

Title: United Church of Canada Governance Through the Lens of Empire

Originating Body: Church in Action Committee of Maritime Conference

Maritime Conference Action: Transmit with concurrence

Financial Implications: N/A

Staffing Implications: N/A

Proposal:

The Maritime Conference proposes that the 40th General Council (2009):

Direct the Executive of General Council to establish a multi-disciplinary Task Group to:

- 1) analyze the structures and processes of the United Church of Canada using the principles and tools of the “Living Faithfully in Midst of Empire” resources. Such an analysis would consider, but not be limited to: the degree to which structures and practices exhibit networking and are non-hierarchical with respect to power sharing; and whether decision-making is promoting distributive justice, inclusivity, and is based within the principles of global and local sustainability.
- 2) identify any places where Empire is being expressed; and
- 3) bring feedback and recommendations to the 41st General Council as to areas requiring change.

Background:

- 1) “‘Empire’ can mean many things, we use it to describe the complex systems of domination at work in the world. It’s about power—power that is used unfairly to create inequality.”
(Challenging Empire: A Call to Community, Mandate 2008, p. 2)
- 2) At the behest of our global partners, the United Church of Canada has been attempting to move towards a critical consciousness about empire and colonialism. The situation is so complex that it is difficult to discern what belongs to Empire and what belongs to God and God’s children.
- 3) The United Church of Canada has developed an analytical tool, namely the “Lens of Empire”, to help us understand unjust relationships and structures in the world.