

Backgrounder #1: Mandate, Terms of Reference, and Membership

Mandate

The 41st General Council approved the following motion in August 2012:

GCE15 – REF GCE59 2012 – Comprehensive Review of How The United Church of Canada Lives Faithfully in God's World

Motion: Don Hunter/Bill Rogers

GC 41 2012 - 008

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 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 consider 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;
8. create a place to mutually engage GC41 Commissioners throughout the current triennium.

Carried unanimously

Terms of Reference

Mandate

The United Church of Canada finds itself in the midst of exciting and challenging times of change: changing forms of church, changing contexts for ministry, changing human and financial resources, changing generations of members and leaders. How do we articulate and live our call to be the church in these changing times?

Through a broad-based engagement of the church, input from ecumenical and global partners, and conversations across generations, this small group will name the opportunities before us and the vehicles that will enable us to be a vital, agile, and faithful church.

General Council Motion

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Membership

The task group will be made up of seven members who have the requisite skills and experience and a love of The United Church of Canada. Priority will be given to ensuring that some of the membership is drawn from the younger leadership in the church.

The current Moderator, the Right Rev. Gary Paterson, will serve with the seven members. The General Secretary and other staff as assigned will provide support to this task group.

Skills and Experience

The task group will be primarily composed of people with a deep understanding of the United Church. It is hoped that the membership will also include people who do not necessarily have in-depth experience with United Church governance structures but who possess transformational expertise or significant knowledge of other organizations in order to bring an "outsider" perspective to the conversation.

Each member will possess skills and experience in more than one of the areas listed below. The final composition of the group will ensure that experience in each of these areas is present in the task group's membership:

- in-depth understanding of United Church polity and ethos
- experience in planning and/or leading large-scale organizational change efforts
- ability to analyze complex qualitative and quantitative data, research, and reports
- experience in "crowdsourcing" or technologies to engage the wisdom of large communities
- financial analysis, strategic planning, and risk management experience
- capacity to reflect theologically on the mission, governance, and ethos of the church
- other gifts and skills not named here that would bring depth, breadth, or inspiration to the work of this task group

All task group members will be predisposed to collaboration and teamwork, understanding of diversity issues, passionately committed to the future of The United Church of Canada, and willing to discern God's yearnings for this work.

Expectations and Term

The task group will meet in person as necessary, with other meetings occurring by telephone and video conference call and e-mail exchange. Consultation with a broad range of voices will be required.

The term of this appointment is from November 2012 to the 42nd General Council, August 2015.

Members of the Comprehensive Review Task Group

Russel Burns: Russel is a tribal member of the James Smith Cree Nation, Treaty Six, and lives with his wife, Charlene, in Ponoka, Alberta. He worships at the Samson United Church in Hobbema, is a member of the Aboriginal Ministries Council, and served as a commissioner of the 40th General Council (2009). In his 36 years in the United Church, he has been part of a movement toward a better balance of respect and humility between all tribal cultures and the spirit of the United Church.

Wilson Gonese: Wilson serves Springdale Pastoral Charge, is chair of the West District in Newfoundland and Labrador Conference, and was a commissioner of the 41st General Council. He was Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana from 2003 to 2006, and before that served several congregations in Zimbabwe.

Cathy Hamilton, Chair: Cathy serves Argenteuil United Pastoral Charge, Avoca, and Harrington, five small communities near Lachute, Quebec. She is past-president of Montreal & Ottawa Conference, and was a commissioner of the 41st General Council. She holds a Master's degree in Business Administration and, before entering ministry, was vice-president of marketing and reader sales at *The Gazette* (Montreal), where she gained experience in strategic planning.

Lauren Hodgson: Lauren was ordained in 2012 and is currently serving St. Matthew's United Church in Toronto. She has held leadership positions at several national United Church events, has extensive experience in youth ministry, and has worked internationally with United Church global partners in Kenya. Prior to entering ministry, Lauren coordinated community relations for the Vancouver Port Authority during a time of organizational change.

Kenji Marui: Kenji is serving in team ministry with Calvary United Church in London, Ontario, after many years with rural pastoral charges. He was a member of the Youth Forum leadership team at the 41st General Council and a commissioner of the 37th General Council. He has training in the diaconal stream and is committed to affirming sexuality within the church.

Beth Symes, CM, LSM: Beth is a long-time United Church member who has participated in and led strategic planning exercises in a variety of not-for-profit settings. She is a lawyer who practises in the area of employment, constitutional, and human rights law, and has provided legal advice to all courts of the church. Beth is a member at Bloor Street United Church in Toronto.

Vic Wiebe: Vic is a member at Grace United Church in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. He serves on the executives of Twin Valleys Presbytery and Saskatchewan Conference. He was a commissioner of the 39th and 40th General Councils and worked for more than 40 years in health and social services in the government and non-government sectors. He is active with a number of community-based non-profit and self-help organizations.

Gary Paterson, Moderator: Gary was elected Moderator at the 41st General Council in Ottawa on August 16, 2012. Ordained in 1977, he has served in all kinds of ministry and participated in the life of the church in different ways, among them: in small rural and urban congregations, as BC Conference staff, as a member the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry, at First United in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, at Ryerson United, and most recently at St. Andrew's-Wesley United in downtown Vancouver.