

PROPOSALS

Proposal 1

Proposal – Recognition of Diaconal Ministry

Title: United Church recognition of diaconal ministry

Originating Body: Conference Ministry, Personnel and Education Committee on behalf of the Coordinating Committee of Diakonia of The United Church of Canada (currently based in Maritime Conference)

Financial Implications:

Conference Action:

Whereas: The Basis of Union Article XVII, *Of the Ministry*, declares “We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein ... a diaconal ministry of Education, Service and Pastoral Care...”; and

Whereas: Diaconal ministry was established by the early church, (i.e. Phoebe, Romans 16:1 and Stephen, Acts 6:5) and has been expressed in various ways since that time to the formation of The United Church of Canada. Even so, at present diaconal ministers make up less than 10% of serving order of Ministry Personnel; and

Whereas: the minority status of diaconal ministry presents circumstances of isolation, misunderstanding, confusion with other forms of ministry and fear of marginalization for many diaconal ministers; and

Whereas: at one time the United Church of Canada supported diaconal ministry through a designated staff person along with a standing committee, the most recent version of which was called Committee on Diaconal Ministry within the former Division of Ministry Personnel and Education; and

Whereas: following the disbanding of the General Council Committee on Diaconal Ministry there appears to be no General Council committee, working unit or staff position with a specific responsibility to support Diaconal Ministry; and

- Whereas: a number of significant issues related to Diaconal Ministry remain of concern, such as but not limited to:
- the characterization of diaconal ministry within General Council documents
 - recruitment for diaconal ministry
 - support for those called to diaconal ministry in the Candidacy process
 - orientation of individuals and committees (Education and Students and Conference Interview Board) within the Candidacy process
 - support for institutions of preparation for diaconal ministry
 - developing awareness of the gifts of diaconal ministry expressed within the life and work of the church
 - isolation of individual diaconal ministers
 - development of ministry positions for diaconal ministers
 - orientation of individuals and committees within Pastoral Relations processes

Whereas: General Council has recognized the association, Diakonia of The United Church of Canada (DUCC), celebrating its 25th year in 2009;

Therefore, the Coordinating Committee of Diakonia of The United Church of Canada proposes through Maritime Conference Ministry, Personnel and Education Committee and Maritime Conference to the 40th General Council of The United Church of Canada that:

1. The United Church of Canada establish a mechanism by which diaconal ministry is specifically supported and encouraged within the life and work of the church.
2. The United Church of Canada consult with diaconal ministers and Diakonia of The United Church of Canada to determine the most appropriate mechanism to specifically support and encourage diaconal ministry within the life and work of the church. Possible mechanisms may include:
 - a. creation of a standing committee of General Council on diaconal ministry
 - b. granting status to Diakonia of The United Church of Canada (DUCC) to access General Council structures directly
 - c. amending the mandate of Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Unit (MEPS) to specifically address issues related to diaconal ministry and appoint a diaconal representative to the MEPS Permanent Committee
 - d. creation of a specific staff position for diaconal ministry.

Proposal 2**Title:** Educational Program for Designated Lay Ministry**Originating Body:** Valley Presbytery**The 40th General Council (2009):**

That the educational program for Designated Lay Ministry be comparable to the program for Order of Ministry.

Background:

1. Manual sections 343 and 345 were declared to be fully in effect on February 1, 2009, together with a new *“Handbook for Designated Lay Ministry and Congregational Designated Ministry.”*
2. These new designations are based significantly on the report *“Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century”* which was received by the 37th General Council. (Record of Proceedings (ROP), pg. 633)
3. The Report, *“Ministry Together,”* identifies as a challenge that *“there are tensions between Ordained Ministers and Lay Pastoral Ministers; Lay Pastoral Ministers get the same privileges and money without the same education. Why then should one seek ordination?”* (ROP pg. 583)
4. The Report, *“Ministry Together”* also states, *“This report affirms that there is a place for designated lay ministry alongside ordered ministry. Given the demands of ministry today, the church needs to be confident that the spiritual, theological, interpersonal, and educational competencies are the same for comparable ministries. This would be consistent with the United Church commitment to an educated ministry.”* (ROP pg. 614)
5. However, the motion approved states, *“a commitment to participate in an appropriate, competency-based educational program, or evidence of having completed an equivalent educational program.”* (ROP pg. 93, Resolution 9.6c) and *“that The United Church of Canada have clear and measurable standards for Designated Lay Ministers that are appropriate to the roles and functions of their ministry position.”* (ROP pg. 93, Resolution 9.7a)
6. Section 343a(ix) of the Manual states that a Designated Lay Minister must *“commit themselves to participating in an appropriate educational program... set by the appropriate General Council working unit in accordance with policies approved by the General Council or its Executive.”* The Handbook echoes this statement without providing details.
7. Orientation material covered in a conference call by General Council staff with Conference Personnel Ministers, Presbytery Pastoral Relations and Education and Students representatives on Thursday, March 12, 2009 described the new educational program for Designated Lay Ministers. While noting that the new program is more substantial than the former program for Lay Pastoral Ministers, it was also acknowledged that it was not comparable to the program for Order of Ministry.

Financial Implications:**Intermediate Court Action:** Valley Presbytery – transmit with concurrence

Proposal 3

Proposal – Membership of Conference Education and Students Committee

Title: Diaconal Minister to be named as member at large to Education and Students committees.

Originating Body: Conference Ministry, Personnel and Education Committee on behalf of the Coordinating Committee of Diakonia of United Church of Canada (currently based) in Maritime Conference.

Financial Implications: The costs of accommodation and travel for an additional person to attend the Education and Students interview meetings.

Theological Reference: “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and some teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” (Ephesians 4: 11 – 13, NRSV)

Background: The United Church of Canada recognizes that diaconal ministers are included in ordered ministry, as noted in the Article of Faith XVII, Of The Ministry.

Section 462 a, 3 of the United Church Manual notes that “every effort should be made to include a Diaconal Minister on the interview team.”

Students of diaconal ministry in the Maritime Conference candidacy process report spending a large portion of their interview explaining diaconal ministry in the Education and Students (E and S) interviews. Having to explain diaconal ministry takes away valuable time from the interview process.

The hope for the Education and Students interview is to examine the student’s preparation for ministry, not to inform or educate the interviewing committee. Diaconal representation on this committee will provide a source of information for the Education and Students Committee as it prepares to focus on the student’s preparation for ministry. In addition, the diaconal representative will be available to participate in interviews (Manual , Section 462 a,3).

Currently, the Education and Students Committee of Maritime Conference consists of Chairs of Presbytery Education and Students committees. There are no diaconal ministers on the present committee.

- Proposal:**
- a. that Maritime Conference Education and Students Committee include a Diaconal Minister named as a “member at large;”
 - b. that Maritime Conference propose that General Council amend the Manual of The United Church of Canada and Ministry and Employment Policies and Services documents affecting candidacy processes to include diaconal ministry representation on Education and Students Committees.

Proposal 4

Title: Congregational Designated Ministry hours threshold

Originating Body: Valley Presbytery

The 40th General Council (2009):

That the category of Congregational Designated Minister be limited to specifically defined positions of 8 hours per week or less.

Background:

1. Manual sections 343 and 345 were declared to be fully in effect on February 1, 2009, together with a new "*Handbook for Designated Lay Ministry and Congregational Designated Ministry.*"
2. These new designations are based significantly on the report "*Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*" which was received by the 37th General Council. (Record of Proceedings (ROP), pg. 633).
3. Among the actions approved by the 37th General Council is the following, "*that any lay ministry position of 14 hours per week or more in the areas of education, outreach, pastoral care, or worship must conform to the requirements of designated lay ministry and be a Presbytery/District appointment.*" (Resolution 9.4(c), ROP pg. 94) The 38th General Council changed the number of hours to 8.
4. Section 345 of the Manual is silent on the matter of an hours-per-week limitation for Congregational Designated Ministers. So too is the new Handbook. Emphasis is placed on a complex rating system of Experience/Knowledge, Accountability, Decision-Making, Complexity of Focus, and Boundaries.
5. Remaining silent on the matter of hours-per-week threshold provides the opportunity for substantial pressure being brought to bear on Presbyteries and Ministry Personnel to have existing and future multiple staff ministry positions in Pastoral Charges categorized as Congregational Designated Ministry positions with less regard for the rating system and more regard for potential cost saving measures.

Financial Implications:

Intermediate Court Action: Valley Presbytery – transmit with concurrence

Proposal 5

Title: Prioritizing of Campus Ministry

Originating Body: Halifax Presbytery on behalf of Dalhousie Campus Ministry Committee

Financial Implications:

Halifax Presbytery, on behalf of the Dalhousie Campus Ministry Committee, proposes, through Maritime Conference, that:

1. The 40th General Council recognize campus chaplaincies and ministries as a key element in the implementation of its commitment to Youth and Young Adult Ministry.
2. The Secretary of the General Council facilitate a national review of campus ministries to determine their strengths, needs, and role in youth and young adult ministries.
3. That the 40th General Council re-establish National Funding for Campus Ministry.

Background

For 70 years, until the mid-1990s, the United Church of Canada (UCC) campus ministries were supported by a national resource of funding and guidance.

In the 1990s, a restructuring process ‘downloaded’ the funding and governance of campus ministries to be more local, immediate and contextual. As part of the downloading, there was a ‘grandparenting’ period for some of the funding, in order to allow for the transition. As a result of this downloading, campus ministry competes for Mission Support Grants along with presbytery funding.

In 1997, the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Vision, as accepted by the 36th General Council, stated that: “We have a vision of a church that... provides a Christian environment where youth and young adults are welcome, heard, valued, nurtured, and supported both personally and as equals in local congregations, church camps, courts and campuses.” (Item II)

In May 2007, the General Council Executive adopted a motion which affirmed the “Call to Purpose” and affirmed that planning for the period 2008-2010 give priority to that which:

1. Deepens our experience of intentional and authentic communities; stretches us beyond the familiar expressions and concerns of our church; with particular concern for our commitment to youth and young adult ministry, becoming an intercultural church; and living with respect in creation.

In May 2008, approximately 20 of the UCC-supported Campus Ministers and Chaplains from across the country gathered at the University of Toronto to share their experience, their hopes and challenges and to provide collegial pastoral support.

While we appreciate the high level of support that Halifax Presbytery offers the Dalhousie Campus Ministry Committee, as well as the Mission Support funding from Maritime Conference, this is not the situation across the country. A common understanding has been emerging among these ministers over a number of years that campus ministries receive little recognition or support from most presbyteries, conferences, or General Councils. In addition, it is the experience of many Campus Ministers that a large percentage of the few United Church young adults who feel a vocational call to ministry developed and discerned that call in part through their engagement with a campus ministry.

The Campus Ministers agreed that campus ministries across the country are in a strategic position to help realize the current programmatic priorities as stated by the General Council Executive in May 2007. The Campus Ministers further agreed that it was important for the entire church to take ownership of campus ministry and its potential to minister to youth and young adults *and* to contribute to raising a new generation of United Church leadership.

The UCC-supported Campus Ministers across the country understand their call as offering a number of gifts to the United Church of Canada, including:

- Representing God's mission through the United Church of Canada to campuses across the country and serving thousands of students.
- Leadership development.
- Discernment, support and identification of inquirers and candidates for ministry.
- Support of the United Church's intention to foster and develop an intercultural church.
- Supporting the United Church's commitment to youth and young adult ministry.

Proposal 6

Title: Group Insurance Benefits extended to surviving spouse and dependent children.

Originating Body: Ministry, Personnel & Education Committee of Maritime Conference

The 40th General Council (2009)

That the financial provision at the time of the death of a Ministry Personnel (Manual section 038) be extended to include group insurance benefits, as well as employee assistance plan coverage, for a surviving spouse and / or dependent children for the coverage period of up to six (6) months.

Background:

1. We have a significant theological and institutional responsibility to care for people, especially those who have experienced the loss of a spouse or parent who was a ministry personnel serving among us.
2. Our present indemnity plan states that all group insurance (medical / dental) and employee assistance coverage end at the conclusion of the month in which the ministry personnel dies.
3. The foregoing (item 2) has led to surviving families having the unfortunate experience of seeing their group insurance and employee assistance plan coverage end in times of greatest need.
4. Some families have financial needs that necessitate the porting of pension, thus, making them ineligible for even the limited survivors' group insurance coverage.
5. United Church of Canada policy in the Manual section 038 makes the overarching statement that: "*(a) Financial Provision. The spouse of deceased Ministry Personnel, or dependent children if there is no spouse, shall continue to be provided for financially by the Pastoral Charge, the Presbytery, and the United Church for a period of six (6) months following the end of the month in which the death takes place,...*"
6. Given the foregoing (item 5), the entitlements under section 038 should be extended to include group insurance benefits, as well as employee assistance plan coverage, for a surviving spouse and/or dependent children for the coverage period of up to six (6) months.

Conference Action:

Proposal 7

Title: Support for Refugees coming to Canada

Originating Body: Woolastook Presbytery

Financial Implications: Shared cost of full-time staff component

The 40th General Council (2009): It is proposed to General Council by Woolastook Presbytery, through Maritime Conference that the General Council confirm the United Church of Canada's responsibility in offering support to refugees, that the General Council recognize its vital role therein, and that it direct the Executive of General Council:

- 1) invoking paragraph 524 (c) of The Manual that the Executive of General Council has no power to reduce the role of the United Church of Canada in offering support to refugees;
- 2) that the Sponsorship Holder Agreement (or other such agreement respecting refugees) be maintained;
- 3) that support as a liaison with the federal government for churches assisting refugees involved in private sponsorships be maintained;
- 4) that a General Council staff person be available on a full time basis to assist congregations and other bodies of the United Church to sponsor or host refugees and their families; and
- 5) that other interested courts of the church be consulted on the financing and administration of such a staff person.

Background: The United Church of Canada is a uniting church, offering welcome and hospitality to all. In this context, we recognize refugees as brothers and sisters, not only in principle, but also in deed and with a sustaining love. (There are numerous stories where lives have been saved by timely effective work, and other stories where lives have been lost if delays have been experienced.)

This work has been carried out by all levels of the courts of the church. However, since citizenship and immigration is a federal responsibility, the General Council support for this work is key. There are two essential elements for carrying out this support:

- 1) the Sponsorship Holder Agreement that the church, represented by the General Council, has with the federal government, and

- 2) the staff support of the General Council for the congregations, other courts of the church and other bodies of the United Church involved in the Government Sponsorship Program, the Immigration Visa Program, and other refugee support work. (An essential part of this work is the liaison work with the federal government to avoid delays.)

In recent cutbacks by the Executive of General Council, the full time person supporting this work at the General Council level was replaced by a part-time person with a very limited numbers of hours, working out of New York City. Also, plans included a cutback in support for private refugee sponsorships. (These sponsorships have been nearly five times more cost effective in Woolastook Presbytery, increasing the number of refugees affected, by involving and organizing more people who want to assist financially. However, the role of the liaison person of General Council is essential in order that the refugees actually get processed and arrive.)

These changes have greatly reduced the ability of the other courts and bodies of the United Church of Canada to carry out its mission to offer welcome and hospitality to the world's refugees and their families.

This predicament was outlined in a proposal to Maritime Conference at its 2008 annual meeting that the Conference request the Executive of General Council take similar actions. However, to the best of the knowledge of Woolastook Presbytery, no answer has been received dealing with the **specifics** of the request. So the proposal is being made to the commissioners of General Council in order that they clarify that the Church still intends to offer its support to refugees, and because of the federal government's constitutional responsibility in this area, that this work needs to be supported at the General Council level in an effective way.

Proposal 8

Title: Rural Ministries Focus within the Gospel, Ecumenism and Theology (GET) Committee

Originating Body: Maritime Conference Executive

Conference Action:

Financial Implications: Annual budget allocations of \$4,000 for three years

Whereas the 83rd Annual Meeting of Maritime Conference in May 2008 took formal action to approve the establishment of a Rural Ministries Unit and to request its proposed mandate be recommended to the 2009 Annual Meeting for approval;

It is proposed that for the next three years the Gospel, Ecumenism and Theology Committee (GET) focus on rural ministries including the following possibilities:

- a. hosting an ecumenical forum with community partners from rural communities representative of the Maritime diversity in rural concerns (fishing, logging, agriculture, mining) and through that, form a network of rural ministry leaders and interested persons,
- b. advocate on behalf of rural ministry throughout Conference Committees and structures so that the rural reality is addressed in areas of faith formation, justice, stewardship, ministry leadership, and ministry in changing times, e.g., gather Committee chairs, etc. prior to an Executive meeting for sharing of concerns/ issues,
- c. additional funding for this specific work be \$4,000 for three years beginning in 2009, in addition to the regular GET budget line for an annual total of \$7,000,
- d. membership of the GET Committee be supplemented, as needed, with those with rural expertise.

Proposal 9**Title:** *Proposal to Celebrate “Season of Creation”***Originating Body:** *Church in Action Committee of Maritime Conference***That the 40th General Council (2009):**

1. Designate an annual “Season of Creation” to be observed in the Lectionary / Liturgical Year during the 4 Sundays of September;
2. Direct Theology and Faith Committee or its equivalent to develop worship, Christian education, eco-justice / social action and other resources from the Canadian context and encourage congregations to make use of these and other resources available for use in the Season of Creation (e.g.: from an Australian and U. S. contexts for 2006, 2007, and 2008 for Lectionary Year A, B and C) (www.seasonofcreation.com.)

Background

“The Earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.”
(Psalm 24)

Whereas: We believe that life and creation are gifts from God that elicit our respect, awe and reverence; that we are one Earth community, one human family and share one destiny; that we recognize God’s call to live in harmony with this total community and to care for it that all may benefit equitably now and in the future; and

Whereas: The United Church of Canada has developed the policy statement, One Earth Community based on 12 ethical principles including social and economic justice and personal, corporate and governance responsibilities in environment and development issues; and has added to its creed, “called...to live with respect in creation”; and

Whereas: The life of the Earth community is threatened with destruction - pollution of air, land and water, unprecedented loss of species, and global warming - related to human impact on the earth; and we are at a major turning point at which we can either continue along the path of self-destruction, or turn toward restoration and renewal; and

Whereas: It is urgent for us to reconnect with the deep roots of our faith. There is growing concern in Christian communities about the ecological crisis, the way human beings are treating God’s Earth, and a growing awareness that an effective way to focus these concerns is through worship - concentrating our worship on God’s creation and our relationship with it including rituals that remind people of the importance and ethic of ecological care and that lead them to act differently in order to practice their faith; and

Whereas: Several major Christian denominations in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Europe have designated and include a “Season of Creation” in the liturgical year – some for 4 Sundays of September culminating with October 1st (St. Francis of Assisi Day) and some for 8 weeks between October 1st and Advent – which has become a meaningful time of worship and inspiration for action for all ages; and

Whereas: “Church leaders in the United Kingdom have called upon Christians to use the period from September 1 until October 4 as an opportunity to put the environment at the heart of their worship. The ‘Time For God’s Creation’ initiative, which would run annually, follows a resolution made at the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in 2007, which was attended by representatives of Europe’s Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant churches, ‘that the period be dedicated to prayer for the protection of Creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change.’”

Whereas: In the seasons of Advent, Epiphany, Lent and Easter we celebrate the life of Christ. In the season of Pentecost we celebrate the Holy Spirit. Now, in the Season of Creation, we have an opportunity to celebrate God, the Creator. For four Sundays in September we can join with others in celebrating with Christ the wonders of creation. In the liturgy, we follow the lead of the psalm writers and celebrate with creation — with the forests, the rivers and the fields, which praise the Creator in their own way. Bible readings focus especially on the story of Earth, which complements the story of God and the story of humanity in the Scriptures. We commit ourselves to a ministry of healing Earth, with Christ and creation as our partners.

Financial Implications: Costs should not be significant. Resources could be sold at cost.

Proposal 10**Title: *Proposal Encouraging Community Development of Renewable Energy through Standard Offer Contracts / Feed-in Tariffs***

Originating Body: *Church in Action Committee of Maritime Conference
(Environment Working Group)*

Background

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” “God saw all that God had made, and it was very good.” (Genesis 1:1, 31);

Whereas: We believe that life and creation are gifts from God that elicit our respect, awe and reverence; that we are one earth community, one human family and share one destiny; that we recognize God’s call to live in harmony with all of creation and to care for it that all may benefit equitably now and in the future; and

Whereas: The carbon cycle, one of life’s sustaining systems, is out of balance by human causes both from production of greenhouse gases by lifestyle choices and a large carbon foot print from our dependence on fossil fuels; and

Whereas: According to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate and Change), Canada’s GHG emissions per capita are among the highest in the world. NS is among the highest in Canada, with Green energy making up less than 1 % of the total of the entire energy grid in the Maritimes. NB is slightly higher in emissions than NS and PEI is below the national average. (In 2004 PEI generated 0.5% of its energy from on island wind power, but in 2007 that increased to 15 %. NB and NS have yet to make such a breakthrough using renewable energy. (pg 18; The Maritimes and Climate Change by Richard Zurawski, 2008)); and

Whereas: The Maritime provinces have one of the best wind regimes in the world and good solar potential as well as other resources such as Community Economic Development Investment Funds, an active cooperative movement and a college and university sector distributed throughout the area; and

Whereas: The United Church policy statement, Energy in One Earth Community calls for us to shift from an emphasis on large-scale fossil fuel and nuclear energy generation projects to a focus on energy conservation, increased energy efficiency and the development of renewable alternate energy sources, and to move away from mega energy projects and to move toward “development and utilization of appropriate technologies for small-scale, decentralized energy systems” and also says that “legislation should be enacted which would allow small scale electrical generating projects to sell excess power to the electrical utility at a fair price in order to help make such projects economically viable.” (“Energy in the One Earth Community” article 4.6.1); and

Whereas: Standard Offer Contract or “feed-in tariff” is government legislation that stimulates renewable energy production by requiring electric utilities to buy renewable energy at a fair, set (by government) price from anyone who wishes to produce renewable energy; and

Whereas: Standard Offer Contracts or Feed-in Tariffs have been the most successful policy in stimulating the rapid development of renewable energy in many countries worldwide including Germany, Denmark, Spain, and Australia and also in the province of Ontario; and

Whereas: In addition to the clear environmental benefits, small renewable energy projects provide new sources of income for individuals, communities and provinces and local employment opportunities – secure, long-term jobs in renewable energy equipment manufacturing, operation and maintenance.

It is proposed that the 84th Maritime Conference (2009) urge the four provinces within its boundaries to take the necessary steps to establish systems of Standard Offer Contracts or Feed-in Tariffs in order to support community development of renewable energy by:

- 1) Contacting the premiers of the 4 provinces to urge them to take necessary action and**
- 2) Developing a plan to communicate with congregations and presbyteries encouraging them to advocate for these measures within their area.**

Proposal 11**Title: Concerning Uranium Exploration and Mining within the region of Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada****Originating Body: Church in Action Committee (Mining The Connections Working Group)****Background**

Whereas the world is a sacred space and a sacred trust, The United Church policy base³ has provided a framework for considering the full range of environmental and social consequences from the exploration, development, and use of uranium; and

Whereas uranium exploration, uranium mining, and uranium ore milling involve permitted routine releases of radiation and chemically toxic, radioactive substances; and radon, toxic dust, and tailings can contaminate air, soil, watersheds, and wells; all with a risk of cancers, genetic damage, and other health damage to the workers, the public, and non-human life; and

Whereas The United Church has expressed concerns repeatedly over the last thirty years about the radioactive, chemically toxic wastes from uranium mining, and the reality that none of the available options for waste management can provide the containment for the long time period required by the inherent toxic hazards of the wastes; and

Whereas mining companies would leave with the profits while the present and future generations would be left with the radioactive chemically toxic wastes and their continuing health, environmental, and economic burden; and

Whereas The United Church views Canadian uranium mining as an issue within the complex of problems with nuclear power, including the international problem of extremely hazardous nuclear fuel wastes; the risks of proliferation of military nuclear capability; and the military applications of depleted uranium that expose the environment, civilian populations, and military personnel to a radioactive, chemically toxic by-product of civilian nuclear power; and

Whereas The United Church is concerned about sustainability and jobs and recommended to the federal government that funds invested in uranium nuclear energy *could provide more ecologically sustainable forms of energy and yield many more jobs if invested in programs for energy conservation, efficiency, and the development of alternative, renewable energy sources* (2000); and

³ *The Nuclear Option for Canadians*. 28th General Council, 1980.

One Earth Community – Ethical Principles for Environment and Development, 34th General Council, 1992.

Energy in the One Earth Community – Current Challenges and Future Options for Energy Use in the Canadian and Global Contexts, 37th General Council, 2000.

Nuclear and Uranium Mining Social Policy Position, 38th General Council, 2003

Whereas since 1980, The United Church has repeatedly called for a moratorium on uranium mining;

Therefore it is proposed that the 84th Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada (2009):

- **Make a public statement in support of a legislated ban on uranium exploration and mining in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec;**
- **Write to the Premier of New Brunswick, the Premier of Nova Scotia, and the Premier of Quebec stating support for a legislated ban on uranium exploration and mining;**
- **Encourage members, congregations, and presbyteries to make statements of support for a legislated ban on uranium exploration and mining in their province.**

Proposal 12

Title: Concerning Corporate Accountability of Canadian Mining Companies Overseas

Originating Body: Church in Action Committee of Maritime Conference (Mining Connections Working Group)

Background:

Whereas: The United Church of Canada has worked for many years with partners in several countries in the global south whose land and way of life have been threatened and/or destroyed by Canadian mining practices.

Whereas: The Canadian extractive industry, including mining, oil and gas companies, has been implicated in well-documented cases of human rights violations and environmental disasters. Allegations of toxic dumping, the destruction of protected areas, forced displacement of indigenous peoples, collaboration with repressive regimes, and threats of and intimidation of local communities, have been associated with the activities of specific Canadian companies abroad.

Whereas: When some Canadian corporations go abroad, there are no effective accountability mechanisms in Canada to ensure that they abide by international human rights law and environmental standards.

Whereas: The current voluntary approach to corporate accountability has failed in practice, and relies on the willingness of companies to comply with human rights and environmental standards.

Whereas: Our Catholic brothers and sisters through the Canadian organization Development and Peace have initiated an action campaign to hold Canadian mining companies accountable for their actions overseas.

It is proposed that the 84th Maritime Conference (2009) urge the Government of Canada to establish clear legal norms in Canada to ensure that Canadian companies and residents are held accountable when there is evidence of environmental and/or human rights violations associated with the activities of Canadian mining companies by:

1. Writing the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Industry, and the Minister of the Environment with these requests.
2. Encouraging members, congregations and presbyteries to write government officials (listed in item 1) in the same regard.
3. Participating in a post card mail-in campaign to the Prime Minister in support of the initiative underway by the Catholic organization, Development and Peace.

Proposal 13

Title: Children in Care Sunday

Originating Body: The Maritime Conference Church in Action Committee (Children and Youth in Crisis Working Group)

The 40th General Council (2009):

1. Designate “Children in Care” as the United Church’s particular focus for this years Children’s Sunday (November 22nd, 2009).
2. Direct the General Council Executive to post on the United Church website worship and educational resources*, that:
 - a) provides information about the way we practice child welfare in Canada.
 - b) raises awareness about many of the issues children in care face.
 - c) provides examples of how we as a caring community in the United Church can encourage our Canadian government to better meet its obligation to children in care under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

(*Note: Children and Youth in Crisis Working Group, of Maritime Conference Church in Action Committee have been working on material they are prepared to share for this purpose.)

Background:

November 20th, 2009 marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. While movement towards the goals and commitments expressed in this document has sometimes been slow around the world, in Canada the situation has been of particular concern for children in care and this needs our attention.

Approximately 80,000 Canadian children are under the protection of Child and Family services and are referred to as ‘children in care’, more commonly known as foster children (*Provincial/Territorial Ministry of Child and Family Services Annual Reports*). Children in care are particularly vulnerable children, often powerless in relation to their environment, yet expected to adapt and behave “normally” in situations and conditions that are far from “normal”. These children have high incidences of juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, school failures and mental health issues (*Canadian Association for Community Living, 2003. Current Issues and Resources - Children and Youth Justice*). Many experience social isolation and discrimination. Children in care are over represented in families living below the poverty level and minority groups (*Child Welfare League of Canada*). Over the last few years there has been both an increase in the number of children coming into care and in the severity of their problems (*Child Welfare League of Canada, 2001 “Summary of Child Protection”*). Frontline workers (foster parents and social workers), often diligent and caring, can only be as effective as policy and programs allow. Children’s rights advocates claim that the poor life prospects for these vulnerable Canadian citizens are neither inevitable nor acceptable.

Canada ratified the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1991. Nations that ratify this international convention are bound to it by international law.

Compliance is monitored by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Although we made a commitment that states otherwise, there is still no national standard of child protection in Canada. The system of alternative care we have in Canada needs significant reform if it is to meet its obligations under the Convention. It has been recommended that Canada, among other things, establish a federal Ombudsman's office responsible for independent oversight of child protection, establish a means of monitoring and reporting on the status of children and develop legislation that makes children's rights part of Canadian law. In Canada, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child has not been directly incorporated into child welfare legislation which means it does not have the force of law in Canadian courts (*Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children "Submission for Stakeholder Report on Canada: Universal Periodic Review" 4th cycle, February 2009. UN Human Rights Council*).

First and second reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (basically summaries of how we are meeting our obligations under the Convention) contain long lists of federal and provincial programs for children. They do not, however, analyse how children are doing, identify where children's rights are not being respected and what corrective actions will be taken (*Coalition for the Rights of Children*). The outcomes of our programs, of how well they are meeting the needs of children, are missing. In 2009, Canada will present its third/fourth report to the United Nations committee for review but little has been done to respond to the recommendations of the second review (*Coalition for the Rights of Children*). Review by the United Nations committee about how well we are honouring our obligations under the Convention is only effective if Canadians hold their governments accountable at home.

In a society that often stresses individualism, collective responsibility for the welfare of children in care has not always been sufficiently acknowledged. Obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child are clear on this front. If anything, states must do more for these children because they have been marginalized and victimized. Our quick fix reactive, instead of proactive, responses to the problems of these vulnerable children deviates from our obligations under the Convention. Children in care are a marginalized population, and if their rights are to be respected, it is clear that these rights need to be acknowledged in legislation and practised and supported by advocacy.

Unfortunately, there is a significant gap in understanding of the relevant issues of this invisible population by the general public. The risks these children face and how the community can, to the maximum extent possible ensure their healthy development, need to be addressed. Yet this very group needing advocacy is at a disadvantage. Most children have parents to advocate for them. These children often do not. Added to this is the fact that the role of advocate is a declining part of a social worker's role given the pressures within bureaucratic and hierarchical agencies (*Mark Ezell, Advocacy in the Human Services*).

The United Church of Canada has a long tradition of listening to and giving voice to the invisible and marginalized in our society. Raising awareness of issues that these children face and implementation of beneficial policy and programs are interrelated. In their lives, children in care need their voices to be amplified because of the extent of their powerlessness in relation to their environments. Justice for these children requires advocacy that goes beyond the needs of most children. Advocacy begins with awareness.

Proposal 14**Proposal – Comprehensive Salary for Ministry Personnel**

Title: Manse policy and salary structures

Originating Body: Woolastook Presbytery

Background: A long-standing policy of the United Church of Canada has been that “the minister shall be provided with either a manse or an equivalent housing allowance” [Manual 036(f)]. This is considered to be part of the remuneration for the services of the minister to a Pastoral Charge. When it is a manse that is provided, the value in terms of the minister not having to provide his/her own housing is offset by:

- 1) the minister not gaining equity in a house during the working years with the prospect of owning a home upon retirement;
- 2) the minister’s family having no real sense of privacy in a manse home that is under management, indeed scrutiny, of a committee prescribed by the owner, namely, the United Church of Canada via its designate, the Pastoral Charge; and
- 3) with respect to understanding the needs and aspirations of people of the Pastoral Charge, the minister really cannot empathize with the lives of families who must deal with the realities of home ownership with respect to financial determinants as well as social implications.

In view of these limitations to Ministry Personnel beset by the manse portion of the housing component of the compensation policy of the United Church of Canada, and the apparent hesitancy by the Executive of the General Council on the matter of a comprehensive salary in relation to the recent Compensation Project Recommendations (i.e., in the Pastoral Charge Payroll Service Report to GC39: The Compensation Project, item 2 headed “Providing a comprehensive salary to all ministry personnel” starts with “The Executive of the General Council still needs to decide when and how it will proceed with this recommendation. If it proceeds, the various compensation components—salary, manse/housing, telephone, and heat—will be rolled into one comprehensive figure.”)

IT IS PROPOSED to the Executive of General Council by Woolastook Presbytery, through Maritime Conference, that the Executive of General Council proceed as soon as possible with “providing a comprehensive salary to all ministry personnel” including altering its salary structure in alignment with other walks of life where salaries are used to offset the cost of living, which includes housing.

Proposal 15

Title: Diversion of Emergency Supragifts

Originating Body: Kingston Pastoral Charge Session

The 40th General Council (2009):

1. Abandon the practice of diverting 15% of emergency supragifts to the Emergency Response Fund.
2. Encourage contributions to be made directly to the Emergency Response Fund.

Background:

1. In November 2006 the General Council Executive acted to establish the Emergency Response Fund. The Emergency Response Fund receives funds from the Mission and Service Fund (\$130,000 in 2008). In addition, the Emergency Response Fund will be replenished with 15 percent of “emergency supragift” monies received.
2. Supragifts are designated donations made by United Church members or others that are above and beyond the Mission and Service Fund. When contributors make supragift offerings in response to an emergency, 15% of their offering is diverted to the Emergency Response Fund.
3. Kingston Pastoral Charge Session is in favour of the establishment and support of the Emergency Response Fund. However, we feel that, in spite of the attempts at transparency, the 15% diversion is not the most appropriate way to replenish the Emergency Response Fund.

Financial Implications:**Intermediate Court Action:**

Valley Presbytery: Transmit with Concurrence

Maritime Conference: