) Encourages all its member congregations to:**
 - a. seek a greater understanding of the issues facing Indigenous Peoples,**

- b. support Indigenous Peoples in their ongoing efforts to exercise their inherent sovereignty and fundamental human rights,**
 - c. continue to raise awareness about the issues facing Indigenous Peoples, and**
 - d. develop advocacy campaigns to support the rights, aspirations and needs of Indigenous Peoples;**
 - vii) Supports the continued development of theological reflections by Indigenous Peoples which promote Indigenous visions of full, good and abundant life and which strengthen their own spiritual and theological reflections;**
 - viii) Affirm the Royal Proclamation of 1763 as a legal precedent in Canada that upholds the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.**
- 2) commit the church to a process of discerning how its own values, actions, policies and structures continue to be informed by the Doctrine of Discovery; and**
- 3) take steps to repudiate The Document of Discovery in word and action.**

Background:

In February 2012, the World Council of Churches Executive Committee denounced the “Doctrine of Discovery,” which has been used to subjugate and colonize Indigenous Peoples around the world. This doctrine has permitted the enslavement of Indigenous Peoples in the name of Christianity. The World Council of Churches’ statement declared that this doctrine is “completely opposed to the gospel of Jesus”.

The origin of the doctrine lies in the papal bulls issued by Pope Nicholas V in 1452, allowing the invasion and killing of the Indigenous Peoples. In the 14th century, some of the historical church documents such as *Dum Diversas* and *Romanus Pontifex* called for non-Christian people to be captured, vanquished and to have their possessions and property seized by the Christian monarchs.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 as a legal precedent in Canada that upholds the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. It was issued by King George III, after Great Britain acquired French Territory in North America at the end of the French and Indian War/Seven Years’ War to organize the new North American empire and to stabilize the relationship with the First Nations people by regulating trade, settlement and land purchases in the new frontier. In other words, The Royal Proclamation was a step in the Crown recognizing that the land occupied by First Nations located beyond the existing North American colonies were in some sense Indian Land. Title and access to these lands could only be granted by the Crown.

The World Council of Churches statement points out that the “current situation of Indigenous Peoples around the world is the result of a direct line of 'legal' precedents, originating with the Doctrine of Discovery and now codified and embedded in many of the contemporary national

laws and policies of the nation states that have emerged from the European colonial process.” The doctrine has been cited by courts in the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The World Council of Churches statement rejects the idea that “Christians enjoy a moral and legal right to invade and seize lands and to dominate Indigenous Peoples.” It also supports the “rights of Indigenous Peoples to live in and retain their traditional lands and territories. And to maintain and enrich their cultures.”

On her recent visit to Yellowknife, our Moderator met with Francois Paulette, an Aboriginal Spiritual leader, and member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In their discussion he emphasized the importance of the World Council of Churches' denunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

As the “Doctrine of Discovery” will be the theme for the 11th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) this year, The World Council of Churches Executive Committee stressed the need to sensitize churches on this issue.

The Executive Committee statement urged the churches and ecumenical organizations to mobilize and participate in the UNPFII process.

Through this statement, The World Council of Churches reaffirms its commitment to the rights of the Indigenous Peoples, and asks each member church to “reflect upon its own national and church history,” and to seek a better understanding of the issues faced by Indigenous Peoples.

LINKS:

World Council of Churches

Statement on the Doctrine of Discovery

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/bossey-february-2012/statement-on-the-doctrine-of-discovery-and-its-enduring-impact-on-indigenous-peoples.html>

Anglican Church of Canada

Motion to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery

<http://archive.anglican.ca/gs2010/resolutions/a086/index.html>

Background information regarding the Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius

<http://archive.anglican.ca/gs2001/rr/presentations/terranullius.html>

The Royal Proclamation

http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_treaties/fp_treaties_brconquest_proc1763.html

Title: GCE15 – REF GCE 59 2012 – Comprehensive Review of How The United Church of Canada Lives Faithfully in God’s World

Originating Body: The Executive of the General Council

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Executive of the General Council proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 direct that, after the 41st General Council 2012, the Executive of the General Council, not later than its first meeting of the triennium, appoint a task group of five to seven individuals, selected through the Nominations process, and supported by staff.

The overall task of this group is to examine the comprehensive vision and circumstances of The United Church of Canada and develop a report and recommendations for the 42nd General Council 2015 that will best enable the church to live faithfully in God’s world at this time in the church’s life.

The group will:

- 1) attend to the sense of identity emerging from the 41st General Council 2012;**
- 2) articulate for themselves the vision which is found in the decisions made and work done in recent years and during the 41st General Council 2012 in order to inform their work;**
- 3) look at all significant aspects of the organization and operations of The United Church of Canada in all its courts, including attention to the interaction and connection of courts;**
- 4) draw on the information and analysis already gathered through Permanent Committees and staff led reviews;**
- 5) prepare alternate models of program, governance and staff structures as the basis for soliciting in-depth input from diverse voices across The United Church of Canada;**
- 6) develop a process for ensuring that future work brought by Permanent Committees or mandated by General Council will take into consideration the church’s ability to fund future work and considers how it fits with ongoing work;**
- 7) give interim reports and receive feedback from the Executive of the General Council at each meeting throughout the triennium.**

Background:

The proposed process offers an opportunity to lift up our Reformed tradition of being church with purpose in the current context without apologizing for circumstances. It is good modelling for ministries to live within one's means and given resources and to give thanks for this opportunity. The gospel is about transformation not stagnation and being open to God's presence at all times. Faithful interpretation of gospel is that we give thanks for the comfort/struggle to open ourselves to new life and opportunity in all the times of our lives and the life of the church. By faith we journey on. The seed, wheat and chaff illustrations are familiar to most people. And even the chaff is put to use.

In conducting this review, the General Council Executive and its executive would be modelling the same approach that is expected of congregations, when they use discernment around needs and resources and their integration as an ongoing tool in guiding mission strategies, through the Joint Needs Assessment process.

UPDATED PAGE
Revised August 7, 2012

Title: GCE 2 – REF GS56 2012 – Simplification of Church Processes

Originating Body: The Executive of the General Council

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Executive of the General Council proposes that the 41st General Council 2012:

1) approve the principles on which the proposed Manual by-laws are based:

- a) the by-laws must strike a balance between enough regulation for the church to function in a fair and orderly way, and enough flexibility so that courts and people are free to carry out ministry in ways, both traditional and innovative, that meet local needs;**
- b) the by-laws must reflect that mission is the church's focus, and that our Polity exists only to support mission rather than as an end in itself; and**
- c) the by-laws must serve the reader by providing the greatest possible clarity and accessibility to people of different backgrounds including people for whom English is not a first language; and**

2) approve the proposed by-laws in the form posted at (<http://www.gc41.ca/background-material>) as an updated re-drafting of the existing by-laws. This is the same form of the proposed by-laws as was endorsed by the Executive of the General Council.

Background:

In May 2010, the Executive of the General Council mandated the simplification of church court processes in order to reduce significantly the complexity and size of The Manual and make it more user-friendly.

The General Secretary assigned a staff group to the project.

The staff group identified principles to guide the drafting of a new set of by-laws. These principles are based on the mandate from the Executive, the staff group's understanding of the context in which this project arose, and the consultations with church courts, committees, other groups and individuals. Based on these principles, the by-laws were rewritten in contemporary style and language.

There have been minor policy changes made in the proposed by-laws but all of these changes are subject to the approval of the 41st General Council. There are separate proposals for each of these minor policy changes for the General Council's consideration. Apart from these policy changes, the proposed by-laws are intended to be simply an updated version of the existing by-laws.

The Executive of the General Council endorsed the principles on which the draft by-laws were based and, subsequently, endorsed the proposed by-laws for the consideration of the General Council.

Title: TICIF1 Statement on Ministry

Originating Body: The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 approve the “Statement on Ministry in The United Church of Canada (2012)” and

direct the General Secretary, General Council to ensure that the policies and procedures of the church are consistent with the statement while ensuring flexibility in matters of pastoral and human relations policies.

Statement on Ministry in The United Church of Canada (2012)

The Ministry of All

The Church is a community of believers (*ecclesia*) called into existence by the presence of Jesus Christ and the call to continue Jesus’ ministry in the world. Through the Spirit, who enlivens and renews the church, all members¹ are empowered to share in Christ’s ministry, the work of the church. The church is about God’s mission in the world, living out the gospel message through action, that there will be shalom for God’s creatures and healing for God’s creation. Ministry serves God’s mission in the world.

The United Church of Canada since its beginning has upheld a central tenet of the Reformation, that the ministry of the church includes the ministry of all the baptized. (1st Peter 2:9) At various points in its history the church has affirmed that all its members are called to ministry as parts of Christ’s body. The ministry of Jesus begins with a community of people. These diverse communities actively participate in God’s mission as disciples of Christ’s ongoing ministry which takes many forms. The ministry and discipleship of all is reflected in the conciliar structure of the United Church.

The ministry of all seeks to be:

- **representational, reflecting the character of Jesus the Christ, who is among us as one who serves;**
- **relational, originating in God’s covenant and modeling mutual acceptance and respect with all creation;**
- **collaborative, recognizing that the church’s life is based in partnership;**
- **accountable, being exercised on behalf of and therefore with the authority of the faith community;**

¹ Members in this document is used in its broadest understanding as all who choose to identify and participate in the life of the community of faith.

- **prophetic, enabling communities formed by God’s Word and Spirit to be living messengers for the reign of God and to resist the powers of evil;**
- **charismatic, discerning and faithfully using the gifts and charisms of the Spirit for the building up of the church.**

The ministry of all takes place as the Spirit moves in known and unknown ways; bringing into the community of faith and sending into the world, the gifts of its people. “For the sake of the world,” says *A Song of Faith*, “God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry. To embody God’s love in the world, the work of the church requires the ministry and discipleship of all believers.”

Ministries of Leadership

“In the church, some are called to specific ministries of leadership, both lay and ordered; some witness to the good news; some uphold the art of worship; some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering; some build up the community of wisdom; some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.”²

While all members share in Christ’s ministry, the church from its earliest days has recognized that God calls some to exercise specific gifts of leadership, both paid and voluntary. These ministries of leadership 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. All forms of leadership in the church are therefore accountable to the community of faith.

These various forms of leadership in the church can be expressed in the following ancient expressions given current meaning:

- **enlivening worship and celebration of the sacraments (*leitourgia*);**
- **interpreting and passing on Christian 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*);**
- **building up the community of faith as the beloved community of God (*koinonia*).**
- **embodying the presence of Christ in the world (*marturia*).**

Such ministries of leadership are all expressions of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Through these forms of ministry, leaders empower the community and its members to be representational, relational, collaborative, accountable, prophetic and charismatic in character.

The ministry of leadership, both paid and unpaid, is lived out in diverse ways. Some examples are youth ministry, leadership in worship, pastoral visiting, licensed lay worship

² A song of Faith; 1 Corinthians 12

leaders, community and outreach ministries and the use of new forms of electronic technology.

It is the responsibility of leaders to seek to be humble and authentic, to act with personal integrity and courage, and be passionate for God's love for creation. All leadership requires adequate preparation and a discipline of spiritual growth and life-long learning. Education and formation need to contribute to awareness of and sensitivity to the contexts of the ministry and the intercultural commitments of the church.

A particular form of a ministry of leadership in the church is found in the oversight responsibilities and authority given to the courts of the church, the Session, or its equivalent, the Presbytery, the Conference and the General Council. In Reformed and specifically in the United Church tradition, the episcopal role of the bishop is shared between the Presbytery and the Conference.

The decision making structures of the United Church are conciliar, meaning that each court has particular roles and authority. Because of our theology of the ministry of all, all courts of the church include both lay and ordered leadership.

Paid Accountable Ministries of Leadership

While all members of the church share in Christ's ministry, the Church has from its earliest days recognized that God calls some from within the community through specific gifts to ordered expressions of ministry. The United Church recognizes one order of ministry in two expressions, ordained and diaconal. The church has also recognized the emergence of lay expressions of paid accountable ministry in local and time limited contexts. These include designated lay ministries recognized and accountable to the Presbytery and congregational designated ministries accountable to congregations.

Ordered and those designated lay ministries recognized by the Presbytery, are called to a distinct role of leadership within the church. Their leadership is authorized and exercised through their membership in a presbytery (or district). Through this membership, they are called to exercise governance and leadership, shared with elected leaders, in the ministry of the church. Ordered ministers, and designated lay ministers while in paid accountable ministry positions, are 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, and the pastoral charge or presbytery recognized ministry, and God.

***Ordained and diaconal ministers* are ordered by the denomination and serve the mission and ministry of the United Church as a whole. Preparation for ordered ministry involves university level theological study and an extensive discernment and assessment process. Ordered Ministers maintain the historic connection of the United Church to the church catholic through the faithful witness to the apostolic tradition and the interpretation of a living faith. Ordered ministers carry the responsibility as communicators of the tradition enacted in word and sacrament, education and service. They 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.

They are ordained and commissioned to the ministry of The United Church of Canada within the Holy Catholic Church. Consistent with the historic traditions of the church, in the United Church ordination and commissioning take place through the laying on of hands and once enacted, are not re-enacted. Ordination and commissioning are liturgically enacted at a Conference level.

***Ordained ministers* serve in all aspects of ministry and are formally called to word, sacrament and pastoral care. This involves presiding in worship and sacrament, 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* serve in all aspects of ministry and are formally called to 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.”³**

By virtue of their training and recognition, ordered ministers are representatives of the whole United Church. Because of their distinct role of leadership their membership in the United Church resides in a Presbytery throughout their lives. As they are called to ministry and God’s mission in the world, ordered ministers in Presbytery recognized ministries are maintained on the role of Presbytery or may be retained when engaged in other vocational or personal activities. Ordered ministers are entrusted to initiate new forms of ministry, including the possibility of non-stipendiary ministries authorized and accountable to or recognized by presbytery.

***Designated lay ministers* are members of the church who exercise gifts for leadership in mission and ministry that respond to a need within a local congregation or community ministry. Their ministries are presbytery accountable and dependent on appointment. 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. Designated lay ministers function in various aspects of ministry leadership relating to their appointment and they are also members of Presbytery. At the end of an appointment, the Presbytery and Designated Lay Minister discern together questions of ongoing ministry and presbytery membership. Because designated lay ministry is dependent on appointment, it is celebrated (re-enacted) at each appointment. The appointment is liturgically enacted by the presbytery either in a presbytery meeting or in the local ministry.**

³ Quoted from the Statement of Vision of Diakonia of The United Church of Canada

The Future of Ministry

The church is about God’s mission in the world. Therefore the Holy Spirit continually calls the church to renew its understanding of ministry opening itself to new expressions that serve the needs of the present day.

In particular, existing paradigms of congregational identity are changing. People no longer maintain formerly expected patterns of participation. The United Church is challenged to re-image the nature of life in the church. As the church has begun to experiment with new expressions of community it will develop a greater variety of forms and models of ministry that will involve all of the people of the church. As the church carries God’s Word into the world in new ways, ministry will be characterized by more collaboration, networking and transparency as well as a variety of educational approaches.

Ministry will be transformed as the church itself is transformed.

Background:

The 40th General Council adopted the “Statement on Paid Accountable Ministry” and directed the General Secretary, General Council:

1. To develop a statement on the subject of the ministry of the whole people (thus including laity) of The United Church of Canada, and
2. That such a statement be developed with congregational consultation, and
3. To report to the 41st General Council 2012, with the intention that this would be added to the current “Statement on Paid Accountable Ministry” to create a conclusive “Statement on Ministry.” (GC40 2009-031)

On the advice of the General Secretary, the Executive of the General Council referred the task to the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee.

This revised Statement on Ministry (2012) provides a response to the direction of the 40th General Council. The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee proposes that it be approved for this time in the life of the church.

The revised 2012 Statement does not vary significantly in policy from the “Statement on Paid Accountable Ministry (2009)” approved by the 40th General Council with the exception of the use of the term “apostolic succession” as noted below. In consultation with the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policy and Services, the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee believes that approving this revised statement can provide a base for further ongoing conversations about the meaning and nature of ministry in the church, and for mutual recognition agreements with other denominations.

However, the Committee also believes that there are significant questions surrounding the various streams of ministry that do require further work in the church. With that in mind an

additional proposal is offered by the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to the 41st General Council.

Purpose and Use

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee understands the Statement on Ministry (2012) to be a theological expression of the meaning of ministry for The United Church of Canada. The desire is to offer a succinct and theologically articulate statement of the United Church's understanding of ministry in this moment in time. The Statement is written in theological language and assumes a certain level of understanding of theological principles. In other words, it is not written as an introductory document for wide use, but rather as a document for offering theological clarity for processes of preparation and oversight of ministry and for conversations with ecumenical colleagues.

Because the statement is succinct it makes reference to points of belief that in themselves could require significant explanation. The Committee recognizes the weakness of summarizing potentially complex theological arguments in sentences, but believes that the purposes of this statement are served best by maintaining its current length.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee believes that The Statement on Ministry should be used as a resource to inform Pastoral Relations and Human Resources policies. While it provides theological direction it should not be used, for example, to limit access to such programs as long term disability for designated lay ministers.

Process and Changes in this Document

The proposed Statement on Ministry (2012) is a revision of the Statement on Paid Accountable Ministry approved by the 40th General Council (2009). The 2009 Statement was developed by The Meaning of Ministry Task Group. The Task Group proposed the need for a succinct statement on ministry and offered the initial document, termed a Statement on Ministry. The GC40 approved the Task Group's proposed statement with some critical amendments, renamed it as a Statement on Paid Accountable Ministry, and directed, as noted above, that further work be undertaken to include more effectively the ministry of all the people of God.

While GC40 approved the 2009 Statement, it did so with only a small majority and after significant debate. Questions from the floor centred primarily on issues related to Designated Lay Ministry with some additional questions such as the appropriateness of the inclusion of "apostolic succession" in a United Church document.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee was charged by the Executive of General Council to undertake the work of further revising the 2009 statement. It produced an initial revision that was shared for response across the church in 2010 and 2011. Responses to this initial revision suggested that a more encompassing rewrite of the Statement was required. The work of the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee was also enriched by a Symposium on the future of Ministry held jointly with the 2011 Annual Theology Conference of Queen's School of Religion.

The 2012 Statement simplifies some language and reorders the text to make clear a flow in understanding of ministry from *The Ministry of All*, to the *Ministries of Leadership*, to *Paid Accountable Ministries of Leadership*. Some additional material has been added while attempting to ensure that the policy directions of 2009 remain intact.

A significant change is found in the change of language from *apostolic succession* to *apostolic tradition*. The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee generally supported the language of apostolic succession. It noted the discussions with the Anglican Church in the 1970's that expressed agreement that apostolic succession has never meant in church history a direct tactual lineage from the Apostle Peter through to bishops today. Instead, the Anglican Church has historically been much closer to the reformed understanding that apostolic succession is found in the community of faith's commitment of faithfulness to the apostolic tradition. The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee also noted the central part Apostolic Succession has within the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry Document (BEM 1982) of the World Council of Churches.

Nevertheless, the Committee felt that there was significant misunderstanding of the meaning of apostolic succession that could not be addressed in this statement and felt it best to change the language to "apostolic tradition." The Committee does not believe that this substantially changes the meaning of the document.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee has also added a section at the end of the document on the Future of Ministry. The Committee has spent considerable time reflecting on the changing nature of the church. In an accompanying document to GC41, the Committee offers an initial reflection on ecclesiology and proposes the need for more extensive study in the church. Ministry and the church are inseparable, and will evolve together. The Committee therefore wishes to reinforce the understanding that this statement and its successors are provisional for a particular moment in time. They must always be works in progress, reflecting the changing nature of the church and its call to participate in God's mission.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee continues to reflect on larger theological issues in ministry that intersect question on the nature of the church. Of particular interest to the Committee is the historic distinction between movement and institution. While highly simplified, the Committee recognizes tensions within the church that are pushing for a more movement based orientation. In a sense these pushes represent a return to the core of the Methodist identity of the church. The church needs much greater flexibility in all aspects of its governance and life in order to be responsive to God's call for mission in this time. Lay ministry is one aspect of our Methodist heritage that has significant potential for transforming the church.

Designated Lay Ministry

This 2012 Statement does not change the policy directions concerning Designated Lay Ministry expressed in the 2009 statement. However, the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee heard significant ongoing difficulties with the category of Designated Lay Ministry. The 2009 Statement had proposed an understanding of DLM based on a distinction between life

time membership in Presbytery afforded to ordered ministry personnel and membership in Presbytery that was dependent on appointment for DLMs. This time limited nature of DLM status was consistent with the original design of Designated Lay Ministry and was based on an understanding of the nature of ordered ministry within reformed traditions.

This distinction of time limit, the primary one the 2009 Task Group could identify between *ordered* and *designated lay* ministries, was diminished by the amendments to the statement that allowed Presbyteries and DLM's together to discern ongoing membership. From this and other actions, it has become clear to the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee that this primary distinction between ordered and designated lay ministry is not workable in the church.

In addition there is considerable concern within the DLM community over the name itself, in both official languages, many indicating a preference to return to the language of Lay Pastoral Minister. For many DLM's their status would best be seen as a third stream of ordered ministry alongside ordained and diaconal ministries, all expressing a life time call to ministry leadership in the church.

Conversations between the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee and the Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policy and Services suggest agreement that the current policies, structures and the theological definitions of Designated Lay Ministry are not working. Further work needs to be done. Nevertheless, both Committees have agreed that whatever changes might be proposed in respect to the DLM category need consultation throughout the church before being implemented.

Since the 2009 Statement has been approved, the current understanding of Designated Lay Ministry is the formal policy of the church. The proposal for study from the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, if approved by the General Council, therefore will invite the church to consider an alternative, for consideration at GC42. This alternative model is found in the proposal entitled, "A Proposal for Local Ordination within The United Church of Canada."

Title: TICIF2 – Local Ordination

Originating Body: The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 direct the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, in consultation with the Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policy and Services, and other appropriate bodies, to engage the church in a study of the theological and functional implications of “local ordination” for designated lay ministers serving in pastoral ministry roles.

Background:

The proposed Statement on Ministry in The United Church of Canada (2012) maintains the policies and directions concerning Designated Lay Ministry that have been in place in the church following the Ministry Together Report of the 37th General Council (2000). The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, in undertaking its preparation of the 2012 Statement, has recognized significant ongoing difficulties with the category of Designated Lay Ministry. These concerns have been confirmed and shared by the Permanent Committee, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services.

The Meaning of Ministry Task Group, which proposed the 2009 Statement on Paid Accountable Ministry, struggled to articulate a theological distinction between ordered ministry and designated lay ministry. The Task Group noted in its report that most denominations have some expression of lay pastoral ministry. Most denominations make the distinction between lay and ordered ministries based on sacramental authority. The Task Group believed that the United Church could not make this distinction. With widespread authorization of Designated Lay Ministry for sacramental ministry, and the growing practice of sacrament elders, the United Church has moved far away from a sacramental authority as the defining characteristic of ordered ministry.

The Task Group proposed that the distinguishing characteristic between lay and ordered could be found in the life time accountability and responsibility to Presbytery for the exercise of ministry leadership for ordered ministers, versus the time limited relationship (dependent upon appointment) for lay ministers. The Task Group saw this proposal as consistent with the episcopal role of Presbytery and reflected the relationship of presbyters (in the early church) to the Bishop. The Task Group also proposed that ordered ministry personnel be understood as carrying accountability and responsibility into the whole church, while lay ministry represents primarily localized leadership. The symbolic representation of this was found in the direction that ordination and commission take place at Conference and be a life time ordinance while recognition of designated lay ministry takes place at Presbytery and be repeated for each appointment.

These assumptions have been challenged; by the action of General Council in authorizing Presbyteries to extend life time membership to lay ministers; through responses of many designated lay ministers who have rejected this understanding; and by some Conferences who have indicated an unwillingness to make distinctions between lay and ordered ministers in their celebration of ministry services.

Consultations with the church in the Statement on Ministry process have lifted up the issue of education for ministry that underlies distinctions between lay and ordained ministries. The course work for designated lay ministry involves three years of supervised training with six, ten day learning circles and three courses of educational instruction. A typical B.Th or M.Div. academic program involves thirty courses (six full time terms of study) and a full time eight month internship program, in addition to the required undergraduate study.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee has heard clearly from the church the value and importance of academically trained clergy. In a time of increasingly secularization and wide spread lack of theological and biblical knowledge within the church, it is critically important that education for ministry leadership be strong and rigorous.

It also recognizes that patterns of educational preparation need to continue to change, and learning styles and life experience need to be taken into account in determining educational qualifications for ministry.

Designated Lay Ministers involved in pastoral leadership have, as noted above, raised significant concerns about the definitions of the category. Most see themselves in a life time call and commitment to ministry leadership. Many commit themselves to ongoing learning and preparation for ministry. Most bring significant life experience and other forms of education. Most find the term, designated lay ministry, unhelpful, some for its connotations, others because it is too broad.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee has heard the argument that Designated Lay Ministers function in ways that are closer to the community. This argument implies an understanding of ordination (or commissioning) that assumes a separation or isolation from the people of the church. The “set apart” nature of ordering for ministry, in other words, stands in contrast to the “lay” identities of DLM’s. The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee believes this to be a misunderstanding of the nature of life time accountability. The United Church’s *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel* require anyone serving in paid accountable ministry to recognize appropriate boundaries. If Designated Lay Ministers see themselves in a life time commitment to paid accountable ministry, this implies a “set-apartness” that is indistinguishable from ordered ministry.

In summary the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee believes that the church’s understandings and practice of Designated Lay Ministry are unsustainable. It does not have the support of many of those whose ministry it defines. There is no clear theological articulation of its distinctiveness from ordered ministry. There is a confusion of the meaning of “lay” in the title. And the implications of the educational requirements have not been assessed for their effect on a church committed to an educated clergy.

The Committee is also clear however that ending designated lay ministry is not the answer. Many pastoral charges across the country depend on the capable and faithful leadership of designated lay ministers. Parts of the country are significantly dependent upon designated lay ministers for leadership in Presbytery. Experience in other denominations suggests that forms of lay ministry emerge in every setting. While professional academically trained clergy provide the majority of leadership in most Protestant churches, greater flexibility in ministry leadership can make an important and significant contribution to the transformation of the church.

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee does believe that it is vitally important to honour the role and place of designated lay ministry in the life of the church in a way that has theological integrity and is functionally appropriate. At the same time the Committee wishes to lift up the importance of academic preparation and training for all who serve in paid accountable ministry particularly at this time in the history of the church.

A Proposal for Local Ordination

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee proposes that consideration be given to the ministry category of local ordination for those who are called to what has previously been known as “lay pastoral ministry.”

Local Ordination is a term that has meaning in some parts of the ecumenical community. It rests in the authority of a local bishop (or council) to ordain into ministry leadership individuals who are acknowledged within their community to have the appropriate charisms for ministry but who are not able, for any number of reasons, to follow traditional educational paths to ordination. Such individuals, for example in the Anglican Church, are licensed to ministry only within their diocese. Their status, in other words, is localized. But their functioning is equivalent to other ordained clergy

The church’s understanding of ordination and formal leadership in the church emerged in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries. The role of Bishop was to preserve the unity of the Body of Christ by bringing together in a common fellowship Christians within a certain area. *Presbyters* was the earliest term given to those who functioned and shared in leadership under the authority of a Bishop, but both functioned within and subject to a community. In the early church, all forms of ministry belonged to the community and ordination was always based in relationship to the community. In other words, all ordination was localized.

The study proposal would involve an exploration of the following considerations, and likely others as identified during the study process:

- A. Local Ordination as a replacement for Designated Lay Ministry for those serving in pastoral ministry. Individuals in preparation would be identified as candidates for local ordination. Completion of the three year study and preparation process currently in place for DLM, would lead to a service of local ordination, enacted by the Conference within the celebration of ministries service. Those so locally ordained would be afforded the full rights and responsibilities of an ordained minister within The United Church of Canada with the following restrictions.

Ministry personnel with local ordination would be limited to call within a home Conference. A transfer process to another conference would have to be undertaken (including interview board processes) in order to be eligible to accept a call in another Conference. Ministry personnel with local ordination would also not be included in mutual recognition agreements with other denominations.

- B. An individually developed educational plan for all candidates seeking local ordination, and an expectation that the candidate would normally continue in educational processes following ordination. On acceptance into the stream, individuals could be assessed for life experience and educational background. This assessment process would be designed to recognize and affirm life experience, education and preparation from other careers and experiences. The intention would be to develop an individual learning plan, over and above the three year program already in place for DLMs. Candidates for local ordination could continue to engage and work at the individual learning plan in order to qualify for unrestricted ordered status. This might be comparable to what used to be called the short course BD degree or perhaps a diploma in theology. The goal would be that all ministry personnel with local ordination be encouraged to engage in learning and preparation for their ongoing practice of ministry and to qualify for an unrestricted ordination status.
- C. An exploration of appropriate forms of supervision. The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee believes that supervision should be an integral expectation for all ministry personnel. In this sense supervision needs to be understood as part of an expected component of professional occupations. It represents a basic commitment to growth and competency in a chosen field of work where there is capacity to do harm. The Committee believes that supervision is an important means of accountability to the community of faith and to God. The study process would need to explore what forms of supervision would be appropriate for local ordination and whether this would differ for those in unrestricted ordered ministry. An additional area of exploration would be how processes of supervision are related to the educational processes.
- D. Further consideration would be given on whether the term Designated Lay Ministry might continue to be used for those in other forms of ministry, for example ministers of music, youth leaders, parish nurses, and so on, and whether the processes of assessment and study should stay the same as now required for Designated Lay Ministry.

The foregoing provides an introduction to the proposed exploration of local ordination. Much might change or be refined through further study and response from the church. With General Council approval the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee would intend to bring proposals concerning local ordination to the 42nd General Council 2015.

The Committee has heard strong affirmation from across the church for the importance of ministry formation and the need for careful development of professional leadership. Healthy, faithful and vibrant congregations require competent leadership well trained for the demands of our time. This proposal suggests that such leadership can and will emerge in many different ways

and be nurtured and formed through a variety of educational processes. The goal remains to provide the best leadership possible to the congregations of The United Church of Canada.

Title: TICIF3 – Regional Team Models

Originating Body: The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee proposes that:

The 41st General Council 2012 direct the Executive of General Council to encourage the emergence of *regional team models* of congregational ministries by:

- 1. gathering and sharing the experience of regional team models across the church;**
- 2. calling on Presbyteries to encourage and facilitate the development of regional team models within their bounds;**
- 3. identifying and addressing structural issues that would facilitate the emergence of regional team models; and**
- 4. examining the implications of and mitigating the negative effects of the growing number of part time ministries in the church.**

Title: TICIF4 – Ecclesiology Report

Originating Body: The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee proposes that:

The 41st General Council 2012:

- 1. receive the report “A Church with Purpose: Towards an Ecclesiology for The United Church of Canada in the 21st Century” as a timely and contextual reflection of the lived and living ecclesiology of The United Church of Canada;**
- 2. receive the theological principles arising from this report as a response to the Executive of General Council request to the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to engage the church in conversations to discern core values for The United Church of Canada;**
- 3. make use of the theological principles arising from this report in discerning future directions for the church;**
- 4. invite the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to continue to reflect on ecclesiology as The United Church of Canada moves through the 21st century; and**
- 5. direct the General Secretary, General Council to make this report available to the church and to prepare study materials in consultation with the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee to enable its use in congregations and ministries of the church.**

Theological Principles

Attending to the ethos and vision that has been expressed and lived out in our statements, policies and actions, and the stories they tell, can be a source of wisdom and guidance. The following theological principles emerge from the stories we have told as a church. Revealed in these principles are the core values that we hold as a church – values which shape our identity and the character of our relationships. We believe that they can help us to reflect on fundamental issues and make decisions in the next months, and as the church moves into the future:

- A church that holds scripture as foundational remembers the wealth of stories and teachings collected in scripture and in the continuing tradition.**
- A church that is called into being as the body of Christ recognizes that those who come to the church, come through the invitation of Christ, and must be welcomed with the radical hospitality of the reign of God.**

- **A church seeking justice and resisting evil knows itself, confesses and repents its errors, serves with humility and acts with courage.**
- **A church that lives with respect in creation asks how all of its decisions will affect the flourishing of creation.**
- **A church that is part of God’s mission in the world asks how each of its decisions will promote or obstruct God’s mission.**
- **A church seeking equity and justice honours the diverse experiences of those who we may have seen as “other,” but who are never other to God.**
- **An intercultural church intentionally risks engagement with difference as a God-given gift, affirming the human dignity of all.**
- **A church open to transformation through relationship with others is committed to dialogue.**
- **A church which values partnership and whole world ecumenism seeks out collaboration with people beyond our church in areas of common concern.**
- **A church living faithfully in the midst of empire makes its decisions with the full and informed participation of all those affected.**

Title: GCE16 – REF GCSE 2012-05-23-240 – Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships

Originating Body: The Executive of the General Council

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Executive of the General Council proposes that:

1. the 41st General Council 2012 direct the Executive of the General Council to develop and test simplified pastoral relations as well as oversight and discipline policies that are:
 - a. flexible to contextual and regional differences;
 - b. supported within overall financial capacity;
 - c. reflective of, but not limited to, a model that:
 - i. the Pastoral Charge and the Presbytery be accountable for the discernment and articulation of mission and ministry leadership needs, and the support and nurture of pastoral relationships and ministry personnel;
 - ii. the Conference be accountable for the pastoral relations processes related to placement, oversight and discipline of ministry personnel; and
 - iii. the courts resource pastoral relations as well as oversight and discipline policies with trained paid accountable staff; and
2. the Executive of the General Council be authorized to implement pastoral relations as well as oversight and discipline policy changes that do not require a Remit and that are consistent with and responsive to the ongoing work of the “Comprehensive Review of How The United Church of Canada Envisions and Lives Out Its Identity.”

Title: GS3 – The Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy
Originating Body: General Secretary
The Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy
Financial Implications if known:
Staffing Implications if known:
Source of Funding if known:

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that:
the 41st General Council 2012:

- 1) receive the report of The Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy;
- 2) direct that United Church policies and actions, in relation to Israel and Palestine, reflect the content of the report;

Direct that United Church of Canada policy in respect to the conditions necessary for peace:

- 3) Continue to identify the end of the occupation as necessary for peace in the region by:
 - a. continuing to name the occupation as the primary contributor to the injustice that underlies the violence of the region;
 - b. identifying the end of all settlement construction by Israel as a necessary first step in entering into good faith negotiations toward ending the occupation;
 - c. calling on Israel to dismantle settlements within the occupied territories;
 - d. calling on Israel to dismantle the separation barrier in all sections where it crosses over the Green Line;
 - e. identifying equitable access to water as a critical factor in a just settlement of the conflict;
 - f. urging the Canadian government to provide leadership among nations advocating for the end of the occupation.
- 4) Continue to call for a rejection of all forms of violence by all parties in the conflict.
- 5) Affirm that non-violent resistance to the occupation is justified and should be supported by all who seek an end to the occupation.

- 6) Acknowledge with deep regret the past policy of calling on Palestinians to acknowledge Israel as a Jewish state.**
- 7) Affirm the importance of a just resolution of the rights of refugees throughout the world and the Palestinian Right of Return by continuing to uphold the legal rights of all refugees to return to their home, affirm that in the situation of Israel/Palestine this right extends to both Jewish and Palestinian peoples, and support a negotiated settlement to the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees that maintains the demographic integrity of Israel.**
- 8) Address the critical role that some forms of Christian theology have played in legitimizing the occupation by:**
 - a. challenging Christian beliefs that theologically justify the occupation and Israel's possession of a greater Israel that includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza;**
 - b. requesting that the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee explore the implications of theologies and beliefs that support the occupation.**

Direct that United Church policy in respect to action to be taken:

- 9) Call on United Church members to take concrete actions to support the end of the occupation by:**
 - a. encouraging members of the United Church to avoid any and all products produced in the settlements;**
 - b. directing the Executive of the General Council to give high priority to establishing a church-wide campaign of economic action directed against one or more settlement products that can be identified as produced in or related to the settlements or the occupied territories;**
 - c. identifying the goal of the campaign as building awareness of United Church members of the illegal settlements' unjust continuation of the occupation and its impact on the lives of Palestinians and Israelis;**
 - d. supporting the campaign through accompanying resources such as this working group report, the *Kairos Palestine* document, and others that are clearly directed toward an end to the occupation;**
 - e. directing the Executive of the General Council to explore the wisdom of divesting in companies that are profiting from or supporting the occupation;**
 - f. requesting that the Canadian government ensure that all products produced in the settlements be labelled clearly and differently from products of Israel;**

Title: LON1 – Responding to the Palestinian Call for Solidarity

Originating Body: Lambton Presbytery and Kent Presbytery

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

London Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 direct the General Secretary, General Council, to respond to and support the call for action in the documents, “A Moment of Truth: Kairos Palestine” and “The Bethlehem Call: Here We Stand – Stand With Us” by taking the following actions:

- 1) direct that the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee develop theological statements that support non-violent actions against the Israeli government’s illegal occupation of Palestinian land;**
- 2) endorse and promote the boycott of products made by and divest from companies that participate in or profit from Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories, including facilities in the occupied territories and products that facilitate the occupation of the Palestinian Territories, including Canadian retailers who sell products from such companies;**
- 3) reject Christian Zionism as a theological justification of the occupation of Palestinian land by Israel;**
- 4) declare unequivocally that criticism of the policies of the Government of Israel is not anti-Semitic; and**
- 5) encourage and provide educational support to individuals to visit Palestine to see for themselves the situation in which Christian Palestinians and all Palestinians live.**

Background:

“Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in the country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant, in God’s divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land.” (A Moment of Truth, p. 5)

We have heard this cry and want to respond. We believe the United Church of Canada is called to witness to its faith in God’s solidarity with the suffering with a stronger voice and deeds of political pressure. The reality in the life of Palestinians is one of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, resulting in loss of freedom, property, community and livelihood. The separation wall, erected on Palestinian territory, has separated towns, villages and families from one another. Settlements control resources of water and land. Military check points subject Palestinians to humiliation.

Therefore, Palestinian organizations, NGOs and certain religious institutions call on individuals, companies and states to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of products and companies involved in and benefiting from the occupation. They understand it as peaceful resistance and advocacy proclaiming that their object is not revenge but liberation of all people in Israel and Palestine. The Bethlehem Call is an urgent plea to the Churches to end their silence and demand that churches take bold and courageous positions for justice against injustice.

Intermediate Court Action:

Motion It was moved, seconded and carried that the proposal be transmitted with concurrence.

Motion It was moved and seconded to note additional support for this proposal is provided by the London Conference United Church Woman and the London Conference Social Justice Committee.

Member attended the microphone to request the United Church of Canada send copies of this proposal to the governments of Israel and the United States.

Motion carried.

Title: BC2 – Modifying the United Church of Canada’s Recognition of Israel as a Jewish State

Originating Body: Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery

Financial Implications if known: none

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

British Columbia Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 recognize the right of the state of Israel to exist and directs the General Secretary, General Council to remove from all future United Church of Canada policy statements and communications any wording which recognizes Israel as a “Jewish state”.

Background:

Two General Council documents refer to “Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state”. (2003 Path to Peace in Israel and Palestine and 2009 Implementation of Measures Towards Peace in the Middle East).

As Christians, as theologians, we understand the importance of words and the significance of language. What are the implications of talking about Israel as a Jewish state? 20% of Israeli citizens are Palestinians, few of whom are Jewish. The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel (from 1948) includes the statement that Israel "...will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants..." and that it "... will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race, or sex."

Recently legally supported discrimination against non-Jewish citizens of Israel has increased. One instance is the Citizenship Law which forbids Palestinians from the West Bank from living in Israel with the spouses to whom they are married who are citizens of Israel. One example of this is the Khatib family in Acca. The mother of 2 young children has lost her right to legally live with her husband and children because she was born in the West Bank and has lost her right to live in Israel.

By taking these words (as a “Jewish state”) out of United Church official policy we signal to the Palestinian community in Israel, in the occupied territories and living in the rest of the world that the church supports their yearning for equal human rights within the state of Israel. We would not want to recognize Canada as a Christian state, nor would we have any reason to recognize particular countries as Muslim states, so there is no reason to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. In taking this action, the United Church of Canada affirms its support for Israel's right to exist as a state, in peace and security, within internationally recognized borders. We continue our desire for positive relationships with Jewish people in Canada, in Israel, and around the world.

Other background information is available through Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel; and Human Rights Watch (see links below).

http://www.adalah.org/upfiles/2011/Adalah_The_Inequality_Report_March_2011.pdf

<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/03/30/israel-new-laws-marginalize-palestinian-arab-citizens>

Intermediate Court Action:

Presbytery Action: Concurrence

Conference Action: Concurrence

Comment: The vote was very close, nearly 50/50

Title: BC6 – Affirming the General Council Israel/Palestine Report

Originating Body: Janice Young, Member of BC Conference

Financial Implications if known: None directly

Staffing Implications if known: None

Source of Funding if known: N/A

British Columbia Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 adopt the Report of the Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy.

Background:

British Columbia Conference affirms the Report of the Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy specifically calling for an economic boycott focussed exclusively on settlement products.

Title: HAM7 – Accept the Kairos Palestine 2009 Document and to Act on its Call to the Churches of the World

Originating Body: Hamilton Presbytery

Hamilton Conference with non-concurrence

Financial Implications if known: Cost of Theology and Interfaith Committee work

Staffing Implications if known: Utilizes existing staff

Source of Funding if known: General Council

Hamilton Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012:

- 1. accept the Kairos Palestine 2009 document with gratitude for its affirmation of Christian faith, hope and love and with respect for the theological foundation of its presentation; and**
- 2. on the basis of its acceptance of the document, adopts the following:**

The United Church of Canada:

- a. repents of its past indifference to the continued plight of Palestinians living in land occupied by Israel and of its complicity in accepting the continued occupation of Palestinian land;**
- b. calls on all Christians to set aside those theological positions that support unjust political options with regard to the Palestinian people;**
- c. tasks its Theology Interchurch Interfaith Committee with the responsibility to engage with the United Church to develop theological positions for the Church in which justice with love is the standard by which the Church measures and determines (i) its relationships to those involved in conflict over land and (ii) the actions it takes within those relationships;**
- d. encourages and provides support to conferences, presbyteries, and congregations to enable individual members of the United Church of Canada to visit Palestine and see for themselves the situation in which Christian Palestinians and all Palestinians live;**
- e. condemns all forms of racism, religious or ethnic, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and opposes it in all its forms;**
- f. reaffirms that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is illegal under the 4th Geneva Convention; and**
- g. requires of all General Council units, and encourages Conferences, Presbyteries, Congregations and individual members to follow the call by our**

Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation as nonviolent actions on our part toward ending the illegal occupation of Palestinian land.

Background:

General Council has previously recognized, in 2003, 2006 and 2009 that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land conquered during the 1967 War is illegal under the 4th Geneva Convention.

Section 1 of the Kairos Palestine document ("The reality on the ground") describes how the Palestinian reality is one of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, deprivation of their freedoms and all that results from this situation, including the separation wall, the ravishing of the land by Israeli settlements and the restriction of movement.

Our Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine have called on us, through the Kairos Palestine document, to respond to their situation.

The leaders of all Christian denominations in Palestine have endorsed the approach to a just and peaceful settlement to the Israel/Palestine dispute as it has been expressed in the Kairos Palestine document.

It is the established policy of The United Church of Canada to be guided by the direction of our Christian partners as regards the mission of the church in their homelands.

Intermediate Court Action:

Hamilton Presbytery transmitted with concurrence.

Hamilton Conference transmitted without concurrence.

Title: HAM5 – Proposal on the Palestine/Israel Dispute

Originating Body: Faith Formation and Outreach committee, Halton Presbytery

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known: Research on Boycott Divestment Sanctions to share with the church

Source of Funding if known:

Hamilton Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 act in solidarity with our Palestinian sisters and brothers by enacting a policy of boycott, sanctions, disinvestment on all goods and services emanating from the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territories.

Background:

The policy of the United Church of Canada is that we are guided by the direction of our Christian partners with regard to the mission of the church in their homelands.

The leaders of the main Christian traditions in Israel/Palestine have endorsed the approach to a just and peaceful settlement to the Israel/Palestine dispute as it has been expressed in the Palestine Kairos Document, “A Moment of Truth”.

Intermediate Court Action:

Halton Presbytery transmitted with concurrence.

Hamilton Conference transmitted with concurrence.

Title: M&O3 – Support of Recommendations of “Report of the Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy, reporting to the 41st General Council, August 2012”

Originating Body: Montreal & Ottawa Conference

Funding Implications: To be done by existing staff of General Council Partners in Mission Unit; plus resource production costs

Staffing Implications: To be carried out by existing staff and elected members of the General Council Partners in Mission Unit

Volunteer Implications: Participation in research, discussions and action.

Source of Funding: General Council’s Partners in Mission Unit budget

The Montreal & Ottawa Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012

recommend that the General Secretary, General Council request the Partners in Mission Unit assume lead responsibility for implementing the action recommended by the Report of the Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy

- 1) of establishing a church-wide campaign of economic action directed against one or more settlement products, with accompanying resources;**
- 2) that this campaign and resources be made available to the church by April 2013.**

Background:

Pages 22-23, Report of the Working Group on Israel/Palestine Prepared for the 41st General Council, August 2012:

“7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Secretary, General Council proposes:

That the 41st General Council (2012) receive the Report of the Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy, and direct that United Church policies and actions in relation to Israel and Palestine reflect the content of the report.

The General Secretary, General Council proposes that the 41st General Council (2012) direct that United Church of Canada policy:

In respect to the conditions necessary for peace:

1. Continue to identify the end of the occupation as necessary for peace in the region by:
 - a. continuing to name the occupation as the primary contributor to the injustice that underlies the violence of the region
 - b. identifying the end of all settlement construction by Israel as a necessary first step in entering into good faith negotiations toward ending the occupation
 - c. calling on Israel to dismantle settlements within the occupied territories

- d. calling on Israel to dismantle the separation barrier in all sections where it crosses over the Green Line
 - e. identifying equitable access to water as a critical factor in a just settlement of the conflict
 - f. urging the Canadian government to provide leadership among nations advocating for the end of the occupation
2. Continue to call for a rejection of all forms of violence by all parties in the conflict.
 3. Affirm that non-violent resistance to the occupation is justified and should be supported by all who seek an end to the occupation.
 4. Acknowledge with deep regret the past policy of calling on Palestinians to acknowledge Israel as a Jewish state.
 5. Affirm the importance of a just resolution of the rights of refugees throughout the world and the Palestinian Right of Return by continuing to uphold the legal rights of all refugees to return to their home, affirm that in the situation of Israel/Palestine this right extends to both Jewish and Palestinian peoples, and support a negotiated settlement to the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees that maintains the demographic integrity of Israel.
 6. Address the critical role that some forms of Christian theology have played in legitimizing the occupation by:
 - a. challenging Christian beliefs that theologically justify the occupation and Israel's possession of a greater Israel that includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza
 - b. requesting that the Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee explore the implications of theologies and beliefs that support the occupation

In respect to actions to be taken by The United Church of Canada:

7. Call on United Church members to take concrete actions to support the end of the occupation by:
 - a. encouraging members of the United Church to avoid any and all products produced in the settlements
 - b. directing the Executive of the General Council to give high priority to establishing a church-wide campaign of economic action directed against one or more settlement products that can be identified as produced in or related to the settlements or the occupied territories
 - c. identifying the goal of the campaign as building awareness of United Church members of the illegal settlements' unjust continuation of the occupation and its impact on the lives of Palestinians and Israelis
 - d. supporting the campaign through accompanying resources such as this working group report, the *Kairos Palestine* document, and others that are clearly directed toward an end to the occupation

- e. directing the Executive of the General Council to explore the wisdom of divesting in companies that are profiting from or supporting the occupation
 - f. requesting that the Canadian government ensure that all products produced in the settlements be labelled clearly and differently from products of Israel
 - g. requesting that the Canadian government ensure that products produced in the settlements not be given preferential treatment under the Canada–Israel Free Trade Agreement
 - h. inviting the participation of other Canadian churches in the campaign
8. Identify the importance of trust-building programs between Palestinians and Israelis by:
- a. encouraging stronger connections between United Church programs and organizations that build understanding between Palestinians and Israelis
 - b. exploring and supporting initiatives for increasing connections in Canada between Palestinian Canadians and Jewish Canadians.
9. Emphasize the importance for all Christians, and in particular members of the United Church, of visiting and engaging directly with Palestinian Christians by:
- a. encouraging United Church people to respond to the call from Palestinian Christians to come and see the Holy Land through their eyes, encouraging support of Palestinian-based tourism, and providing materials to United Church members for supporting ethical travel in the Middle East
 - b. encouraging positive economic action in support of the Palestinian economy and making available to United Church members information on programs and services like the Alternative Tourism Group and the Olive Tree Campaign
 - c. continuing to support the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program for Palestine and Israel and encouraging United Church members to participate.”

Intermediate Court Action:

The proposal *Support of Recommendations of “Report of the Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy, reporting to the 41st General Council, august 2012”*, originated from the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Committee, (Partners in Mission), and was submitted at the 2012 AGM of the Montreal and Ottawa Conference, to which the court concurred with proposal. However, the Proposal Committee put forward a motion not to transmit the proposal since the proposal commented on a report already on the agenda of the 41st General Council. This motion was defeated. The said motions were carried by a vote.

Title: HAM6 – Amend United Church recognition of Israel from “Jewish state” to “state”

Originating Body: Hamilton Presbytery

Hamilton Conference, without concurrence.

Financial Implications if known: None

Staffing Implications if known: Utilizes existing staff

Source of Funding if known: Not applicable

Hamilton Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 recognize Israel as a state and urge all with whom Israel must be in negotiation for its permanent borders to recognize it as a state.

Background:

Our current policy, adopted at GC 2003, recognizes Israel as a Jewish State. Since we do not think of Canada as a Christian State, but as a state that exercises tolerance and extends charter rights to religions and cultures, it goes against our values to recognize any state in the world as a religious state or a cultural state. Such a position contradicts our core beliefs as people of faith, and sends a signal of bad faith across the land and around the world.

Policy Reference: “Paths to Peace in Israel and Palestine” (2003; 38th GC, 2003 Records of Proceeding page reference, p 100-101, 601-603 (according to the web page www.united-church.ca/beliefs/policies/2003/p162):

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 38th General Council record its conviction that a just peace in the Middle East will require:...

- the recognition by the emergent State of Palestine and other neighbouring Arab States of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state within safe and secure borders;

This proposal amends this resolution to read “state” instead of “Jewish state” and calls for the change to “state” in all United Church documents which use the expression “Jewish State.”

Intermediate Court Action:

Hamilton Presbytery transmitted with concurrence.

Hamilton Conference transmitted without concurrence.

Title: MNWO4 – Accepting the Kairos Palestine 2009 Document and Acting on Call to the Churches of the World

Originating Body: Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Financial Implications if known: Unknown cost of Theology and Interfaith Committee work.

Staffing Implications if known: Utilizes existing staff.

Source of Funding if known: General Council

The Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 accept the *Kairos Palestine 2009* document with gratitude for its affirmation of Christian faith, hope, and love; and with respect for the theological foundation of its presentation; and

- 1) repent of its past indifference to the continued plight of Palestinians living in land occupied by Israel, and of its complicity in accepting the continued occupation of Palestinian land;**
- 2) call on all Christians to set aside theological positions that support unjust political positions with regard to the Palestinian people;**
- 3) task the Theology and Interfaith Committee to engage with the rest of the Church to develop theological positions in which “justice with love” is the standard by which we measure and determine our relationships with those involved in conflict over territory and the actions we take within those relationships;**
- 4) encourage and enables Church members to visit Palestine to see for themselves the situation in which Christian Palestinians and all Palestinians live;**
- 5) condemn and opposes all forms of racism – religious or ethnic – including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia;**
- 6) reaffirm that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is illegal under the 4th Geneva Convention;**
- 7) respond to the call by our Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine to engage in nonviolent actions toward ending the illegal occupation of Palestinian land through divestment and economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation; and**
- 8) require all General Council units, and encourages conferences, presbyteries, congregations, and United Church members to follow this call.**

Background:

The General Council of The United Church of Canada has previously recognized (2003, 2006, 2009) that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land conquered in the 1967 War is illegal under the 4th Geneva Convention; and

Section 1 of the *Kairos Palestine 2009* document describes the Palestinian reality as one of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, and of deprivation of Palestinians’ freedoms, including the separation wall, the ravishing of the land by Israeli settlements, and the restriction of movement for Palestinians; and

Our Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine have called on us, through the *Palestine Kairos 2009* document, to respond to their situation; and

The leaders of all Christian denominations in Palestine have endorsed the approach of the *Palestine Kairos 2009* document to a just and peaceful settlement to the Israel/Palestine dispute; and

It is the established policy of The United Church of Canada to be guided by our Christian partners as we carry out our mission in their homelands,

Pam McLeod moved, seconded by Kirk Windsor that the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario recommends that the 41st General Council (2012) accept the *Kairos Palestine 2009* document with gratitude for its affirmation of Christian faith, hope, and love; and with respect for the theological foundation of its presentation; and on the basis of its acceptance of the document, adopt these policies:

The United Church of Canada:

- Repents of its past indifference to the continued plight of Palestinians living in land occupied by Israel, and of its complicity in accepting the continued occupation of Palestinian land;
- Calls on all Christians to set aside theological positions that support unjust political positions with regard to the Palestinian people;
- Tasks the Theology and Interfaith Committee to engage with the rest of the Church to develop theological positions in which “justice with love” is the standard by which we measure and determine our relationships with those involved in conflict over territory and the actions we take within those relationships;
- Encourages and enables Church members to visit Palestine to see for themselves the situation in which Christian Palestinians and all Palestinians live;
- Condemns and opposes all forms of racism – religious or ethnic – including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia;
- Reaffirms that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is illegal under the 4th Geneva Convention;
- Responds to the call by our Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine to engage in nonviolent actions toward ending the illegal occupation of Palestinian land through divestment and economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation; and
- Requires all General Council units, and encourages conferences, presbyteries, congregations, and United Church members to follow this call.

Title: BC4 Boycott Divestment and Sanctions as Solidarity Action Toward a Just Peace in Israel/Palestine

Originating Body: Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery, Faithful Public Witness Cluster
British Columbia Conference with non-concurrence

Financial Implications if known: None directly

Staffing Implications if known: None

Source of Funding if known: N/A

British Columbia Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 direct the General Secretary, General Council to:

- 1) initiate and implement a boycott and divestment strategy and plan of action in regard to Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories;**
- 2) advocate for sanctions against Israeli and Canadian corporations and institutions complicit in the illegal occupation; and**
- 3) encourage all courts, bodies and members of The United Church of Canada to apply such boycott and divestment strategies and to advocate for sanctions, until such time as the occupation of the Palestinian territories ends.**

Background:

"A Moment of Truth: Kairos Palestine" issued in December 2009 by Christians in Palestine calls upon Christian Churches around the world "to stand alongside the oppressed and to preserve the word of God as good news for all.... not to offer a theological cover-up for the injustices we suffer, for the sin of the occupation imposed upon us.... We call on you to say a word of truth and to take a position of truth with regard to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. As we have already said, we see boycott and divestment as tools of non-violence for justice, peace and security for all." (A Moment of Truth: Kairos Palestine: Section 6).

Following a 12 day visit to Israel/Palestine in February 2011, The General Council Executive's Working Group on Israel/Palestine Policy "decided to call for an economic boycott focussed exclusively on settlement products." (News Release: The United Church of Canada, "Report Calls for Dignity for All in Israel/Palestine).

It is important for resolutions from different parts of the United Church to go forward showing widespread support for this policy.

Intermediate Court Action

Presbytery: Concurrence

Conference: Transmit with non-concurrence

Comment: The vote was very close, nearly 50/50. Some members were concerned that the boycott was too ‘broad’ which led to motion 2012-06 arising from the floor and passing with concurrence

Title: GCE12 – REF PC PMM 17 2012 – Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation

Originating Body: The Executive of the General Council

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The Executive of the General Council proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012

- 1) receive the report of the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries, entitled “Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation”;**
- 2) adopt this “Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church,” and recommend this vision to General Council and its Executive, Conferences, presbyteries/districts, and pastoral charges – for study and reflection, and encourage all courts to integrate aspects of this vision into their mission and ministry; and**
- 3) direct the Executive of General Council to establish accountability processes that would intentionally monitor and build on the intercultural vision, and report to the 42nd General Council 2015 about progress made on this intercultural commitment.**

Background:

Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church An intercultural church is one that is:

welcoming. It

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

relational. It

- affirms, honours, and treasures the God-given differences present in the context of its communities—recognizing that there are a variety of cultural expressions of faith;
- offers a positive vision of community as a whole, with critical engagement within and between cultural perspectives;

- recognizes reciprocal relationships among and between one another, and our responsibilities to live in right relationship with all of creation;
- strives to become a culturally diverse and multilingual community.

adaptive. It

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

justice-seeking. It

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

intentional. It

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

missional. It

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

Title: HAM1 -- Inclusion of The Evangelical United Brethren Church Symbol in The United Church of Canada Crest

Originating Body: Bruce Presbytery

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

Hamilton Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012 approve the addition of The Evangelical United Brethren Church symbol of hands shaking in front of the cross to our United Church Crest to remember the people and the gifts received with our union with the Canada Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1968.

Background:

The church crest tells the story of the founding denominations and has been changed to better represent our understanding of who we are over time as a united and a uniting church. In 1968, The Canada Conference brought into the United Church 58 congregations, 9,898 members, and 40 ministers. Among the physical assets it brought to the United Church were two fine camp sites at Silver Lake and Golden Lake, as well as more than 58 church buildings.

Many of our United Church congregations have benefitted from the rich traditions contributed by the Evangelical United Brethren. Although a majority of Evangelical United Brethren congregations were found in Southern Ontario, many of the individuals who began their faith journey in that tradition have carried a strong heritage including stewardship, adult Christian education and co-ed camping throughout United Church. These contributions continue to support and encourage the mission and ministry of The United Church of Canada.

With the design of The United Church of Canada crest being reconsidered in order to honour our First Nations brothers and sisters, this seems an appropriate time to consider this proposal. Weaving the two initiatives together makes better use of both financial and human resources.

Intermediate Court Action:

Bruce Presbytery transmitted with concurrence.

Hamilton Conference transmitted with concurrence.

Title: BQ2 – Affirming Ministry Status for General Council and its Executive

Originating Body: Bay of Quinte Conference with concurrence

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

Bay of Quinte Conference proposes that:

the 41st General Council 2012

- 1) direct the Executive of the General Council to enter into a study process with the objective of General Council and the Executive of General Council becoming an Affirming Ministry, as defined by Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble; and**
- 2) direct the General Secretary, General Council to implement the study and decision-making process.**

Background:

Since 1988, The United Church of Canada has been a leader in advocating for the inclusion of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life and work of the Church. At General Council 38 (2003), the Church adopted a motion that called for the approval of equal marriage. At General Council 40 (2009), a motion was passed declaring that in matters respecting doctrine, worship, membership, and governance, The United Church of Canada is opposed to discrimination against any person on the basis of age, ancestry, colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender identity, language, marital status, place of origin, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or any other basis by which a person is devalued.

However, the Church has not declared publicly by a visible sign that it is an Affirming Ministry through the use of a rainbow sign on its offices or its web site. Nor does it have an intentional process for educating and orienting its elected bodies in an understanding of the issues related to sexual difference or broader issues of inclusion of difference.

Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble is a national organization of people in The United Church of Canada, formed in the 1980’s whose membership is open to those who support their work regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. It has a current mandate for education, action and support in relation to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble has had an Affirming Ministry program since 1992. In that program, a ministry (Congregation, Pastoral Charge, Presbytery, Conference or General Council) studies the issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, using the current guidelines in the resource *Open Hearts*. At the end of their process, ministries make a decision about whether to become an Affirming Ministry, making public their celebration of the involvement of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in their life and work. As part of the process, the ministry develops a mission statement relevant to their ministry, develops an action plan and celebrates their decision to become Affirming in a worship service.

Given The United Church of Canada's strong support for people of differing sexual orientations and gender identities, it would be a logical next step to become an Affirming Ministry as have over 70 congregations, presbyteries and Conferences.