

Proposal 2

Title: Educational Program for Designated Lay Ministry

Originating Body: Valley Presbytery

The 40th General Council (2009) direct:

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

It is moved by Bob Johnson, seconded by Graham Powell that the 84th Annual Meeting of Maritime Conference concur with proposal 2 entitled “Educational Program for Designated Lay Ministry” and transmit to the 40th General Council of The United Church of Canada.

MOTION CARRIED