

PREAMBLE TO PROPOSALS

In 2006 just prior to the 39th meeting of General Council, then-Moderator Rt. Rev. Peter Short offered some reflections based on the musings of one of his predecessors:

In 1934 Richard Roberts, the 6th Moderator of The United Church of Canada, wrote an essay titled “In a World Gone Mad, What is a Christian to Do?” He said that before we Christians can do anything there are certain things we must ask about ourselves. I think his questions are worth asking today:

- Are we equipped to reach a Christian judgment on the course of events – that is, a judgment which is “of Christ”?
- While we are involved in the course of events, can we be sufficiently detached from them to see them in perspective?
- Do we know enough about this to entitle us to say anything about it?
- Are we able to discern the ethical values involved?
- Have we the faith, the hope and the love to enable us to reach a Christian estimate of events and to justify our taking any Christian action at all?

May these questions, along with your own discussions with others and the prayers of your heart guide you as together we discern God’s will at this annual meeting.

PROPOSAL TO TORONTO CONFERENCE #1

- TITLE:** 2011-2013 Conference budgets and assessment
- ORIGINAL SOURCE:** Conference Executive and Staff
- FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** as outlined in the proposed budget
- SOURCE OF FUNDS:** General Council grant, interest, retinal income and Presbytery assessments
- STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:** Conference staff time by financial administrator
- VOLUNTEER IMPLICATIONS:** reimbursement of expenses

Narrative budget: 2011-2013

The Executive of Toronto Conference operates with the understanding that the mission of Toronto Conference is to strengthen Congregations, Pastoral Charges, Outreach Ministries, and Missions to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

To fulfill that mission, the Conference Executive will:

1. Make the best use of the human and financial resources available.
2. Ensure oversight and compliance within the polity of The United Church of Canada
3. Provide resources in the Presbyteries to promote the work in the following areas – program, property, personnel and public witness, with further support from the staff in the central Conference office.

This mission statement will be reviewed by 2012 along with all the other aspects of the new Conference/Presbytery structure.

One of the goals of the restructuring was to bring the resources of the Conference closer to the congregational level of the church. Some commentary on the budget based on the mission statement:

1. Strengthening... to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ

Most of this work happens at the Presbytery level of the church. Confirmation retreats, events for young people, training for Ministry & Personnel Committees, re-constituting a crisis response team to aid congregations in distress, workshops on building right relations, and presentations on social issues are a few examples of the initiatives that help to strengthen congregations to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Conference activities include the work of the settlement and pastoral relations committee which attempts to match congregations and ministers

to ensure effective ministry, consultations on mission support and stewardship, and processing financial grant applications. A personnel emergency fund provides short-term assistance to ministers needing counselling.

2. Making the best use of human and financial resources

All costs of the Presbytery offices are included in the budget. A common telephone system allows access to all staff using one telephone number, and staff have access to all computer files through a single computer network which is also tied in to the General Council computer system. All staff are supervised by the executive secretary. One of the outcomes of the restructuring is that the Conference office is primarily an administrative centre while Presbyteries look after program work. There is no overlap between the two Courts in administrative and program work. The Conference's finance and property administrator has oversight of all financial matters for the Conference and the four Presbyteries, paying all bills based on Presbytery-approved budgets; and she manages all of the offices, ensuring that the offices are well supplied, as well as looking after all necessary repairs.

3. Ensuring oversight and compliance

The Conference has numerous responsibilities which fall under the headings of oversight and compliance. Oversight includes responsibility for the religious life of the United Church. It has specific oversight of the four Presbyteries. It looks after interviews for those in the various ministry processes; it ordains, commissions, admits and recognizes ministers. It oversees policies such as mandatory racial justice training and the sexual abuse policy of the United Church. Conference oversees the marriage licence registration system as required by the province, supervises more than 30 Incorporated Ministries, is a liaison with the General Council, elects and interacts with General Council Commissioners, and plans an annual meeting with up to 500 people present from every part of the Conference.

4. providing resources to the Presbyteries

More than 70% of this budget is spent in the Presbyteries. The largest single item, of course, is staffing, but it also includes support for the governance and committee structures of the Presbyteries. Congregations benefit from the universal membership in AVEL, the audio-visual library which is part of the Grand River Spiritual and Education Resources bookstore at Five Oaks. In addition, the archival services of the United Church are available. There is no separate Presbytery assessment.

Budget assumptions: a) Some of the figures will require revision as new information is received from the General Council. Examples include i) staff salaries which are calculated to increase by 2.2 percent. ii) The General Council grant is flat-lined for

budget purposes. iii) The archival costs are flat-lined for 2011. c) All other budgeted items are calculated at a 2.5 percent increase.

Concluding comments: a) 2010 is the first full budget year where all Conference and Presbytery expenses have been combined. By the end of this calendar year, we will have a good sense of the costs of the new system. b) There is a slight budget decrease in 2011. c) Like most congregations, the largest single item in the budget is staff salaries. The projected increases in 2012 and 2013 are based primarily on the current staff moving through the salary steps within their categories.

Assessment method: The 2008 annual meeting adopted a new assessment method which took effect January 1, 2010. The Assessment Commission explained the formula in its report to the 2008 annual meeting:

The recommendation from the Assessment Commission for a new formula to be used to calculate the assessment from Toronto Conference to the Pastoral Charges is made up of two parts. Half of the annual budget requirement will use the membership number taken from column 16 of the statistical form. The Pastoral Charge membership will be taken as a percentage of the total membership of Toronto Conference as published in the prior year's Year Book. The other half of the annual budget will be based on column 40 of the Statistical Report – Operating Expenses. Again, the Pastoral Charge amount will be changed to a percentage of the total of column 40 for the whole of Toronto Conference as published in the prior year's Year Book. The 2010 Assessment will be based on the 2009 Year Book which publishes the 2008 statistics.

**TORONTO CONFERENCE PROPOSED BUDGET
2011 - 2013**

	2009 BUDGET	2009 ACTUALS	2010	2011	2012	2013
INCOME						
General Council Grant	294,500	294,516	314,800	314,837	314,837	314,837
Interest	13,000	7,004	6,500	6,665	6,832	7,002
Annual Meeting Offering	1,500	2,867	1,500	1,590	1,630	1,670
Rental Recovery (GC staff)	3,600	2,708	3,700	3,785	3,880	3,977
Other Income	-	37,025	-	-	-	-
Assessments *	1,326,600	1,108,254	1,310,400	1,293,334	1,376,298	1,437,417
Total - All Income	1,639,200	1,452,374	1,636,900	1,620,211	1,703,476	1,764,904
CONFERENCE EXPENSES						
Governance	103,000	137,718	105,600	91,700	93,993	96,342
Conference Committees	76,210	100,225	8,300	10,970	11,244	11,525
Insight	12,000	11,884	12,000	12,300	12,608	12,923
Litigation/Legal Costs	50,000	1,653	51,300	52,531	53,844	55,190
Office Costs (20%)	136,000	125,477	36,100	48,230	54,436	54,436
Property Costs (20%)	92,000	57,236	30,900	21,320	21,853	22,399
Staff Salaries, Benefits & Expenses	793,308	777,062	256,900	231,334	242,896	252,332
Archives (20%)	44,000	44,000	9,000	9,020	9,246	9,477
Total Conference Expenses (29%)	1,306,518	1,255,255	510,100	477,405	500,119	514,625
PRESBYTERY EXPENSES						
Presbytery Block Grants	80,000	23,638	120,000	123,000	126,075	129,227
Office Costs (80%)			144,500	144,320	147,928	151,626
Property Costs (80%)			95,600	85,280	87,412	89,597
Staff Salaries, Benefits & Expenses			711,600	734,651	784,998	821,461
Archives (80%)			36,100	36,080	36,982	37,907
AVEL (100%)	15,000	14,935	15,000	15,375	15,759	16,153
Personnel Emergency Fund (100%)			4,000	4,100	4,203	4,308
Total Presbytery Expenses (71%)	95,000	38,573	1,126,800	1,142,806	1,203,357	1,250,279
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,401,518	1,293,828	1,636,900	1,620,211	1,703,476	1,764,904
Excess of Income over Expenses	237,682	158,546	0	0	0	0

Notes:

The percentages are applied starting in 2010.

In 2010 the percentages are 31% Conference; 69% Presbyteries

In 2011 - 2013 the percentages are calculated at 29% Conference; 71% Presbyteries

* The 2008 annual meeting approved a new assessment formula which came into effect on January 1, 2010.

See explanation in the narrative budget.

MOTION by David Allen/Marg Walker that this 86th annual meeting of Toronto Conference approve the 2011 budget and receive for information the projected budgets for 2012 and 2013.

PROPOSAL TO TORONTO CONFERENCE #2

TITLE: Poverty Reduction Strategy

ORIGINAL SOURCE: Social Justice and World Affairs, South West Presbytery

ACTION BY PRESBYTERY: Concurrence

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

SOURCES OF FUNDING: NA

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS: NA

WHEREAS we are followers of one who preached “*good news to the poor*” (Luke 4: 18) and said “*Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the realm of God*” (Luke 6: 20); and

WHEREAS the gap between rich and poor has grown substantially in the last 20 years; and

WHEREAS The United Church of Canada has a strong history of standing alongside the poor, who are economically marginalized in a system that rewards wealth and whose human rights to food, shelter, clothing, as stated in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948). have been severely eroded due to numerous cuts to social programs; and

WHEREAS the Ontario Government has initiated a Poverty Reduction Strategy in December of 2008, with an announced goal of reducing “childhood poverty by 25% in 5 years”; and

WHEREAS the Ontario Government has also announced a Social Assistance Review in December of 2009;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

That Toronto Conference communicate with the government of Ontario to a) commend steps taken to date to reduce poverty in Ontario among all age groups, and b) request the adoption of further measures including but not limited to the following:

1. Adequate Income
 - guarantee that the Social Assistance Review¹ results in enhancements and does not reduce services or benefits for Workfare² and Ontario Disability Support Program³ recipients
 - continue to raise the minimum wage, currently \$10.25 an hour
 - encourage employers to offer benefits to all workers, both full-time and part-time

- provide vocational assessments in conjunction with increased training and retraining opportunities
- to encourage educational upgrading, remove age limit for LEAP⁴ program
- provide legislation to protect the pensions of laid –off workers
- enhance English Second Language Programs to ensure that students can achieve employers’ standards
- provide increased sheltered employment opportunities for physically or mentally disabled persons who wish to work
- change the age of leaving parental supervision from 16 to 18 years of age⁵
- call on Ottawa to expand Employment Insurance coverage
- act to protect pension plans for seniors and lobby for the reduction of cutbacks to pensions

2. Affordable Housing

- require municipalities to increase the number of available rent-to-income units
- encourage affordable options to townhouses or apartments such as stacked units
- provide tax or other incentives to builders who incorporate scattered⁶ rent-to-income units in market value housing projects
- require municipalities to maintain emergency shelters in good repair and encourage use of options which enhance privacy such as trailers, apartment hotels and so on
- ensure adequate supported housing units for youth, seniors and severely mentally ill and disabled persons

3. Personal Support

- ensure the provision of easily accessible services in low income communities including Legal Aid, credit counseling, marriage counseling, family planning, addictions counseling, and mental health support programs
- require school boards to offer Life Skills courses as part of both their regular and Continuing Education programs
- provide childcare in conjunction with English Second Language courses
- ensure Official Guardians⁷ are available to the mentally ill or disabled who lack family support
- ensure that adequate subsidized daycare spaces are provided in conjunction with the implementation of full-day kindergarten

NOTES:

1. Social Assistance Review – Advisory Council announced Jan. 11, 2010 to “submit recommendations to the Minister of Community and Social Services regarding the scope and terms of reference for a review of Ontario’s social assistance system and to advise the Minister regarding possible short-term

changes to social assistance rules” – Chair: Gail Nyberg, Executive Director Daily Bread Food Bank

2. Workfare (Ontario Works) – provides money for people in temporary financial need and helps them find jobs, provides financial assistance to cover basic needs and housing costs, clients may also be eligible for prescription drug and dental coverage, moving costs and job related expenses.
3. Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)- provides income support for residents of Ontario over the age of 18 who are in financial need and have a substantial physical or mental disability that is expected to last a year or more and makes it hard for the person to care for themselves or to take part in community life and work. The rate covers basic needs such as food, clothing and other necessities, as well as a shelter allowance to cover rent or mortgage, heat, utilities, property taxes, insurance and condo fees up to a maximum.
4. Learning, Earning and Parenting Program (LEAP) – available to people between the ages of 16 and 25, mandatory for 16 and 17 year olds, to help them finish high school, improve their parenting skills and prepare to find work to support themselves, upon successful completion of the program recipients may receive \$500 for post-secondary education or training, or for an education trust fund for their children
5. Age of Leaving Parental Supervision – adolescents who leave home at age of 16 have probably not completed high school and may lack the maturity to parent on their own, if they are in the care of a Children’s Aid Society, their wardship is terminated by the court and cannot be reinstated
6. “Scattered” units – rent-to income housing units not incorporated in a rent-to – income housing development, made available to those with s special need, for example, victims of a crime
7. Official Guardians (Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee) – lawyers who are appointed by the court to be trustees for mentally disabled persons who are unable to manage their own affairs

Motion to enable Conference action:

MOTION by David Allen/Marg Walker that Toronto Conference communicate with the government of Ontario to a) commend steps taken to date to reduce poverty in Ontario among all age groups, and b) request the adoption of further measures including but not limited to the following:

1. Adequate Income
 - guarantee that the Social Assistance Review results in enhancements and does not reduce services or benefits for Workfare and Ontario Disability Support Program recipients
 - continue to raise the minimum wage, currently \$10.25 an hour
 - encourage employers to offer benefits to all workers, both full-time and part-time

- provide vocational assessments in conjunction with increased training and retraining opportunities
- to encourage educational upgrading, remove age limit for LEAP program
- provide legislation to protect the pensions of laid –off workers
- enhance English Second Language Programs to ensure that students can achieve employers’ standards
- provide increased sheltered employment opportunities for physically or mentally disabled persons who wish to work
- change the age of leaving parental supervision from 16 to 18 years of age
- call on Ottawa to expand Employment Insurance coverage
- act to protect pension plans for seniors and lobby for the reduction of cutbacks to pensions

2. Affordable Housing

- require municipalities to increase the number of available rent-to-income units
- encourage affordable options to townhouses or apartments such as stacked units
- provide tax or other incentives to builders who incorporate scattered rent-to-income units in market value housing projects
- require municipalities to maintain emergency shelters in good repair and encourage use of options which enhance privacy such as trailers, apartment hotels and so on
- ensure adequate supported housing units for youth, seniors and severely mentally ill and disabled persons

3. Personal Support

- ensure the provision of easily accessible services in low income communities including Legal Aid, credit counseling, marriage counseling, family planning, addictions counseling, and mental health support programs
- require school boards to offer Life Skills courses as part of both their regular and Continuing Education programs
- provide childcare in conjunction with English Second Language courses
- ensure Official Guardians are available to the mentally ill or disabled who lack family support
- ensure that adequate subsidized daycare spaces are provided in conjunction with the implementation of full-day kindergarten.