

**THE EVOLVING CONCEPT OF MISSION  
WITHIN CONGREGATIONS OF  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

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## ABSTRACT

### **The Evolving Concept of Mission within Congregations of The United Church of Canada**

This study is an examination of the evolving concept of mission within The United Church of Canada, and the implications that are presented for the funding of the mission of the church.

The roots of the concept of mission are traced from the biblical record of the Greek Testament. The ways in which the early church interacted with, and thrived within, the cultural, social, political, and economic realities of the first centuries C.E. are outlined.

The impact of the revolutionary changes implemented in the wake of Constantine's acceptance of (some might say promotion of) the Christian faith are reviewed in detail. While there is clear evidence to suggest that the church thrived and expanded within the Roman Empire in the centuries preceding the rule of Constantine, that emperor did establish a climate for the church to be viewed in a new light. The political and social acceptance of the church brought a new understanding of the relationship between the church and the world. To be a Christian was the accepted norm within society.

That understanding shaped much of the missionary activity up to the mid-twentieth century. The desire to preach "to the heathen" or to share the gospel "to the unchurched" was often linked to the expansionist economic interests of western enterprises. Mission for much of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could be characterized as "from the west to the rest."

After World War II, with the growing influence of the World Missionary Councils, and the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, a new sense of partnership

began to arise within missiological circles. Within The United Church of Canada, a pivotal point in the church's understanding of mission can be traced to the Commission on World Mission, established by the General Council in 1962, and which reported in 1966. Suddenly mission was no longer something we did to others, but mission was a "six continent reality" in which all parts of the inhabited world were considered appropriate sites for the mission of Christ. Encouragement was offered to expand the nature of the mission to include agricultural support, social workers, engineers, business advisers, accountants, etc. The report of this Commission on World Mission also urged the establishment of an Interfaith Dialogue position in the General Council office. Suddenly the call of Christ involved working with the very faith groups that the church sought to convert just a generation or two earlier.

In the changing realities of the 1990's, where authority of leadership is challenged, and where centralized power is reduced through a new branch-plant mentality, the church also has moved to an understanding of mission that is more local, hands-on, diversified, and concerned with people's basic needs. The final chapters of this thesis examine the views of a sampling of congregations responding to a survey on mission sent to them in the late summer of 1998. The information provided helps to paint a picture of the understanding of mission within the United Church today at the local level, and provides some pointers to the way in which stewardship education and mission promotion must be conducted in the future. Unless the church comes to grips with this movement to a locally-based mission, the mission activities of the denomination as a whole could be in peril in the very near future.

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## Introduction

The understanding as to what constitutes the mission of the church is an ever evolving reality. The church has been in mission since its earliest days. One of the primary statements on mission that has empowered the Christian church throughout the ages, as recorded in Matthew's gospel, records the resurrected Jesus decreeing to his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup> These sentiments echo the entreaty to the seventy sent out during Jesus' lifetime, and recorded in Luke 10:1-12.

While the gospels are written in the latter part of the first century, Paul's writings carry a sense of the church's mission earlier in its history. The very fact that the "apostle to the gentiles" was moved to spread the message of Jesus throughout the Mediterranean region showed a sense of missionary call. That was why he continually referred to himself as "an apostle of Christ Jesus," even when others would not do so.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Matthew 28:19, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Parallels of thought are found in Mark 16:15: "And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.'" and Luke 24:46-48: "and he said to them, 'Thus it is written that the messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.'"

2. The phrase is found in the salutation of most letters: e.g., I & II Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, I & II Timothy, Titus. Galatians 1:1 also uses the word "apostle." Titus 1:1 includes the word "servant" with "apostle," while Romans 1:1 begins "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle..." Paul is not so identified in Luke's historical rendering of the early church in *The Acts of the Apostles*. F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 18, calls Paul the "Gentiles' apostle *par excellence*." Robert Jewett, New Testament Professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, in *Paul: The Apostle to America* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), ix, argues that Paul felt "obligated" to become "an apostle to cultures like ours."



The argument can be effectively made that Paul's major work, the letter to the Romans, perceived as the great theological treatise of the New Testament, was written as a call to missionary service. In the *Apostolic Parousia* section (Romans 15:14-33), Paul outlines his desire to go to Spain (Rom. 15:24) and to visit Rome on his way (Rom. 15:23), but first he must deliver the offering of the Gentiles to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:16,25). Paul carefully presented his views on the faith to the Romans not so much to leave behind a treatise on systematic theology as to provide the church in Rome with a clear understanding of the content of the message he sought to deliver to Spain,<sup>1</sup> and the value of his apostolic mission for which he sought the Romans' assistance.<sup>2</sup>

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1. James D. G. Dunn, Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham, "The Formal and Theological Coherence of Romans," in Karl Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate*, rev. ed. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 246, expands this point: "Paul thought it necessary to elaborate his understanding of the gospel at length before he made his specific requests to the Roman Christians, on the assumption that they needed his fuller insight before they could be expected to give him the support he sought."

2. Robert Jewett makes this point as boldly as any New Testament scholar, when he clearly states that the purpose of Romans was "to elicit the cooperation of the Roman house-churches in Paul's missionary activities." Robert Jewett, "Following the Argument of Romans," in Donfried, ed. *The Romans Debate*, 277. The exact nature of that mission, or the motivation for the mission of Paul, has been linked to his conversion experience on the road to Damascus. There is some question whether that conversion was a commitment to the person of Jesus Christ in a new way (see Richard Longenecker of McMaster Divinity College, "A Realized Hope, A New Commitment, and a Developed Proclamation: Paul and Jesus," in Richard N. Longenecker, editor, *The Road to Damascus* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 18-42), or a call to see the Gentiles in a new way (Terence L. Donaldson of College of Emmanuel and St. Chad, Saskatoon, "Israelite, Convert, Apostle to the Gentiles: The Origin of Paul's Gentile Mission," Longenecker, editor, *The Road to Damascus*, 62-84). What is significant is that Paul viewed his call to mission (whatever motivated that call) as the driving force to his travel and preaching.

Two well-known professors from Duke University, Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, use the image of “alien” as a unifying term for the way in which believers have lived in relation to the prevailing culture throughout time.<sup>1</sup> Several examples are provided. I Peter uses the term “alien” (*paroikos* and *parpidamos* in Greek) as the chief metaphor to describe the Christian’s relationship with the surrounding culture. Jesus was not accepted by his own people, according to John 1:11. Was he not treated like an alien? Abraham left his country and kinfolk (Genesis 12:1) to be an alien in a new land. His descendants were known as “aliens in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:34, NRSV). The term “alien” has been important to the theological language and imagery of such diverse writers as Augustine, Count von Zinzendorf, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.<sup>2</sup>

The church throughout time also has been forced to transform itself in the face of changing social and cultural circumstances. The original communities in which Jesus spoke were predominantly rural, Palestinian, Aramaic-speaking, Jewish-based in terms of religion. The Christian church very quickly spread its message in order to convert people in urban, Hellenistic, Greek-speaking, pagan worshipping communities where philosophical teachings, and constant exposure to merchant travelers, made these

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1. The point also is germane to the views of William Stringfellow, *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land* (1973), referred to by Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Where Resident Aliens Live* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 95. The authors also credit Miroslav Volf, then of Fuller Theological Seminary (now at Yale) with being helpful to influence their insights on this matter.

2. Hauerwas and Willimon, *Where Resident Aliens Live*, 95.

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 communities far more cosmopolitan.

That shift in the group to whom the church's message was addressed (from rural to urban, from Palestinian to Hellenistic, from Jewish-centred to pagan-centred world) involved a shift in emphasis as to the social and cultural concerns which gripped the church. The church grew as a reality within the Roman world by adapting to the needs of local communities, and finding sympathizers within most communities. The early church did expand in meaningful ways. The slow yet consistent expansion of the church made the Christian faith a major player in Roman society by the end of the third century.

The church of the first three centuries survived and flourished in a variety of situations. In many venues, open approval and support by the authorities was lacking until the time of Constantine, though tacit interest in, even encouragement of, the early Christian church was evident among many, including many wealthy people (such as wives of Roman officials, and members of "the upper classes").<sup>2</sup> That reminds us all that the church can still grow and thrive with commitment by its members alone -- it need not rely on sanction by social or political forces of our time. Once Constantine became Emperor, and was open to giving status to the Christian faith not provided by the

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1. John E. Stambauch and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 55, "The Christian leaders emphasized the worldwide nature of their mission." Paul's early, effective mission is outlined in Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1928).

2. Rodney Stark, Professor of Sociology and Comparative Religion at the University of Washington, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 31.

government officials to that time (by introducing laws of preferential treatment for Christians), the church then thrived as an *accepted* part of the wider society.

To this point Christianity (or what the German New Testament scholar Gerd Theissen called “The Jesus Movement,”<sup>1</sup> the Palestinian version of Christianity) grew in country areas where a rebellious spirit lived, on the edge of culture and society, more remote from Roman power. The Christian faith now was integrated more openly with the power structures and the political forces of the day.

This was a major shift for the early church. Now Christians were viewed as welcome participants in the main stream of imperial life. This identification with the cultural, political, and social realities of the time marked the church for many centuries to come.

The purpose of this thesis-project is to trace the evolving view of mission within congregations of The United Church of Canada over the last thirty years. Those views on mission began to be altered during the shifting theological climate in North America of the 1960’s. Also during that decade, The United Church of Canada established *The Commission on World Mission*, which reported to the General Council of the church in 1966. That report, along with trends in the international ecumenical community, led to a radical shift in how mission is understood and practiced today.

Mission during the nineteenth century up to the middle of the twentieth century operated from a basis of accepted expansionism. The mission of the church was

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1. See Gerd Theissen, *The First Followers of Jesus: A Sociological Analysis of the Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1978), 55-56. Theissen labels Palestinian Christianity “the Jesus Movement,” which itself was characterized by a certain ‘lack of principle!’ (Ibid., 37.)

deserving of support by all Christians as consistent with the expansion of the western control around the world. At that time the church as a whole -- including The United Church of Canada -- sent missionaries to foreign lands to teach a western way of life, as well as to share a western theological stance.

By the mid-twentieth century, I will argue, local concerns became much more the focus of the church. Mission-founded churches had developed their own indigenous leadership, and local congregations in North America began to focus on the mission on their doorstep. Suddenly the community of faith was more than a gathering of people seeking to save those far off through money and support of overseas missionaries. Recruitment and funding for foreign missionaries dwindled.<sup>1</sup> The focus reverted to the needs of local communities. As Jesus sought to meet the needs of people in his community, and as Paul attempted to address concerns in his local churches, so now the mission of the church returned to an understanding of the changing local community in which the church existed. New approaches were needed in the face of the cultural changes emerging after World War II.

Today, The United Church of Canada, in its policies and procedures around mission, operates with much more sensitivity to the local region, using volunteers and lay people as much as professional missionaries, seeking to make a difference in territories within Canada as well as abroad. The United Church, though, still holds on to a denominational

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1. Total overseas personnel have decreased from 588 in 1927 (including spouses and Women's Missionary Society personnel) to 334 in 1947, and then church missionaries alone of 270 in 1965, 133 in 1985, and 36 in 1998. Graph of this data is Appendix C: Statistics from Shirley Welch of the Department of Stewardship Services, The United Church of Canada (based on Yearbook data).

vision of mission, and maintains an expectation of support for that vision from congregations throughout Canada. As resources have dwindled for the wider mission of the church over the last ten years, one is left with the following questions: Why do people seem hesitant to support the mission of The United Church of Canada? What priorities in mission are evident in local congregations and pastoral charges of the United Church? What motivates giving among the members of the United Church? How must the United Church as a denomination or within its regional bodies (or judicatories) alter its approach to mission to recapture the energy and vision for mission once present in the early years of its existence?

Other questions also emerge: To what extent is there a common understanding of mission within the United Church as a whole? How do local congregations view their mission today? How is the mission of the church shaped by the ways in which Christianity is affirmed (or ignored) by the wider culture? What directions can one map for the future mission of The United Church of Canada and its congregations?

To begin to answer these questions, I shall first look to the first four centuries of the Christian church. Before Constantine provided the cultural and political acceptance of the church, which gave the church authorities a new freedom to exercise their control over the church universal, Christians lived in simple, committed ways. The church thrived even in a hostile environment. The church of the late twentieth century can learn from the life of the church community in the first centuries of the common era. So, the final question needs to be: "What can the primitive church experience, lived apart from the approval of the state authorities and lacking cultural affirmation, teach us for the reality of the church today which is in similar social, political and cultural realities?"

Then I shall trace the mission activity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was the era of great expansion of western Christianity, based on a new evangelical zeal and fervor that was tied into the political and social powers of the age. The church saw its mission connected to the well-being of the political forces of the time. What was valuable to the church was linked to, not separate from, the economic and political objectives of the home nation.

Mission also was energized by a global perspective. Local, congregational concerns diminished in the face of world-wide, denominational (or even ecumenical) interests. From the International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 to the integration of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches in 1961, a new concept of mutuality in mission emerged.<sup>1</sup> Such a concept became the rallying point for missions within The United Church of Canada by the 1970's. That perspective remains a driving force for many denominational leaders, based on partnerships and links which are brought into being by staff at the national church level. Many individual members, however, understand partnership as a more personal experience, and view their connection to mission in an individual way. Unless "Mutuality in Mission" reacts to the movement toward a more congregationally-based

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1. So prevalent is that concept of mutuality in mission that modern writers on mission assume an ecumenical spirit in almost everything they write. For example, John V. Taylor, "My Pilgrimage in Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* Vol. 17, No. 2 (April, 1993), 61: "Mission is not what one church does for another but what churches do together for the world."

mission activity, the partnerships of the recent decades could be lost due to a lack of support by individual church members. A better effort needs to be expended at helping people see the value of connections with other churches, and not just contact with other people in need.

The influences arising from the work of *The Commission on World Mission* established by The United Church of Canada in 1962 will be assessed, using both archival material and interviews of key people on that commission. As a final step, an analysis of a questionnaire sent to every pastoral charge of The United Church of Canada (and to which about 8% have responded, or 245 out of 3,000 sent) will help to pinpoint current directions in mission thinking within The United Church of Canada. This data will provide the basis for a series of recommendations on what the church must do to maintain its mission thrust as a denomination, and yet honour the growing parochial needs and desire for a more local focus among individual pastoral charges and members of The United Church of Canada as a whole.



## **I. Mission in The Early Church**

Some would suggest the nature of the movement toward a structured Catholic church, the construction of ornate and elaborate church edifices, the structure around liturgy and worship format, the pomp and ceremony around the role of clergy leadership, the organization of church bureaucracy all stem from (or at least gained their momentum from) the new status enjoyed by the Christian church under Constantine (306-337). Until the Emperor declared Sunday to be a day of worship and provided special acceptance of, and tolerance toward, the members of the Christian faith, followers of Jesus of Nazareth were open to threats. Some were persecuted as enemies of the state.

The early church, though, was effective in spreading its mission throughout the world. The church which arose following the end of the ministry and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth was a church with clear Judaeo-Palestinian roots.<sup>1</sup> The way in which Jesus taught, as recorded by the gospel writers, indicates the fact that modest rural living was the norm for most people.<sup>2</sup> His stories would focus on shepherds, farmers, simple travelers, housewives, women going to get water, fishermen, just to name a few. Where people of means are mentioned: landowners, government officials, Jewish leaders, they are mentioned as foils to a story, or as individuals who need direction and teaching

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1. The influence of the Jewish roots on Christianity is outlined in Rodney Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 49 ff.

2. This point is constantly being made by the German New Testament scholar Gerd Theissen in his book *The First Followers of Jesus: A Sociological Analysis of the Earliest Christianity*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1978).

themselves. The powerful and rich<sup>1</sup> ultimately were reliant on the work and dedication of the rural peasants.<sup>2</sup>

The emphasis on the ordinary people of rural Palestine in the teachings of Jesus meant that the Christian faith initially existed in relative obscurity, free from the glare and scrutiny of the large centres where government leaders and business endeavours would be centred. The roots of the Christian faith meant that the language used, the images shared, the teachings preserved catered to the original membership's milieu.

W. H. C. Frend of the University of Glasgow boldly proclaims: "It is impossible to think of Jesus apart from Galilee."<sup>3</sup>

As the church expanded into the Graeco-Roman world, it expanded into urban centres. Paul, in particular, became the apostle to a world of pagan believers in these

1. Douglas E. Oakman of Pacific Lutheran University in "The Countryside in Luke-Acts," Jerome H. Neyrey, editor, *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991), 155, remarks there tends to be a "small ruling elite in the cities and a mass of toiling agriculturalists in the villages whose labor and product supports the elite."

2. Oakman, "Countryside" in Neyrey, ed., *Social World of Luke-Acts*, 163f., offers many passages in Luke's gospel that reflect what he terms are "marginalized and landless people" who reflect the "general conditions of political insecurity and subsistence anxiety in the ancient countryside." The Yale trained Professor at the Inter-denominational Theological Centre in Atlanta, Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, Volume I (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1984), 91, declares that the vast majority of Christians in the first three centuries were from the lower echelons of society. Contrary to this view, Derek Tidball, *The Social Context of the New Testament: A Sociological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 92, argues for recognition of the role of the wealthy and the middle class in the church as early as the first century as well as the poor and uneducated. He further states that "the Christian church from the very beginning was socially mixed." (Ibid., 94.)

3. W. H. C. Frend, *Rise of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), 59. For a discussion of the role of Galilee in Jesus' life and teachings, cf. Sean Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

same urban centres.<sup>1</sup> (The impact of urbanization on the church is a key element that reappears throughout the history of the church's understanding of its missionary call.)

The shift in focus of the messengers of the faith from rural-Jewish to urban-Greek meant a change in language by which the message was communicated.<sup>2</sup> There is some disagreement as to when that shift took place. Some would argue that Paul was the instigator of that shift by his contact with the Gentile community of the middle-first century. It was the "Apostle to the Gentiles" who saw the value (indeed, some would say 'need') of shifting language and images from a Jewish context to a Graeco-Roman pagan context. Interaction with traditional Greek story telling,<sup>3</sup> pagan religious language,<sup>4</sup>

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1. Yale University Professor Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 10, is very clear about this point: "[T]he mission of the Pauline circle was conceived from start to finish as an urban movement." Richard L. Rohrbaugh then of Lewis and Clark College in Portland, "The Pre-Industrial City in Luke-Acts: Urban Social Relations," Neyrey, editor, *Social World of Luke-Acts*, 147, challenges Meeks idea that the cities of the first century and the twentieth century were similar. He also points out that Jesus' ministry takes place outside the largest cities of the area -- Sephoris, Scythopolis, Samaria, Caesarea all are outside the domain of Jesus' ministry. James Shiel, *Greek Thought and the Rise of Christianity* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co. Ltd., 1968), 44, regards the teaching of Jesus as "within the spiritual tradition of the great Jewish prophets," yet Paul is "an amalgam of two cultures, Hebraic and Greek."

2. Cf. Derek Tidball, St. Andrews University, *Social Context*, 75, where the spread of Christianity is characterized as a transition from "the Jewish and rural environment in which the Jesus movement was founded to the Gentile and urban world of Rome." The same point is made by John E. Stambauch and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 52.

3. R. A Markus, *Christianity in the Roman World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 27 claims Christianity offered its adherents "both a cult and a philosophy."

4. The German scholar Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 342, points out the similarity in the language used to describe the pagan rulers of the Roman Empire and Christ himself in later times.

the rites of mystery religions,<sup>1</sup> and philosophic schools of thought,<sup>2</sup> replaced the traditional rabbinical stories, Hebrew Testament allusions, and prophetic schools of imagery reflected in the gospels themselves.

Others, including Heinz Guenther of Emmanuel College,<sup>3</sup> and Derek Tidball of St. Andrews, have argued that even the primitive gospel message has elements of the Greek world within it. Such a position is based on the important affirmation that first century Judaism, including the Judaism within Palestine where Jesus limited his mission and ministry, was comfortable with the Greek language, and so probably conversant with at least some of the stories and teachings of the Greek tradition. Tidball suggests<sup>4</sup> New Testament times were influenced by three main institutions: city community (*politeia*); household community (*oikonomia*); voluntary association (*koinonia*). In Tidball's

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1. Cf. Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956; reprint of London: G. Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1911), xxiii.

2. New Testament Professors from Berne, Peter Lampe and Ulrich Luz, "Post-Pauline Christianity and Pagan Society," Jurgen Becker, editor, *Christian Beginnings: Word and Community from Jesus to Post-Apostolic Times*, trans. A. S. Kidder and Reinhard Krauss (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, 255, link Acts 2:44, "all things in common," with Hellenistic social utopias. Oxford scholar Gilbert Murray, "Pagan Religion and Philosophy at the Time of Christ," *Humanist Essays* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964), 112, argues that first century Christians represented a more crude, less educated population in comparison to Roman philosophers.

3. Heinz Guenther, "Greek: Home of Primitive Christianity," *Toronto Journal of Theology*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall, 1989), 251: "Earliest post-Easter Christianity...lived and thought in Greek."

4. Tidball, *Social Context*, 76. This summary leaves out the term *ekklesia*, the word of choice for the self-identification of the Christian church. As discussed by Robert Farrar Capon, *The Astonished Heart* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Ltd., 1996), 47, *ekklesia* is rooted in the Septuagint, but also is a term in the Graeco-Roman world for trade associations, or political entities.

summary: “each, at a different level, dealt with man’s need to belong.”<sup>1</sup>

British scholar Peter Brown, writing as part of a collection of historical pieces on the life in the Roman Empire, has suggested that early Christianity was not as rural-based as has been argued. The shift to the urban realities of the Roman Empire would have been easy, given the urban influence of Jewish communities of faith. The growth of the church, the “new Israel,” was formed (according to Brown) among pagans who had been attracted to these Jewish communities in cities throughout Asia Minor, the Aegean, and even Rome itself.<sup>2</sup> At the very least, Hellenistic influence is apparent by the role played by people with Greek names in the early church. Within Stephen’s group mentioned in Acts 6:5 -- Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, Nicolaus -- all seven have Greek names.

Whether or not the early Christian community felt comfortable in urban settings, whether or not the first Christian messengers and writers were conversant with Greek (and even Latin) religious non-Christian teachings, whether or not the early church was at ease in translating the faith originally experienced in the context

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1. Tidball, *Social Context*, 76.

2. Peter Brown, “Late Antiquity,” Paul Veyne, ed., *A History of Private Life*, Vol. I: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 257. Others have argued for the urban, Hellenistic influences within Galilee itself. For example, the controversial New Testament scholar and co-director of the Jesus Seminar, John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1991), 19, declares that “life in lower Galilee in the first century was as urbanized and urbane as anywhere else in the empire.” A counter position is offered by former McMaster University Professor E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), and also in *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1993).

of Judaism into a pagan world, it is clear that the church was not readily accepted and embraced by some leaders of the Roman Empire. The extent to which the Christian church had a following among all citizens is up for debate.<sup>1</sup>

The church faced enormous difficulty in the early years. Even before the Christian church as such was formed, Jesus himself was crucified as a political prisoner at the hands of the Roman government, no matter what the gospels might suggest in terms of a Jewish cabal undertaking his demise. Paul sought redress to the Roman authorities when his teachings were viewed as causing dissension in the Empire.

At the same time, it would be inaccurate to suggest there was an organized persecution of the Christian church before 64 C.E. It was in that year that Nero blamed the Christians for the fire in Rome when a scapegoat needed to be found. While some historians, including Tacitus (c. 55 C.E.-c. 117 C.E.), were not convinced by Nero's accusations, there is widespread agreement that these Christians are not worthy of high regard.<sup>2</sup> The very fact that a potentially scurrilous accusation of arson could stick (though widely viewed as fallacious) shows the low regard for early Christians in Rome. In the very least, this Christian faith was viewed as a harmful superstition.<sup>3</sup> Hardly a

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1. Oxford University scholar Robin Lane Fox, *Pagan and Christian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), 16, characterizes the Christian church of the early third century C. E. as "the persecuted faith of a minority." By 250 C.E., only 2% of the population were Christians (Ibid., 317). University of Washington sociologist Rodney Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 64 ff., has argued the church was a major player in the first three centuries, and remained closely tied to its Jewish roots throughout that era.

2. Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44; *Histories*, 5.5.

3. Cf. Suetonius (b. 69 C.E.), *Nero*, 16.2, and *Claudius*, 25.3; Pliny (c. 61 C.E.-113 C.E.), *Epistles*, 10.96 (quoted in Lampe and Luz, "Post-Pauline Christianity," Becker, ed., *Christian Beginnings*, 261). Tacitus (*Annals*, 15.44) writes that Jesus was

powerful group!

A series of actions were taken to limit the power and influence of the Christians even more within the first centuries of the church. Various Emperors enacted legislation which punished Christian believers who refused the tradition of Emperor worship officially recognized within the Roman Empire. As Christians remained resolute in their refusal to worship the Emperor or to offer incense and wine before images of the Emperor in order to appease the authorities, they were summarily denounced and often put to death. In the second century such prominent leaders as Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (d. 107 CE), and Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (d. 155 CE) were martyred.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the further dispersion of the Jewish population following the destruction of the temple, Christians more than Jews became targets for attack in the Empire. In actual fact, Christians may have been even more open for derision, since the Jewish faith had had a tradition of living in peaceful co-existence with the Roman authorities. Many within the Christian movement had a reputation for being trouble makers. Jesus was crucified between two “*lestes*” or “thieves” or “brigands,” a term associated with “revolutionists” in Josephus’ writings.<sup>2</sup> Those linked to Jesus, including the twelve, also

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“the founder of a novel and pernicious superstition.” Dominique Cuss, *Imperial Cult and Honorary Terms in the New Testament* (Fribourg: The University Press, 1974), 158, finds pagan superstition a factor in the persecution of Christians, for any catastrophe was seen as a result of the Christians’ failure to placate the gods with sacrifices.

1. Cambridge University historian Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, The Pelican History of the Church, vol. 1 (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), 28; Robert M. Grant, then Professor of New Testament at University of Chicago, in *Augustine to Constantine* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), 87, points out eleven others were martyred with Polycarp.

2. Cf. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 43.

appeared to have roots in politically-charged movements within the first century.<sup>1</sup>

Some relief occurred during the reign of Commodus (180-192), since his concubine Marcia was a Christian. She was able to convince the Emperor to be sympathetic to the Christians.<sup>2</sup> Martyrdom, though, did not diminish the expansion and growth of the church. People gained courage in their faith. The resolute way in which Christians lived was as much because of the possibility of martyrdom as it was in spite of it.

Much of the Third Century C. E. showed a dramatic shift of support for the Christian church. During the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235 C. E.), there were closer relations between Christians and the court of the Emperor. His successor, Maximin (235-238), persecuted the church, while Philip (244-249 C. E.) was friendly toward the Christians.<sup>3</sup> His successor, Decius (249-251), returned to the old ways of persecution, but only lasted in power for two years.<sup>4</sup> Valerian persecuted the Christians during his brief reign (257-260) as well, but on his death the bishops of the church could resume their duties and had their churches restored to them.<sup>5</sup>

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1. For a fuller treatment of the implications of the actions, attitudes, and associations of the disciples, see the views of the former New Testament professor at the University of Basel, Oscar Cullmann, *The State in the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956). The sociologist Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 46, disagrees: "I reject claims that the state did perceive early Christianity in political terms." Stark offers challenge to many traditional ideas on early church worship, church growth, and the role of martyrdom in Christianity.

2. Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 29.

3. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 166f.

4. Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 85.

5. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 170 f.



In all of these periods of persecution, the emphasis moved away from seeking to put Christians to death (since martyrdom seemed to give life to the Christian movement), to a state goal of pressuring Christian believers to become apostates and to worship the gods of the Empire, or at least to acknowledge the divinity of the Emperor himself. All religions were tolerated as long as practitioners would honour the pagan gods alongside their own deities. The obstinacy of both the Jews and Christians who refused, for the most part, to share their worshipful allegiance to Yahweh with the pagan gods of the Roman Empire left them vulnerable.<sup>1</sup> Those who had their own deity, yet denied the god(s) of everybody else, were regarded no more highly than atheists.<sup>2</sup>

The Christians were seen as a threat to Rome for many reasons. Their unwillingness to worship the emperor, or to offer libations to the emperor's image in the local temple, left them suspect of activity against the state.<sup>3</sup> Rumours of the worship liturgy within the Christian meeting house also aroused suspicion. People heard awful stories that Christians were eating the remains of a human body (and so someone was sacrificed at every worship service in order to provide the meal that was shared). While such grotesque stories may have arisen out of a misinformed understanding of the Lord's

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1. Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 15.

2. Ramsay Macmillan, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 2. E. R. Dodds, the well-known Oxford University classicist, in *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1951), 190, claims that a charge of irreligion may be a way to attack people in order to get them to fall in line, even when such attacks may be more politically motivated.

3. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 79, suggests that in a broadly-based understanding of civic duty, the Christians of the second century "rejected the demands of the Roman civic law."

Supper (where bread and wine were seen to be the body and blood of Jesus in their midst), such tales left the Christians on the defensive. There were also suggestions of orgies and inappropriate sexual liaisons, again no doubt arising (in part) from the liturgical “kiss of peace” which was part of the Christian greeting.

Any symbol of the faith worn was viewed by others as being similar to a secret sign of the mystery religions, and so handed over some magical powers to the individual. (The story of Constantine using a *chi-rho* monogram on the shields of his soldiers in order to gain victory shows that even those sympathetic to the Christian cause confused magical powers and the Christian faith.)

Gatherings of the Christian faith could not amass wealth, or purchase property. This meant that the early places of worship often were simple, modest places. The model for the organization of the church may have been the various voluntary associations important in Greek and Roman cities.<sup>1</sup> Many groups worshipped in homes,<sup>2</sup> which may have been transformed for the worship service. Some wealthy Christians, especially

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1. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 31.

2. Carston Colpe, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Berlin, “The Oldest Jewish-Christian Community,” Becker, ed., *Christian Beginnings*, 89: “The Nazaraean community was stabilized by individual house (*oikos*) churches...” Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 75, calls the “household church” (*kat’ oikou ekklesia*) the “basic cell” of the Christian movement. John H. Elliott of the University of San Francisco, “Temple versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions,” Neyrey, ed. *Social World*, 227, suggests the household is the “most appropriate sphere and symbol of social life” for the Lukan Jesus to illustrate “features of life under the reign of God.” Elliott later upholds the household as a sign of economic and social reciprocity (where no hierarchy exists) in contrast to the hierarchical structure (and ultimate redistribution of wealth) demanded by the temple organization. Lampe and Luz, “Post-Pauline Christianity,” Becker, ed., *Christian Beginnings*, 271, characterize the principle of reciprocity as a pagan idea which the church replaced by a “principle of caring behaviour toward those who cannot ‘give in return.’”

women, would offer a part of their home for the Christian rites, but for the most part Christian “churches” were seen as small gatherings in cramped quarters. In fact, the very term “*ekklesia*” (which is a common word for “church”) suggests more an informal community association than it does an impressive edifice. This latter image would be the image of a “church” in the era following the rule of Constantine.<sup>1</sup> Such an association, or *ekklesia*, also remained in tension with the social web of the day. Members of the Christian church during the first three centuries remained outside of the exercise of social and political power. There was obvious tension experienced by the Christian believers from their neighbours -- a tension at times leading to open hostility. Any sense of personal affirmation arose from what happened inside the church meetings. There was little pleasure gained, or satisfaction enjoyed, through relationships with the wider society and culture. Some scholars claim the early church did include a wide range of people from a variety of social and economic levels,<sup>2</sup> yet that broadly based membership (however broadly based it might have been),<sup>3</sup>

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1. Stambauch and Bald, *New Testament in Social Environment*, 140-142, link the concept of church to an amalgam of the synagogues, clubs, voluntary associations, and philosophical schools. Cf. the Manchester Baptist scholar David S. Russell, *From Early Judaism to Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

2. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 191. John Domic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 180 suggests only 1% of the Roman population came from the upper strata, while 99% were from the lower strata. As to the number of Roman citizens, only 25% of the Roman Empire members were citizens in the first century C.E. (Ibid., 181).

3. Also discussed *supra*, 4.

did not translate into a broadly-based acceptance outside of the church.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the Christians were not able to be open in their recruitment and worship, were forced to lead an underground existence, did not have alluring, impressive buildings in the community, were seen as both political threats to the Empire and religious aberrations to the Jewish believer, meant the church did not grow in an open way within the first three centuries.<sup>2</sup> The numbers of the faithful, though, did expand during this era. The fact that early Christian evangelists would travel from city to city, possibly to offer their message in open air venues, and often receive little response to their cause, set the tone for the commitment needed to share the gospel message. The mission of the church was not dependent upon social or political acceptance. That example gave strength to those people of faith in the first three centuries. (It later served as a symbol of the commitment needed by missionaries in remote parts of the world in more modern times.) The martyrdom of

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1. Yale-trained Professor Howard Kee, "A Century of Quests for the Culturally Compatible Jesus," *Theology Today*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 27, suggests that early Christianity inherited the diverse nature of its membership from first century Judaism. It strikes me that other factors were involved in that diversity (such as it was), including the need for those shut out of the power structure to offer leadership somewhere (and so chose the church), the syncretistic movement of the time, and the philosophic creativity (if not open accommodation to Graeco-Roman thought patterns) evident in the Christian church by the second century.

2. Gail Paterson Corrington, *The 'Divine Man': His Origin and Function in Hellenistic Popular Religion*, American University Studies Series VII, Theology and Religion, Vol. 17 (New York: P. Lang, 1986), 159-162, points out that the spread of gods, and the acceptance of foreign gods into one's land, usually resulted from the displacement of people through military conquest rather than through disenchantment with one's current religion. Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, Chapter 2, argues for a learned, wealthier class to be drawn to new religious movements, and suggests Christianity did grow in the first three centuries significantly.

many in the first two centuries actually brought attention to the strength, courage, and conviction of Christians, helping their cause to gain converts among those searching for new meaning in their lives who were outside the power struggles of the era.<sup>1</sup> Once the Emperors set aside the regular persecution of Christians, Christians became a people officially ignored; their faith, where it was dismissed, was quietly scorned by the citizens of the Empire. By the third century C. E., there were Christians who were moving upward in society due to education, skill, support of patrons, and less persecution of Christian believers.<sup>2</sup> George La Piana of Harvard University has argued that there was a certain kind of strict organization and centralized movement around the Roman Church by the end of the second century. While churches were spread out all around the Empire, the *katholike ekklesia* “did possess unity of essential belief and even a certain degree of uniformity in its organization and practice.”<sup>3</sup> The Roman political community, then, eventually formed the structural basis for the unification of the Christian church as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

While the numerical growth of Christianity may not have been exponential beyond the first century of its existence, the westward expansion of Christianity was swift. Paul wrote to an already existing church in Rome in his letter to the Romans. Tradition

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1. A position challenged by Stark, *Rise of Christianity*. Cf. *supra*, 17, n. 1.

2. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 220.

3. George La Piana, “The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century,” in Everett Ferguson, editor, *Studies in Early Christianity* Vol. IV: “Orthodoxy, Heresy, and Schism in Early Christianity” (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1993), 201.

4. *Ibid.*, 209.

around Peter's presence and identification with the church in Rome are of an early origin. Whether or not Peter actually founded the Christian community in Rome, it is clear that the roots of Christianity in Rome were established early in the expansion of the Christian faith. Further expansion of the church into the west is noted during the third century C.E., evident primarily by the number of bishops at early church synods.<sup>1</sup>

Constantine came to power in the wake of further extreme action against the Christians. On February 24, 303,<sup>2</sup> Diocletian issued an edict to destroy all churches, to forbid assemblies, and to have the scriptures burned. What was known as the Festival of Terminalia did not happen as outlined, though some persecutions did take place. This edict remained a telling indictment against the Christian faith until Constantine allowed for the freedom of religious expression in early 313.<sup>3</sup>

The Christian church by the end of the third century C. E. lived within this mix of political persecution, economic uncertainty, social rejection, and personal struggle. Into this mix came the Emperor Constantine, who through his reformations as Emperor, and openness to the faith of the Christians in particular,<sup>4</sup> changed the face of the Christian church for the next sixteen centuries.

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1. Grant, *Augustus to Constantine*, 219.

2. Grant, *Augustus to Constantine*, 230, puts the date as February 23, 303.

3. Grant, *Augustus to Constantine*, 236.

4. Constantine's edict of tolerance toward the Christians is found in Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 401.

## **II. The Impact of Constantine on the Church's Sense of Mission**

By the time Constantine (306-337) claimed power as Emperor of the Roman Empire, permitted the return of church properties, and allowed for freedom of religious expression for all in 313 C.E., Christians were an established part of the religious framework of the Empire. Though still looked down upon by many of the rich and cultured members of the Roman aristocracy, Christians quietly established a presence in many smaller communities of the Empire, and were spread throughout urban centres as well.

The organization of the church grew in the Third Century C. E. to the point where Rome alone had 154 priests.<sup>1</sup> What began as a movement of followers of Jesus of Nazareth in a rural, Palestinian context now was becoming a highly organized institution. Greater institutionalization was on the horizon.

Constantine was interested in establishing peace within the Empire. That was his main goal. He thought that in accepting Christianity as part of the religious landscape of the Empire, and later actively promoting it as the official religion, such peace would be guaranteed. This shift in policy by Constantine, then, had more to do with political and social concerns than with religious or philosophic convictions.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 268.

2. Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 122: "When Constantine enacted laws in favor of Christianity...what he sought was not the goodwill of Christians, but rather the goodwill of their God."

It was the Emperor's feeling that proclamation of the Christian religion as the authorized religion of the time would bring stability to the Empire (and also unity to the church). Further, Constantine saw a need to appease the God of the Christians in order to meet his economic, social, and political goals.<sup>1</sup> He had the *chi-rho* emblazoned on the shields of his soldiers as he conquered Rome from the west.<sup>2</sup> Constantine felt his military success was due (in large part) to the help he received from the Christian god. According to Eusebius, Constantine now sought ways to appease that support.<sup>3</sup>

The religious realignment within the Empire began gradually. First, Constantine removed the laws which declared Christianity to be illegal. As the church became more comfortable with this extended period of religious peace, further consolidation of the church's organization and leadership took place. Eventually, by 324 C.E., Constantine declared Sunday to be the official day of worship within the Empire. This was a day of pagan import, for it was the day on which the people worshipped the Emperor as the *Sol Invictus*.<sup>4</sup> Nothing radical by Constantine's declaration, except that Sunday also was the day on which Christians gathered for their worship. The Christian rituals

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1. Pierre Boyance, *Études sur la Religion Romaine* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1972), 135, writes that the distinctive mark of a Roman "ce n'est pas d'abord la valeur militaire, le courage des soldats, le genie des chefs, mais c'est bien probablement le respect de ses dieux -- *pietas*--."

2. Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 121.

3. Eusebius, *Early Church History*, chapter 10 for discussion of Constantine.

4. Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 123.



around baptism and the eucharist (often held in secret) took place in conjunction with an evening meal. These rites had created concern among many leaders of the Empire in the past. Now Constantine was providing tacit approval of these worship gatherings, while dismissing the worship on Saturday by the large Jewish population of the Empire, a group which traditionally had been protected by the Romans. In an Empire that once prided itself on syncretistic acceptance of all religions as long as adherents also would honour the Emperor and the gods of the Empire, Constantine now offered official sanction for two diametrically opposed religious traditions: pagan worship and worship of Jesus the Christ.

The situation was untenable. A choice had to be made. For the good of the Empire (he thought) Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup> Suddenly official acceptance of the church changed the social status of Christianity. The Roman government provided money for the refurbishing of Christian churches. New edifices for Christian worship were built. Christians also took over pagan temples and reclaimed them as Christian sanctuaries. The style of church building – long, majestic structures with a sanctuary, choir, nave division – reflected the style of pagan temples. The overall external shape was that of the Latin Cross.<sup>2</sup> Buildings now were bold and

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1. Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 10, argues that the acceptance of Christianity by Constantine followed the rise of the number of followers of the Christian faith, rather than caused an increase in the church. Constantine simply acknowledged what was the current influence of the church rather than created a new expansion of the church. (This is discussed *supra*, 10-12.)

2. Alan Watts, *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 194.

majestic. Many churches were built on traditional holy sites. In Rome alone,  
Constantine built seven churches.<sup>1</sup>

With a change in worship acceptance came a change in worship format.<sup>2</sup> Priests, and especially bishops, now dressed and acted in a way that reflected the pomp and ceremony that surrounded the Emperor himself. Processional hymns became a standard feature of every service, as the priest entered in ways analogous to the ruler himself at a public function. The burning of incense, once a rite to show allegiance to the Emperor which early Christians refused to do (and as a result many of them gave their lives as martyrs) now became part of the Christian liturgy. As rituals around the honouring of the Emperor once were conducted by officials, so too priests and bishops in the Christian church now took on more of a sacramental role. A shared meal in which the Lord's Supper was a part now became a formal ritual event in which the priest participated on behalf of the people.<sup>3</sup> Ornamental additions to the sanctuary (such as statuary of Jesus, Mary and the apostles) reminded others of the way in which images of the Emperor adorned pagan temples. Many festivals once held for the Emperor and his family now became a model for days to commemorate martyrs and saints within the Christian tradition.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 246.

2. Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 125.

3. Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire. Vol. II (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 530.

4. Fishwick, *Imperial Cult*, 483.

Change was not limited to worship alone. The acceptance of the church meant that Christians now were open to take leadership in the community at large. Politicians, once judged on their allegiance to the gods of the Empire, now could be more successful as Christian believers. Tensions arose as the old money of the aristocracy, known for its political power in the Senate and prestige in the community, felt threatened by the new elite among the Christians.

Terminology used around the structure and organization of the church also reflected the political structure in which the church now existed. Where once Jesus spoke in opposition to the powerbrokers of his day, fourth century C. E. Christians adapted symbols of power for their use. Bishops oversaw a diocese that roughly equated a Roman political jurisdiction by the same name. As power centralized in Rome for the Empire as a whole, Rome also became much more prominent within Christian circles.<sup>1</sup> Where once the church saw itself in tension with the Emperor, now the Emperor was an open ally to the church. The first General Council in the West was held at Arles in 314 (and called by Constantine), while the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 (to deal with the Arian controversy)<sup>2</sup> also was as a result of Constantine's initiative.

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1. Christopher Bush Coleman, *Constantine the Great and Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1914), 69, suggests the rise of the Roman See was helped by the fact that Constantine employed the Bishop of Rome "as a kind of secretary of state for Christian affairs."

2. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 155.

By 336, Christians at Rome observed December 25 as the birthday of Christ, no doubt linked to the fact the birthday of the sun in Egypt during this time also was December 25.<sup>1</sup>

Constantine, in fact, was so highly regarded among the Christians who lived at that time that even the history of his life by Eusebius had “traditional hagiographic elements in it.”<sup>2</sup>

Even when rulers subsequent to Constantine sought to re-establish the pagan religion’s prominence (especially Julian in 361-363),<sup>3</sup> the church prevailed.<sup>4</sup>

The forces of change under Constantine were so great there was no turning back the clock. Where once being a Christian meant that one was persecuted, faced political rejection, and was ostracized, the opposite was true now.<sup>5</sup> Where once Christian

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1. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 308.

2. T. D. Barnes, “Panegyric, History and Hagiography in Eusebius’ Life of Constantine,” Rowan William, editor, *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 110. Cf. Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 123: “Eusebius’ unabashed panegyric on Constantine and the early Byzantine mosaics of Christ as *pantokrator*, emperor of the universe, are two witnesses to the Christian triumphalism that followed the wedding of the two empires.”

3. Arnaldo Momigliano, *On Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 154, Julian is characterized as one of those who argued for polytheism as a way to honour the diversity of nations, and the role of the Sun (Latin *Sol*, Greek *Helios*) as the Supreme God.

4. Shiel, *Greek Thought*, 56: “The Christian organization proved superior to Julian’s Hellenism.”

5. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 319, finds in the years after Constantine’s conversion a connection between social mobility and Christianity. The new ruling class were Christian believers to an extent unheard of in the first three centuries C.E.

literature and teachings clearly viewed God and Caesar as two diametrically opposite realities, now the Emperor was seen as the protector of the worship of God, and the safeguard for the freedom of Christian witness.<sup>1</sup> At best, all pagan worshippers could hope for was an acceptance of their right to worship as they wished, and a safe journey on the fringes of society, once the preserve of Christians themselves.

This left the church in a very different place. The former “evil religion” (*prava religio*) was now the “legal religion” (*religio licita*).<sup>2</sup> The penchant to cultural criticism or political resistance of the early church<sup>3</sup> was set aside in order to garner the maximum benefit from the Emperor’s support of the faith.<sup>4</sup> The church of the poor and dispossessed started by Jesus in and around Galilee became the church of the wealthy and the powerful.<sup>5</sup> Where once the church had a form “that recalls many of the features of the Greek *polis*,” in the wake of Constantine conditions changed to the point where

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1. Deissmann, *Light from Ancient East*, 252.

2. Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 110.

3. Gerd Theissen, *The First Followers*, spends four chapters discussing the socio-economic, socio-ecological, socio-political, and socio-cultural factors in the rise of the Jesus movement in opposition to the prevailing urban ethos; Vincent L. Wimbush of Union Theological Seminary in New York, in “The Ascetic Impulse in Ancient Christianity,” *Theology Today*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (October, 1993), 421, calls this the “ascetic impulse.” By that he means that Christianity was one of several new religious movements which “view the world in its social, cultural, political and economic manifestations as alien” (Ibid, 420). Christians, then, lived oblivious to worldly concerns.

4. Shiel, *Greek Thought*, 56, boldly proclaims “Romans and Christians soon became synonyms.”

5. Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 134.

the State “aided the growth of the monarchic episcopate.”<sup>1</sup> Shiel is much more outspoken in his derision for this resulting development within the church:

Thus the organization of a proletarian subversive communism gave rise to the most faithful support of despotism and exploitation, a source of new despotism, of new exploitation. The victorious Church congregation was at every point the precise opposite of that congregation which had been founded three centuries before by poor Galilean<sup>2</sup> fishermen and peasants and Jerusalem proletarians.

The shift in the church’s relationship with the political powers of the day did not enamour everyone. As accommodation to the power structure of the Empire followed the support of Constantine for Christianity, a newly energized ascetic movement gained prominence in the faith. Those who saw the spiritual journey of believers to be something outside of the social-political-economic realities of the time began a monastic trend that escalated in both scope and energy during the fourth and fifth centuries. They sought to maintain the clear separation of church and political concerns evident in the earliest church. Others, however, saw an opportunity for social acceptance and therefore economic advantage for the church.

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1. J. B. Skemp, *The Greeks and the Gospel* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Ltd., 1964), 34. Coleman, *Constantine the Great*, 41, refers to a law of 321 allowed civil suits to come before bishops in a form of “episcopal court” parallel to the “secular courts.” Virginia Burrus, “Blurring the Boundaries: A Response to Howard C Kee,” *Theology Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (July, 1992), 239, discovers the movement of the church toward an exclusively male leadership as rooted in the male-dominated political sphere of the Roman Empire.

2. Shiel, *Greek Thought*, 100. Grant, *Augustine to Constantine*, 311, is much more circumspect in his analysis of this shift under Constantine, simply stating “the church came to terms with the world [and] the world finally came to terms with the church.”

Other movements arose in response to the institutionalization of the Christian church. As theological uniformity was stressed in the name of Christianity, alternative movements found themselves labeled as heretical. Gnostics, for the most part, had been dismissed by the time of Constantine. The Arian controversy, which led to the Council of Nicaea, and the rise of Donatists, challenged the unity of the institutional centralization of the Christian church.<sup>1</sup>

By the late Middle Ages, reform movements also shattered the mirage of unity within the church. While these struggles were significant, and eventually led to the formation of various reformed and Protestant groupings, many of the premises instituted by Constantine remained: an accommodation of the church and state,<sup>2</sup> a desire for unity and peace, an interaction with the world by believers.<sup>3</sup> Some of the pomp and ceremony of the liturgy were removed by the most radical reformers (as was an allegiance to the government of the day through military service or taxation), but most mainline protestant groupings sought to receive state sanction for their churches, tax-free status for their buildings, and government help for their programs.<sup>4</sup> In actual fact, many of our

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1. Michael Grant, *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), 176.

2. Capon, *Astonished Heart*, 67, has postulated that the reason that Martin Luther could not side with the peasants in the German peasant revolt of 1524 was because of his deeply-seated view that the church needs to uphold the state (in Capon's words, Luther was immersed in the "Christendom" model).

3. Gilbert Murray, *Stoic, Christian and Humanist*, 31, himself a non-believer, is critical of the Christian's ability to understand the Roman ideal of civic duty at any point.

4. Capon, *Astonished Heart*, 6, proposed that the reformed churches made "mini-Christendoms" all over Europe.

modern health care facilities, schools, and social programs are church-sponsored efforts which became state-sponsored through cooperative sharing. In short, Constantine began a process of acceptance of the church by the authorities, support for the church's programs through the powers of the state itself, special civil (including tax) status for the church's clergy, and unique accommodation for the church's property taxes that have remained to this day. In spite of a variety of struggles based on doctrine, organization, and worship styles, the Christian church has remained in what could be properly called the "Constantinian era" until at least the period of World War II in this century.<sup>1</sup>

The next chapter will examine how that Constantinian era influenced the church's approach to mission.

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1. George T. Armstrong, "Church and State Relations: The Changes Wrought by Constantine," Everett Ferguson, editor, *Church and State in the Early Church* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1993), 269 writes "a pattern of Church and State relations was established at Nicaea and throughout the Constantinian legislation from which we are only now departing." Capon, *Astonished Heart*, develops what he terms the "Christendom" model of the church. That model, he claims, died in the early nineteenth century, to be replaced by the corporate model, which itself is now dying. Others, such as Douglas John Hall of McGill University, speak of the "Constantinian" influence or the "Christendom" model as being more current.



### **III. The World-Wide Missionary Movement up to the Early Twentieth Century: A Time of Expansion**

The Renaissance period, accompanied by the active exploration of the world, provided a new missionary thrust for the church. Suddenly parts of the world were being “discovered” by Europeans which were outside of the influence of this now long-established “Christendom” model. As traders, entrepreneurs, and rulers expanded their territorial holdings through overseas exploration, the church sent missionaries to remote lands to convert the residents to a brand of western Christianity. The faith shared remained couched in the ideological categories of the Enlightenment.<sup>1</sup> By that I mean, among other things, that faith had to be understood rationally to come alive. The languages of the church and Bible (Hebrew, Greek and Latin) must be taught, or at least the philosophical basis of the Semitic and Graeco-Roman world must be studied, in order to make the religious truths of Christianity have meaning today. Religious music was created by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and other classical European composers. The Christian missionary effort, then, gave no credence to the music, language, philosophy, culture, dress, or overall worldview of the nations to which missionaries were sent.

It had been so long since the church had need for such a cross-cultural missionary effort that the methods used were not always helpful. While the Apostle Paul understood the difference between first century rural Palestine and first century

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1. Lesslie Newbigin, the former World Council of Churches administrator and then pastor of a United Reform Congregation in Winson Green, Birmingham, writes in *A Word in Season* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Ltd., 1974), 69, that while the Catholic church put up barriers to the Enlightenment, “The Protestant churches had, in effect, surrendered the public field - politics, education, industry, economics -- to the ideology of the Enlightenment.”

Hellenistic urban centres, and tailored his message accordingly, many modern missionaries up to the beginning of the twentieth century saw themselves as “saviours of the lost” and “converters of the heathen.”<sup>1</sup> By the early twentieth century, such views were only slightly modified when mission was seen as ‘evangelizing people in foreign lands.’

Such language set up a clear understanding of the relationship between a missionary and those to whom the mission was addressed:

- a) doing mission is a far-away experience: missionaries go out to foreign lands to do their work;
- b) missionaries hold unique and special objective knowledge that the simple, uninformed people of the world need;
- c) missionaries are the masters of truth, while those to whom the missionaries traveled are the recipients of the truth they bring;
- d) mission work can only be done by professionally trained, theologically literate people in order that such special knowledge is shared;
- e) an acceptance of the Christian faith often involved a denial of one’s own social and cultural heritage;
- f) all faiths other than the Christian faith were labeled pagan;
- g) all rituals and traditions from these pagan faiths were to be denied entry into any new Christian ritual.

There were some glaring problems in this view of mission. The Christian faith had flourished and grown throughout the early centuries of this era thanks to the ability of missionaries such as the Apostle Paul to adapt the message of a wandering bucolic

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1. David J. Bosch, Professor of Missiology at the University of South Africa, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 1, suggests this vision of “converting the heathen” continued until the 1950’s.

Palestinian Jewish preacher to the needs of an urban Hellenistic pagan world. By the early twentieth century, there seemed to be wide acceptance of a new understanding of mission. The church did not need to adapt its message to the existing culture; the existing culture and social milieu needed to adapt to the Christian faith as known and practiced in western Europe and North America. While Christians often lived on the fringe of the cultural and political power of the first century (indeed, for the most part of the first three centuries), Protestant missionaries from mainline churches in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were part of a general western expansion into the world. Many of those interested in the spread of the gospel teamed up with western economic interests in gaining access to a nation. In such traditions, expansion of the church and western economic interests were inseparable.<sup>1</sup>

Until the dawning of the twentieth century, Christian influence was very much couched in western imagery, language, and perspective. Missions were carried out in foreign lands, or among a nation's indigenous people, with a view to "converting the

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1. That same tension between political and economic goals and the mission of the church was evident in the spread of Christianity within Canada itself. Historian Mary Vipond, "Canadian National Consciousness and the Formation of The United Church of Canada," in Mark G. McGowan and David B. Marshall, editors, *Prophets, Priests, and Prodigals* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1992), 168, argues that Canadian church leaders saw Canadian nationalism as a spiritual matter. "Only when Canadians ceased lauding the country's physical growth and wealth and turned their attention to moral and spiritual factors would a real national spirit develop. Providing the foundation, the necessary social cohesion, was the mission of the churches." All that has been said above applies to so-called mainline Protestant churches, especially those fellowships that formed the basis of The United Church of Canada in 1925 - Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian. Free-church and non-conformist traditions were not at all interested in political and economic power, or of aligning themselves with political forces. They were diligent in keeping their distance from the government wherever possible, including a strict pacifist refusal to bear arms, and a reluctance to pay taxes.

heathen.” The mission of the church was not dependent upon an understanding of, or even a sensitivity to, the indigenous culture.

The sense of a universal Christian mission that was shared by all was lost to the national interests of a variety of denominations. With the rise of the churches spawned by the Protestant Reformation, the identity of church and nation became closely fused. The mission of the church became an extension of the social and cultural assumptions of the land from which the missionary originated. The sense of spiritual revival that infused energy to the Christian movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was replaced by a desire for organizational union. Denominations were the focus of mission, and various denominational groupings sought unity within their own country, and eventually on a world scale.<sup>1</sup>

In the Canadian Methodist tradition, a main partner among the three founding denominations of The United Church of Canada, the nineteenth century was a time when the energy around spiritual renewal and personal evangelism (always a key mark of the Methodist spirit from Wesley onward) was transformed through a growing understanding of social justice, communal concerns, or what later became known as the “social gospel.”<sup>2</sup> Mission, therefore, was based on concern for the needs of others. Understanding what

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1. Henry Renaud Turner Brandreth, Chaplain of St. George’s Church, Paris, details the growth of world-wide denominational groupings as a precursor to the wider world-wide ecumenical movement, in chapter six of Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, editors, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 263-268.

2. Phyllis Airhart of Emmanuel College, Toronto offers details of this movement in her book *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada*. (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992).

those needs were, though, was accomplished through the lens of the western church or western missionary.

The concept of the mission of Christianity being western-based and controlled by dominant economic forces began to be challenged with the constitution of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Following similar events in London, England (1888) and New York (1900), the Edinburgh Conference provided a focus for the world-wide nature of mission. This Conference grew out of the many ecumenical efforts in overseas mission among mainline denominations. It began the journey to the later declaration of the World Council of Churches (a statement popularized in writings and speeches by Lesslie Newbigin) that “mission is a six continent reality.”<sup>1</sup> William Hutchison at Harvard has suggested that the shift from speaking about “Foreign Missions” and the more recent thinking of “World Mission” can be traced to that event in Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> The thinking eventually evolved that mission was not just a foreign activity with professional missionaries going overseas, but an activity of the church that can happen anywhere at any time and involves all believers. It was a crucial step in the development of seeing mission as rooted in the local congregation, not in foreign lands. But the movement to that realization took many decades, and many councils.

As mentioned earlier, The World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 has been identified as a key element in this shift in our understanding of the church’s

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1. That phrase gained common currency at the December, 1963 gathering of the World Missionary Council in Mexico City.

2. William Hutchison at Harvard University, “Americans in World Mission: Revision and Realignment,” in David W. Lotz, ed., *Altered Landscapes: Christianity in America 1935-1985* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 157.

mission. This meeting spoke of mission as a world-wide enterprise. In the words of Commission II - "The Church in the Mission Field" (from that same Edinburgh Conference): "The whole world is the mission field, and there is no Church that is not a Church in the mission field. Some Christian communities are younger and some are older, but that is all the difference."<sup>1</sup> Even so, according to Lesslie Newbigin, in Edinburgh "it was still possible to speak of Christianity and civilization in one breath."<sup>2</sup> Very simply, the *mission* may be a world-wide reality, but the *impetus for the mission* was still a northern hemisphere reality. The *mission* may be everywhere, but the *cultural nuances* of that mission were controlled by the sending churches themselves.<sup>3</sup>

The International Missionary Council was formed in 1921 as a result of the follow up which gained its impetus from the 1910 meeting. A new thrust to make real that sense of the world-wide nature of mission was underway. In that same year, 1921, at a rally held at Massey Hall in Toronto, N. W. Rowell, a prominent politician of the day and an active Methodist layman, proclaimed:

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1. Hutchison, *Altered Landscapes*, 157.

2. Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 133.

3. So powerful was that western control of the church that S. D. Chown, General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Canada, told an American audience in 1919 that he expected Canada to play a leading role in the world, because "we believe ourselves to be strategically well placed for binding the United States and Great Britain together" - in Robert A. Wright of Trent University, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and a Quest for a New International Order 1918-39* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 28. That was all that was needed in 1919 to be a world player -- be a link between Great Britain and the United States. All of the significant power of Christendom was captured between these two nations.

The idea that mission work is propagating a creed or extending an ecclesiastical organization is gone forever. It is seen that it is not merely the preaching of the Gospel, as the phrase was understood in former days. Christian mission work is an effort to make the lives and relationships of men everywhere Christian, and to organize human lives and human society everywhere the world over on the basis of Christ's golden rule of brotherhood and service.<sup>1</sup>

Mission, so understood, revolved around action, social involvement, care of humanity.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of having a faith to share through preaching that is separate from meeting the needs of others is lost.<sup>3</sup> Mission in this vein is controlled not by the body doing the mission, or even by the individual professional missionaries called to this work. Mission, according to Rowell, is linked to the personal, subjective needs of those to whom the mission is addressed. Perceiving this shift is crucial to understanding the ways in which the mission of the church is conducted today.

Such views were not widely accepted immediately. When The United Church of Canada was formed, more traditional ideas on mission were expressed in the church's official documents. The confidence of the United Church in its own understanding of mission was evident in the first worship service of the new church held in Mutual Street

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1. Wright, *A World Mission*, 150.

2. Wright, *A World Mission*, 156, finds the first thrust to work cooperatively with people of other faiths (non-Christians) coming from the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in its concern for the environment and other human issues during the 1920's.

3. Pearl S. Buck (1892-1973), the American-born novelist raised in China by missionary parents, declared in 1932, just two years after her first novel *East Wind: West Wind* was published: "I am weary unto death with this incessant preaching. Let us cease our talk for a time and cut off our talkers, and try to express our religion in terms of living service." William Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 146. Buck was active in the growing ecumenical movement, but not always was seen as an ally to the cause of more evangelical participants.

Arena, Toronto, on June 10, 1925. Each of the affirmations around the church's call to ministry and mission begin: "According to the grace given to our fathers, as witnesses to the Apostolic Gospel and standard bearers of the Church commissioned to make disciples of all nations..."<sup>1</sup> The call to make disciples was centred on the need to share a better understanding of the world, a superior standard of living, a greater insight to the truth, all of which originate from the sending church (in this case, from Canada).

The preamble to the Basis of Union emphasized the hope that the United Church so formed might become a truly national church. The life of The United Church of Canada would be consistent with the goals, aspirations, and values of the nation in which it was located. The church, through its link to the national political realities, would have an influence on society. The nation, thanks to the church's influence and guidance, would be nurtured and blessed. The success of both The United Church of Canada and the nation Canada were mutually dependent upon one another from the start.

To that end Phyllis Airhart has argued that this preamble to the Basis of Union "captured remarkably well the hopes of the founders and the vision which shaped the new church's understanding of its mission."<sup>2</sup> It was a mission based in Canada, immersed in Canadian (and so western) values, and eager to reach out to other nations to help them find the benefits of this western-based vision.

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1. United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the First General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1925), 6.

2. Airhart, Phyllis, "Christianizing the Social Order and Founding Myths - Double Vision?" *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 12, no. 2 (Fall, 1996): 170.



Mission very much was wrapped up in the national realities of the church. While The United Church of Canada in 1925 sought to capture the national needs of Canada, other indigenous churches throughout the world saw themselves rooted in a similar national focus. The way that mission needed to be done was through a sensitivity to the national realities (cultural, social, economic, linguistic as well as religious) of each country. As the Canadian Presbyterian missionary John A. MacVicar put it, “Christianity cannot be passed over from one nation in bulk, ready-made.”<sup>1</sup> That awareness may have been part of the head knowledge available to the missionary enterprise. It was not always followed, though, when missionaries were sent to other lands. Many efforts assumed that one could, indeed, bring a ready-made Christian faith and tradition to other people.

At the first General Council of the new United Church, “Foreign Missions” and “Home Mission” were distinguished.<sup>2</sup> There is no hint of a “World Mission” that would encompass both terms.

The Anglo-centric nature of this new United Church also was very clear. It was no more evident than in a statement issued by the First General Council entitled “To His Gracious Majesty King George V,” which went as follows:

May it please You Gracious Majesty:  
We, the members of The United Church of Canada,  
assembled in its First General Council, in the City of  
Toronto, as one of our first duties, heartily express to  
Your Majesty our happiness at your restoration to health,

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1. Wright, *A World Mission*, 155.

2. United Church of Canada, *ROP First General Council*, 77-88 and 105-113; The Methodist Women’s Missionary Society used the terms “home field” and “foreign field” *ibid.*, 115-116.

our congratulations on your illustrious reign extending over a period of fifteen years, our deep devotion to your person, an unswerving loyalty to the Throne, and our warm attachment to British traditions and Institutions.<sup>1</sup>

More than a statement of British loyalty, it was an affirmation of the outward movement of culture, economy, and mission from a British perspective, for the British Empire also was a key element of the statement. It goes on to read:

We rejoice in the peace which is enjoyed by your subjects in all parts of the Empire, and we pray that this may long endure, and that the Empire may continue to be the divinely chosen instrument in mediating the blessings of peace to the Nations of the world.<sup>2</sup>

No wonder the mission of this young Canadian church, like all other enterprises, was centred in the English-speaking world of the time.<sup>3</sup> The earlier mentioned statement by S. D. Chown in 1919 still rings true in 1925.<sup>4</sup>

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1. United Church of Canada, *ROP First General Council*, 43.

2. *Ibid.*, 43. Similar statements of loyalty to the Monarch can be seen in the Record of Proceedings of the General Council up to the 1980's.

3. James George, *The Mission of Great Britain to the World: A Lecture Delivered at Stratford* (Toronto: Dudley and Burns, Books and Job Printers, 1867), 5, argues for the superiority of the English language in the world, and upholds Great Britain as the purveyor of Christian truth: "Great Britain is on a grand scale, engaged in teaching this noble tongue to the world." He later declares (*ibid.*, 21) the British Empire teaches "the just man is the strong man, and that the just nation will become...the powerful nation."

4. *Supra*, 39, n. 3.

By 1928 at the International Missionary Conference in Jerusalem, one no longer could speak in terms of “Christian and heathen lands” on the world scene.<sup>1</sup> Where once the goal of mission was to go to the heathen and convert them, now there was a realization that all nations contained both believers and non-believers within them.

That is not to suggest, though, that old ideas of the need for the spread of western-style Christianity died quickly in the wake of this new understanding within these worldwide consultations. In *The Record of Proceedings for the Fifth General Council of The United Church of Canada* (held in 1932), the Board of Foreign Missions reported a reduction in the appropriations from the Missionary and Maintenance Fund for Foreign Missions from \$1,004,000 in 1928 to \$681,000 in 1932. As a result, a plea is issued: “We call upon our Church for a recommitment of itself to the task of claiming the mastery of the world for Jesus Christ. He alone offers a solution for the problems of the world’s life.”<sup>2</sup>

Such sentiments remind one of the call in earlier literature to “preach to the heathen” the saving significance of Jesus Christ. No wonder William Hutchison has observed that the new ideas on mission in the 1920’s “contended for nothing less than a Copernican revolution in the way Christians of the West conceived and addressed the world.”<sup>3</sup>

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1. Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 133.

2. The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the Fifth General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1932), 292.

3. Hutchison, *Altered Landscapes*, 150.

Issues around mission became much more complicated in the wake of the Second World War, and the rise of indigenous churches throughout the world. The established flow of missionaries from Europe and North America to Africa, Asia, and South America began to wane, as church growth and vitality within many of these so-called “third world” churches was linked to locally developed church leadership. The changing nature of the World Church and its mission was reflected in the various meetings of The International Missionary Council (in Tambaram 1938, in Whitby, Ontario 1947, in Willingen 1952, and in Ghana 1957-58). The 1947 Conference in Whitby was called specifically “to clarify the missionary obligation of the Church,” though the debate around what would be an appropriate missionary message arising from the meetings was deadlocked, and no final report was accepted and issued.<sup>1</sup> The nature of the church’s mission clearly was (and needed to be) changing. The problem was how to capture that change, and how to be pro-active in planning for the future of the church’s mission.

In the midst of these meetings, The United Church of Canada established a significant *Commission on Church, Nation, and World Order*. Formed in 1940, it was expanded in 1942 to include “all sections and interests of the church.”<sup>2</sup> This commission was set

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1. Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 135.

2. *Report of the Commission on Church, Nation and World Order to the Eleventh General Council of The United Church of Canada* (Toronto: The Board of Evangelism and Social Service, 1944), 3. It is interesting to note that only three women were on the Commission - Miss Ethel Chapman, Miss Gertrude Rutherford, and Mrs. J. G. Endicott. More amazing to the modern reader is the fact only two women were among the one hundred and twenty-one people listed on eleven regional consultation groups. The United Church for many years has sought a careful balance among members on committees between men and women, lay people and order of ministry.

up under an understanding of the church, mission, and culture which still held on to former notions. The preamble begins:

Since any civilization is in large measure the product of its prevailing religious inheritance...it is incumbent upon the Church to restate the the basic principles of a truly Christian civilization. Thus, it can offer guidance to the nation and to the world.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the report, we are reminded of the link between civilization (or culture) and religion.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the report speaks about the growing gulf between the leadership of the church and its membership on social and economic issues.<sup>3</sup> Solutions to deal with that gulf, as they have remained to the present time, alternate between more education, information, and support of local congregations (including the order of ministry personnel in each congregation),<sup>4</sup> and more consistent and careful oversight of churches

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1. Ibid., 6.

2. For example, *ibid.*, 11: "Great civilizations or cultures are in large measure the creation of their prevailing religious inheritance." Later in recommendation #156, *ibid.*, 36: "The basic responsibility of the Church now and in the days to come is to lead the world to God through Christ."

3. Item #146, *ibid.*, 34: "we must face the fact of an underlying hostility that has arisen within the church towards the pronouncements of Church Courts in the economic and social field."

4. For example, on the efforts around world missions, as discussed in Item #141, *Commission on Church, Nation and World Order*, 33: "The foreign missionary enterprise is still the hallmark of a vital Christianity, but the church is called upon to rethink its methods of operation for the post-war period." and in Item #144, *ibid.*, 34: "Our members, when adequately informed of the importance and greatness of our undertakings, will respond."

(which implies greater accountability by congregations and pastoral charges to the presbytery).<sup>1</sup> Ultimately both methods of congregational accountability to the denomination as a whole will fail unless there is a spirit of cooperation among the pastoral charges and the pastoral charge ministers themselves. This report, without dealing with issues of mission directly, warns of a growing gulf in perception of the role and purpose of the church between the national and regional leadership of the church on one side, and the local communities of faith on the other side. A shift of priority within The United Church of Canada toward congregational concerns from a denominationally-based mission focus is widely assumed within the higher courts of the church today. That shift already was being felt in the 1940's, as these recommendations from the *Commission on Church, Nation and World Order* show. [Later in this thesis, results from interviews with stewardship personnel, and the results from the questionnaire distributed to all pastoral charges of The United Church of Canada, will affirm that shift to local, congregational concerns within pastoral charges of The United Church of Canada, and how those concerns shape where and how mission efforts are undertaken today.]

By 1961 on the world scene, the International Missionary Council was integrated into the World Council of Churches, leading to the formation of the

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1. Items #148-#150 all deal with the need for responsible presbytery oversight of congregations. If not done well, "our church will weaken as a great national body and become increasingly an association of fairly independent congregations." (ibid., 35.) The Commission recognized the decentralized movement of The United Church of Canada, and the power of the congregation in determining the agenda of the church, long before this shift became obvious to others.

Division of World Mission and Evangelism within the World Council of Churches.<sup>1</sup>

That act, claims one author, showed that mission was “the heart of the church.”<sup>2</sup> That affirmation of the important role of mission for the church came at a time when the very nature of the church’s mission was coming into a new focus. The notion of the “mission to six continents” was gaining popularity. Lesslie Newbigin, a prominent proponent of that concept, and one who had a major influence on *The Commission on World Mission* established by The United Church of Canada, used his position within the World Council of Churches to encourage a new view on mission. He saw the task of sharing the gospel as an enterprise separate from the cultural trappings in which the western world often presented the gospel. The way in which the gospel message is presented must be sensitive to the different world views that do exist.<sup>3</sup> As one author has put it, the church must call people to an encounter “between the cultural understandings and values by which they live and the challenging impact of the gospel’s announcements about the

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1. Could this be the precursor step to the formation of the Division of World Outreach within The United Church of Canada? *The Report of the Commission on World Mission of the United Church* did refer to this move as an important step which “underscored the place of mission in the whole life of the World Council of Churches...” *ROP 22nd General Council (1966)*, 327.

2. Johannes van der Ven, Professor of Practical Theology at Divinity School of Nijmegen University in the Netherlands, *Ecclesiology in Context* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 201

3. Cf. Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 123: “Preaching the gospel is seen as arrogance because it is imposing my beliefs on others. It is not arrogance to tell others of what we believe; it is arrogance to try to persuade others of what we believe. Knowledge is one thing; belief is another.”

reign of God.” This goes some distance from the remarks of the fictional missionary pastor in *The Foreigner*, who in summation saw his role “to do anything to make them [i.e. children] good Christians and good Canadians, which is the same thing.”<sup>2</sup>

While the frontier area of Canada may seem a long way from the Constantinian influence of the Roman Empire, the Protestant church in Canada (much like Protestant churches which grew up on a national basis from the sixteenth century on) maintained a sense of the political power of the church, albeit on a national scale, rather than an Empire-wide scale, as in the era of Constantine. A sense of “Christendom” being in control of the social, economic, and political agenda (as well as the religious agenda) of a country was maintained.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, The United Church of Canada established a *Commission on World Mission*. This Commission, established in 1962, began its work in 1963, and its final report was tabled in 1966. The purpose of this commission was to make “an independent

1 Hunsberger, George R. “Acquiring the Posture of a Missionary Church,” George Hunsberger and Craig van Gelder, editors, *The Church Between Gospel and Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 289.

2. Phyllis Airhart, “Ordering a New Nation and Reordering Protestantism,” George Rawlyk, editor, *The Canadian Protestant Experience 1760-1990* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 129.

3. Robert Farrar Capon, *The Astonished Heart* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Ltd., 1996), 6, has argued that the reformed churches made “mini-Christendoms” all over Europe, and that sense of the national power of church in a state setting continued in the Canadian scene, I would suggest. The error of this way as a modern thrust is detailed in Douglas John Hall, *The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Ltd., 1988), 8, where he remarks “for Christians to go into the world of today in the spirit of conquering it for Christ is to become part of the world’s problem, not its solution.”



and fundamental study of how The United Church of Canada can best share in the world mission of the Church.”<sup>1</sup>

It was a turbulent time within the church. The fluidity of the church landscape at this period is underlined when one realizes that this is the period of the Death-of-God theology.<sup>2</sup> A shift was underway in the self-understanding of North American churches. The early rumblings of the secularization of the church was first detailed in a linguistic-analysis study by Paul Van Buren of Temple University,<sup>3</sup> and then given further focus in Harvard Theologian Harvey Cox’s work entitled *The Secular City*.<sup>4</sup> There was a growing sense that urbanization and secularization of the world was part of the transformation

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1. United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the Twenty-First General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1964), 283, quoting from the original mandate).

2. This movement is associated with the American theologians Thomas Altizer of Emory University and William Hamilton of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in particular, best known for their collection of essays entitled *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1966), but this new theology received its label from a seminal work by Gabriel Vahanian of Syracuse University, *The Death of God: The Culture of Our Post-Christian Era* (New York: George Braziller, 1957), where he developed a historical context for the death of God as a cultural and literary icon of our society. Further development of this argument as it applied to modern technological society can be found in his later work, *God and Utopia: The Church in a Technological Civilization* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977). These theologians, among others, helped to point to the diminishing influence of talk about God (i.e. theology) on the socio-cultural understandings of the day.

3. Paul Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963);

4. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965) and Daniel Callahan, editor, *The Secular City Debate* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966).

necessary to make the meaning of the gospel come alive.<sup>1</sup> People could be saved through a change in social organization. The kingdom of God could be heralded by a new world order, centred on the movement to the city. The urbanization taking place meant more people would be in a smaller space, and so the power of association, organization, joint planning and visioning would allow for a new impetus to the gospel in our time.<sup>2</sup> Governments and political structures could carry the message of the church into their policies, programs and activities.<sup>3</sup> So strong was this viewpoint that Samuel Escobar, a Peruvian Evangelical from the International Federation of Evangelical Students, remarked at the Lausanne Meeting of Evangelicals in 1974 that spirituality, without involvement in social, economic, and political concerns, “is mere religiosity.”<sup>4</sup>

The United Church, as part of the North American reality, was not immune to this thrust. This current of new thinking led to such seminal works as Harvey Cox’s

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1. Such an approach is diametrically opposed to the views of the American Quaker, Rufus Jones, who presented a paper to the 1928 International Missionary Conference in Jerusalem where he argued “the greatest rival to Christianity today” is “a world-wide secular way of life and interpretation of the nature of things.” Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 101.

2. Lesslie Newbigin has remarked on the secular city concept: “secularization was seen as the fruit of the gospel, and the advance of Western secular ideas...was hailed as the contemporary form of the Christian mission.” (*A Word in Season*, p. 139)

3. Hutchison, *Altered Landscapes*, 159 - mission of 1950’s and 1960’s “were inclined to view world mission as an active Christian presence throughout the world, and to define conversion less in individual terms than as the radical remaking of social structures.”

4. Hutchison, *Altered Landscapes*, 16.

*The Secular City* and Colin Williams' *Faith in a Secular Age*<sup>1</sup> in the British context. No doubt that same ferment also lay behind the need to form *The Commission on the Church on the Urban Frontier*. That Commission lifted up the need for social involvement by the church which honoured the views of the day: "If the church is to perform its task effectively today, it must become involved in the social as well as the personal aspects of urban life."<sup>2</sup>

The optimism of the new urban reality also is clearly within the report: "We believe that in the modern, urban, secular world God provides not fewer but more possibilities than before for [us] to achieve together a Christ like way of life."<sup>3</sup> So strong was this viewpoint that the recommendations all focused on an updating of the life, work, and witness of the church. These recommendations were:

- a) find ways to express the truth of the Gospel in language which is both contemporary and meaningful;
- b) urge ministers to be intellectually honest about presenting the findings of biblical and theological scholarship to their congregations in a positive way;
- c) show the relevance of the Gospel to a fast moving technological society;
- d) deepen its concern in areas of social tension;
- e) make the Sacraments relevant to present day culture."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Colin Williams, *Faith in a Secular Age* (London: Fontana Books, 1966)

2. United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the Twenty-Second General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1966), 193.

3. Ibid.

4. United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the Twenty-Second General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1966), 193.

All recommendations rested on the need to be modern, current, relevant.<sup>1</sup> Such a need to re-focus radically the work of the church at large set the tone for a new understanding of mission for the church in the Commission on World Mission. The need for a radical transformation of the church's work, witness, and ministry was evident on all fronts. It went beyond urbanization, secularization, and mission. As this Commission on World Mission met, The United Church of Canada was in the midst of the development of a new Sunday School curriculum,<sup>2</sup> a debate was raging over the recognition of "Red China" within the church, and new thrusts in worship were being introduced.<sup>3</sup> All of these trends had implications one for the other. Now, more

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1. The desire to find relevance for the church was brewing in Canada on other fronts. Most notable in the debate was the book by the Canadian author Pierre Berton written for the Anglican Church of Canada, *The Comfortable Pew: A Critical Look at the Church in the New Age* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), esp. 129: "the church has become fossilized [which] has prevented it from moving with the world."

2. The Rev. Dr. Peter Gordon White, a former Secretary of Theology and Faith for The United Church of Canada, commenting on the controversy in the United Church over the current Moderator's statements on the divinity of Jesus in the fall of 1997, pointed out that such comments are far from unique in the history of the church. He remembered being called before almost an inquest in 1964 at the General Council in Newfoundland to defend new thrusts in the Sunday School curriculum which he had coordinated and which then were before the church (interview by author, 8 December 1997). The Rev. Dr. Bruce McLeod, a Commission member and then Minister of Westdale United Church in Hamilton, missed the April, 1964 meeting of the Commission due to writing commitments he had around the New Curriculum (United Church Archives 82.124c, Box 1, file 1, minutes of April 14-15, 1964).

3. *The Commission on the Church on the Urban Frontier* urged new ways to be found to communicate the gospel, a concept ministers were reluctant to embrace for fear they would upset their congregations. "In the meantime the Gospel cannot exercise its influence on the contemporary scene." [United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-First General Council (1964)*, 279.]

than ever, social influences on the church carried much more weight than the church's influence on the society at large.<sup>1</sup>

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1. In a background paper to the work of the Commission on World Mission, Harvard Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith wrote: "It is not only mission that is in transition. Rather the whole religious history of mankind in the twentieth century is entering a new phase." (Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Background paper III "Revolutionary Changes in the Twentieth Century Challenging Conventional Approaches to Missions," 1, Box 1, file 10 of United Church Archives, 82.124c). The Rev. Dr. Bruce McLeod, a Commission member and later Moderator of The United Church of Canada, interview by author 7 April 1998, recollected a Saturday morning discussion in the Commission where Dr. Smith was at one end of the table, and Dr. Newbigin at the other, discussing the missionary imperative. Dr. Smith argued for more interfaith thrust in missions, and a redefinition of the mission of the church away from simply conversion and baptism. Dr. Newbigin would be the defender of a more conservative position. Even Newbigin, though, in writings shortly after the period of the Commission, took a more open stance on the mission imperative of the church. He remarked that the Uppsala Conference of 1968 defined mission as humanization, and designated local congregations as mission fields - a new thrust on both accounts (*A Word in Season*, p. 135). He later wrote that "nothing is more central to the world mission of the Church than the renewal of the life of local congregations" (*ibid.*, 147). Both of these notions are crucial to putting into perspective the thrust of the United Church's Commission on World Mission.

#### **IV. The Contribution of The United Church of Canada's Commission on World Mission to the Current View of Mission within the Church**

With the evolving view of mission evident in the series of International Missionary Council meetings through the twentieth century, and with the increased role of the ecumenical movement, culminating in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 (just four years after the Canadian Council of Churches was formed in this country), leaders of The United Church of Canada realized that they could not conduct the church's missionary work as if it were "business as usual." It was time to take stock of the direction that the church should go in its stewardship of the gospel and in its management of the mission of the church to the world.

At its meeting in 1962, the General Council of The United Church of Canada established a Commission on World Mission to look at the broad sweep of issues around the church's mission. Strong leadership was needed, and the final committee represented well-known church leaders, academics, theological professors, social activists, and church administrators. Most had played a major role in one or more other commissions and committees of the church in the past decade.

The membership of *The Commission on World Mission*, as reported in the *Record of Proceedings of the Twenty-Second General Council (1966)*, is as follows:

Hon. Donald M. Fleming, Chairperson, Toronto  
 Professor C. Douglas Jay, Secretary, Toronto  
 Mrs. Horace Croome, Regina  
 Rev. Dr. Ross Flemington, Port Elgin, New Brunswick  
 Dr. H. C. Grant, Toronto  
 Professor John Webster Grant, Toronto  
 Dr. Irwin Hilliard, Toronto

Dr. Katharine Hockin, Toronto  
 Rev. Dr. T. E. Floyd Honey, New York  
 Rev. Dr. Ernest E. Long, Toronto  
 Rev. Dr. N. Bruce McLeod, Hamilton  
 Rev. Dr. A. B. B. Moore, Toronto  
 Rev. George Morrison, Toronto  
 Professor N. R. Richards, Guelph  
 Mrs. Cyril Shoemaker, Vancouver  
 Mr. William W. Small, Toronto  
 Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Cambridge  
 Dr. Ruth Taylor, Toronto  
 Rev. Dr. W. S. Taylor, Vancouver  
 Rev. Roy E. Webster.

Everyone except Roy Webster appeared in the list of members of the 1964 interim report to the Council. Three other original members of the Commission, listed in the 1964 report, did not maintain an affiliation with the Commission, and so their names are not on the final report: Dr. William Feasby, Mr. Donald Simpson, and Rev. George Goth.<sup>1</sup>

Some time was spent assembling the members of this Commission. One of the difficulties faced was procuring a chairman for the work. Eventually, the Hon. Donald Fleming of Toronto, a member of Bloor St. United Church, a long-time Sunday School teacher, and a former Minister of Finance and Minister of External Affairs in the John Diefenbaker federal government, accepted this role. This position as Chair of the Commission on World Mission was the first major community responsibility (of a non-

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1. I have consulted Professor John Webster Grant, formerly of Emmanuel College (interview by author, 14 April 1998), and the Rev. Dr. Bruce McLeod (interview by author, 7 April 1998) from this commission, and neither remembers the membership of these three gentlemen, much less any role that they might have played in the early deliberations. The Rev. Barry Brooks, a staff resource to the Commission, believes George Goth, then Minister of Metropolitan United Church in London, Ontario, was appointed for his interest in world travel, but was bored by the long meetings and so resigned after attending just once (interview by author, 7 January 1998.)

professional nature) that Fleming had accepted after leaving politics earlier in 1963. In his letter of acceptance on September 30, 1963, he writes: “It is not a moment too soon to be undertaking an exhaustive study of the world task of the Church in the light of changing conditions and methods and concepts the world over.”<sup>1</sup>

The immensity of the task was reflected in the fact so prominent a Canadian would accept this role as chairman of the Commission. The importance of the project to the Church was clear by the profile of those who were approached to serve.

Donald Fleming took the role very seriously. He arrived at the first meeting with a blueprint as to how he saw the process being conducted for this study. While not prejudging the outcome of the deliberations, Fleming set out a time frame by which to accomplish this immense task. From the modern perspective, this was a commission with a top-down leadership style. In commenting on this approach, The Rev. Dr. Bruce McLeod recalls that Fleming was one of the most fair minded and gracious chairpersons he had ever worked under in such a major Commission. “He had a thoroughness of approach to the meetings which would allow all to speak their mind at length, even going to 1:00 a.m. at times. We would leave those meetings absolutely exhausted, but Donald Fleming never lost his focus or his ability to incorporate the input of everyone.”<sup>2</sup>

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1. Donald Fleming, *Letter of acceptance as Chairman of Commission on World Mission*, Toronto, September 30, 1963 - United Church Archives 82.124c, Box 1, file 4).

2. The Rev. Dr. Bruce McLeod, interview by author, 7 April 1998. Douglas Jay, then Professor at Emmanuel College and Secretary of the Commission, remembers Fleming’s leadership as like that of a chairperson of a Royal Commission, and Fleming saw Jay’s role as equal to that of a senior civil servant assigned to such a Commission, keeping everything in order (Douglas Jay, interview by author, 7 October, 1998).



As the Commission began its work, it initially saw the issue as one of church organization and communication. President A.B.B. Moore of Victoria University, quoted in the minutes of the meeting held Saturday, November 9th, 1963, commented that two problems faced them:

First, the underlying problem for The United Church of Canada in relation to other churches, and secondly, the specific practical problems such as the relation between the Committee on Overseas Relief and the Board of World Mission. <sup>1</sup>

The Commission very quickly moved into much broader, more philosophic issues of mission and the church. That movement no doubt was helped by a report given on the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches held in Mexico City in December, 1963 entitled "Witness." An unpacking of the work of that Commission during meetings of the Commission on World Mission held in April, 1964 set the tone for the next two years of deliberations:

As the implications of the theme of "Witness" were examined, it became apparent that it includes not only the missionary obligation of the churches for people in distant lands, but it includes the direct responsibility of individual Christians and local congregations for nearby neighbours as well. <sup>2</sup>

The themes of mission being both "there" and "here,"<sup>3</sup> both "the Church" and "the

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1. U. C. Archives, 82.124c, Box 1, file 1, Nov. 9, 1963 minutes, p. 10.

2. Ibid., April 3, 1964 minutes, p. 8

3. A pamphlet in the file with the Commission minutes (U.C. Archives 82-124c, box 1, file 1) entitled *Planning Education for Mission in the Congregation* (undated) speaks about the need for both overseas ministries and missions as well as "Our homeland ministries to frontier communities, in Inner City areas, and through numerous specialized institutions and services." The concept of home missions are linked to special need areas, and not necessarily one's own front step. The concept of mission being in every neighbourhood develops later.

individual,”<sup>1</sup> both “word” and “action” are set in this early part of the Commission’s deliberations.

Those seemingly polar opposites in understanding the mission of the church frame the deliberations of the next two years. They remain the major issues behind a series of background reports written for the Commission. The traditional linear view of church history as a phenomenon handed down directly from Graeco-Roman times to the Reformation era to the modern church was challenged. The Commission understood that the way in which the mission of the church was conveyed and discussed needed to be viewed from a much wider context of world history.<sup>2</sup> In the face of such diverse views of the western church’s role in mission in much of the world, Katharine Hockin (a long-term, and highly respected, church missionary and mission educator) was asked to write a section on “How to be a missionary with a guilty conscience.” The Commission had come to a place where they saw that the mission of the church needed to be done with two principles in mind:

- a) a sense of cooperation with other denominations, and
- b) a sensitivity to the religious-cultural mores of the recipient country.

It was significant to the Commission that Lesslie Newbigin spoke to the meeting on February 13, 1965. Then the General Secretary of the Division of World Mission and

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1. The role of the individual in mission also is highlighted: “*Mission* is not something to be conveniently delegated to other people. It is a personal obligation...”

2. U. C. Archives, 82.124, box 1, file 1, Feb. 12-13, 1965 minutes.

Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, Newbigin stressed the six continent approach to mission with such phrases as:

“every country is now a mission field;”

“mission is an activity of the whole church as such;”

“not talking about Christianization in terms of extending the power and influence of Christian civilization” for “Christians are a minority in the world.”<sup>1</sup>

After a full discussion of these issues raised by Newbigin, and responded to by the Commission itself, the following wording was adopted on the scope of the church’s mission: “We recommend that The United Church of Canada broaden its awareness of mission; God’s mission embraces every sector and aspect of human life; it is mission to six continents.”<sup>2</sup>

The Report of the Board of Overseas Mission to the General Council of 1966 included a paper “Toward a More Flexible Approach to World Mission.” That report also had been submitted to the Commission on World Mission. It stated, in part: “In the rapidly changing situation today it is imperative that the United Church should have the greatest possible flexibility in its world mission enterprise.”<sup>3</sup> That document further stated that: “More and more we should think of our task, not as working in certain geographical areas which are regarded as ‘our fields’ but as participating in the

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1. United Church Archives, 82.124, box 1, file 1, Feb. 12-13, 1965 meeting, p. 7.

2. United Church Archives, 82.124, box 1, file 1, Jan. 28, 1966 minutes, p. 3.

3. United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-Second General Council (1966)*, 401.

one mission of the Church throughout the world in partnership with other Churches.”<sup>1</sup>

That statement picks up on the work of the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism held in Mexico City in 1963 by delineating the shift to a world-wide mission: “In an era of ecumenical mission into which we have moved today it is recognized that the whole world has become our mission field and the base for the Christian mission has become world-wide.”<sup>2</sup> This document offers the first musings on what has become known as “Mutuality in Mission,” for the suggestion is made that the church in Canada must begin to consider receiving missionaries as well as sending them.<sup>3</sup>

The report of the Commission finds its roots in the biblical witness starting with Genesis. The movement of God’s people is a symbol for the movement of the message of God to other people.

Jesus’ own mission in the New Testament had the purpose “to inform the nation,

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1. United Church, *ROP 22nd General Council*, 401. The significance of such a statement is underlined by the fact Margaret E. Guider, a professor at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, in “Transforming Missionaries: Implications of the Ecumenical Paradigm,” in Saayman and Kritzing, *Missions in Bold Humility*, 153, refers to the “emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm” as the key understanding “for Christian mission in the Twenty-First Century.”

2. United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-Second General Council*, 402.

3. Ibid. Bruce McLeod, interview by author, 7 April 1998, suggests that the movement of the Division of World Outreach in the mid-1970’s onward to have part of its work in Canada, as well as abroad, was a direct result of this new understanding in mission. Projects which allowed for partner churches to send missionaries to Canada, as well as new internships in the late 1970’s to early 1980’s to allow students seeking ordination in Canada to have overseas experience, resulted from this new direction.

restore its hope, and revive its sense of election to mission.”<sup>1</sup>

Two principles are held up as the basis for the life of the church today:

“First, the gospel must be offered to all men, with no national, cultural, or religious strings attached; second, the one gospel demands one mission admitting to one church, with no segregated Christians.”<sup>2</sup>

A sense of the unity of the mission of the church was severely tested in the heyday of the Christian mission of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many denominations supported missionary enterprises on their own (though cooperation in the field among missionaries from various denominations did exist). The concept of “church missions” usurped the idea of the one Christian “mission.” Denominationally-based decisions set the mission agenda. Local congregations of any given denomination were expected to support that denomination’s mission efforts. Few questioned the need to do so. In a broader way, western cultural, social, and political interests controlled the work of the missionaries as much as the gospel of Christ.<sup>3</sup> This style of missionary enterprise led to increased dependence on the country of origin for the mission.<sup>4</sup>

A sense of western dominance and dependency led to an arrogant approach by western missionaries and governors. The Commission does not duck that issue:

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1. United Church, *ROP Twenty-Second General Council*, 306.

2. *Ibid.*, 307.

3. *Ibid.*, 312; also, Bernard J. Cooke, “The Church: Catholic and Ecumenical,” *Theology Today*, 36, no. 3 (October, 1979): 354, “missionary evangelization was basically a transplanting of Latin Christianity that accompanied European civilization.”

4. United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-Second General Council*, 313.

“The arrogance of the West is profoundly resented throughout the world: most Westerners have little inkling of how arrogant we have been and in many ways still are, and of how profound at times is the resentment.”<sup>1</sup> The sensitivity of the Commission is all the more obvious when one realizes that it was many years after the Commission reported, at the 1973 World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in Bangkok, that General Simatoupong of Indonesia was overheard to identify the number one question of mission to be: “Can the West be Converted?”<sup>2</sup>

The church must be transformed to do mission today.<sup>3</sup> That message clearly underlies many of the points in the Commission on World Mission. Four principles established early in the document are as follows:

- “The church ought to be involved in what is happening.”
- “The mission with which the church is entrusted is a mission to all men, of all countries, races and tongues. It is a mission to six continents, because it is a mission from God to men, not a mission from Christian men to non-Christian men.”

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1. United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-Second General Council*, 325.

2. Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 136. The Division of World Outreach Report of the United Church, *Record of Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1977), 351, claimed mission still was very much in one direction: “From the West to the rest.”

3. That message has become the key to many new writings on congregational mission and the church. For example, it forms the basis of the whole approach in the South African David Bosch’s book *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991). Loren Mead of the Alban Institute in Washington D.C. also talks about transformation in *The Once and Future Church* (Washington: The Alban Institute, 1991). His follow up book is much more explicit on this theme: *Transforming Congregations for the Future* (Washington: The Alban Institute, 1994).

- “The mission of the church is to penetrate, transform, and redeem.”
- “The church must recognize that its mission is to witness in a religiously plural world.”<sup>1</sup>

In such a context, the mission no longer is the bastion of theologically-trained, set-apart missionaries. All of God’s people have a say in, and participation in, the mission of Christ to the world. “The whole church is a missionary community and a community of missionaries . . . . Without the effective participation of the laity, the Church cannot properly exercise its mission.”<sup>2</sup>

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1. United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-Second General Council*, 342. The Division of World Outreach, *ROP Twenty-Seventh General Council* (1977), 351, quoted the noteworthy Asian Theologian Kosuke Koyama that we need to hold up a “crucified mind,” not a “crusading mind” in our mission endeavours. Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 47 proclaim “The overriding political task of the church is to be a community of the cross.”

2. United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-Second General Council*, 349; cf. *Commission on the Church on the Urban Frontier*, which reported to the Twenty-First General Council in 1964 – this commission also emphasized the need to mobilize the laity with a global perspective: “There is a tendency in some churches to be more concerned with their own life than with the life of the world. In such a case we become ingrown and lose our concern for the outsider, and for the whole of life.” (United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-First General Council*, 277.) Even in the present, mission and service to others remain essential to being a vital church. Cf. the American church consultant Herb Miller, *The Vital Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), esp. chapter X “From Serve-Us to Service.” Robert Wuthnow, *The Crisis in the Churches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 112 derides the churches’ penchant for “ministering to the economic needs of their middle-class members.” William Brackney of McMaster Divinity College in *Christian Voluntarism: Theology and Praxis* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 51, credits the Protestant Reformation as being the source of the “modern voluntary impulse” by showing there was “more than one approach to being the church.”

Such a recommendation naturally would lead one to assume that the church should have one mission, and so one mission department or board. Why not unify “Overseas Missions” and “Home Missions” in the structure of The United Church of Canada to one Board (Division) of World Mission? The minutes of October 14-15, 1965 of the Commission on World Mission address this issue:

The opinion was expressed that the Home Mission enterprise is so diverse that it needs to be sorted out before there could be any such coordination, and that at any rate at this juncture it would be premature to recommend change, though the relationship should be reviewed.<sup>1</sup>

The end result of the deliberations and subsequent restructuring of the church was to establish a Division of World Outreach and a Division of Mission in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

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1. U. C. Archives, 82,124c. box 1, file 1, minutes Oct. 14-15, 1965, p. 9

2. As Bruce McLeod recalls, interview by author, 7 April 1998, the structure of what became known as the Division of Mission in Canada was just too unwieldy to unify it with the eventual Division of World Outreach. The *Record of Proceedings of the 24th General Council of 1971* bears that out. An original configuration of a Division of Congregational Life and Work and Division of Church and Society led to the creation of the Division of Mission in Canada, for both social outreach and education needed to be linked to have life within the local congregation. In other words, ‘nurture and outreach,’ ‘faith and action,’ ‘life and work,’ ‘mission and service’ belong together (United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the Twenty Fourth General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1971), 204.



**What are the Influences on Mission Thinking and Practice  
Arising from this Commission?**

The Commission on World Mission set in motion a whole new way of thinking about the mission of the church. This group encouraged the church to see mission as a God-centred operation, and not a means by which western culture could be exported and established in other countries. The Commission also urged those responsible for the mission of the church to clearly distinguish what are elements of the gospel, and what are elements of western culture that are part of the way the gospel has been understood in a European-North American context, but not necessarily elements which define the gospel itself. The need for a social understanding of the implications of the gospel were emphasized, and so a challenge was issued to the common perspective that personal salvation is the goal of evangelism.

Most significantly, the Commission set the mission of the church at the front and centre of the church's agenda.<sup>1</sup> That focus is reflected in many subsequent reports of the church. Such a focus also is repeated in many books on the future of the church today. *The Commission on World Mission* anticipated a great deal of recent viewpoints on the church and its mission.

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1. United Church of Canada, *ROP Twenty-Second General Council*, 421: "The church can be the church in the world only as it engages effectively in mission. This conviction is fundamental to the thinking and conclusions of this report." These words come verbatim from a letter submitted to the Commission by Roy Webster, a former Missionary and Commission member, on December 10, 1965 (U. C. Archives, 82,124c, box 1, file 7), offering changes to the introduction of the report. Bruce McLeod remembers Webster as an important member of the Commission who offered balance to the more radical views of Professor Smith of Harvard (interview by author, 7 April, 1998).

This Commission also embodied a shift in philosophy. Where mission in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could be termed “from the West to the rest,” the underlying view of the Commission on World Mission was this is “God’s mission in which all of us participate.” That was more than a stated hypothesis or underlying viewpoint. The final report of the Commission was circulated to twenty ecumenical partners around the world for their response before it was printed.<sup>1</sup> There was a clear sense of sharing the good news with others, not an attitude of “we have it; they don’t.”

The establishment of an Interfaith Dialogue Staff person reflected this new view of mission. If we must have a global perspective, and see the world as others see it, then we must be sensitive to the alternative religious views in the world.<sup>2</sup> Christianity no longer could boast that it had all the answers. Members of the faith now had to be open to listen to others. This new inclusive approach to the religious traditions of others was a direct result of the Commission’s work.<sup>3</sup> It was an end to the Christian triumphalism against

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1. As shared by Douglas Jay, interview by author, 7 October 1998.

2. Diogenes Allen of Princeton Theological Seminary, *Christian Belief in a Postmodern World* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989) entitles his part III of this book “Christianity and Other Faiths.” Also George Rupp, *Commitment and Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), esp. chapter 3: “Christology in the Context of Pluralism,” and chapter 4: “Theology and Comparative History of Religions.”

3. Bruce McLeod remembers the action to establish an Interfaith Dialogue Staff person (the individual eventually appointed was James Seunarine) arose from the implementation committee that followed the report of the Commission on World Mission (Bruce McLeod, interview by author, 7 April, 1998). Also Douglas Jay, “Missiological Implications of Christianizing the Social Order with Special reference to The United Church of Canada,” *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 12, no. 2 (Fall, 1996): 278. In a personal reflection (interview by author, October 7, 1998), Professor Jay credits Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith as the one who pushed the hardest on the interfaith issue. In Jay’s words, “it was the most controversial recommendation, even today.”

which Douglas John Hall and others have railed.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission's report resulted in a change of nomenclature in the Board of World Mission to the Division of World Outreach. There was a great deal of passion around the desire to maintain the word "Mission" in the title (and so a sense of loss in the word being removed),<sup>2</sup> but in the end "mission" had too many overtones of control and cultural dominance to be preserved. If partnership was to be lived, and not simply mouthed, then a new way of being had to arise. That new reality resulted in new nomenclature to express the church's activities.<sup>3</sup>

The nature of mission in the local setting must change, as well. Churches were beginning to see themselves in terms of their survival as an institution, rather than a body

1. Jay, "Missiological Implications," 275. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, "Is the Postmodernist Always a Postfoundationalist?" *Theology Today* 50, no. 3 (October, 1993): 375, sees pluralism as a sign of the postmodernist perspective, which also includes a "flight from authority" (*Ibid.*, 373).

2. Douglas Jay, interview by author, 7 October 1998.

3. This report probably started a lengthy re-assessment of the term "missionary," resulting in a motion at the Thirty-Second General Council in Victoria British Columbia which read: "Whereas our Ecumenical Guests from the two-thirds world have expressed their discomfort with the term "missionary" and the colonial connotations it often infers, and Whereas we would like to have a term that would more adequately reflects [sic.] the nature of our relationship with partner churches around the world, Therefore be it resolved that this 32st [sic.] General Council of The United Church of Canada urge the Division of World Outreach in light of new understanding of partnership in mission, to continue to seek a more appropriate term for our partners in mission than the term "missionary"." That term eventually became "overseas personnel" in 1990, accepted without debate at the General Council. (ROP 33rd General Council, 1990), 160. Rhea Whitehead, the current General Secretary of the Division of World Outreach of The United Church of Canada, already is searching for the next generation term after "partners," and suggests the word "companions" would better express the relationship (as told to John Brown, "International Relations in Mission: A Study Project" *International Review of Mission* Vol. 86, No. 342 (July, 1997), 235.

with an established set of mission goals. Thomas Gillespie, a Presbyterian New Testament scholar who later became President of Princeton Theological Seminary, in offering his vision on the needed renewal of the church in the late 1970's, picked up on themes addressed by the Commission on World Mission. Part of the new work needed in the church will be seen "as a *beginning again* of the mission that has been entrusted to believers from the very beginning."<sup>1</sup>

In the report of *The New Church Development Research Project* at the 27th General Council of 1977, it was clearly stated: "It is safe to say that most congregations operate out of a combination of mission and survival goals."<sup>2</sup> The very way in which a congregation lives and serves is determined by which side of that combination is predominant in a given faith community. Earlier the Board of World Mission expressed its deep concern "over the apparent shallow, outmoded, and indefinite sense of mission evident in many congregations visited by missionaries on furlough."<sup>3</sup>

The emphasis of mission as the operating guide of the church comes through in the *Report of the Task Force on the Church in the Metropolitan Core* entitled *A Dream that*

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1. Thomas Gillespie, "The Laity in Biblical Perspective," *Theology Today* 36, no. 3 (October 1979): 315. In a later interview, when he became Chairman of the Board of the journal *Theology Today*, Gillespie reshapes this view by stating: "Authentic theology must be *theology today*" as long as the Christian faith is dealing with "temporal change and cultural diversity which interact and which characterize our human historical existence." [in Thomas Gillespie and Hugh T. Kerr, "Editorial: A Conversation," *Theology Today*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (April, 1984), 1.]

2. United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1977), 276.

3. United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of Twenty-Fourth General Council* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1971), 201.

is not for the Drowsy. Tabled at the 28th General Council in 1980, this report states:

God wills that the Gospel should transform not just our personal and private life but also all social and public behaviour, that is, the attitudes, customs, laws, and structures of the world in which we live. <sup>1</sup>

This report, though, hardly offers a blueprint for how mission can be realized in the urban core, for its technical language and learned obfuscation leave the average reader with a great deal of confusion and little help. An example of that is found on page 333 of the *Record of Proceedings* of that General Council:

Good citizens will corporately take responsibility for themselves as a community, a *koinonia*, giving and receiving one another's gifts not simply as concupiscent consumers but as concelebrants of the grace of living together in excellence and adventure. <sup>2</sup>

This statement follows an even more challenging sentence:

The managerial and oligarchic and all variants of the authoritarian sense of civic structuring will be repudiated as retrogressive and counter-productive. <sup>3</sup>

This report falls in line with a growing concern about the church's mission in a variety of contexts. The mission to the urban core was (and is) essential to the church of the

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1. United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth General Council* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1980), 343. The issue here is to transform society, not to control it, or even to blindly reflect it. Cf. Barbara Hargrove, "The Church as the Coming Future," *Theology Today* 34, no. 3 (October, 1977): 246-247: "We no longer live in the kind of Christendom where religious boundaries coincide with those of social groups or cultural style."

2. United Church of Canada, *ROP of 28th General Council*, 333.

3. *Ibid.*, 333. My immediate response to such a sentence is: "So what?"

modern era. Sadly, though, this document provided more confusion than clarity to the issues at hand.<sup>1</sup>

The Division of World Outreach's reports to the General Council throughout the 1970's and 1980's consistently return to the dual mandate of "doing mission - doing justice." For example, at the Twenty-Eighth General Council in 1980, Garth Legge, then the General Secretary of the Division of World Outreach for the United Church, reported that the dual mandate of doing justice and doing mission "proved even more demanding and challenging than anticipated."<sup>2</sup> The Twenty-Seventh General Council report of the Division of World Outreach in 1977 was entitled: "Global Consciousness and Global Commitment: 'Doing Justice' and 'Doing Mission';"<sup>3</sup> by the 31st General Council of 1986, the mandate of Doing Mission and Doing Justice were displayed on the axes of a cross in the Division of World Outreach report.<sup>4</sup>

That 1986 report also refers to the importance of interdivisional work around mission. The report further states "our understanding of mission and global solidarity has shown us that it is vital that we act locally, but think globally."<sup>5</sup> Even with all of this

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1. This report was used as a study document in Willowdale United Church in 1981 while I was an Assistant Minister there; the members of the congregation involved in the study found it less than helpful. Many cited the convoluted language and abstract terminology. The title may suggest "a dream that is not for the drowsy," but the report tended to make one sleepy, indeed.

2. United Church, *ROP 28th General Council*, 357

3. United Church of Canada, *ROP 27th General Council*, 349.

4. United Church of Canada, *ROP 31st General Council*, 585.

5. *Ibid.*, 596.

enthusiasm and constant highlighting of this perspective, progress was slow in getting the church at large to accept this new view of mission. In the opening paragraph of the Division of World Outreach report to the General Council in Victoria in 1988, the frustration is evident:

The Thirty-First General Council affirmed the Division's characterization of its task as "The Dual Mandate -- Doing Mission and Doing Justice." At the same time, the comments made in the table groups made very clear the extent of our failure to enlist the support of the whole church in our task. <sup>1</sup>

The concept that doing mission involved doing justice emphasized the aspect of partnering with people of other churches in a way that those doing mission were sensitive to the political, social, economic, and cultural realities of the people to whom the mission was addressed. Their basic human concerns and needs had to become the missionaries' concerns and needs. At the General Council of 1990 in London, the Division of World Outreach report began with a video entitled "In Partnership." <sup>2</sup> By then, the idea of partnership in mission, a new concept for the church in *The Report of the Commission on World Mission*, had become the norm. In the printed report of the Division of World Outreach for that biennium, it was stated that the role of the Division was "to share with partner churches and agencies in other parts of the world in God's mission, embodied in Jesus Christ, for wholeness, love and justice for all people and all of creation." <sup>3</sup>

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1. United Church of Canada, *ROP 32nd General Council*, 597.

2. United Church of Canada, *ROP 33rd General Council*, 84.

3. *Ibid.*, 555.

While such a global perspective is admirable, rooted as it is in the inclusiveness of the Christian faith, people in recent years tend to see the mission of the church in more local terms. As early as 1978, Leonard Sweet, then a United Methodist pastor in Western New York and currently Dean of the Theological School at Drew University, examined the mission imperative within the local congregation, suggesting that an effective local mission depends upon a church with “a robust conceptual vision of the world and a commanding image of the future.”<sup>1</sup> Sweet’s insistence on a vision beyond the local congregation upheld a perspective that was under attack. Already there were signs of congregations becoming inward-looking. Where once the local congregation offered support to foreign missions through prayer and money, now many congregations simply sought their own survival as an institution. Yet to come was the new concept of the congregation as the primary mission agency.<sup>2</sup>

This movement to the particular is the focus of a seminal article by Martin Marty, the widely-published University of Chicago church historian. Marty suggests society has moved from a centripetal influence on the church and culture to a centrifugal influence. In other words, no longer do we have a “centripetal, convergent, universalizing and unitive” influence as in the period roughly 1944 to 1968, but we have moved to “an observed and experienced world of centrifugal, divergent, particularizing,

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1. Leonard I. Sweet, “Congregation and Community,” *Theology Today* 35, no. 3 (October, 1978): 298.

2. Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 145. Also Carnegie Samuel Calian of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, “Building a Visionary Church: An Organizational Theology for the Congregation,” *Theology Today* 52, no. 4 (Jan. 1996), 493: “A visionary church sees the local organization of believers (of whatever size) as the body of Christ responsible for advancing the church’s mission.”



mutually exclusive, and disruptive forces.”<sup>1</sup> That shift has been characterized by Stan Skreslet of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia as a move to “tribalization,” for today even nations crumble in the movement to focus life around local groupings.<sup>2</sup>

It seems inevitable that such strong social forces would push the church in its local manifestations to be more concerned with mission on the homefront, or in one’s own frontyard, than be influenced by the unifying, global realities of the church.<sup>3</sup> The long held position by some in society, viz.: “Charity begins at home,” has been sanitized by the new manifestation: “The Mission of the Church begins in our own neighbourhood.”<sup>4</sup>

A recent report from the Division of Mission in Canada entitled *Embracing Transformation: Congregational Mission in a Changing Canada*, also builds on this

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1. Martin E. Marty, “From the Centripetal to the Centrifugal in Culture and Religion,” *Theology Today* 51, no. 1 (April, 1994): 7-8.

2. Stan Skreslet, “Emerging Trends in a Shifting Global Context: Mission in the New World Order.” *Theology Today* 54, no. 2 (July, 1997): 153.

3. Douglas John Hall, “On Contextuality in Christian Theology,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 1, no. 1 (Spring, 1985), 131: “If one looks over the vast array of regional theologies in the present world situation, one wonders sometimes whether anything like a global theology is possible...”

4. Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 147: “Nothing is more central to the world mission of the church than the renewal of the life of local congregations.” While Newbigin has not turned his back on a life-long commitment to world mission, his emphasis in this statement is quite different from the sentiment in a speech given in 1960, where Newbigin declared: “Every church ought to be engaged in foreign mission. This is part of the integrity of the gospel.” (Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 13.) These two polar realities are addressed by the mission themes chosen within The United Church of Canada during the 1970’s and 1980’s, since the theme alternated from an overseas emphasis one year to a mission theme within the Canadian context the next year.

idea. The second mission principle of the report states: “Congregations are both evidence of the mission of God and vital mission agents in the communities where God has gathered them together.”<sup>1</sup> The whole purpose of the 1925 union is summed up in the desire to live together “for the sake of Christ’s mission.”<sup>2</sup>

*The Commission on World Mission* initiated a process by which The United Church of Canada began to acknowledge openly that the church no longer could remain a powerful presence in society based on its status in the past. The church needed to see itself as a minority group in society at large, and one of several religious traditions within this country, never mind the world at large.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned earlier, the movement to an Interfaith Dialogue portfolio within the United Church had its roots in this Commission’s report.<sup>4</sup> What began in the 1960’s as an openness to other religions has led The United Church of Canada to redefine the term “ecumenism” to be a “whole-world” phenomenon that speaks to dialogue and understanding among various religions,

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1. *The Commission on Congregational Mission and Church Development, Embracing Transformation* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1997), 5.

2. *Ibid.*, 40.

3. Such marginalization of the church leaves the church able to be faithful to its gospel according to Douglas John Hall, *The Future of the Church* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1989) or, in the words of Robert Farrar Capon, “to cherish its absurdity” (Capon, *Astonished Heart*, 64).

4. *Supra*, 67.

and not just various denominations.<sup>1</sup> The roots of that thrust are reflected in the thoughts of the Secretary of the Commission on World Mission, Douglas Jay, writing as Principal Emeritus of Emmanuel College some three decades after the Commission reported to the church: “[R]ather than resorting to a privatized, individualistic understanding of Christianity, we should adopt a missiology which emphasizes the goal of abundant life for all, without claiming all for Christianity or the church.”<sup>2</sup>

Many people today are willing to serve overseas as temporary missionaries, or unpaid volunteers on projects which are church-sponsored and of benefit to the receiving country or community.<sup>3</sup> Young people, in particular, often are looking for ways to serve in other lands for a time span anywhere from two weeks to six months (or more), often at their own expense as long as they are provided food and lodging when they arrive.

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1. The report *Mending the World*, tabled at the Thirty-Sixth General Council in Camrose, Alberta in August, 1997, makes this dramatic leap. The report has caused quite a stir among ecumenical partners of the United Church within Canada, and helped to set the stage for the questioning of the United Church's position on Christ that was exacerbated by the remarks of the current Moderator of The United Church of Canada (the Rt. Rev. Bill Phipps) to the *Ottawa Citizen* on October 31, 1997.

2. Jay, “Missiological Implications,” 283. This argument is repeated in Jay, “More than Thirty Years On: Some Implications for Missiology,” in Mark Husbands, editor, *Theology and the End of Modernity* (Toronto: Wycliffe College, 1996), 86.

3. Gillespie, “The Laity in Biblical Perspective,” *Theology Today* 36, no. 3 (Oct. 1979): 319, sees in the modern world a shift from ‘Temple’ to ‘Christ,’ for “God’s dwelling place” on earth is no longer conceived of as a building set apart from the world, but “as a people set in and sent into the world.”

That trend to overseas service was noted by the Commission on World Mission over thirty years ago,<sup>1</sup> but The United Church of Canada still has not done enough to address such yearning amongst its members.<sup>2</sup>

That remains the challenge of the church today -- to find ways by which it can see the mission of Christ as a universal, or world-wide mission, can understand its own unique local role within that mission, and can be prepared to be shaped and informed by experiences which are both alive to the traditions of the faith, and sensitive to the realities of the present culture.<sup>3</sup> Often the church uses its mission energies and strategies

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1. October 14-15, 1965 minutes, p. 9 "It was noted that many young people are attracted to short-term programmes . . ."

2. Three times when approached by young adults (in their late teens or early twenties) looking for that kind of experience, I have been forced to refer them to more evangelical denominations or parachurch groups, since The United Church of Canada has no program to meet that need. Given the fact the Commission saw this trend in 1966, the lack of action is disconcerting. This reliance on parachurch mission groups need not be negative. When churches cannot meet all expectations equally, then such groups allow for another way to focus on specific mission work. [cf. William Brackney, *Christian Voluntarism*, 129-132.] From a United Church perspective, many of these parachurch groups operate in a theological climate foreign to most of our people (emphasizing personal salvation over social transformation), and inculcate values around mission which, some would argue, highlight the individual believer and overlook ideas such as "partnership" and "justice." If such criticism of these groups is valid, then it would be helpful for the United Church to add to its own mix of "ministry and participatory possibilities" (Brackney, *Christian Voluntarism*, 160) certain areas of service which meet this need for mission experience by youth. R. Pierce Beaver, *American Protestant Women in World Mission* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968; revised edition, 1980), 217, states that from the 1960's onward there has been a "veritable eruption of very young short-term missionaries." The church ignores such a movement at its own peril.

3. Views expressed in the Task Group on New Church Development (Minutes Sept. 20-21, 1976, p. 3 at Cedar Glen) supports this thrust and places it within a context of new church growth and development for the modern era: "We agreed that we sensed the need for the Church to turn around in its thinking, that we feel God is calling us to a new mission and we need to appropriate that calling." The number one reason given for a

to attract people who are already members elsewhere. We need to find a vision that leads to the mission of the Church impacting on those outside of the Christian faith and tradition.<sup>1</sup>

One way of trying to accomplish an openness to the traditions of the faith and a sensitivity to the needs of others has been to focus on the local situation.<sup>2</sup> Another way to attempt to uphold the traditions of the faith and to do so within a global context is to share the gospel message with little or no concern for the cultural and social realities of other people. This latter option is no longer valid. As Douglas John Hall writes, context is the most decisive formative element for Christian theology and teaching today. If the context in which the faith is to be shared is not addressed, then the gospel cannot be proclaimed.<sup>3</sup> In other words, without understanding the context of mission, whatever

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lack of commitment in The United Church of Canada for New Church Development is “lack of faith and conviction about the Church’s mission” (May 1, 1976, p. 2).

Douglas John Hall, “The Future of Protestantism in North America,” *Theology Today* 52, no. 4 (January 1996), 463, sees a need for a rethinking of the church and its relation to its host culture.

1. John J. Carey of Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, “The Sunbelt as Mission Territory,” *Theology Today* (Vol. 35, No. 3): 315, suggests the inability of the church to look beyond its current assortment of members to reach out to a new audience of non-Christians is that we have seen the church from an institutional model perspective rather than view the church as servant. In other words, our energies are spent to keep the institutional “Church” going, rather than reaching out to others to share the gospel. Division of Mission in Canada, *Embracing Transformation*, 41, speaks of a “real and growing gulf between those of us inside our church walls and those outside our church walls where God is at work amongst people in the mission of love and reconciliation.”

2. The United Church of Canada, New Church Development Consultation Steering Committee meeting Calgary Nov. 4-5, 1975, 3: “Need for the promotion of new ‘home mission’ vision throughout the Church” shows already there was a sense that the ‘home mission’ was where energy and vitality would arise for the future outreach of the church.

3. Hall, “On Contextuality,” *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 1, no. 1 (Spring, 1985): 4.

one does, it should not be viewed as the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The mission of the church demands a sensitivity to all of these realities. We must not just think globally and act locally, but we also must at times make sure our thinking is sensitive to the local realities of people in far-away settings.

The mission of the church may come alive in the local setting. We also must be careful to be sure that what we are about as Christians is, truly, the mission of Christ.<sup>1</sup> This mission needs to be sensitive to others. The mission needs to be aware of, as well as offer a critique of, the culture in which people live. Finally, this mission needs to be evident in attitude and lifestyle as well as in words and documents. Such was the example Jesus left for us. Such is the example we will leave for others.<sup>2</sup>

The need for mission is no less today than it has been in any other time of the church. The nature of that mission -- in terms of its cultural presuppositions, philosophic assumptions, funding, duration of service, and personnel -- may be different.

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1. Sweet, "Congregation and Community," 300: "The church possesses what Johannes Metz has called the 'dangerous memory of Jesus,' which mandates that the church's resources be deposited in change-bearing accounts." Tensions around the ways in which individual congregations and members of The United Church of Canada understand the imperative of sharing the mission of *Christ* will be evident in the variety of responses to the questionnaires found in chapter five and analyzed in chapter six.

2. R. C. Hutchison in 1926 suggested the rejection of Christianity in the Moslem world is based on a failure of Christianity to exemplify its own distinctive ethic either in outward relationships or within its own communities (Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 156). Douglas John Hall in one of his most recent works, *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1997), 51-52, has argued that if members of Christianity as an institution, or religious movement, "disengage ourselves . . . from the dominant societies, classes, and institutions we have been for centuries trying to court, we may be able to serve those societies, classes, and institutions in ways far more faithful and more humanly needful than Christendom usually did."

To capture that movement, I turn to my own statement as a candidate for Moderator of the United Church in 1992 which, in hindsight, can only be understood as part of the continuum in a new understanding of mission within our denomination:

The church gained life when it was a mission church.  
The fact that we have re-defined missions today in terms of 'partnership' and 'community' should not lessen our commitment to, and need for, the mission of the Church. <sup>1</sup>

This movement in the understanding of the mission of the church has been a gradual evolution, starting with the emphasis in ecumenical efforts throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and going on through the emphasis upon a "world mission" as opposed to a western-based "foreign mission" of previous generations. The Commission on World Mission of The United Church of Canada also played a major role in the evolution of personal and communal understandings around mission within the United Church. A new emphasis was given to mission, while the need for "partnerships" and "dialogue" with others was expanded to include third world churches.

I now wish to turn to a questionnaire which was sent to all pastoral charges of The United Church of Canada. Through this questionnaire, I sought to test the influence such views on mission as dialogue, partnership, world mission, global justice have upon local congregational understandings of, and funding priorities for, the mission of the church.

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1. United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the 34th General Council August 14-22, 1992 in Fredericton, New Brunswick* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1992), 34.

## **V. A Window on The Views of Selected Congregations within The United Church of Canada on Mission - Past and Present**

To help determine views on mission current within local congregations of The United Church of Canada, a survey was sent to every pastoral charge of The United Church of Canada -- some 3,000 in total. Of that total, 251<sup>1</sup> were returned, or approximately 8%. What is significant in this return rate is the fact that a selection of questionnaires was received from all parts of the country. The reasons for this relatively low response rate will be discussed later.

The goal of this exercise was to test my assumptions on the changing understanding of, and perspective upon, the mission of the church within congregations of The United Church of Canada. An examination of the annual *Year Book* data for the church indicated that over the past ten years givings to local churches had increased, givings to denominational mission efforts had decreased, and the number of givers to either area of the church's work had decreased. That means that fewer people were giving more to the church, but selecting to give to more local efforts than to denominational, international, or broadly-based ecumenical projects. Or so the statistics seemed to indicate. There appeared to be a need to ask specific questions to a broad-based sample of the United Church which would test these assumptions. A questionnaire was deemed to be the most appropriate method to address those assumptions for a number of reasons:

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1. Of that number, 245 are used for the statistical data in this report; six were received too late to be included in this analysis (i.e. more than two months after the deadline advertised for receiving the data).



a) the annual *Year Book of The United Church of Canada* provides fairly accurate statistical data on mission givings and local church finances, but a questionnaire could address the motivation for mission givings and the local priorities for giving as perceived by individual congregational members or ministers;

b) a questionnaire could ask for information not in the church's annual *Year Book* statistics but of interest to this study (in particular, the type of givings beyond the local church, or percentage of givings to various types of mission);

c) a questionnaire would seek information from a different group of people, since the *Year Book* statistics often are brought together by the minister or the Official Board, while this questionnaire would be sent to contact people through the Department of Stewardship Services, and so go to people more attuned to, interested in, and aware of the pattern of mission support within the local congregation/pastoral charge.

Such a large mailing was made possible because the Executive of the Department of Stewardship Services approved the inclusion of this questionnaire in its annual summer mailing which detailed worship resources and promotional material for the fall and Advent - Christmas season. Such approval meant I did not need to receive the approval and cooperation of each individual congregation, or even each presbytery of the church, to make such contact with individual pastoral charges. The Executive of the Department of Stewardship Services simply asked for a summary report of my findings as "payment" for the mailing service. The cost of the production of the questionnaires was borne by the office budget of Rosedale United Church. The Executive Committee of that congregation approved a plan to run off all 3,000 questionnaires on the church RISO machine, provided I purchase the paper, since this was related to my ongoing

professional development.

I weighed a number of factors before I determined this system of distribution to be the appropriate action to take. First of all, the cost of doing a mailing to 3,000 pastoral charges was prohibitive for me to undertake personally.<sup>1</sup> It would cost several thousand dollars to mail a personal letter to such a large number and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the reply. Further, a purely random sample to pastoral charges (say, one in ten pastoral charges) would give me an adequate sample provided a much higher percentage responded. This method, as well, would be somewhat costly (several hundred dollars rather than several thousand dollars, but still substantial).

A random sample also had risks that may make the data skewed in certain ways:

- without a careful analysis of the ways in which pastoral charges are listed in the year book of the church, a sample of every fifth or every tenth pastoral charge could lead to a disproportionate number of rural churches, or city churches, being questioned. If every pastoral charge received the questionnaire, which a mass mailing system allowed, then the selection process would be determined by the personal choice of the recipient at each charge to respond or not. There would be no outside arbiter making those decisions. The tabulations around which type of pastoral charge replied might be significant in themselves;

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1. A personal letter mailed with individual questionnaires, and enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope, is the best way to get the maximum response rate, as discussed by Pamela L. Alreck and Robert B. Settle, *The Survey Research Handbook* (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1985), 209. For me, this was not cost-effective.

- a random sample would mean that a smaller number of charges would be part of the original sample, thus further limiting the variety of responses possible;
- a random sample could limit the response from various regions of the church, since the largest number of pastoral charges are found in southern Ontario.

The questionnaire was reviewed by the Committee on Ethics in Research of McMaster University before it was mass produced and then mailed to all potential participants.

Care was taken to develop questions which asked for clear, direct answers.

The choices offered in each question were designed to be simple and independent from one another. Great effort was put into trying to keep the questions relevant to the issue at hand, appropriate for a pastoral charge setting, clear in their intent, and helpful to the overall goal of the thesis to determine ways in which the understanding and funding of mission within congregations of The United Church of Canada has evolved over the past thirty years.<sup>1</sup> Since I did not see how an instrument addressed to the local church could effectively measure changes in a thirty year time frame, I sought information which covered attitudes from the present, ten years ago, and offered projections for three years into the future. In the church today, as my field testing of the questions taught me, it is difficult to ask for information more than ten years ago (many churches have had a great turnover of members in the past decade, and people do not remember details from more than ten years ago). In a similar vein, “long-range

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1. Alreck and Settle, *The Survey Reserach Handbook*, 98, point out that: “Effective survey questions have three important attributes: focus, brevity, and simplicity.”

planning,” once thought of in terms of five or ten years hence, rarely involves more than three years into the future today.

Care also was taken in the order of the questions.<sup>1</sup> The attempt was to get basic information from the immediate past and present on mission funding, then move to larger issues around mission priorities and reasons for giving, then to seek general comments and insights. The categories of information sought as to how mission education is done (#12 and #13) and why a church funds a certain mission project (#17) or does not fund the general Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada (#15) were designed based on input from information shared with the Department of Stewardship Services of The United Church of Canada, experiences I have had as a Stewardship Consultant with the United Church, testing of the questionnaires with representatives from an urban church (Rosedale United Church, Toronto), a rural pastoral charge (Kirkton-Woodham Pastoral Charge in Huron-Perth Presbytery, Ontario), and the Executive of the Department of Stewardship Services of The United Church of Canada. Most of the early questions deal with simple answers for identification purposes, or seek a one category answer to indicate percentage of givings. Later questions provide for a multiplicity of answers to each question, or provide an opportunity to write in unsolicited comments. The movement in the questionnaire, then, is from particular to general; simple to more complex; basic data to more detailed data.

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1. Alreck and Settle, *The Survey Research Handbook*, 112, point out that the order in which questions are asked in a questionnaire can be a key component in affecting the responses given to that questionnaire. Care was taken not to adversely influence the responses based on the order of the questions asked, or even by the order of choices within individual questions.

As a result of reflecting on the process undertaken, and reading the responses received, I have some comments of a critical nature regarding the questionnaire itself before presenting the data collected. One cannot make general conclusions on the data unless one is sure that the data is reliable and without bias. Several indications of potential bias are presented in the questionnaire results. Most questionnaires say that the givings to the Mission and Service Fund have increased in the past ten years, and project an increase in the pastoral charge in the next three years. This flies in the face of actual data which shows that the Mission and Service Fund has dropped from \$31,902,350 in 1987 to \$29,685,952 in 1997. That means that while the overall fund has decreased, those who responded to this questionnaire suggest that their local pastoral charge actually has increased mission givings.

There are many reasons that could be identified for this. The most obvious way to explain this is that people who replied are interested in the Mission and Service Fund, generally support the work of the church, and so have had positive results. Possibly a higher percentage of those disinterested in the Mission and Service Fund simply did not bother to answer the questionnaire.

Possibly more churches in The United Church of Canada have seen an increase in their Mission and Service Fund donations, but those increases (in total dollars raised) were less on an overall dollar basis than the decreases identified by those churches where the Mission and Service Fund has gone down. That would mean a majority of churches could record an increase in givings, even though the total of their increases would be less than the decreases in the other congregations. (A lack of computer data

from 1987 does not permit those figures to be obtained from the General Council office of The United Church of Canada with regard to the percentage of congregations.)

Shirley Welch, an employee of the Department of Stewardship Services for The United Church of Canada, finds it possible that a majority of pastoral charges believe they have increased their givings even if they have, in fact, experienced a reduction in their givings over that ten year span. Most congregations are operating with a smaller donor base than ten years ago,<sup>1</sup> so most individuals are giving more per year, even if the totals have been reduced. As well, more effort goes into raising money today,<sup>2</sup> leaving the impression of more things happening (and so the hope that more money is raised).

This further gives credence to the view that a higher percentage of churches positive to the Mission and Service Fund responded than is the case in a random sample. Even

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1. The number of givers to the Mission and Service Fund were 231,000 in 1989, for an average gift of \$133. Three years later, 209,000 donors gave an average of \$151. By 1997, 185,000 gave an average of \$160 annually (Statistics produced by the Department of Stewardship Services for Division of Finance Meeting, Church House, February 27, 1999). One questionnaire makes this very point. The answer predicts that in the next three years, support for the Mission and Service Fund of the church will "remain the same," but adds the footnote: "with fewer people contributing." That means the level is maintained by an increase in givings per contributor (Nova Scotia, Small Town church).

2. In the years 1997, 1998, and 1999, the General Council of The United Church of Canada authorized a special expenditure of \$650,000 from reserves (up to \$50,000 per Conference) to raise the profile and the level of support for the Mission and Service Fund. Barb Fullerton, a Mission and Service Fund consultant in Hamilton Conference hired through this fund, when asked about the mission promotion effort, responded: "I think that possibly more effort goes into it [i.e. mission education and promotion]." She went on to remark: "There was an ethos of mission support (that is what we do, that is who we are)...it was taken for granted that a congregation would support the M. and S. Fund, and that is not so now, so a more concerted effort is being made around M. and S. education as to what the fund is, because it is not so much a part of people's backgrounds." (Barb Fullerton, interview by author, 3 January 1999.)

where churches have reduced their givings, many have indicated a positive thrust to the efforts around promotion of the Mission and Service Fund within the church.

To summarize, then, any final conclusions must be sensitive to the reality that positive results and projections may be the result of an imbalanced survey result. That reality, though, also makes the flip side of the information gathering very significant. If my assumption is correct that these results come from churches mainly positive toward the Mission and Service Fund of the church (and so possibly more positive toward mission activities in general), then comments made on concerns around the ways in which the church funds its mission might be very telling. Any negative comments would be made not out of a desire to undermine the work, or to look for petty excuses not to fund something in which the community is disinterested in the first place, but out of a concern to offer a helpful critique that ultimately may lead to improved funding of the church's mission. This part of the survey on ways to generate interest in the Mission and Service Fund of the church (question #16) needs close attention, as do the general comments made under question #18.

One question which was removed from the questionnaire to save space was a question to identify in which conference a pastoral charge belonged. Since confidentiality was a concern, I did not want people thinking that somehow we would use data collected to pinpoint from where responses originated. This data on location of the church would have been important to have. Some responses are determined as much by the region of origin as they are by size of congregation or the role of the individual responding.

I also quickly learned that while anonymity was important to the survey process, and was carefully protected in my tabulation of the questionnaires, many people were quite open about the origin of the questionnaire. The vast majority had a return address; most of the responses were inside church envelopes. Of those responses with no return address, most could be traced through the postal code on the cancellation mark. It was relatively easy, then, to determine the province of origin (though not the conference of origin) of all but 11 of the questionnaires, or less than 5% of those returned. As questionnaire envelopes were opened, I wrote on the upper left corner of the front page of each questionnaire the province of origin. The original envelope then was set aside, so that when the tabulations were done, I had no idea as to the name of the exact pastoral charge being considered. The only data to be considered was that provided by the pastoral charge on the form itself, with the addition of a note on the province of origin. When regional disparities are considered, therefore, I am somewhat confident in the findings. Most parts of the country have a reasonable number of identifiable pastoral charges within their sampling. After analyzing the data on a national basis, I will provide some regional breakdowns on the key points raised.

Another assumption is made in these questionnaire tabulations. I assume that only one questionnaire has been received from each pastoral charge. The original mailing was done on a bright yellow paper (Appendix B), which not only helped individuals to locate the questionnaire in a large package of material but also meant that I would know if it



was not an original questionnaire that was mailed to me.<sup>1</sup>

One pastoral charge had the whole Outreach Committee respond as individuals, so I received seven completed questionnaires -- one on the original yellow paper and six white copies. I treated that package as one return, and included what comments there were from all samples. (Other congregations did the response as a committee, but tabulated the responses onto one form, so I thought there was precedence for that way of receiving data.) Another pastoral charge had two returns -- a yellow copy and a white copy of the questionnaire. Once again, I treated the two responses as one response. Four other questionnaires were received on white paper. Each one came from different parts of the country, and were alone in an envelope. I assumed that these results formed the only return from the pastoral charge, since I had no way of knowing if this was a second response from a pastoral charge that already submitted a yellow copy of the questionnaire. When I received a stand alone white copy of the questionnaire, I compared it with other copies received on yellow paper. Not one of them was identical to the basic data of another pastoral charge response (*viz.* province of origin, title of

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1. The use of the yellow paper was tested with various people in the Department of Stewardship Studies, in the office of Rosedale United Church, and with the Official Board of Rosedale United Church. I was strongly advised against using blue (difficult to read print) or pink (too flowery and gives inappropriate message). Alreck and Settle suggest "Pink, blue, and yellow paper should be avoided" when printing a questionnaire - *The Survey Research Handbook*, 194. The use of yellow, which distinguished this questionnaire from many other coloured inserts in a large package, may have been problematic. The other suggestions made by Alreck and Settle were followed: have a clear introductory chapter, and end with instructions on how to return the questionnaire; use at least 20 bond paper (I used 24 bond), a variety of type should be used, and none smaller than 10 point (my smallest type was 12 point). Only one 8 1/2" by 11" sheet of paper was used, and bold italics were used to set off questions (*Ibid.*, 194).

responder, type of pastoral charge, size of average attendance, and percentage of the budget which is given to the Mission and Service Fund and other agencies). That led me to think it was not a duplicate of a questionnaire already received.

The data collected would not be modified significantly if my assumption proved to be incorrect. I sensed that some people found the white paper easier with which to work. The use of white paper also would be appropriate if copies of the questionnaire response were to be shared with others in the pastoral charge after its completion. (It is easier to make multiple copies from a white original than from a yellow original.) For some, as well, white would be easier on the eyes.

One other irregularity in the tabulations is the fact two pastoral charges received questionnaires printed only on one side (questions 1-7 and 16-18). I knew in the printing process there had been some skipped sheets, and thought that all had been caught in the sorting. The rush to get the printed questionnaires to the United Church Distribution Centre (I had forty-eight hours from the time the approval of the Ethics in Research Committee at McMaster University was communicated to me and the Executive Committee of Rosedale United Church approved the printing of the questionnaires until I needed to deliver the final product to the Department of Stewardship Services for inclusion in the summer mailing, so I did not take time to recheck each and every questionnaire of the 3,000 printed) meant that at least two questionnaires did not have printing on one side. Those questionnaire results were included for what data they did offer, but the information provided is not as complete as it otherwise could have been.

Six questionnaires were received after December 15, 1998. Since the deadline established was October 15, 1998, and since the tabulations for all questions had been completed by the first week of December, these questionnaires were not included in the statistical data provided here. They were read, and any comments of value are noted in the anecdotal synopsis which follows.

Most people responding were very thorough in their approach to the questionnaire. People took the request seriously, and were thoughtful in what they shared.

One question that proved the most difficult was the request for the respondent to characterize the mission attitudes and views of their current church from ten years ago. Many lay people were new to that congregation, or even new to The United Church of Canada, so felt unable to respond. Several members of the order of ministry found this question difficult, though I expected most of them would know how to glean that information even if they had only been in that pastoral charge for a few years. The truth is, the vast majority **did** offer a response to the church's position of ten years ago.

More helpful data could have been given the respondents on the meaning of "local outreach" and "local non-church agencies." Some were unclear as to what was being sought, so did not answer these questions. (I was seeking information on agencies and community programs which meet individuals' needs, but which are not sponsored by the local church or any other denominational body.) The vast majority, however, did answer these questions, and most of the anecdotal comments confirmed that their understanding of these questions were consistent with my intentions.

Several commented on how helpful the questionnaire was to the committee or church board in going through the research and discussion necessary to respond as completely as

possible. Many more added further comments when such comments were sought, showing their desire to be clear and precise in their answers.

Only one person suggested the whole questionnaire was “poorly worded and somewhat confusing,”<sup>1</sup> and another person commented on the statement “We could learn more about the mission of the church” as follows: “This is a stupid question.”<sup>2</sup> I was amused by the comment, because in fact I thought that many of the comments to which I sought a response in questions 12 and 13 were “obvious” or “clear cut” or “an extreme caricature” of normal attitudes.

One such comment is the first one: “Mission is the essence of the church.” I thought that was obvious (in light of my own studies of the scriptures, personal reflection, reading of secondary literature, and thinking in relation to this thesis-project), but only 42 respondents, or 17.1%, said that characterized the thinking of their pastoral charge currently.<sup>3</sup> When it came to the understanding of the pastoral charge of ten years ago,

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1. Remark by a Chairperson of the Board from an urban church in Manitoba.

2. Remark by Lay Volunteer from Ontario suburban congregation.

3. One respondent, a Mission/Outreach Committee member from a rural church in Nova Scotia, expanded this point as follows: “Mission is to the church what a hose is to a fireman. Without a sense of mission, you don’t have a church, only a museum. If the minister is not committed to mission, you have a dead church even if every pew is filled on Sunday.” This view is supported by such diverse voices as Charles Klagba, “Salvador and Relationship in Mission: Partnership in Mission,” *International Review of Mission* Vol. 86, No. 340-341 (Jan.-April 1997), 133: “Every church is a mission church;” Gaudencio B. Rosales, “To be the Subject of Mission: A Report of the International Mission Congress, Manila, Dec. 2-7, 1979” *Worldmission* Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring, 1981), 29: “our life-witness itself should be mission;” *and* Donald McQuade, “Why Return to the Missions?” *Worldmission* Vol. 32, No. 2 (Summer, 1981), 4: “Vatican II . . . taught that the Church is missionary by its very nature.”

only 22 of the respondents, or 9%, agreed that “Mission is the essence of the church.”

These comments are only a sample of what is recorded in the totality of questionnaires received. I shall interact with the comments made, and their implications, in the chapter which follows. *At this point I wish to provide a presentation of the answers, and a basic analysis of the data which flows from these responses.*

**Question #1. "Respondent":**

<b>Minister:</b> 126 (51.4%)
<b>Mission/Outreach Committee Member:</b> 53 (21.6%)
<b>Lay Volunteer:</b> 19 (7.8%)
<b>Other Staff:</b> 19 (7.8%)
<b>Chairperson of Board/Executive Committee:</b> 14 (5.7%)
<b>Other:</b> 14 (5.7%) -- includes church treasurer, board secretary, stewardship committee

*On a provincial basis, the numbers break down as follows:*

	<b>Minister</b>	<b>Mission/ Outreach Comm.</b>	<b>Lay Vol.</b>	<b>Other Staff</b>	<b>Chair of Board</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>British Columbia</b>	12	8	3	2	2	4
<b>Alberta</b>	9	7	3	4	2	2
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	17	5	2	1	-	1
<b>Manitoba</b>	8	5	-	1	1	1
<b>Ontario</b>	58	20	8	4	8	4
<b>Quebec + Maritimes + Newfoundland + Bermuda</b>	19	6	1	5	1	1
<b>Unknown origin</b>	3	2	2	2	-	1

**Question #2. "Home congregation about which this data applies":**

<b>Small Town: 76</b>	<b>Rural-Small Town: 13</b>
<b>Urban: 66</b>	<b>Small-Town-Urban: 2</b>
<b>Rural: 54</b>	<b>Rural-Urban: 1</b>
<b>Suburban: 32</b>	<b>Rural-Suburban: 1</b>

There seems to be a disproportionate number of urban congregations relative to the mix of congregations within The United Church of Canada. The numbers show, however, that a reasonable number of samples have come from all areas of the church, and a variety of pastoral charges. The scatter for the size of the average attendance in worship on a Sunday in November further reveals that this is a representative sample of congregations with a variety of number of participants and, therefore, a variety of programming opportunities.

**Question #3. "Average attendance on a Sunday in November":**

<b>Less than 25:</b>	10 (4.1%)
<b>25-49:</b>	32 (13.1%)
<b>50-99:</b>	85 (34.7%)
<b>100-199:</b>	79 (32.2%)
<b>200-349:</b>	25 (10.2%)
<b>350 +:</b>	10 (4.1%)
<b>No answer:</b>	4 (1.6%)

**Question #4. "Percentage of the Church Budget given to the work of the Mission and Service (M. & S.) Fund in 1997":**

<b>Under 10%:</b>	95 (38.8%)
<b>10-19%:</b>	115 (47.0%)
<b>20-29%:</b>	27 (11.0%)
<b>30%+:</b>	0
<b>No answer:</b>	8 (3.3%)

Churches in an urban or suburban setting seem to give a higher percentage of their budget to the work of the Mission and Service Fund.

The breakdown for rural-small town-village-isolated congregations versus urban-suburban goes as follows:

<b>Rural-Small Town</b>	<b>Funding of Mission and Service Fund</b>	<b>Urban-Suburban</b>
68 (46.9%)	<b>Under 10%</b>	27 (27.0%)
64 (44.1%)	<b>10-19%</b>	51 (51.0%)
9 (6.2%)	<b>20-29%</b>	18 (18.0%)
4 (2.8%)	<b>No answer</b>	4 (4.0%)



**Question #5. "Percentage of the Church budget given to Local Community Groups, Non-Church Agencies, and Local Church Mission Groups (include all projects) in 1997":**

<b>Under 10%:</b>	<b>210 (85.7%)</b>
<b>10-19%:</b>	<b>19 (7.8%)</b>
<b>20-29%:</b>	<b>4 (1.6%)</b>
<b>30-39%:</b>	<b>1 (0.4%)</b>
<b>40-49%:</b>	<b>1 (0.4%)</b>
<b>50% + :</b>	<b>1 (0.4%)</b>
<b>No response/ Don't know</b>	<b>9 (3.6%)</b>

What was curious in this response was the fact that three pastoral charges indicated they gave more than 30% of their annual budget (and one in excess of 50%!) to local groups and non-church agencies. I am not sure if these pastoral charges have, in fact, an immense local outreach program, or possibly they see themselves as supporting local church missions and non-church agencies by most of the work they do. Certainly the scatter is much what I expected -- the great preponderance of churches spend minimal amounts, and rarely more than 10% in this category. The three responses which seem to go against the grain do not make a significant mathematical influence on the overall statistics. I suspect they misinterpreted the question, though I present the results as they have been received.

Once again, the percentages of givings show that urban-suburban congregations provide more money for outreach as measured by a percentage of the budget:

<b>Rural-Small Town</b>	<b>Funding of Local Community Groups, Non-Church Agencies, Local Church Mission Groups</b>	<b>Urban-Suburban</b>
132 (91.0%)	<b>Under 10%</b>	78 (78.0%)
5 (3.4%)	<b>10-19%</b>	14 (14.0%)
1 (0.7%)	<b>20-29%</b>	3 (3.0%)
1 (0.7%)	<b>30-39%</b>	-
1 (0.7%)	<b>40-49%</b>	-
1 (0.7%)	<b>50% +</b>	-
4 (2.8%)	<b>No answer/Don't Know</b>	5 (5.0%)

**Question #6. "In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to the Mission and Service Fund have":**

<b>Increased: 136 (55.5%)</b>
<b>Decreased: 51 (20.8%)</b>
<b>Remained: 52 (21.2%) the Same</b>
<b>No answer: 6 (2.4%)</b>

In terms of the breakdown between urban-suburban and small town-rural, the differences are negligible, and certainly not statistically significant:

<b>Rural-Small Town</b>	<b>Givings to M. &amp; S. Fund</b>	<b>Urban-Suburban</b>
83 (57.2%)	<b>Increased</b>	53 (53.0%)
31 (21.4%)	<b>Decreased</b>	20 (20.0%)
27 (18.6%)	<b>Remained the Same</b>	25 (25.0%)
4 (2.8%)	<b>No answer</b>	2 (2.0%)

In the preamble to the evaluation, I discussed the significance of the fact that a healthy majority of answers indicated either an increase in givings or a maintenance of giving levels (overall 76.7% indicate an increase in givings or givings remaining the same), while the actual figures for that ten year span show an overall decrease in excess of \$2,000,000 (or 6.9% decrease). If taken on face value, this means that a far more positive group of congregations is represented in this sample than is the case for the United Church as a whole. Predictions about the overall performance of the Mission and Service Fund into the future (question #14) must be evaluated cautiously in light of such optimism.

**Question #7. "In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to Local Community Groups and Non-Church Agencies have":**

<b>Increased: 94 (38.4%)</b>
<b>Decreased: 43 (17.6%)</b>
<b>Remained the Same: 102 (41.6%)</b>
<b>No Answer: 6 (2.4%)</b>

Once again, the differences in the breakdown between urban-oriented and more rural or small town pastoral charges are not significant:

<b>Rural-Small Town</b>	<b>Givings to Local Community Groups &amp; Non-Church Agencies</b>	<b>Urban-Suburban</b>
50 (34.5%)	<b>Increased</b>	44 (44.0%)
28 (19.3%)	<b>Decreased</b>	15 (15.0%)
64 (44.1%)	<b>Remained the Same</b>	38 (38.0%)
3 (2.1%)	<b>No answer/Don't Know</b>	3 (3.0%)

This is one area where I expected a much greater increase, given my hypothesis that mission focus is more local and hands-on in the current climate. To be fair, 80% indicate that givings to local non-church agencies have either gone up or remained constant in the last ten years (as compared with a combined 76.7% in relation to the Mission and Service Fund), but the percentage difference is not of great significance. What probably is more significant than the local nature of such groups is their lack of affiliation with the church. When it comes to local **church** mission groups and agencies, there is a more steady funding base, as the data from question 8 will show.

**Question #8. "In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies have":**

<b>Increased:</b> 79 (32.2%)
<b>Decreased:</b> 24 (9.8%)
<b>Remained the Same:</b> 129 (52.7%)
<b>No answer:</b> 13 (5.3%)

While a much smaller percentage of pastoral charges have increased their givings to Local Church Mission Groups (32.2%) than have increased their givings to either the Mission and Service Fund (55.5%) or to local non-church agencies (38.4%), the combined factors of "increased givings" and "remained the same" come out to 84.9%

for this question - the highest of the three questions. That indicates that in a climate where givings are tight, and there is great pressure for all dollars raised, there remains a high degree of commitment and support for local church agencies that goes across all types of congregations and all sizes of worshipping communities.

The fact that United Church sponsorship is important for a congregation's decision to support a mission project today (see question #17) indicates that sponsorship by the denomination on a local, national or international level still means something to a large number of people within the church - especially those in local leadership positions.

Once again, the differences among the various types of pastoral charges is negligible, with a slightly larger percentage of increases among the more urban pastoral charges:

<b>Rural-Small Town</b>	<b>Givings to Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies</b>	<b>Urban-Suburban</b>
38 (26.2%)	<b>Increased</b>	41 (41.0%)
15 (10.3%)	<b>Decreased</b>	9 (9.0%)
86 (59.3%)	<b>Remained the Same</b>	43 (43.0%)
6 (4.1%)	<b>No answer</b>	7 (7.0%)

**Question #9. "In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for the Mission and Service Fund of the Church will":**

<b>Increase: 103 (42.0%)</b>
<b>Decrease: 29 (11.8%)</b>
<b>Remain the Same: 104 (42.4%)</b>
<b>No answer: 9 (3.7%)</b>

On a breakdown of urban-suburban versus rural-small town, once again there is little variation:

<b>Rural-Small Town</b>	<b>Support for the Mission and Service Fund over next three years</b>	<b>Urban-Suburban</b>
60 (41.4%)	<b>Increase</b>	43 (43.0%)
19 (13.1%)	<b>Decrease</b>	10 (10.0%)
64 (44.1%)	<b>Remain the Same</b>	40 (40.0%)
2 (1.4%)	<b>No answer</b>	7 (7.0%)

This shows a very high commitment to an increase in the Mission and Service Fund givings. In an era where shortfalls and reduced givings are the norm, there is some hope

in these results.<sup>1</sup> Once again, the reader is cautioned that such a positive response could indicate a higher percentage of answers came from congregations known to be positive toward the Mission and Service Fund of the church. If someone does not want to support the fund at all, then they might be less inclined to reply to a questionnaire that might take an hour (or more) of their time. Even so, these results should be a reminder to those involved in raising mission dollars for The United Church of Canada that there still are very positive attitudes and outlooks within some of the congregations and pastoral charges of the church throughout the country.

**Question #10. "In the next three years, I expect our Congregation's support for Local Community Groups and non-Church Agencies will":**

<b>Increase:</b> 61 (24.9%)
<b>Decrease:</b> 23 (9.4%)
<b>Remain the Same:</b> 156 (63.7%)
<b>No answer:</b> 5 (2.0%)

1. There is hope, at least, if one connects growth with the mission of the church. As a contrast to that view, Douglas John Hall in *The Future of the Church: Where are We Headed?* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1989), 55, sees "a special invitation to discipleship" in reduced mission dollars and a dwindling number of members. "It is an invitation to take up the cross, that is, to submit to the 'decrease' that is Christ's way (not Caesar's) of 'increase' (John 3:30)." Most of the efforts around the mission of the church have been linked to growth and expansion. That was true in the days of the apostle Paul, and remains true to the present time. Three Latter Day Saints authors offer a clear affirmation of the importance of growth to the missionary preaching effort as practiced today: "*Growth and expansion are the two inter-related and mutually enabling objectives of evangelism.*" Lloyd B. Hurshman, William G. Dodds, and David W. Chobar, *Many Will Respond* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1988), 9.



It surprised me that the projection for givings to local community groups outside of the church in the next three years actually is lower than the projections for givings toward the Mission and Service Fund. While there is a slightly greater percentage who project an increase in urban and suburban pastoral charges as against rural and small town charges, the numbers remain fairly constant across the board.

<b>Rural-Small Town</b>	<b>Support for Local Community Groups and Non-Church Agencies over next three years</b>	<b>Urban-Suburban</b>
31 (21.4%)	<b>Increase</b>	30 (30.0%)
13 (9.0%)	<b>Decrease</b>	10 (10.0%)
98 (67.6%)	<b>Remain the Same</b>	58 (58.0%)
3 (2.0%)	<b>No answer</b>	2 (2.0%)

Other questions will point to a dramatic shift in concern for local missions within the priority setting of a congregation (see especially question #15), but the shift to local givings as a priority over denominational programs of a national and international focus is not evident in these results. The same trend is true of the answers to question #11, which almost parallels the results for question #10.

**Question #11. "In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies will":**

<b>Increase:</b> 59 (24.1%)
<b>Decrease:</b> 15 (6.1%)
<b>Remain the Same:</b> 155 (63.3%)
<b>No answer:</b> 16 (6.5%)

Once again, the percentage of pastoral charges anticipating an increase in givings to local church mission groups and agencies is far less than those who anticipate an increase in givings to the Mission and Service Fund.

As in question #10, a greater number of the more urban churches project an increase in givings in this area, but still less than the numbers indicated for the Mission and Service Fund givings over the next three years:

<b>Rural-Small Town</b>	<b>Givings to Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies (over the next three years)</b>	<b>Urban-Suburban</b>
26 (18.8%)	<b>Increase</b>	33 (33.0%)
9 (6.2%)	<b>Decrease</b>	6 (6.0%)
102 (70.3%)	<b>Remain the Same</b>	53 (53.0%)
8 (5.5%)	<b>No answer</b>	8 (8.0%)

The strength of these numbers is revealed in the continued level of support for these groups and agencies (70.3% in the rural-small town category and 53.0% in the urban-suburban category predict givings will at least “remain the same”). The fact that people active within The United Church of Canada composed these responses, and so are automatically pre-disposed to supporting the mission of the denomination as a whole, would lead these results to be less impressive than they would be as an indication of all members of The United Church of Canada, or commitments made by new members to The United Church of Canada as a whole.

**Question #12. "The following statements would apply to my home congregation now": (check all that apply)**

*[recorded in order of preference from most common response to least common]*

<b>1. We could do more in the area of mission projects and outreach.</b>	179 (73.1%)
<b>2. Our mission givings are augmented by the United Church Women.</b>	175 (71.4%)
<b>3. Our people like to give primarily through monetary donations.</b>	165 (67.3%)
<b>4. Mission issues are raised in the worship service every month.</b>	160 (65.3%)
<b>5. The prime focus of mission work is through the Mission and Service Fund.</b>	154 (62.9%)
<b>6. We could learn more about the mission of the church.</b>	147 (60.0%)
<b>7. Children learn about the church's mission in Sunday School.</b>	119 (48.6%)
<b>8. Mission education is a focus of our congregation.</b>	98 (40.0%)
<b>9. Our people like to have "hands-on" experience in mission work.</b> <sup>1</sup>	87 (35.5%)
<b>10. Our main concern is supporting local mission and outreach.</b>	66 (26.9%)
<b>11. Mission issues are raised in the worship service 2-3 times/year.</b>	65 (26.5%)
<b>*12. Funds for the Mission and Service Fund of the church come after all staff and building costs are met.</b> <sup>2</sup>	53 (21.6%)
<b>*12. We have an annual Stewardship Visitation program.</b>	53 (21.6%)
<b>14. Mission is the essence of the church.</b>	42 (17.1%)
<b>15. We are doing all that we can in the area of mission.</b>	27 (11.0%)
<b>No response</b>	4 (2.8%)

1. This item was more highly rated among urban congregations. There has been a much longer and fuller tradition of Christian voluntary outreach in the urban centres, as William Brackney points out in his work on *Christian Voluntarism*, 75: "Church-related and independent voluntary organizations together and in competition arose to meet [the various needs in the city]."

2. The asterisk (\*) indicates the same number of responses for two or more points.

There are some obvious trends in these answers, and the next chapter will provide a more detailed analysis. Worth noting is the importance of using worship time for mission education. The Sunday School also seems to be a major education centre for sharing the mission of the church. At the other end of the spectrum, annual Stewardship Visitation programs, once the mainstay of the church, are falling into greater disfavour. That means that mission material shared must be appropriate for a liturgical setting, not a home-visit session. As people get more and more busy in their lives, and find fewer and fewer evenings free, or rarely have weekends without other commitments, they look for compartmentalized activities in the church. The more that can happen on a Sunday morning (either in worship itself, or associated with the worship time of the church), the better.

The role of the United Church Women remains an important facet of mission funding within The United Church of Canada, as it was ten years ago. This point is very significant to note when evaluating the results of the questionnaire, and looking at recommendations for the future.

**Question #13. "The following statements would apply to my home congregation ten years ago": (check all that apply)**

*[recorded in order of preference from most common response to least common]*

<b>1. Our mission givings are augmented by the United Church Women.</b>	164 (66.9%)
<b>2. Our people like to give primarily through monetary donations.</b>	140 (57.1%)
<b>3. The prime focus of mission work is through the Mission and Service Fund.</b>	128 (52.2%)
<b>*4. We could do more in the area of mission projects and outreach.</b>	125 (51.0%)
<b>*4. We could learn more about the mission of the church.</b>	125 (51.0%)
<b>6. Mission issues are raised in the worship service 2-3 times a year.</b>	92 (37.6%)
<b>7. Children learn about the church's mission in Sunday School</b>	91 (37.1%)
<b>8. Funds for the Mission and Service Fund of the church come after all staff and building costs are met.</b>	70 (28.6%)
<b>9. Our main concern is supporting local mission and outreach.</b>	58 (23.7%)
<b>10. We have an annual Stewardship Visitation program.</b>	57 (23.2%)
<b>11. Our people like to have "hands-on" experience in mission work.</b>	56 (22.9%)
<b>12. Mission issues are raised in the worship service every month.</b>	54 (22.0%)
<b>13. Mission education is a focus of our congregation.</b>	48 (19.6%)
<b>14. We are doing all that we can in the area of mission.</b>	40 (16.3%)
<b>15. Mission is the essence of the church.</b>	22 (9.0%)
<b>No answer</b>	34 (13.9%)

The role of worship as a vehicle for mission education is greatly reduced in this profile of ten years ago, and the importance of an annual Stewardship Visitation program is much higher in the order of answers for question #13, but little change is evident over

that ten year span. The United Church Women (UCW) groups remain strong supporters of mission, though their role was most highly rated ten years ago. While the number of Sunday Schools in the church have dwindled over the past ten years, there seems to be a greater emphasis on mission education within the Sunday School program today than there was ten years ago. Further detailed analysis of this data and implications arising from this material will be discussed in the ensuing chapter.

**Question #14. "In the next three years, I expect overall support for the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church will":**

<b>Increase:</b>	92 (37.6%)
<b>Decrease:</b>	43 (17.6%)
<b>Remain the Same:</b>	100 (40.8%)
<b>No answer:</b>	10 (4.1%)

This question was not as informative as I had hoped, for many read it as referring to their own pastoral charge, and not (as intended) as a statement on the overall support within The United Church of Canada. Re-reading the question from the eyes of the recipient, I realize the question is not clear, given the fact that it is nestled within a series of questions which all refer to the particular pastoral charge or congregation within which

the person serves and/or worships. Some even circled this question and question #9 and linked them, as if to say “You asked the same question in two different places.”

Even given the fact that most answers were the same for #9 and #14, there is some noteworthy information. A slightly greater percentage are more pessimistic about the overall support for the Mission and Service Fund (17.6% predict a decrease in funding) than are pessimistic about their own pastoral charge (where only 11.8% predicted a decrease in support). The same is true around an increase in support: 42.0% predict an increase in their local pastoral charge for Mission and Service Funding, but only 37.6% predict an increase in the overall fund support. For the most part, people are slightly more positive about the performance of mission funding in their local setting than they are in the overall church.



**Question #15. "Less than 50% of the members of The United Church of Canada support the Mission and Service Fund. Reasons given by people in my congregation for not supporting the Mission and Service Fund include the following":**  
*(check all that apply)*

*[printed in order of response, from most common to least common]*

<b>1. Need money for local church</b>	202 (82.4%)
<b>2. Rather give to local causes</b>	181 (73.9%)
<b>3. Protest against United Church policies</b>	118 (48.2%)
<b>4. Fund too impersonal</b>	61 (24.9%)
<b>5. Disagree with Mission Priorities</b>	59 (24.1%)
<b>6. Let Official Board set budget</b>	47 (19.2%)
<b>7. Administration costs too high</b>	34 (13.9%)
<b>8. Never heard of Mission and Service Fund</b>	29 (11.8%)
<b>No answer / no reasons known</b>	9 (3.7%)

The greatest reason for not supporting the Mission and Service Fund rests with concern for the local church, or for the local mission. This trend in seeking local projects over denominational projects, and not using one's support (or lack thereof) for the Mission and Service Fund as a protest action against the church, is consistent across all provinces. The breakdown of responses for each province is as follows:

<b>Province</b>	<b>Protest Against U.C. Policies</b>	<b>Rather Give to Local Causes</b>	<b>Need Money for local church</b>
<b>British Columbia</b>	14	25	24
<b>Alberta</b>	14	22	26
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	9	15	23
<b>Manitoba</b>	5	13	14
<b>Ontario</b>	55	74	82
<b>Quebec-Maritimes- Newfoundland- Labrador-Bermuda</b>	14	24	26
<b>Unknown origin</b> <sup>1</sup>	7	8	7

1. The only category in which the responses for each of these three statements are close to identical in numbers is among responses of "unknown origin." This could be an indication that those who did not include a return address, or did not offer any way of identifying the place of origin of the response, are people more likely to be suspicious of the General Council activities of the church, and therefore careful to be identified in a questionnaire originating from the General Council offices of the church. The fact that the number of responses from an unknown origin was less than 5% of the total responses does not leave me confident that such a conclusion would be true for a larger sample. What this observation leaves me wondering is: "Are people more honest, or simply more negative, when they know their views will not be traced back to the author of such views?"

**Question #16. "One Way to generate interest in the Mission and Service (M & S) Fund of the Church is":**

This question elicited a great deal of response. Some people shared their best or most unique idea. Others gave a list of a number of ideas that have worked well. A few used this box to offer their critique of current information packets. In total, 163 of the 245 replies offered an opinion of one kind or another. A listing of the many responses follows, and an analysis of what these responses mean comes in the next chapter.

**British Columbia:**

**A) Minister**

1. The whole twinning concept even if a congregation focuses on 1 M & S receiving unit per year to increase awareness of the impact
2. to have the Moment for Mission on a weekly basis
3. Minutes for mission
4. for regional and national "levels" of church to honour the congregations as agents of mission not cash cows

**B) Other Staff**

5. There are enough tools to inform us now - it's just finding time/making time to use them - minute for missions, Advent calendars and projects, etc.

**C) Ministry/Outreach Committee Member**

6. Keep telling the story - stories of what the moneys do.
7. Reading Minute for Mission every Sunday worship and the bulletin inserts, we use them all.
8. The special edition of "MANDATE" is a tremendous source of information.
9. Keep talking about it. Human interest stories, Personal connection
10. Education conscientiously made available - building empathy.
11. Minute for Mission every Sunday would be good. *[happy face drawn]*

**D) Chairperson of the Board**

12. bring it to the congregation

13. local situations

**E) Lay volunteer**

14. more commitment to M & S fund by members of Stewards and by Elders - argues set amount of 10% to M & S “precluded those who wanted to designate their own percentage via their envelope givings”

15. Reading the minute for mission each Sunday and displaying the thermometer

16. Have speakers tell of personal experiences in Mission work.

**F) Chair of Stewardship Committee**

17. Adopt a particular area to learn about. Put presently available material from the U. C. Distribution Centre to full use!!

**G) Treasurer**

18. Personalize individual mission projects and the individuals working in them.

**H) Secretary**

19. Tell us about M & S projects in our area/neighbourhood. It seems much is focused on Eastern and Central Canada and little in British Columbia.

**Alberta:****A. Minister**

1. Minute for Mission. Major project every year.

2. To include more specific “mission Focus” areas in promotion, in order to personalize Fund appeal

3. Personal Stories from people serving in Mission Units or Overseas

4. To promote its value and the ministry done through it

5. To establish partnerships between congregations and mission units, + require congregation in the program to match 3 to 1 all donations to their partner with M & S contributions

6. Tell the story and move the heart

7. Bring back some proportion for specified projects - more personal interest

8. To focus on individual projects that people can learn about, get involved with more directly.

9. Special projects

**B) Other Staff**

10. Clergy talking about it and supporting it

**C) Mission/Outreach Committee Member**

11. We use envelopes (special or Thanksgiving)

Publications

Posters and brief interviews

12. Minute for Mission, Mandate, Local Info

13. make congregation more aware of local role of M & S

14. Keep M & S literature coming to Stewardship Committee

Bi-weekly "Moment for Mission" talks

Special Stewardship Projects. Keep training Stewardship People

15. We are from the west and all "Moments for Missions" articles show our moneys going to the east.

16. Thermometer chart. Minute for Missions.

17. Speaking tour by those involved in field. More info about local (in province projects)

**D) Chairperson of Board**

18. To keep reading the Minute (sic.) and Service "Minutes for Mission"

**E) Lay Volunteer**

19. by making congregation aware of local projects funded by M & S dollars, as well as those further afield.

20. Give it a higher profile in our fundraising efforts and financial communications

21. Increasing education about activities and projects of M & S.

**Saskatchewan:****A) Minister**

1. Through weekly reading of Minute for Mission
2. By minutes for mission, Sunday bulletin, Stories and Photos
3. Presbyter or mission animator to provide support and resources to congregation (esp. rural)
4. Verbal Minute Messages (M & S). Visual - printed in bulletin Minute Message Stewardship Education - speaking about it in church, Board and Annual Visitation.
5. Moment for Mission
6. Information on its use. Personal reflections by donors and recipients
7. Slides, video, films showing how the fund is used; Minutes for Mission which tell someone's story.

**B) Other Staff**

8. Through Minute for Mission in worship service  
Bulletin inserts

**C) Mission/Outreach Committee Member**

9. Continue the Minutes for Mission
10. Education - keeping all age groups informed. Our minister (presently) makes M & S an important item in the order of service every Sunday.

**D) Lay Volunteer**

11. more minutes for mission  
speakers during church  
through education which is ongoing  
tell stories of actual results and impact of supporting the fund

**E) Stewardship Committee**

12. Congregational Education

**Manitoba:****A) Minister**

1. consistent info as to what M & S is doing with funds to congregation - i.e. give an account.
2. provide opportunities for hand-on, face-to-face mission projects
3. minutes for mission every Sunday; awareness of local M & S projects
4. Minute for Mission every second Sunday. Every other Sunday have a mission moment in the bulletin and have M & S envelopes ready and available every Sunday.
5. weekly reading of minutes for mission and more personal experience of the effects upon a community
6. Min. for Mission each week; M & S Focus services of worship

**B) Other Staff**

7. helping people make personal connection

**C) Mission/Outreach Committee Member**

8. Bring in good speakers on particular areas of concern
9. Videos. Statistics re: mission, with comparisons as to life here in Canada and elsewhere.
10. Material sent by Department of Stewardship Services is great.
11. Minutes for Mission helps (though some dislike it)  
Advent candle lighting this year will use the M & S inserts, capped with a congregational prayer  
Mission Fair/Festival *[answers from whole committee]*

**D) Chairperson of the Board**

12. education

**E) Stewardship Committee**

13. guest speakers (mission animator)

**Ontario:****A. Minister**

1. More local hands-on projects or mission trips; visiting by members would help. (rural)
2. Bulletin inserts (15-20x year); M & S thermometer givings (rural)
3. Promote it! And give examples of what is happening in Canada and around the world. (rural)
4. Find ways to involve congregation more directly. M & S guest speakers. Detailed info on specific UCC missions; Special mission events. (rural)
5. Keep us aware of needs. (rural)
6. Keep producing "Minutes for Mission" (rural)
7. Minute for Mission connected with a special project like Lenten Coin Box (rural)
8. Allow direct support of particular projects; separate mission from service (rural)
9. To tell the stories of the work our church is doing and make it come alive. (rural)
10. Interest on this pastoral charge has been generated by weekly readings of M & S stories (rural, completed with lay volunteer)
11. sessional/occasional exposure in popular media (in-house exposure has its limits) (small town)
12. Use of Barometers and bulletin inserts telling the stories. (small town)
13. Make it more personal, hands on. (small town)
14. To use the published Minutes for Mission. (small town)
15. To better educate/enthuse ministers (small town)
16. Re-attach evangelism with social action (as it was in past) once church separated these two, givings became less relevant and less reliable (small town)
17. We do all we can - just off the radar screen of most. (small town)



18. National advertising on TV and radio - we need to go electronic (small town)
19. don't know. But how can people have a healthy church and not be mission minded.<sup>1</sup> (small town)
20. More personalized projects. Opportunities to accomplish specific tasks, as well, a bldg., etc. (small town)
21. Personalized, identified missions. (small town)
22. Good, informative eye catching ads in secular media - Macleans, major newspapers, etc. like the Salvation Army does, to which our people (regular worshippers and nominal) respond. Oops! Sorry! That would mean spending money. And Div. Com. would veto the idea as it intrudes on their supposed fiefdom. (small town)
23. To keep telling the story - used the materials provided by the UCC - educate and challenge (urban)
24. We regularly use the Minute for Mission - any liturgies available would be helpful (urban)
25. Sermon illustrations (urban)
26. Annual video for Board use and congregation use - clips from Spirit Connection (urban)
27. Have minister mention M & S projects in sermons (urban)

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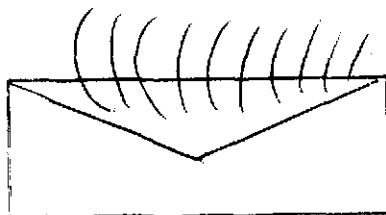
1. It is worth noting, I believe, that this minister did not tick off the box in either question #12 or question #13 that "Mission is the essence of the church." Of course those questions were asked of the congregation's view of mission, not the views of the individual responding, but it begs the question that if this minister feels one cannot have a healthy church unless the church is mission minded, does this minister see his/her church as healthy? An interesting sidelight to the questionnaire.

## 28. Profile of the super logo<sup>1</sup> and programs (urban)

1. The reference to the “super logo” no doubt means the Mission and Service Fund logo of The United Church of Canada created in 1994 by the Denominational Finance Committee of the Department of Stewardship Services of the United Church of Canada. The logo design is as follows:



The evolution of the design is a story in itself. A series of mock-up logo designs were created by the graphics Department of the Division of Communication of the United Church. One of those designs was something like the following:



An envelope with money stylized sharing the energy of the Spirit all over the world. Concern was expressed around the image for a number of reasons:

- a) mission is more than money - it includes personal commitment and involvement, as well as the donation of clothes and goods;
- b) many people give through monthly/quarterly/yearly cheques, or through monthly automatic bank withdrawal, not through envelopes;
- c) the symbol seemed to underscore what some complain about with regard to the church: “All the church cares about is money.”

The envelope looked like a box with an “M” inside. Why not use a stylized “M” as the logo base? No, the word “Mission” is an English word, and The United Church of Canada has many ethnic congregations where people speak other languages. Eventually, someone saw a stylized table/baptismal font in the “M” shape when the “V” was smoothed out, and the energy emitting from the top became water splashing out of a font, or a rainbow of God’s promises. Over the past three years the Confirmation Class at Rosedale United Church has come up with many interesting interpretations of the logo as a symbol of mission:

- the world with all the continents of God’s Mission
- a door that opens to all people everywhere
- the manger where Jesus was born and the light from his halo.

The logo is now a part of all church promotion on the Mission and Service Fund.

29. Have write-ups in the Observer about different mission projects undertaken by The United Church of Canada. (urban)
30. Sister-church relationships with personal contacts. (urban)
31. Once a month Mission Sunday readings from Minute for Mission, videos used, inserts in bulletin at Christmas, bulletin board displaying mission material, Mandate used (urban)
32. Have specialized areas for giving instead of the unified budget - i.e. (1) Education, (2) Mission Congregation (3) Conference Staff, etc. (urban)
33. The special issue of mandate helps. Perhaps radio, newspaper, TV spots. (urban)
34. To show "proper" use of funds, not for areas most disagree with. (urban)
35. Split the fund and personalize projects. (suburban)
36. Publicize info re: various M & S projects in church newsletter. (suburban)
37. Education tell the stories. (suburban)
38. A new item about our M & S projects in every monthly newsletter (suburban)
39. Tell people about it - especially in Sunday School. Articles in Observer. (suburban)
40. Funds to be used for "Outreach and Mission Opportunities" not for developing U. C. policy and conducting studies. (suburban)
41. Minute for Mission more often. Special series with focus on mission projects. More personal stories and ways to participate in projects. (suburban)
42. Explaining how the funds are use [sic.] Video's and pamphlet inserts (suburban)

#### **B. Other Staff**

43. We try to read a Minute for Mission each week. (rural)
44. Min. for Mission. Speaker who has experienced how M. & S. helps either in Canada or abroad.

### **C. Mission/Outreach Committee Member**

45. Interesting speakers with pictures. Get kids and teens to see and do work in other places. Keep one fund (too many requests) (rural)
46. To make funded projects more alive and less remote. People will donate to the Ice Storm and Manitoba Flood victims because the media bring the need into our homes. If this could be done with famine in Ethiopia or refugees from S. America it would certainly help the M & S givings. (rural)
47. Continue printing Minute for Missions - they are very informative and tell of a variety of projects supported by the fund. (rural)
48. If the U. C. would be faithful to the Basis of Union and become a Christ-centred church, more people would give to the Mission and Service Fund. Our church membership donate 4 times as much to mission organizations that are evangelical as well as supportive to the needy. (rural)
49. Minute for mission during monthly service (small town)
50. Monthly read of Moments for Mission. (small town)
51. Promotion by missionary personnel as speeches, etc. in local churches. (small town)
52. Minute for Mission, Lunches, Displays, Videos, Mandates to congregation (small town)
53. Minute for Mission - twice a month. Distribute special edition of Mandate. Have mission speakers. (small town)
54. Education, Education, Education. All budgets are theological documents therefore teaching the basics of faith in ways that attract people needs to take priority. (small town)
55. Encourage young minister trainees to go into other work where they are more likely to be employed. Stop giving them money from M & S just because no one will hire them. (small town)

### **D. Chairperson of Board**

56. Have a Stewardship Committee; Do a worship service spring and fall. (rural)
57. Personalize it - specific projects (small town)
58. Special speakers (small town)

- 59. Minute for mission statements (small town)
- 60. Regular presentations to Board.  
Encourage involvement of all ages. (urban)
- 61. We tend to get mailings that provide too many inserts, appeals, etc.  
....more selective mailings would be received more favourably. (urban)

#### **E. Lay Volunteer**

- 62. Mission Speaker (rural)
- 63. Have a special project to support. (rural)
- 64. An annual statement showing amounts actually directed to which groups and where located (as opposed to non-specific *Minute for Mission* blurbs) (urban)
- 65. Education which is an ongoing exercise. (urban)
- 66. Special 40-day Lenten offerings and Christmas offerings (urban)
- 67. Through special speakers with experience in a mission field. (urban)

#### **F. Treasurer**

- 68. A weekly *Minute for Mission* reading (rural)
- 69. Through education workshops (urban)

#### **G. Secretary**

- 70. To have someone speak to the congregation about it in person --  
make it more personal and relevant to the congregation (suburban)

#### **Quebec:**

##### **A. Chairperson of the Board**

- 1. Bring in speakers
- 2. Minutes for Mission at every service. Showing VCR taped programs

##### **B) Session member**

- 3. More education

**New Brunswick:****A) Minister**

1. We hope to soon have an audio visual capable sanctuary - thus video tape education and appeals would be helpful
2. bulletin inserts, minutes for mission, highlighting local examples in sermon, Lent/Advent folders
3. We would like M & S defined in a narrower sense

**Nova Scotia:****A) Minister**

1. In our case, highlighting local (Canada) work of M & S, more focus in this area!
2. not interested
3. to abandon the central office concept. Have churches raise and distribute \$ by Conference and within Conferences
4. Usually a story within worship plus the use of videos
5. finding ways to emphasize connectedness of people

**B) Mission/Outreach Committee Member**

6. Minute for Mission  
Support of Clergy

**C) Chairperson of Board**

7. further education outside of that expected of lay persons

**D) Lay volunteer**

8. Through imaginative use of mandate and teaching the children

**E) Clerk of Session and Treasurer**

9. awareness

**Prince Edward Island:****A) Minister**

1. education, emphasis on actual people and faces involved in mission - human element important

**Newfoundland:****A) Minister**

1. lived love projects - gave congregation personal experience of fund
2. minutes for mission
3. advertise like Salvation Army

**B) Other Staff (plus lay volunteers)**

4. minutes for mission  
attend Stewardship workshop  
have contact person to get info out to congregation

**Bermuda:****A) Minister**

1. Include info about Mission \$ in Bermuda and/or try to put mission dollars down here

**Unknown Origins:****A) Minister**

1. stories, posters
2. we are already bombarded. I expect that has caused people to get turned off. I know I am.
3. Let congregations directly select which projects we will support. We want to choose. We want our money to go where we want it to go and not to a lot of radical left wing causes.

**B) Mission/Outreach Committee Member**

4. Quickly respond to events in the news, while they are still high profile
5. Why not through a calendar? I have not been impressed with out U. C. Calendar!

**C) Lay Volunteer**

6. read minutes for mission  
have fundraisers
7. I have no suggestions because I believe there is a wealth of printed material and AV resources

**D) Board Secretary**

8. we read an exert [sic.] about mission work each Sunday

**Question #17. "As a congregation, we tend to support mission projects which"  
(check all that apply):**

*[printed in order of preference, from most common response to least common response]*

<b>1. Meet people's basic needs of food, shelter, and health</b>	215 (87.8%)
<b>2. Work in the local community</b>	185 (75.5%)
<b>3. Are sponsored by The United Church of Canada</b>	135 (55.5%)
<b>4. Serve an overseas community</b>	96 (39.2%)
<b>5. Are ecumenical in nature</b>	77 (31.4%)
<b>6. Provide educational programs</b>	68 (27.8%)
<b>7. Provide hands-on experience for volunteers</b>	61 (24.9%)
<b>8. Keep administration costs below 20%</b>	60 (24.5%)
<b>9. Have been visited by one or more of our members</b>	59 (24.1%)
<b>*10. Print an annual audited statement</b>	28 (11.4%)
<b>*10. Have an evangelical component</b>	28 (11.4%)
<b>12. Serve primarily women and children.</b>	27 (11.0%)

Once again, mission is of a local nature (75.5%), and seeks to meet basic human needs (87.8%), but the support of the United Church is key for many churches (55.5%) in planning mission priorities.



**Question # 18. “Other comments on your funding for mission & outreach activities”:**

A number of comments were received under the invitation to say whatever the responder wished to say about mission funding, priorities for outreach, etc. Some people sent in small essays detailing their overall programs. Others offered curt, direct comments of a supportive nature (such as Ontario, 10: “Many will respond if they know the story” or Nova Scotia, 1: “Our people seem more open now to special fundraising for M & S [*i.e. Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada*]”), or of a critical nature (for example, Unknown Origin, 2: “The National Church is out of touch with the grass roots. Our values are small “c” conservative while national values are NDP” or Ontario, 18: “We feel that the M. and S. spends too much money on studies such as sexual orientation and the authority of the bible”).

Relatively few questionnaires picked up the invitation for general comments in #18. Where opinions were expressed, they more likely were offered in relation to question #16, where 163 responses offered suggestions on the best way to promote the Mission and Service Fund of the church. This fact, combined with the fact that mission funding priorities are heavily weighted toward those projects supported by The United Church of Canada (see question #17), leads me to conclude that, at least for the leadership in a congregation, mission funding issues are not considered in a wide-open manner, but most congregations fund things based on traditional support, involvement in the local community, concern for basic human needs, and acceptance by (if not support by) The United Church of Canada as a whole. Since the parameters for funding seem to be fairly consistent, people do not have a great deal of information to share (or to seek) with regard to the mission of the church in general, and funding concerns in particular.

**Total listing of remarks in question #18:**

**British Columbia:**

1. If the congregation can see a connection between a mission unit and themselves, they give. *(ministry personnel)*
2. I'm exercising good stewardship by printing small and not adding extra paper. *(ministry personnel)*
3. I am doing all that I can to promote and inform our congregation. I appreciated the workshop session held last spring on M. and S. here in B. C. to keep me informed in a more personal way than on-paper stories. *(mission/outreach committee member)*
4. The commitment of our congregation is disappointing to our Outreach Committee. Members (a large majority) feel our own congregation should be their concern. *(mission/outreach committee member)*
5. Visual education on T.V. triggers the spirit of giving - would internet be a thought for future. *(mission/outreach committee member)*
6. Elinor Townsend explained M. and S. givings should be 1/3 of member givings. Not all grasp this. *(mission/outreach committee member)*
7. Primarily I think members of our congregation still don't clearly understand where the M. and S. money goes, and the importance of the work done in Canada, not just overseas. *(lay volunteer)*
8. Although we like to hear how the money is spent, we rely on those in charge of M. and S. to distribute money where and when needed. *(lay volunteer)*
9. There is a real need for individuals and congregations to understand the specific needs of each mission. *(chairperson of the board)*
10. It is shocking how much advertising and promotional material is produced *(secretary)*
11. Communication to the congregation is an on-going, ever present need. *(chair of stewardship committee)*

*[Last two responses almost diametrically opposed, yet both from same province and both from urban congregations. Clearly one cannot meet all people's needs in the same way.]*

**Alberta:**

1. The particular year we are having independent fund raisers through M and S info because the board decided not to include M and S in the budget and we're very encouraged by the response. *(mission/outreach committee member)*
2. Need to find ways to personalize it. *(mission/outreach committee member)*
3. M and S materials and information we receive are excellent. *(lay volunteer)*
4. Need to better communicate what M and S is about and what it achieves. *(lay volunteer)*
5. Other than M & S we regularly give to and work for Feed the Hungry each year and also to special appeals as to the Women's Shelter, etc. whenever they ask in such a way as to excite members of Outreach or the Board. *(other staff)*
6. If a project is initiated by minister it is usually supported by some. If Lenten envelopes are distributed at urging of minister then a few responses. It seems the minister has to initiate the project. Few will respond. *(other staff)*
7. Habitat for Humanity home built - "People of all ages got involved..it made us realize that personal involvement is a key." *(ministry personnel)*

**Saskatchewan:**

1. These congregations stopped giving to M & S in 1988. It is only new families coming and education happening that M & S money is now forthcoming. *(ministry personnel)*
2. never enough; income tax receipts important; not going after the present elderly 'have' generation. *(ministry personnel)*
3. We are an aid receiving charge which is receiving less and less from M & S but trying to support full time ministry as our community has many needs and we are not close enough to merge with another charge. Our mission is to help our church, which gives another voice in the midst of a loud conservative voice. Have been hearing questions about the residential school liability and the M and S fund. *(ministry personnel)*
4. National M & S budget is incorporated into all givings, but twice a year extra givings for specifically M & S are requested. Fortunately, national M & S budget has been met. UCW M & S budget is separate to congregational budget. *(mission/outreach committee member)*

5. All mission contributions are personal choice: M & S gets money and local mission gets goods (clothing and food) mainly. It's difficult to get increased givings when local expenses are constantly on the rise. Most resources go to just keeping the church going. *(mission/outreach committee member)*

6. We hope to make a special M & S offering say on Christmas Eve. All the married children bring their children to the December 24th celebration. We are optimistic. Dear Bill - *[name of congregation]* has always been generous in M & S givings. They have the habit of giving since they were children. We are an older congregation and I hope our M & S givings will continue as of now. *(mission/outreach committee member)*

### **Manitoba:**

1. We have been fortunate to have a \$3,000 gift annually to spend on the M & S inner city projects for several years. It hasn't arrived in 1998 so we may need to put more effort into raising M & S funds. *(mission/outreach committee member)*

2. People have told me they believe funding doesn't arrive in proper hands and not used for what it is intended. *(mission/outreach committee member)*

3. This questionnaire is poorly worded and somewhat confusing *(chairperson of board)*

4. I'd like to see longitudinal study of high giving congregations. Did long term solid pastoral ministries motivate M & S giving? *(ministry personnel)*

5. so far the level of giving to M & S has been slightly above average. *(ministry personnel)*

### **Ontario:**

1. Even though this congregation depended on Mission Support grants for its survival for 3 years, I still got blank looks when I asked questions about the fund. *(ministry personnel: rural)*

2. People do not believe in supporting the healing funds. *(ministry personnel: rural)*

3. Mandate Special Edition is a good resource. *(ministry personnel: rural)*

4. Overall Stewardship level is low for most people *(ministry personnel: rural)*

5. The Moderator's comments were a liability for us. *(ministry personnel: small town)*

6. Minutes for Mission are but a good start; need to put a face to mission - stress compassion and community vs. commitment and challenge (e.g. good local response to Manitoba Flood Relief in '97) *(ministry personnel: small town)*
7. Our Outreach Committee is extremely active. We have a drop-in for homeless street people, a breakfast-lunch program at local schools, a cooking club.  
*(ministry personnel: small town)*
8. We currently give 15% of tithes and offerings to M & S. People are free to opt out if they wish. Approx. 15% of people choose to opt out for various reasons.  
*(ministry personnel: small town)*
9. I think we need an assessment for running of national church office and a separate fund for the mission work either in Canada or abroad. The fund is too confusing for folks raised on a colonial mission model. That would eliminate the protest element.  
*(ministry personnel: small town)*
10. Many will respond if they know the story. *(ministry personnel: urban)*
11. We believe appealing primarily to the committed. *(ministry personnel: urban)*
12. An ongoing and important challenge. *(ministry personnel: urban)*
13. Most of our congregation are older folk with set incomes and can't afford to give more. *(ministry personnel: urban)*
14. Our local outreach programs were chosen to cover all age groups. 2 of our groups sponsor foster children. Youth group and S. School for "hands-on" experience  
*(ministry personnel: suburban)*
15. For your information - All mission givings are free will (we don't budget them)  
Local mission (1997): \$22,200    M & S: \$1,412  
*(ministry personnel: suburban, average attendance: 200-345)*
16. We have always tried to meet our goal over the last 10 years; only year we didn't was a change in Ministry Personnel. Some are still holding a grudge from 1988 events. Slowly changing but then this year's Moderator's comments bristled some hairs so we keep struggling! *(other staff: rural-small town)*
17. Various opportunities for supporting the M & S fund are great (e.g. Christmas Cards) as are bulletin inserts. *(mission/outreach member: rural)*

18. We feel that the M & S spends too much money on studies such as sexual orientation and the authority of the bible. These issues should be very clear in a Christian Church. *(mission/outreach member: rural)*
19. Church members not only support our givings but other agencies/funds through wide variety of personal givings. *(mission/outreach member: small town)*
20. Canadian Foodgrains Bank - like the idea of government input of funds  
*(mission/outreach committee member)*
21. Support Canadian Foodgrains Bank *(mission/outreach committee member)*
22. We recognize that local needs far outweigh any previous times' needs in these "unemployed and made obsolete" conditions right at home *(mission/outreach committee member)*
23. provide much more info on M & S projects to U.C. members  
*(mission/outreach committee member: urban)*
24. We try to increase our M. and S. givings each year but also support several special projects both overseas and local. *(mission/outreach committee member: urban)*
25. Designated for M & S amounts only go for M & S. No part of unallocated offering goes to mission. *(mission/outreach committee member: urban)*
26. We fund 3 or 4 other mission organizations (local, national, international)  
*(mission/outreach committee member: urban)*
27. M & S seems to [be] decreasing because of local church needs  
*(mission/outreach committee member: suburban)*
28. Children collect pennies for mission  
Specific funding activities - House boat excursions - supper's (sic.)  
*(mission/outreach committee member: suburban)*
29. I like the United Church unified (M & S) mission and outreach giving provided that congregations are free (as they are now) to pursue other means of mission and outreach as well. *(chairperson of board: small town)*
30. Reaching out to non-congregational sources to fund raise for specific activities/projects, e.g. out-of-the-cold. *(chairperson of board: urban)*

31. First is our local church - without it there is no directed giving by the congregation. Our church specifies needs and receipts applied - why can't Missions?

*(lay volunteer: urban)*

32. The local outreach versus the M & S test the loyalties of people / often they have no established priorities in their pattern for donations *(lay volunteer: urban)*

33. We have a "Peace, Love, Justice" approach for local agencies in December"

*(treasurer: urban)*

34. We have trouble recruiting and keeping a chair of stewardship. We are missing [a] voice to educate us on M & S and local needs too. A great emphasis is on paying off our mortgage/principal fund as quickly as possible - building 5 years old. We do support local mission through a community food bank by gifts of dollars and food and time to a large degree. *(secretary: suburban)*

#### **Quebec:**

1. 90% of 1997 donations to United Church - Mission and Service, Presbytery and Conference. *(mission/outreach committee member)*

2. Many give generously for local needs - not so freely to M. and S., no matter how much education is provided. *(mission/outreach committee member)*

#### **Newfoundland**

1. Cutbacks in employment - no growth in churches unless improvement in work situation *(other staff)*

2. Promote healing Fund through UCW and local congregation *(other staff)*

3. Other non-church groups; Samaritan Purse, Christian Blind Mission, Leprosy Mission, Breakfast for Kids, Children's Hospital *(other staff)*

4. Outreach committee promotes extensively: "Without this, the donations would decrease significantly." *(ministry personnel)*

#### **New Brunswick:**

1. Among leaders currently *(ministry personnel)*

**Nova Scotia:**

1. Our people seem more open now to special fundraising for M. and S. *(ministry personnel)*
2. Local food banks, shelter for battered women, nearby inner city mission. *(ministry personnel)*
3. We are a very small church. We are a Pastoral Charge of four churches and [one of them - name left out] is always over allocation. *(mission/outreach committee member)*
4. Mission is to the church what a hose is to a fireman. Without a sense of mission, you don't have a church, only a museum. If the minister is not committed to mission, you have a dead church even if every pew is filled on Sunday. *(mission/outreach committee member)*

**Bahamas:**

1. Have toll free number that works in the Bahamas. *(ministry personnel)*

**Unknown origin:**

1. Too much emphasis on M. and S. - too much material published and circulated. We are information overload. Congregations are overtapped with many very legitimate requests for contributions. Many people feel "we are doing all we can" and when more is asked for they feel pushed beyond reasonable limits and give up altogether. *(ministry personnel)*
2. The National Church is out of touch with the grass roots. Our values are small "c" conservative while national values are NDP. *(ministry personnel)*
3. I do not agree, but our congregation is still refusing to allocate funds to M. and S. through the Unified Budget. *(lay volunteer)*
4. Support for youth sponsorship in Mission Work overseas is popular. *(board secretary)*
5. When trying to meet the needs of our church, hard to educate on the needs of M. and S. Own local needs in community seem to have a high interest. *(mission/outreach committee member)*



**VI. The Priorities for Mission Funding within  
Responding Congregations of the United Church of Canada  
(An Analysis of Questionnaire Results)**

While the response rate to this questionnaire was somewhat limited (just over 8% of the 3,000 questionnaires sent out), I am confident that the sample has provided me with a good cross-section of the views of pastoral charges of The United Church of Canada. All regions are represented by at least one response, and most regions have several voices speaking on their behalf.

The data shows that many congregations of the United Church are quite small. Over 50% of the pastoral charges responding have less than 100 people in worship during November (some of those statistics include more than one church in the total), while less than 15% have more than 200 in worship during November, traditionally one of the most attended months of the calendar year.<sup>1</sup> The United Church in the 1960's considered seeking a minimum membership number for any pastoral charge to be 250 members, so most charges responding to this survey would be smaller than that figure.

Most of the responses came from members of the order of ministry. Fully 51.4% were ministers, while another 7.8% of the responses were from other staff. When positions such as church secretary and church treasurer are included as "staff" (most of these positions would be paid or at least include an honorarium), then less than 40% of the responses came from lay volunteers within the congregation. This data underlines

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1. *Supra*, 96, question 3 results.

what is said often in stewardship circles around the education and promotion of the church's mission: "The minister is the gate-keeper to the congregation. She/He can encourage the flow of information and the use of material, or he/she can stifle the entry to the congregation." It does underline the key role of the ministry personnel in setting a tone for lay involvement in the church's mission.

The percentage of the budget given to the Mission and Service Fund was not surprising. <sup>1</sup> Over 85% give less than 20% of their budget to the Mission and Service Fund. Almost half of that number give less than 10% -- 95 responses, or 38.8% of the total responses. Not one responding congregation claimed to give more than 30% of their budget to the Mission and Service Fund.

The United Church of Canada in recent years, through its mission promotion, has encouraged congregations to look at a new funding formula for the mission of the church. It has been suggested (sometimes subtly, sometimes very clearly and boldly) that a congregation-pastoral charge should give one dollar to others for every dollar it spends on itself. That would mean a goal of 50% for local efforts, and 50% for mission. Such a goal may be laudable and very consistent with the self-giving teachings of Jesus. It remains a long way off from the reality of the United Church and its congregations.

A similarly bleak picture is presented for the support of pastoral charges toward local mission endeavours, either those sponsored by the church, or those run by independent or parachurch groups. <sup>2</sup> Of those responding to this question, over 95% give less than

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1. *Supra*, 97, question 4.

2. *Supra*, 98, question 5

20% of their budget to such agencies, with over 85% of the total questionnaire returns indicating their pastoral charge gives less than 10% to these groups. There seems to be evidence of an increase in interest in the local nature of the church's mission in other parts of the questionnaire results. The lack of funding here could indicate the relatively new concern for local mission, or it could merely show that church budgets, based on tradition in terms of programs and spending units, have not changed to meet the new reality. Many people may be seeking a more local, hands-on approach to mission, but the church has yet to figure out how to make that happen in all circumstances.

Increases have been made, though, in local outreach. The answers to both question 7 and question 8 indicate that about 1/3 of the pastoral charges increased their offerings to local mission agencies (whether church sponsored or not) over the past ten years.

The largest increase rests with those groups that are not church affiliated, though it is important to point out that givings to church sponsored mission units have remained constant at a higher percentage level, thus balancing out some of that disparity.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that less than 10% record a reduction in offerings to local church mission groups and agencies indicates a strong desire to maintain local mission thrusts in an era where reductions are being felt in mission funding, local church budgets, and overall church giving.<sup>2</sup> The United Church of Canada as a whole needs to be sensitive to this shift if it is to maintain its mission givings as a national church.

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1. *Supra*, 101-103.

2. In her work in Niagara Presbytery in particular, Barbara Fullerton, a Stewardship Consultant for Hamilton Conference of the United Church, has noted many churches are linking up with local missions of the church, usually groups sponsored by The United

The results of questions 9, 10, and 11 all support the view that most pastoral charges have a positive outlook to the mission of the church, be it locally, nationally, or internationally.<sup>1</sup> Increases are projected in all three areas of work by at least 24% of the responses, with over 42% predicting an increase in givings to the Mission and Service Fund over the next three years.

I have discussed the fact that these positive results may indicate a higher percentage of pastoral charges positively-attuned to the mission of the church sent in responses to this questionnaire. Even if that is the case, the very fact that few predict a reduction in mission offerings shows that high support for mission is present across the church. What is more fluid is the nature and scope of the work of the mission groups to be supported. The remaining questions help to answer that question, and will be analyzed in considerably more detail.

**Analysis of question #12:**

“The following statements would apply to my home congregation now.”<sup>2</sup> *and*

**question #13:**

“The following statements would apply to my home congregation 10 years ago.”

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Church of Canada, but which have suffered reductions in funding in recent years. Some local churches see their role is to augment the reduced Mission and Service funding by focusing on these agencies as local mission initiatives. Such funding in turn often leads to further reductions in the Mission and Service Fund givings from that pastoral charge. (Interview by author, 3 January 1999)

1. *Supra*, 104-107.

2. *Supra*, 108-110.

Some interesting trends emerge from these lists. There is a healthy realization on the part of almost three-quarters of the pastoral charges that they could do more in the area of missions. That is the number one response at 73.1%. At the other end of the spectrum, a surprisingly small number, 27 in total, or 11% of respondents, claimed that “We are doing all that we can in the area of mission.” Many people make the comment in conversation or in church gatherings that their church is doing everything it can to reach out to others, but when asked to respond to such a bold statement, the leadership of the congregation is not so sure that is the case. (That means that approximately 13% feel they are doing an adequate job in mission work, since they are neither doing “all that they can” nor are they open to being pushed to do more. Three per cent did not respond to the question at all.)

The nature of that mission remains more traditional, though, in the majority of pastoral charges that responded. People give primarily through monetary donations (67.3%) to projects that are supported through the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada (62.9%), rather than seeking hands-on experiences in mission endeavours (only 35.5%) which have primarily a local focus (26.9%).

While it also may seem obvious to some (as it did to my aforementioned critic)<sup>1</sup> that we always can learn more about the mission of the church, it was a long way from being unanimous in the answers received. In total, 147 identified with this statement, or 60% of respondents. That placed this statement in the mid-range of responses (sixth in order of priority of fifteen choices provided).

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1. *Supra*, 93, n. 2.

Much of what happens around a church centres on the worship experience itself. The increasing role of the worship time as a moment for reflection on the mission of the church is clear in this questionnaire. A total of 160 (65.3%) indicated that “Mission issues are raised in the worship service every month” today, and 65 (26.5%) indicated that “Mission issues are raised in the worship service 2-3 times/year” currently.<sup>1</sup> Ten years ago, those numbers were only 54 (22.0%) raised mission issues at least monthly in worship, and 92 (37.6%) raised mission issues at least twice in a year. Clearly worship and communication of the mission are more closely linked today. This connects with movements within the Department of Stewardship Services to have more Mission and Service information on the weekly bulletins sold through the Department of Stewardship Services within The United Church of Canada. This data also should encourage more liturgical resources around stewardship and mission focus to be produced. In 1998 the Department of Stewardship Services produced stewardship theme-related worship resources for both Advent-Christmas-Epiphany and Lent-Easter.<sup>2</sup> There may be a role for worship resources that lift up the mission of the church in particular.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Six responses checked both boxes. It is obvious that if a congregation raises issues once a month, they also are raising them at least 2-3 times a year. In all of those cases, I counted the “once a month” line and skipped the other. On one questionnaire, there was a helpful explanation as to why both boxes were checked. A mission-outreach committee chair said: “The minister raises mission issues at least once a month in the service, and I raise them quarterly with a special presentation.”

2. The Lent-Easter resources are included here as Appendix A.

3. Barbara Fullerton finds churches tend to use bulletin covers and inserts, Minutes for Mission, and worship planning resources. What are *not* used are bible study resources. (Interview by author, 3 January 1999).

The role of the United Church Women (UCW) also is important to the overall mission givings of local churches. Fully 175 responses, or 71.4%, state that local mission givings are augmented by the United Church Women. Ten years ago, that support was just as great, if not greater. Of the 211 responses to question 13, 164, or 77.7% of respondents to that question, identified the important role of the UCW in mission givings. As United Church Women groups dwindle in numbers and in influence in local congregations, a major impact on givings to mission projects in general, and the Mission and Service Fund in particular, will be felt. Currently about 10% of all givings to the Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada come from United Church Women groups.

There is little difference between rural and urban congregations on this answer, with the exception of three questions. In rural and small town congregations, 82.1% have their Mission and Service givings augmented by the United Church Women, making it the largest response in that bracket. Only 56% of urban and suburban congregations have their Mission and Service givings augmented by the United Church Women, or the fifth most popular response in that group. It seems that more urban congregations have a dwindling number of UCW units (69% of those same congregations had givings for mission from the UCW ten years ago). As women's work continues its changes and re-focusing, especially in urban areas, the lack of mission funding from women's groups will remain a concern for the church. The church will need new sources of revenue to offset those losses, and new energy for the mission enterprise.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Beaver, *American Protestant Women in World Mission*, 218, has claimed the loss of a world mission results from women no longer having the energy and volunteer hours available to promote this mission of the church. "World mission draws its power from voluntarism, and in the past that has been primarily female voluntarism."

More urban churches seem to place a higher priority on recognizing the needs of the church's Mission and Service Fund as part of the basic activities of the church. In urban-suburban congregations, only 10% would say that "Funds for the Mission and Service Fund of the church come after all staff and building costs are met," whereas 29.7% of the respondents from rural and small town congregations would respond that way. That response may link to the other one with a significant variation between the two groups of churches. Fully 67.6% of the rural-small town respondents feel "We could learn more about the mission of the church" (making it the third most popular response in that group) while only 49% of urban-suburban congregations (the seventh most popular response) would affirm the same statement.

It is surprising that the desire for a "hands-on" experience in mission is constant among all groups (35.9% among rural-small town, and 35% among urban-suburban), while the concern to support local mission and outreach actually is higher among the rural-small town churches (31.7% versus 20% for the urban-suburban).

Also shocking is the low percentage of pastoral charges in which a stewardship campaign is held. There again, the numbers are consistent across the board. Of rural-small town pastoral charges, only 22.1% have an annual stewardship campaign, while among urban-suburban pastoral charges, 21% have such an annual campaign. These numbers vary little from ten years ago (22.1% and 25% respectively). The thrust around an annual stewardship program in order to raise the funds needed for a church's mission may be of little interest to the vast majority of churches within The United Church of Canada. That could mean a major re-thinking about how the money is raised for the mission each year. Many resources assume such a campaign is in place.



When compared with ten years ago, the answers in question 12 around current attitudes to mission show some clear trends:

a.) worship time is used much more regularly for mission education today than it was used ten years ago. While 65.3% of all responses claimed to raise mission issues at least once a month in worship now, only 22.0% of all responses so answered for ten years ago. Many more had a periodic method of speaking about missions: 92, or 37.6% of responses raised mission issues 2-3 times a year in worship ten years ago, versus 65 responses, or 26.5% today. Should this data prove to be representative, then it is imperative that those involved with mission education see the worship time as a prime time for mission education, resources, and support. The fact that the Department of Stewardship Services in 1999 is expanding its successful "Minutes for Mission" document to include 52 "seconds for mission" (a sentence or two for the bulletin) as well as the regular 52 weeks of minute speeches on mission, shows the value of the weekly worship time as a place for sharing information. A new thrust (which began for Advent-Christmas, 1998 and continued for Lent-Easter, 1999 - see Appendix A) of producing a prayers and worship resources on Stewardship themes for the major seasons of the church year also ties into this need for more monthly, or even weekly, worship-related resources.

b.) the trend to a more direct involvement in mission, while not startling, is significant. Ten years ago, only 56 pastoral charges, or 22.9% of the total returned questionnaires (and 24.24% of those who answered the question) agreed with the statement "Our people like to have a 'hands-on' experience in mission work." Today, those who

agreed with that statement are 87, or 35.5% of all returned questionnaires. What is less clear is the shift from a more global perspective to a more local one. Only 23.7% viewed local mission and outreach as the main concern of the church ten years ago (or 27.5% of responses to the question). Today, however, the percentages did not change dramatically. Of all responses, some 66, or 26.9%, saw this as crucial to their pastoral charge today.

c.) there is less pride around the church's mission efforts today than was the perception of ten years ago. Fewer responded affirmatively to the statement "We are doing all that we can in the area of mission" today (27) than responded affirmatively to that same statement for the church of ten years ago (40).

Coupled with this lack of confidence or pride around the completeness of the church's mission is the willingness to admit more can be done. Fully 179 responses, or 73.1%, claimed "We could do more in the area of mission projects and outreach" today, versus 125, or 51% of all questionnaires, with respect to ten years ago. While we may not see all being done that can be done today, there is an admission that more can be done, and should be done, by those working in the congregational setting.

Finally, much of the anecdotal material confirms a recent survey authorized in 1996 by the Department of Stewardship Services and conducted by Kenron Management of Sarnia.<sup>1</sup> That survey, on department policies and resources, indicated that the *Minutes for Mission* document was the most popular resource produced by the department. That particular document provides a mission story (it takes approximately one minute to read

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1. Appendix E.

it) about some aspect of the church's work for each Sunday of the year. The purpose of the Kenron survey was to get a handle on how the Department of Stewardship Services could be helpful to its constituency in the production of promotion material and educational resources around the church's mission. In an era of dwindling resources, the question needed to be asked: "What would be the most helpful resources to conduct education around the mission of the church in local congregations?"

That same *Minutes for Mission* resource also was mentioned by 45 of the responses in this survey (18.4%), even though it appeared nowhere in this document. People had to write it in in order for it to be recorded. What is further interesting is that 18, or 7.3% of those who said that they use mission resources once a month, wrote in that they use mission resources in worship weekly. In most cases, the resources used are the weekly readings from the *Minutes for Mission* document.

#### **Analysis of responses to question #15:**

This question provided the most telling data of any question for me. Since 1988, when The United Church of Canada accepted the right to consider for the Order of Ministry all people regardless of sexual orientation, mission givings have plummeted. Concerns around the funding priorities and policies of The United Church of Canada did abound across the country. Many congregations decided to protest against the church by reducing (or even withdrawing) their voluntary donations to the Mission and Service Fund of the Church, the funding mechanism for the church's mission and administration. Fully 48.2% (118 responses) still claim that a reluctance to support the Mission and

Service Fund by some people is based on a desire to “Protest against United Church Policies.” That reason, though, is far from the most common reason for a lack of support. The top two reasons: “Need money for local church” - 202 (82.4%), and “Rather give to local causes” - 181 (73.9%) indicate that the focus for mission has dramatically shifted to the local scene. People still want to support overseas work and wider ecumenical endeavours (see question #17), but where people are reluctant to fund denominationally-based projects, their reluctance is based on a concern for the local needs of the church much more often than it is based on a desire to protest church policies.

Of the responses which indicated that a lack of funding for the Mission and Service Fund is based on a “Protest against United Church Policies,” fully 110 responses, or 93.2% of those which listed “Protest against United Church Policies” as a reason for a lack of support, also listed either “Need money for local church” or “Rather give to local causes” as a reason for a lack of support. Some 77, or 65.2% of those 110 who listed “Protest against United Church Policies” as a reason to avoid the Mission and Service Fund, also listed both “Need money for local church” and “Rather give to local causes” as reasons not to support the Mission and Service Fund, too. Only two responses indicated that a “Protest against church policies” was the sole reason to avoid supporting the denominational fund, while another six responses linked “Protest against Church Policies” with such concerns as “Administration costs too high” (two) or “Disagree with Mission Priorities (four).”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Three responses seem to indicate that “Protest against church policies” is the prime reason for a lack of giving, even though other responses, including support for local mission and local causes, have been checked as well. In one case, that item on “Protest...” is checked twice; in another case, a bold arrow is pointed to the box where a

While a vocal minority remains poised to criticize The United Church of Canada for any of its policy statements and ongoing congregational studies, these results show that a far greater threat to the wider mission of the church is a lack of identification with, or concern for, denominational outreach.<sup>1</sup> People have a greater affinity with the local mission of the church when a decision must be made between the two levels. One comment from a lay volunteer in an urban pastoral charge in Ontario probably expressed the dilemma best: “The local church versus the M & S test the loyalties of people/often they have no established priorities in their pattern for donations.”

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check mark is made; in still a third case, that statement is circled and checked. To partly balance those strong feelings in favour of that type of protest against the Mission and Service Fund, one response specifically states “I do not know of any reason” [for not giving to the Mission and Service Fund], while another person who checked the line “Protest against United Church policies” qualified that response with the words “a few.”

1. This point is delineated in a wider context by the American stewardship writers Ronald Vallet and Charles Zech, *The Mainline Church's Funding Crisis: Issues and Possibilities* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995). This point is picked up again by Vallet (former Executive Director of the Ecumenical Commission on Stewardship Studies) in his latest book *Congregations at the Crossroads: Remembering to be Households of God* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), esp. 87: “As loyalty to institutions erodes, congregations and their members are likely to provide a lower level of support for the denomination. It is no longer sufficient for a denomination to say, “This is our program and our budget. Please send in your support....*People are increasingly reluctant to support what they may perceive as denominational bureaucracies*” (emphasis Vallet's).

### **Analysis of Question #16**

When asked to give one successful idea for mission education and raising funds, people offered a plethora of ideas. Some questionnaires had a complete list of ideas, while others submitted their year-round plan for stewardship and mission education.

A number of general themes arise from these responses:

- a) the most popular print media remain the most effective resources in the local congregation. People continually referred to items such as the *Minutes for Mission* document (which provides at least one mission story for every Sunday of the year) and the *Mandate* mission magazine.
- b) some churches like using audio-visual resources, but there was as much interest in having the church employ advertising on the public media networks as there was interest in more audio-visual material to be used within the church itself.
- c) several people lauded the Department of Stewardship Services for the breadth and scope of the materials provided; several others decried the waste in over-production of resources and too much paper.
- d) concern for material that related to the local region was raised more than once, reflecting the trend that has been seen in responses to question #15, namely that local mission projects carry more interest today than mission enterprises far away. Still others questioned the priorities of the national church in establishing its mission

funding.<sup>1</sup>

e) many asked for more personal material -- either through connection of people with the local church, employing local consultants and mission interpreters, or twinning pastoral charges with projects. The successful "Live-Love" program also was mentioned, though it was a project that began in the 1960's and has not been utilized for over a quarter of a century.<sup>2</sup>

Some general recommendations quickly arise:

a) no matter how effective resources are within the church community, people need reinforcement around the needs of mission projects through personal involvement in the effort, contact with individuals directly active on a daily basis, and a sense of how a

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1. This point is clearly stated by Ronald Vallet, *Congregations at the Crossroads*, 86: "Evidence is accumulating that the understanding of mission by denominational leaders is not consistent with the understanding of mission held by many of its congregations." Vallet goes on to urge denominational leaders to re-evaluate their mission in order to avoid further erosion of local support for that mission. The same can be said of the congregation: its mission must be consistent with the needs of the local member.

2. A recent survey on *Options for Mission and Ministry Funding in The United Church of Canada*, circulated to all pastoral charges by The United Church of Canada (and found as Appendix D here), solicited support for a unified fund for mission work, yet a report on the findings states: "at the same time, we want inspiration, more involvement with what we fund. Many people who support unified giving also express concern that it 'limits relationship and enthusiasm for giving' or that designation 'enhances personal commitment to mission.'"

project impacts on the lives of the people served. Vague write-ups or flat pictures are not enough, especially when people are used to professional, heart-wrenching video productions by large parachurch agencies over the television.

b) resources can be catchy, but they do not replace the open, eager and enthusiastic support of the minister (or barring that, the support of a small group of key lay leaders).

People want to be on a winning side, or at least support something that is worthwhile.

When negative messages on the Mission and Service Fund come from the pulpit every week, the desire to give, and the motivation to make a difference in the overall mission funding of the denomination as a whole, is lost. The power of the “bully pulpit” still exists, even though most congregations have members much better informed about the world and its needs than ever before. Ministry leadership either can empower or can destroy the enthusiasm which lay leaders have for the mission work of the church.

c) there still is a level of some mistrust of those who work in the national offices of the church. When it comes to supporting the mission of The United Church of Canada, some place a higher standard of accountability on the United Church than they put on other agencies to which funds are entrusted. Leaders and mission educators within The United Church of Canada simply must get used to that reality. Any attempt to dismiss concerns raised at the local level will only encourage the growing gap in both interest and support between local missions and the wider mission of the church denomination.

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1. That same document on responses to the survey on *Options for Mission and Ministry Funding in The United Church of Canada* refers to “an obvious concern with what might be called the “flatness” of unified giving.” Uninteresting material for a fund that has little personal appeal is a combination doomed to find little funding support.



### Analysis of Question #17

This priority listing shows that the outreach within The United Church of Canada is not primarily an evangelical thrust (only 11.4% see that as a priority), or even based on a desire to support projects with which one has a close personal identification (24.1% support projects that at least one member of the congregation has visited, and 24.9% seek hands-on experience for volunteers as a criterion for support). The motivation for support in most pastoral charges is to meet people's basic human needs for survival, where the focus is on social and personal well-being (87.8%), do work in the community (75.5% - though, as the above categories indicate, not necessarily projects with which the congregation has a direct link), and are sponsored by The United Church of Canada (55.5%).<sup>1</sup>

The categories which received the least support certainly surprised me. Other than "Have an evangelical component" (which I did not expect to be highly rated based on a new and growing trend to be negative about the concept of "evangelical" and even "evangelism" within the United Church), the remaining statements in the bottom half of this list are echoes of concerns often expressed in gatherings of the Stewardship network of The United Church of Canada, and points raised with regard to the overall mission of The United Church of Canada.

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1. This ties in with what William Brackney declares in *Christian Voluntarism*, 155: "The typical strategy of local church leadership has been to frown upon excessive extra-parish organizational investment at the cost of denominational work." The high regard for United Church sponsorship of programs shows the still high regard for the denominational priorities by those answering these questions. The fact that mission moneys are going to non-church agencies and local church missions as well as to the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church shows a need for people to expand their mission funding horizons from the local congregation.

More and more people claim they want a personal identification with a project, be it through a hands-on experience or through visiting the site. Administration costs often are cited as a reason to support projects other than The United Church of Canada Mission and Service Fund, yet less than one in four (24.5%) view “Keep administration costs below 20%” as an essential condition for support of a mission activity. The need for fiscal accountability is covered even more directly with “Print an annual audited statement,” yet that is even less supported (11.4%). This category, in fact, ranks last among responses by rural-small town pastoral charges, where only 14 (9.7%) consider this an essential component of decisions for funding. Also curious is the fact that overall the least important category is “Serve primarily women and children.” Given that 71.4% of all pastoral charges have their mission givings augmented by the United Church Women (see question #12), then it would seem logical that one criterion of support for mission would be to have an agency or project that specifically supports women and children. In urban-suburban responses, where only 56% of the pastoral charges have their mission offerings augmented by United Church Women, a paltry 7% of responses (7 pastoral charges) consider this focus on women and children an important aspect of mission project funding.

The traditional thrust of mission work within the church remains a strong influence on the local congregation, for the fourth and fifth most popular responses: “Serve an overseas community” (39.2%), and “Are ecumenical in nature” (31.4%), tie in with traditional mission activities of the United Church as a partner with other mainline denominations throughout the world.

How can one account for the fact that both “Work in the local community” and “Serve an overseas community” are among the most popular responses? Quite simply, people understand the mission of the church to be a “both-and” experience -- both “here” and “there.” The 1963 meeting of the Commission on World Mission of the World Council of Churches called this a missionary movement that “now involves Christians in all six continents.”<sup>1</sup> That means, as Johannes Aargaard, Professor of Mission and Ecumenics at Aarhus University in Denmark writes in the wake of the 1968 meeting of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala, that we must focus not on the *missio Dei*, but the *missiones Dei*, or “the manifold ways in which God makes himself present in the Holy Spirit in our period of history.”<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ronald K. Orchard, editor. *Witness in Six Continents: Records of the Meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches held in Mexico City December 8th to 19th, 1963* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1964), fourth point of the closing message, 175.

2. Johannes Aargaard, “Mission after Uppsala 1968,” in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, editors, *Mission Trends No. 1: Critical Issues in Mission Today* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), 17.

### Analysis of Question #18

The general comments section provided a variety of responses. Some people offered best wishes for the project, while friends offered personal notes and comments. Some felt compelled to give reasons for their own pastoral charge's limited support of the Mission and Service Fund, while others used this question as a chance to speak highly of their efforts at raising money for mission projects.

Several themes arose in this material:

a) The level of support for, and trust of, the leadership of the church in the area of Stewardship seems to be high. Examples of that may be seen in such comments as: "Although we like to hear how the money is spent, we rely on those in charge of M. and S. to distribute money where and when needed" (B.C. #8, lay volunteer) and "Our people seem more open now to special fundraising for M. and S." (Nova Scotia #1, ministry personnel).

b) There is a feeling that much of the promotional material produced by the church is worth distributing to the pastoral charges, but many feel overwhelmed by the volume of material available (such as letter of Unknown Origin #1: "Too much emphasis on M. and S. -- too much material published and circulated. We are on information overload.") While there are supportive comments for the value of the church resources and leadership (for example, Ontario letter #17: "Various opportunities for supporting the M and S fund are great (e.g. Christmas Cards) as are bulletin inserts" - *mission/outreach member: rural*), others are highly critical of the inability of the church leadership to be in touch with the church as a whole (Unknown Origin #2: "The National Church is out of

touch with the grass roots. Our values are small “c” conservative while national values are NDP” - *ministry personnel*, or Manitoba #2: “People have told me they believe funding doesn’t arrive in proper hands and not used for what it is intended” - *mission/outreach committee member*), or at least they underline the ongoing need for education and communication (B. C. #9 “There is a real need for individuals and congregations to understand the specific needs of each mission” - *chairperson of board*);

c) Promoters of the Mission and Service Fund always need to be in search of new, creative ways to seek the funding necessary. Some reinforce the need to maintain the development of resources like those presently available; others want to find ways to communicate the church’s mission through secular media and even the internet (for example, B. C. #5 “Visual education on T.V. triggers the spirit of giving - would internet be a thought for future” - *mission/outreach committee member*). [Similar suggestions were made for question #16.]

d) The United Church is seen as concerned with issues of social justice, ecumenical cooperation, and political action. Many people who raised that history did so in a critical way, suggesting that the church should rediscover its evangelical roots.<sup>1</sup> Part of the

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1. This was not a majority opinion, as results to question #17 showed; only 28 responses, or 11.4% of the questionnaires, indicated they give to mission projects which “have an evangelical component” (*supra*, 129). Alan Bailyes writes about this false dichotomy in the context of the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Appendix III of the Statements from Nairobi read: “Christians are called to engage in both evangelism and social action. We are commissioned to proclaim the gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. Simultaneously, we are commanded to struggle to realize God’s will for peace, justice and freedom throughout society.” Alan J. Bailyes, “Evangelical and Ecumenical Understandings of Mission,” *International Review of Mission* Vol. 85, No. 339 (Oct. 1996): 485-503.

concern raised was a concern around the gap in understanding what the church should be between local pastoral charges and higher levels of the United Church. As one respondent remarked: “Primarily I think members of our congregation still don’t clearly understand where M. and S. money goes, and the importance of the work done in Canada, not just overseas.” (B.C. #7 - *lay volunteer*) When more strongly stated, people felt the leadership of the church has strayed from the biblical faith which established the church in the first place. Such sentiments have been linked to the church’s stand on sexuality and ministry from 1988, where all persons regardless of sexual orientation are eligible to be considered for ordered ministry (for example, Sask. #1: “These congregations stopped giving to M & S in 1988” - *ministry personnel*, and Ontario #18 “We feel that the M & S spends too much money on studies such as sexual orientation and the authority of the bible. These issues should be very clear in a Christian Church” - *mission/outreach member: rural*). In recent months, dissatisfaction with the church’s theological position has been linked to the Moderator’s interview with the Ottawa media (Ont. #5: “The Moderator’s comments were a liability for us” - *ministry personnel: small town*). One person brought both of those events together (Ontario #16: “Some still are holding a grudge from 1988 events. Slowly changing, but then this year’s Moderator’s comments bristled some hairs so we keep struggling!” - *other staff: rural/small town*)

e) Many mentioned other projects with which they are associated. It seems that the draw to fund projects and missions outside of the work narrowly defined as that of The United Church of Canada actually encourages support for the denomination’s mission. A basic principle of stewardship education has always been: “A spirit of giving produces

a sense of generosity that leads to more giving.” The same, it appears, can be said about the ways in which congregations support the mission of the church: “A willingness to support the mission of the church allows congregations to see that mission in a variety of places and in a multitude of forms.” Some of those other appeals that are mentioned include the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (Ontario #20 and #21), Habitat for Humanity (Alberta #7), support for food and shelter programs (Alberta #5, Ontario #7, #30, Nfld. #3, Nova Scotia #2), Foster Children (Ontario #14) or simply an unspecified body of agencies other than the United Church (Ontario #19, #24, #26, #33).

One chairperson of the board suggested seeking funds from outside the congregation to fund outreach work, such as the Out-of-the-Cold Program in many urban centres (Ontario #30). This is one effort to which people totally outside of the church network or congregational membership are willing to donate significant funds. In many cases, the church need only ask directly to solicit money which now goes to other outreach and charitable activities.<sup>1</sup>

f) While generosity breeds more generosity, the major obstacle to support of the church’s wider mission seems to be a desire to meet local needs. Several responses point out the fact that local needs surmount the mission requests. In a couple of cases, there is no apology for such a view (in fact, there is a sense of self-justification for

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1. In Rosedale United Church, Toronto, the lunch program run by the congregation for the Out-of-the-Cold initiative in downtown Toronto (lunches are served at Metropolitan United Church by volunteers from Rosedale United every Tuesday from November 1st to March 31st) is almost totally funded by corporate and business donations. That program costs approximately \$20,000 per year to run, but raised \$26,635 in 1997 and \$24,525 in 1998.

putting local needs above the wider mission of the church). Examples of this come from B.C. #4 “The commitment of our congregation is disappointing to our Outreach Committee. Members (a large majority) feel our own congregation should be their concern” - *mission/outreach committee member*; Sask. #3: “Our mission is to help our church, which gives another voice in the midst of a loud conservative voice” - *ministry personnel*; and Ontario #31: “First is our local church - without it there is no directed giving by the congregation” - *lay volunteer: urban*. In at least one case (Ont. #32: “The local outreach versus the M & S test the loyalties of people / often they have no established priorities in their pattern for donations” - *lay volunteer: urban*), there is an acknowledgment of the struggle between balancing local needs and the greater mission. As long as the questions around funding priorities are being addressed by the church in a thorough and meticulous way, then decisions concerning the church’s mission will reflect the results of intentional consideration. Too often, I sense, congregations have stopped the struggle to determine where they want to be, and what they want to do, around issues of mission and outreach. Where once the spread of the gospel may have been an intentional issue to face, now the priority rests with the fundamental question: “How can this congregation/pastoral charge survive?”<sup>1</sup> The mission question (“What is the mission

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1. This issue was raised in an interview with Loren Mead of the Alban Institute, in Bob Bettson, “A Survival Plan for Ailing Churches,” *The United Church Observer* (June, 1994), 23: “Q. If congregations concentrate more on local mission work, how will the funding of national and international work continue? We’re already seeing a trend towards more of the donor dollar going to local spending. A. That has been a trend across the board in most mainline denominations since 1968. I think it is dangerous...A lot of congregations are in trouble, and they are going to cut back. They are not cutting back to be selfish. They are cutting back because they don’t have the money.”



of this church?") has been replaced by the survival question ("How can this congregation/pastoral charge have a future?").

g) Given the local focus and particular interest of people within the local churches, a few suggested dividing up the centralized Mission and Service Fund into designated gift centres. Others even felt local congregations and members should be able to give directly to their project of choice.

The issue of a centralized fund within The United Church of Canada for funding the mission of the church has been contentious for many decades. As early as 1962 the pressures on this centralized fund were being felt, as indicated by a memorial to General Council from Alberta Conference that year, stating "That we re-affirm our belief that the Unified Plan of Finance represented by the Missionary and Maintenance Fund<sup>1</sup> is the best way of financing the wider work of the Church."<sup>2</sup> That has been the way in which funding has been established ever since. In 1997 the General Council Executive sought a report on designated giving from the Department of Stewardship Services. There remains a great resistance to a designated plan of giving among the volunteers across the church, though a growing minority have expressed the deeply held belief that some changes must take place to accommodate the new expectations held by donors to the church's mission. No longer can money be expected simply because it is needed. The

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1. This was the precursor term for the "Mission and Service Fund."

2. The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of the Twentieth General Council September 1962, London, Ontario*. (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1962), 88.

first question most people ask is “Why do you need it?” and the second one will be “How will you tell me if you spend it wisely?”

The report requested by the General Council on designated giving became a discussion paper on funding options, with the end result that The United Church of Canada surveyed all pastoral charges to get an impression of their preferred options for mission funding. One person in the survey under discussion in this study suggested a separation of the support for the work of the national offices and the mission work of the church (Ontario #9 - *ministry personnel: small town*).

The general comments underline the fact that some turmoil exists within the church as mission priorities are established at all levels. Views on mission are evolving within the church. The final shape of that mission, and the sources for its funding, are yet to be determined. One thing appears clear: the church no longer can assume denominational priorities will translate into congregational priorities, or that local priorities will automatically support national and international projects.

## **VII. The Future Mission of the Church: A Blueprint Based on a Sampling of Congregational Priorities**

This study grew out of observations I made as a Regional Stewardship Consultant with The United Church of Canada during 1993 and 1994. It appeared to me that people had experienced a transformation in their understanding of, and support for, the mission of the church. That transformation included the following realities, namely a shift from:

- foreign, overseas missions to local, neighbourhood missions;
- church-based mission activities to agency or (parachurch)-based mission activities;
- preaching and sharing the gospel to relief and development work;
- a mission to change or convert people to a mission that serves people 'where they are at.'

Having shown the ways in which the mission of the church has, indeed, become more local in its focus (a shift that, in part, may be attributed to the wider paradigm shifts in society as a whole and the church in particular, and a shift, in part, due to the specific tensions between local congregations and the General Council level of The United Church of Canada), I now want to address the issue as to how those responsible for raising the funds of the mission of the church can use this understanding of the new local focus for mission as an opportunity for raising the profile of the mission of the church as a whole.

This study began as an attempt to develop stewardship principles around the shift in focus of the mission of the church. I learned quickly that one cannot raise funds, or even encourage personal commitment to the mission of the church, without first

understanding the reasons for the shift in mission focus, and the assumptions which lie behind people's desire to share in the mission of the church (however it is defined).

Two main themes recur in this material -- what I would term (to borrow from economics literature) the "macro-issue" and the "micro-issue" of mission support and funding.

Loren Mead in his book *The Once and Future Church* offers for me the best account of the macro picture. He argues that the church is moving into a new paradigm. In the earliest centuries, the church worked from an Apostolic Paradigm, where the church was over and against the society and the culture around it. Evangelism and mission, then, was reaching out to those outside of the church itself. Some of those people separate from the church may be people living in one's own neighbourhood, and some may be far away. In simple terms, though, the model was one of "church versus the world."

In the era of Constantine and beyond, the Christendom Paradigm evolved, where the local congregation was seen as the centre of a region or neighbourhood, known as a "parish." This parish of believers and adherents shared a common culture, language, and view of the world. Mission in that model was seen as sharing the gospel with those "outside the bounds of the parish," i.e. in remote parts of the country or in foreign lands. Within the context of one's own neighbourhood, the church and the world were one.

Within the development of The United Church of Canada, there has been an acceptance of the Christendom paradigm for much of the earliest history of the denomination. The mission of the church was seen as a call to reach out to those lost souls (variously known as the "heathen" or the "unbelievers") who were in far-off

countries (generally overseas) and currently beyond the grace of Christ.

That view of mission was under question when the General Council formed the Commission on World Mission in 1962. In the work and report of that commission, a new understanding of mission dominated. Issues such as partnership in mission, dialogue with people of other faiths, and seeing mission as a six continent affair, and so involving all parts of the world (including one's own home territory) became the accepted norm. That shift to a world mission, though, did not eliminate the concept of mission as also reaching out to others far away. Mission simply now involved people in our own communities, and missionaries could come "from the rest to the west" (or to anywhere from anywhere, for that matter) instead of the traditional "from the west to the rest." Concepts of partnership grew in the church's understanding of mission, but the global aspect of mission was not lost in this transition.

We are now moving into a new era, not identical with the Apostolic Paradigm, for we still share many cultural and social realities with the wider world around us, yet not similar to the Christendom Paradigm, for many people in our own neighbourhood do not share values and beliefs based on Christian teachings. In a world of increasingly multi-cultural experience, multi-faith communities, and even non-faith neighbours, the church must find a new way to understand its mission and to share it.

We are moving into a new era, where the mission is primarily local, and yet it is not a "church versus the world" scenario like the Apostolic Paradigm. In fact, people do not

necessarily trust the church authorities<sup>1</sup> as having the best insights as to what the church should be about for the future. What is the vision for today? The big picture is changing, and we need to struggle with where we are.

This is the “macro-picture,” yet the individual believer also faces a new understanding of faith and mission in what I would term the “micro-issue” shift. Individual believers no longer trust their mission efforts to others without some involvement themselves. The need for involvement in the mission of the church, and indeed involvement in all aspects on one’s personal life within the church, is growing.<sup>2</sup> (The number of lay readers in regular worship, or the number of family members taking part in a wedding or funeral, would be exponentially more than what I experienced as a minister 20 years ago.)

That means most people want to have some ownership in what they do. Simply being told to support a cause “because it is right” or “as a sign of faith” or as a way “to support the church” no longer animates a potential donor. Those who support the mission look for personal involvement and identification, a chance to do something (or assist in the accomplishment of something) that is meaningful. At the North American Conference on Christian Philanthropy in Orlando, Florida in February, 1998, Kennon

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1. Mead, *The Once and Future Church*, 39, “most congregations now see little connection between what their judicatory or denomination proposes as mission and what they themselves identify as mission.”

2. A position supported by Mead, *Once and Future Church*, 53: “In the Church of Christendom, the clergy were assumed to play the primary role in mission and ministry. In the emerging church, the laity are the primary ones to cross the missionary frontier and undertake the missionary task.”

Callahan spoke of the shift in stewardship understanding from giving on the basis of commitment to giving on the basis of compassion. Where once people gave to the church because it was expected as part of the demands of membership, now people give to causes which they regard as valuable, important, and make a difference in others' lives no matter who is the sponsoring body.

The mission of the church can only happen in the future if there is sufficient support for its activities. Such support will not be found unless the church (as individual congregations, or as a denomination as a whole organized within a variety of judicatory configurations) is sensitive to the changing expectations for, and demands of, the mission that is both Christ's mission and our mission.

In light of the review which has been undertaken in this study, I offer some stewardship principles which speak to this changing understanding of mission within the congregations of The United Church of Canada.

1. Mission education will be effective when it is carried out the way evangelism and church growth is done: one-on-one.<sup>1</sup> Personal contact means more than a fancy program, a colourful resource, or an exciting video. The church must renew the personal ways in which the mission of the church is communicated to local congregations and members, or the risk of denominational funds dwindling even more is great. This demand to make the mission personal by contact with those working in

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1. Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon in *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 166, emphasize in their own words the need for an individual, personal yet community-based approach to the mission of the church: "Renewal comes, not through isolated, heroic thinkers, but rather in the church through the everyday activity of people...."

the field is difficult when projects which are funded by the Mission and Service Fund are stretched to the limit in terms of personnel and resources. The time available for promotional work in the church as a whole, or in individual congregations, is limited. The United Church today also has such a small pool of overseas personnel (i.e. missionaries) -- 38 in 1998 versus 270 as recently as 1965 -- so information sharing from experienced personnel is virtually impossible. There are not enough people to share the mission story of The United Church of Canada. Yet ways need to be found to make the message personal. Such was a common thread in many questionnaire comments. As long as other mission groups and parachurch organizations find ways to touch the heart of donors in a personal way, church members will increase their mission dollars for such agencies. The United Church of Canada may find it difficult to "compete" with agencies that use mass market advertising, infomercials on television, and sophisticated mail campaigns, but compete it must if it is to maintain anywhere close to its historic funding levels for the wider mission of the church. One way to change the negative trend in mission givings for the national church would be for the United Church to rediscover ways to make the mission speak to individual donors (which may include looking at expanding its advertising in the secular media, and reducing the percentage of the budget spent on in-church promotional efforts through official church media resources).

2. Most congregations still rely on support from the United Church Women (UCW), yet statistics show that the UCW is dwindling in terms of the number of groups still meeting and in the number of members in total. Most such groups also face an aging,



and so less able, body of members in terms of major fundraising events or personal mission involvement.<sup>1</sup> The church must face the fact that a major hole in the mission programs may arise when these UCW groups become even less common. Failure to address this concern could result in devastating results for the wider church's mission. Somehow the involvement of professional women in the activities of the church have not included ways to tap their compassion and concern for others into special support for the mission of the church. No longer can budgets in the local church be seen as "ours" and "the women's;" the approach, instead, must be to view the work of the whole congregation as a shared venture, and then determine how all partners in that unit will share the work, the witness, and the cost. All that the UCW groups have done in local congregations enhanced the ministry and mission of the whole church. It is time for the whole church to acknowledge its debt to such activities, and to discover new ways to maintain those efforts.

3. People relate positively to individuals hired to help them with their mission promotion and education, but the church periodically has introduced such programs only to pull the funding after a short time. Currently the General Council Executive of The United Church of Canada has provided special funding of up to \$650,000 a year for three years to do mission promotion in every Conference of the church as a

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1. It was reported at the annual meeting of the Department of Stewardship Services of The United Church of Canada (February 20, 1999 in Toronto) that in some United Church Women's groups, half of the members are eighty years old or older. Those groups obviously will have a limited resource pool in ten years, and have of necessity reduced their funding for the wider mission of the church. Compounding this dilemma is the fact many UCW groups now add significant dollars to the local church budget for operating and staff expenses, thus further reducing an already diminishing pot of money for mission work.

whole (13 in total). This effort is a follow-up to an experimental program of two Regional Stewardship Consultants (one covering parts of Alberta and British Columbia, one in Southwestern Ontario) during the years 1991-1994. The church may need to realize, as many businesses realize, that promotion and advertising (as un-church as those words may sound) cost money and cannot be short-circuited where interest is dwindling in the church's mission.<sup>1</sup> A failure to fund promotion because of a lack of money will only guarantee an ongoing reduction of funds for all aspects of the church's work.

4. Despite the many ways in which The United Church of Canada has been questioned vilified, or even dismissed in the past decade, and in spite of the loss of members and congregations (most of which took place during the raucous debates over the issue of Sexual Orientation and Ministry during the 1980's), a positive attitude to both the church's mission and its funding possibilities arises from these questionnaires. In planning for the future, the United Church must build on that good will. While money for the mission of The United Church of Canada via the Mission and Service Fund has dropped in recent years, the givings per identifiable giver have

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1. This, too, has been a long struggle within the church. *The Commission on Financial Policy in the Distribution of the Unified Budget Fund* which reported to the General Council of the United Church in 1962 urged that funds be increased for the Missionary and Maintenance Department: to fill vacancies on staff and to round out its promotion programme." *The United Church of Canada, Record of Proceedings of the Twentieth General Council of The United Church of Canada, September, 1962* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1962), 299. Clearly the need for adequate and well-planned promotion was evident back then. That same vision was evident in a more recent three year funding for "revenue generation" within the Department of Stewardship Services. The issue is: will the funding continue in order to maintain the mission?

increased. What is of equal significance is that the amount of money raised for local mission and the local church have increased as well. This means that fewer and fewer people are doing more for the health and well-being of the church's mission locally, nationally, and internationally. An inability to celebrate those examples of sacrificial giving and commitment will send a wrong message to the church.

To state this position differently, the national church must stop trying to preserve its traditional mission activity levels based on the assumption that people must support the wider mission of the church as defined by centralized initiatives within the church. The priorities of denominational staff and regional leaders may not be the priorities of the church as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Many congregational members have a different view of the wider church. Fewer and fewer have been a part of a church community throughout their lives. Many have become members in recent years. The fact that several could not answer the priorities of their own congregation from ten years ago shows both mobility and, potentially, a newness to the faith journey itself for key lay leaders in The United Church of Canada. The church in its official capacities must honour the role of the local congregation<sup>2</sup> while still attempting to provide leadership for the wider mission of the church nationally and internationally.

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1. Avery Post and William McKinney of Hartford Theological Seminary, in an introduction to William McKinney, editor, *The Responsibility People* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 11, write about the unique perspective of retired church leaders in the American setting: "This generation was more and more inclined to understand the church as mission." The same applies to the Canadian scene.

2. Doris Anne Younger, retired Executive Director of Church Women United and formerly of American Baptist Women, lived mission as a professional church worker, and sought ecumenical cooperation, yet she now realizes the limitations of getting others to share such a position. Doris Anne Younger, "What Would I Like to Say to My

**5.** Finally, one also needs to note that the basis for giving today has radically changed.

People give more out of a sense of compassion and sharing than out of a sense of duty or responsibility. In addition, the motivation for giving is based more on meeting people's basic needs and less on providing an evangelical or instructive presence in others' lives. This study has shown<sup>1</sup> that people in The United Church of Canada also operate on a desire to help people in crisis around life's necessities. For many years, requests for assistance to special appeals established by the United Church to meet such crises (the flooding in Manitoba, the ice storm in Ontario-Quebec, famine relief in North Korea or aid to victims of Hurricane Mitch in Central America) have elicited significant response. The church needs to find a way to make giving to the Mission and Service Fund as significant and special as funding these immediate crises.

Knowing the impact of the ongoing work of the church, and having a visual connection to the mission enterprise, would be among the ways to do just that.

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Successor?" in McKinney, editor, *The Responsibility People*, 346-347: "In the real world, the local church is the primary expression of the church. . . . Ecumenism is too often seen by them as competition." Kenneth Teegarden, retired minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is very forthright on the limitations of demanding support for denominational projects from congregations (especially if those congregations are within a church based on a congregational polity). Quite simply, "If the congregation doesn't want to participate, there is nothing that can be done" (Ibid., 317). Increasingly The United Church of Canada acts like a congregational church on such matters.

2. See question #17 results, *supra*, 129.

## Summary

The church has issues it must address, but it also must honour the commitment and dedication of a faithful group of leaders who continue to put the church's mission -- indeed, Christ's mission -- at the forefront of their concerns.

In the movie "Field of Dreams," the message got through that if you build it, they will come. In the mission of The United Church of Canada, the formula for success is not that simple. In days past, it might have been true that if you asked for assistance, it would come. Now people, sophisticated in the ways of the world, aware of competing needs at home and abroad, knowledgeable about international banking and much more aware socially and politically, give on the basis of a compelling need that touches their lives.

Mission funding no longer can be successful by using the formula: "Ask, and they will give." Stewards of the mission of the church must realize that in asking, the request must touch the donor's sense of compassion and concern for others; the project for which one is asking must meet people's basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, and basic sustenance; the money collected must be carefully spent and properly accounted for; the goals of the project must be honestly reported and the data in terms of clients served must be accurate and concise. In short, the mission of the church, broadly understood, must be preserved, but the perspective of the individual donor also must be honoured.

There has been a clear shift from centralized funding of programs to more locally-based mission endeavours, and the lack of trust in ecclesiological institutions and leadership means that people want more personal contact with programs they will fund and nurture. The church not only must be aware of these trends, but also must be sensitive to

these trends and revise its mission objectives and methodologies for funding accordingly.

A failure to do so will cause even further erosion from the funding of the wider mission of the church.<sup>1</sup>

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1. David W. Preus, the retired Bishop Emeritus of the American Lutheran Church, and one who argues for a strong global mission as part of the Lutheran denominational heritage, despairs at the lack of mission support within local congregations today. When asked during an interview by Margaret Post how he saw the church handling both the sense of an evangelical mission, and an openness to global justice and ethical issues, Preus responded: "A lot of our congregations, instead of choosing one side or the other, are dropping out... We have spawned an increasing number of independent congregations who are going to do their own thing their own way and are ignoring the national church offices and are placing their resources elsewhere" (McKinney, *Responsibility People*, 271). What Preus states about the dichotomy between 'evangelism' and 'social justice' for American Lutherans could apply to local congregations of The United Church of Canada about issues of local mission versus global mission. Too many have opted out of all mission (as shown by the small percentage of gifts to the mission in relation to the overall church budgets).

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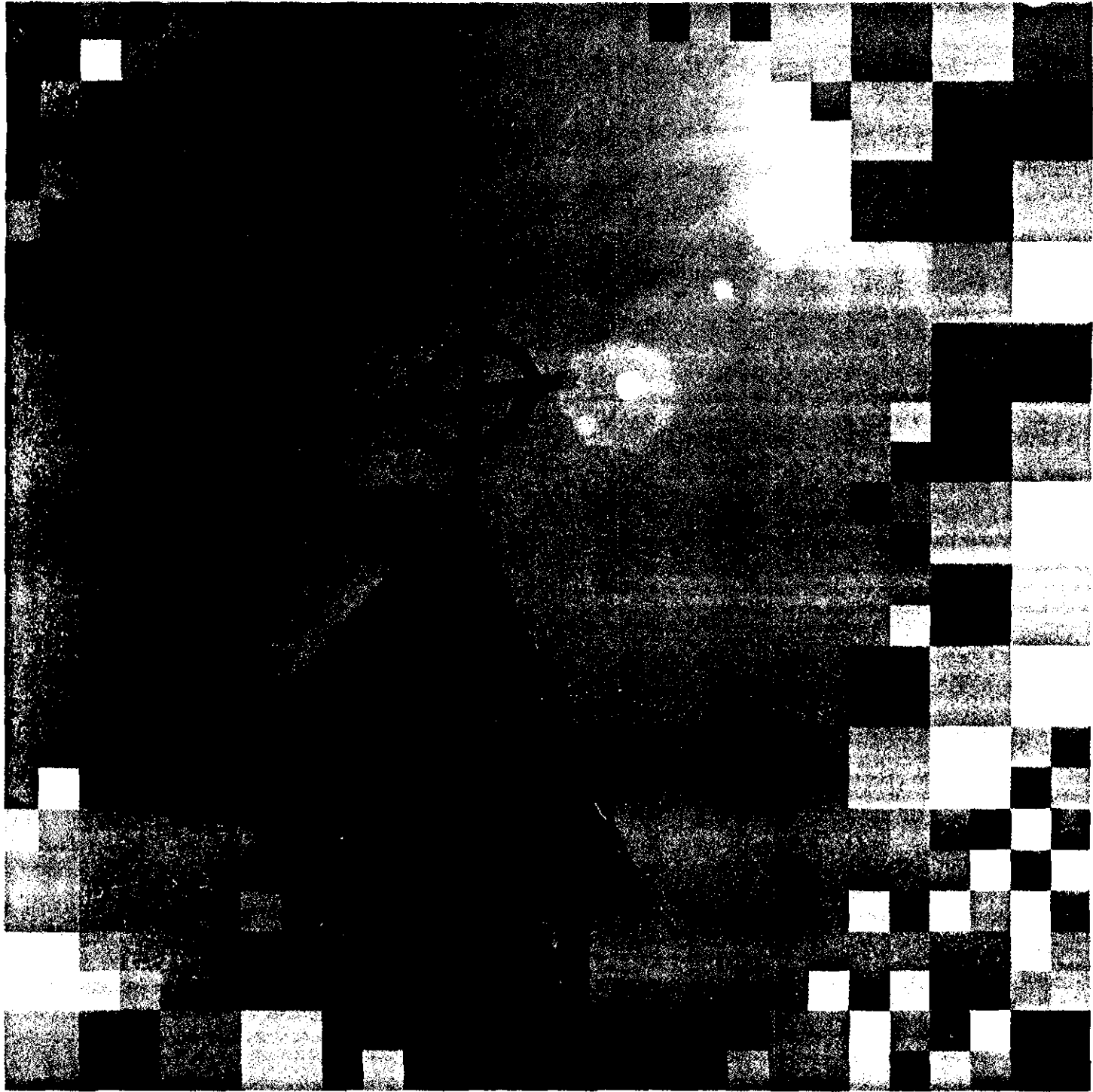
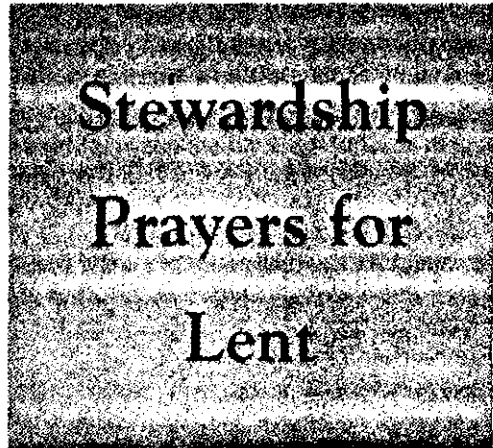


Photo: Allen McCarrey

APPENDIX A





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The following prayers for use during Lent have been written by men and women in the United Church. They are based on the lectionary for Lent Year A, although much of the material could be used on any Sunday in that season in any year - or at other times of the church year.

The writers have freely contributed their time and talent to this resource. You may reproduce any of the material, but we would appreciate it if you would give proper credit when you reprint the prayers in your church bulletins, newsletters or other church publications.

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The United Church of Canada.  
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# Stewardship Worship Resource for Lent

## ASH WEDNESDAY

### CALLS TO WORSHIP

- One:** As in Christ we work together, may we not accept the grace of God in vain.
- All:** Though we be sorrowful yet may we be always rejoicing, though being poor yet may we make many rich, and though having nothing yet may we possess everything.

*Bob Matton*

- Leader:** Now is the time to wholeheartedly return to God!
- People:** For our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.
- Leader:** Without Show! Without Ostentation!
- People:** Let our lives declare God's praise.

*Bill Brown*

### PRAYER OF APPROACH

O God, we are called to approach you in ashes, not to practice our piety for others to see by trumpeting our almsgiving or seeking others' pity towards our fasting. Rather, we pray, make us humble of soul and spirit in everything we do, remembering always that whatever we do in Jesus' name we do it for you and you alone.

*Bob Matton*

### INVOCATION PRAYER

Gracious God, in this time of worship we return home to you and are amazed to find ourselves welcomed and accepted as we are. We pray that your Spirit may transform us. Enable us so to lose ourselves, that genuine love for others may make us as your people and stewards of your reign of justice and peace. Amen.

*Bill Brown*

### OFFERING INVITATIONS

When we see the truth your way  
we turn.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem, not for his own sake  
but following the will of God.

As we go to Jerusalem this Lenten Season,  
our hearts will be broken by the gift of Cross.

Our lives will be restored through the gift of Jesus.  
Our living is made joyful as we respond.  
Let us give our tithes and offerings.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

Jesus teaches that our earthly treasures are not so much to be sought after as the treasurers of heaven. Let us respond now with the offering of our hearts and treasure.

*Bob Matton*

### OFFERING DEDICATIONS

This season is dark God.  
We would rather not experience it.  
We cannot go through it alone.  
Hold our hearts, guide our living.  
And bless what we do as we present our tithes and offerings. Amen.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

Our treasure is indeed your treasure, O God. Receive now what you have entrusted to us and enable us, in all things, to give from the heart.

*Bob Matton*

### PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

At this time of penitence, we search our hearts, recognizing within ourselves our true humanity. We acknowledge our humanness: our inability to recognize Christ within others, our inability to serve our fellow human being, our inability to love ourselves, our inability to care for Mother Earth. We ask for forgiveness. May the presence of the Holy Spirit guide us once again to be stewards of right relationship.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

When we repent and return to God, recognizing that we need the Divine Presence in our lives, we are free to rejoice in the visible love of the One who created us. Thanks be to God.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

Humbly and cautiously we come before you, O Holy One. We acknowledge that we have failed to be true stewards of your Word and Truth. We seek your mercy and ask your forgiveness because we know that in returning to you we find abundant joy.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

We are people of God, loved and nurtured by the Divine Spirit. Freed of our inhibitions, we can

continue the journey of true discipleship as an Easter people.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

## **COMMISSIONINGS AND BENEDICTIONS**

Mark well, the days ahead.  
Our hearts will be made heavy by the walk of Christ  
to Jerusalem.  
Remember God's mercy and live in Christ's love as  
you go.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

May the God whose heart is torn by love/  
Bless you and keep you.  
May the Christ whose heart is greater than death/  
Bless you and keep you.  
May the spirit whose heart is filled with life/  
Bless you and keep you.  
Now and always.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

We begin our Lenten journey in sackcloth and ashes.  
As we seek to walk the walk as well as to talk the  
talk, may we be joined by God our Creator, Christ  
our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit our Redeemer.  
*Bob Matton*

## **LENT 1**

### **CALLS TO WORSHIP**

Even in this place we are not free from temptation  
and test.

We may look for miracles  
or listen for the speaking of God's Word.

We may search for proof of the power of God,  
or see the presence of divine grace.

We may serve many things,  
or serve the One who gives us life.

Let us do the choosing wisely  
Let us worship God.

*Gretta Vosper*

This day, as each day, God offers us again an opportunity  
to choose to worship God  
to choose to walk with Jesus  
to choose to wait upon the Spirit's wisdom.

Alone, we find it hard to choose what is best.  
So we come apart from the world awhile  
to draw strength from God and from one another  
Let us worship God and be renewed  
for faithful choices day by day.

*Pegi Ridout*

## **PRAYERS OF APPROACH**

Creator and Life-Giving God,  
make your presence known to us  
that our choice might be to listen for Your Word,  
to rest in the trust of your Grace  
and to worship you with the whole of our being.  
In the name of the One who taught us how to  
choose, we pray. Amen.

*Gretta Vosper*

God, you hold all creation and all creatures  
in your tender embrace.  
Our hearts are warming to your grace.  
Our ears are listening to your strength.  
Our eyes are awakening to your hope for the world.  
Open our lips to sing your truth  
our hands to receive your freely offered gifts  
and our lives to seize our responsibilities  
for the coming of your commonwealth.

We pray in the name of Jesus,  
the one who chose your way in all of life.

*Pegi Ridout*

## **CHILDREN'S TIME**

Based on responsible choices—three boxes, one has  
enough stuff (maybe snack for during church school  
time or after worship) in it for one person, the second  
has enough for one person, the third has enough for  
sharing. The first one is easily accessible—you have it  
right there. The second one is going to take some  
work to get—it's in the next room under a table, the  
third one is going to be in another room, not too hard  
to get, but it won't be ready for another fifteen minutes  
(or whenever is appropriate, e.g. after worship). Ask  
children to choose and discuss their choices, carefully  
and honestly.

*Gretta Vosper*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Since the beginning of time, we have been tempted  
to make choices which have moved us away from  
God's vision for creation. Let us open our hearts to  
God as we confess our individual and corporate sin.

We are created with freedom to choose. Too often we  
have been consumers when we were called to be  
stewards, attracted by the fulfillment of our own  
desires rather than God's desire for creation. Let us  
come before God in confession.

*Deborah Johnson*

## OFFERING INVITATION

God freely gives us whatever we have. Let us also give of our time, talents and resources.

*Martin Asumang-Birikorang*

## OFFERING DEDICATION

Empowering God, the source and nourishment of our lives, you call us to look for you in the simple things of this world. Your word is expressed best in our attitude toward your creation. May your love flow through us in the form of these offerings to bring blessings to our communities, and to your world.

*Martin Asumang-Birikorang*

## SERMON QUESTIONS

Responsible Choice - Can we defend our choices? What choices do we not want God to have anything to do with? What choices do we make routinely without considering God. Do we regularly remind ourselves that every choice we make is for or against our baptism and if we do, what does that mean? Why have you come to this place? Is it miracles you seek? Is it to test God's power? Is what you worship really here?

*Gretta Vosper*

- i) Stone and bread: what is the difference?
- ii) What choices do we make in our lives?
- iii) What rules and criteria do we apply in the choices we make?

*Martin Asumang-Birikorang*

## COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

We go forth to continue our journeys, making choices about what it means to be the body of Christ in the world. Let us go in the power of the Holy Spirit, recommitted to care for creation, to love our neighbour as ourselves, to be the people God would have us be. Until we meet again, may we be blessed by the grace, wisdom and faithful love of God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

*Deborah Johnson*

Leader: God calls us from this sanctuary  
People: To go out into the world.  
Leader: God empowers us to act  
People: As careful stewards of creation.  
Leader: God goes with us on our journey  
People: We are blessed.

*Deborah Johnson*

## LENT 2

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Our ancestor Abraham heard Yahweh's call  
People: "Go to a country which I shall show you"

Leader: Yahweh calls to us today

People: To walk again in God's way

Open to God's blessings

Sharing the good news of God's faithful love

Whenever God will lead us.

All: Let us listen for God's call.

*Deborah Johnson*

### PRAYERS OF APPROACH

Leader: Lift up your eyes to the hills

People: From where will our help come?

Leader: Our help comes from the Lord

People: Who made heaven and earth

Leader: Baptized by water and spirit

People: We who are many are made one

All: Help us O God

to be born anew in your image  
to respond to your faithful presence  
with all that we are.

*Deborah Johnson*

God of surprises, we come seeking your baptism of water and spirit that we may be born anew in your service. Open our hearts to new possibilities, that we may respond to your loving challenge to be the people you have called us to be.

*Deborah Johnson*

### CHILDREN'S STORY (JOHN 3:1-17)

#### "What A Surprise"

**Setting:** Use evaporated milk can, or any other can with fluid, and gently remove the wrapping. Carefully punch two holes on the surface where you removed the wrapping, to let out the milk. Pour some water through the holes, and thoroughly wash the inside of the can a few times to remove any traces of milk. Then fill the can with water, and firmly seal the two holes with tape. Put the wrapping back on the can. (These preparations should be done at home, prior to the story.) Explain to children how God can bring surprises into our lives.

Open the milk can to show water inside.

(If you know of someone who works in a can factory, ask them to put different things and objects into cans and seal them for you to use.)

**Conclusion:** When we open ourselves to God's leading, like Nicodemus, we will be surprised by the unlimited choices he gives us.

*Martin Asumang-Birikorang*

### **OFFERING INVITATIONS**

Do we love only when we know what will happen to our love?

Do we follow only when we know where we are being led?

Do we give only when we know what becomes of our gift?

God calls us to love recklessly, follow bravely, give generously

that joy might be known not only in the lives we touch, but in our own.

*Gretta Vosper*

When we grasp too tightly the familiar things of this world

we squeeze out room for God.

So let's loosen our grip on our money letting the winds of God's Spirit

scatter it into the world God loves.

*Pegi Ridout*

### **OFFERING DEDICATION**

God of Blessing and Promise, these gifts we bring, this love we share, these lives we offer that you might bless them each to your purpose and fill us with wonder and surprise. We offer them in the name of the One who stunned the world into great awakening, Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

*Gretta Vosper*

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

We sing the prayer,

"Holy Spirit, help us daily by your might,

What is wrong to conquer, and to choose the right."

Yet we know just how difficult it is

to make faithful choices:

to make choices that leave room for God

to make choices that allow room for God to

act in and through us.

We confess together:

(Prayer on back of bulletin 9-99)

*Pegi Ridout*

### **COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

God invites us beyond what is comfortable

beyond what is familiar

beyond what we know

even beyond what seems possible

into the adventure of faith  
of trust in God alone.

In our saying, "yes!" God promises to surprise us  
with blessings beyond our present imagining.

So, have the courage to say "yes!" to God

and the God of Abraham's sky full of stars

of Sarah's smothered laughter

and of Nicodemus' puzzled questions

will be with you.

*Pegi Ridout*

### **LENT 3**

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**One:** We have come this far O God.

**All:** Into your sanctuary, O God, to praise and worship you.

**One:** Bring us to the fountain, Lord, to drink of your holy water.

**All:** Life giver and sustaining spirit, quench our thirst with your everlasting water.

*Martin Asumang-Birikorang*

#### **PRAYER OF APPROACH**

Lord of all mysteries, we gather in your sanctuary to praise and worship you; and to receive blessings for our lives. Here, in your sanctuary, we are loved and honoured. Give us the grace to bare our souls to you, during our worship, and grant us your Holy Spirit to enable us to follow your way of selfless giving, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Martin Asumang-Birikorang*

### **OFFERING INVITATIONS**

In the name of the One who thirsts for justice and reconciliation, let us offer our money and commitment for the world of Christ's mission in the world.

*Deborah Johnson*

God accepts us as we are. Let us respond to God's grace with all that we have. Let us respond to God's grace with all we can be.

The offering will be received.

*Deborah Johnson*

### **OFFERING DEDICATIONS**

Holy One, you quench our thirst with living water.

You quiet our doubts with forgiving grace. To your

church we offer the gifts of our labours.

To you we give ourselves.

*Deborah Johnson*

Gracious God, your acceptance of the Samaritan woman gave her the power to share the good news of

your love with her people. Accept these offerings of our time, talents and treasures so that your church may share this good news with all the world.

*Deborah Johnson*

### **SERMON NOTES (EXODUS 17:1-7)**

"You can't get blood from a stone." What does that mean? You can't get money from someone who doesn't have any.

Can this rock be turned into bread? No? Satan tempted Jesus to do so. If he couldn't, it wasn't a true temptation.

Is it possible to get water from a stone? No? But Moses, with God's power, did so in the wilderness.

We have pretty limited and rigid ideas about what's possible. Especially about what amount of money it's possible for us to put on the offering plate.

But when we know God's deliverance from the things that enslave us, God's saving grace, God's deep acceptance of us, then our ideas of what's possible are transformed.

We can give more money than we believed possible, We can see God in places and people where we would not have expected God to be and we can even tell others about God and share our faith in ways that will make people want to come and see for themselves.

*Pegi Ridout*

### **COMMISSIONING AND BENEDECTION**

The people in the wilderness cried out, "Where is our God!"  
and grace poured from a rock, water for their parched and frightened lips.

The psalmist claimed a memory of judgment,  
and grace sang it into words of beauty.

The faith of a people brought rejection to them,  
and grace spoke with a woman, quenching her people with the promise of everlasting life

Go to the world.

Through you—

God waits to touch that world,  
Grace waits to work its miracle of love,  
and Life awaits the giving of itself again and yet again.

Go in peace, for you do not go alone. Amen.

*Gretta Vosper*

## **LENT 4**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Come, all who would see the light  
All: In Christ, we have come from darkness to light  
One: Come to the light that brings every kind of goodness.  
All: We come as God's people. **LET THERE BE LIGHT!**

*Barbara Fullerton*

### **PRAYER OF APPROACH**

All seeing God, as the light of the season lengthens,  
We gather to see your light,  
We come, often influenced by outward appearances.  
You see into (our) hearts.  
Open our eyes that we may see what you call us to be and do.  
Fill us with your spirit as you filled your servant David  
and your son Jesus.  
That we, too, may be stewards of light in (y) our world. Amen.

*Barbara Fullerton*

### **OFFERING INVITATION**

Jesus said,  
As long as I am in the world,  
I am the light of the world.  
Jesus is in our midst, lighting our lives.  
As children of this light, let us offer our insights, our selves, and our gifts, with those who would be transformed in the light of new life.

*Fred Graham*

### **OFFERING DEDICATION**

Lamb of God,  
you have brought us into your light  
that we might care for one another and for all creation.  
Bless now the giving of symbols of our lives,  
that your flock may know your grace,  
and be anointed by your healing power,  
for the sake of your mission in the world,  
and the glory of the everlasting God. Amen.

*Fred Graham*

## THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Your first act of creation, O God, was to speak light  
into the world;  
a light which shone in the heart of a young shepherd  
boy named David,  
though seen at first only by you;  
a light to which Jesus came to testify so that all might  
truly see;  
a light by which we see in ourselves and in the world,  
the treasures stored there; truth and goodness,  
justice and mercy, compassion and love.  
It is your light Great Steward,  
which leads us in paths of righteousness,  
teaches us to be stewards of your goodness  
bearing your light to others, giving, receiving  
and serving in the way of faith.  
For the glory of your light O God  
we give you our thanks and praise,  
through Christ the light of the world.  
Amen.

*Rob Dalgleish*

### SERMON NOTES: (1 SAMUEL 116:1-3; PSALM 23; EPHESIANS 8:8-14; JOHN 9:1-41)

The very first verse in the lesson from 1 Samuel acted as the key for unlocking today's lections. God tells Samuel "I have provided for myself a king..." That's God acting as Steward. Now that's an intriguing idea, certainly a change from that so common anthropocentric approach to stewardship - US AS STEWARDS. It even sounds like what we call Gospel - God as primary actor. But what about the other lessons?

In Psalm 23 God leads beside still waters, restores my soul, and prepares a table before me. There's the steward of the world at work again. We call it the Doctrine of Providence.

The Epistle at first glance seems to put the focus back on us. But there is a difference. Look at verse 10 - try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord" (NRSV) or verse 13 and 14 where the gift of light is a precondition. What was the first act of God on the first day of Creation. Let there be light! This is divine stewardship.

The Gospel lesson takes in the whole ninth chapter of St. John. Did you notice that the Pharisees are stewards? Stewards of the Sabbath and the sabbatarian law. Of what is Jesus the Steward? Of humanity perhaps - like the man born blind? Or steward of the light? That ties in. Did you notice that the first response was "this can't be the blind fellow. It just looks like him." Then retreating from that indefensible

position, it becomes he must be lying. He never was born blind. And last of all, they just pull rank: "Are you trying to teach us?"

What really is at stake is HOW YOU SEE. Do you look upon appearances (see Samuel) or do you see with the eyes of God? Thank God for the light. Looking upon the heart takes a lot of light! At the end Jesus notes that the opposition can't even see themselves clearly.

In the stewardship of God we are to see truthfully and clearly human need, human liberation, and human hope. And there's lots of examples for you to choose, including all the dark places where the United Church of Canada exercises God's stewardship of the light. It is God's stewardship that we steward.

*David Allan*

## LENT 5

### CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God says, I will put my spirit within you.  
All: We shall live.  
One: You will know that God speaks and acts in the world.  
All: We shall live.  
One: If you believe in Christ Jesus, you will not die.  
All: We shall live. Let us offer praise and thanksgiving to the God of life.

*Fred Graham*

### PRAYER OF APPROACH

Faithful and life-giving God,  
You call us to a life of peace  
in the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Grant that we may faithfully respond  
to your invitation to "come and see."  
May we understand your will for humanity,  
and, freed from the bonds of disbelief and fear  
may we enter joyfully into the mission  
of your realm on earth. In Jesus's name we pray.

*Fred Graham*

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

With Israel we lament: our hope is lost.  
But God will bring us out of the valley of death  
if we set our minds on the things of the spirit.  
Let us acknowledge those things that are death-dealing  
and hostile to God,

as we confess to one another and to God:  
(see *bulletin*)

*Fred Graham*

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

"I am the resurrection and the life," said Jesus.  
"Those who believe in me will live."  
The Good News is that we have been  
raised to new life in Christ.  
Thanks be to God.

*Fred Graham*

### **OFFERING INVITATION**

We hesitate to give generously  
when the power of death overwhelms our hope  
that anything we have can make a difference.  
But Jesus said, "If you believe, you will see the glory  
of God."

Let us offer our gifts in faith.

For it is the God of hope who will use them  
to bring light and life where once there were only  
shadows and death.

The offering will be received.

*Rob Dalgleish*

### **OFFERING DEDICATION**

In faith we offer these gifts, O God,  
believing in your reign of Peace,  
not yet seen, but alive in us.  
Breathe into our offering your Spirit of renewal and  
vitality

so that weeping may turn to joy  
and so that our common life  
may become the flesh of your new creation.

Amen.

*Rob Dalgleish*

### **MOVING FROM DOUBT TO THANKSGIVING: A PRAYER**

God:

We ask you.

Can these dry bones live?

Our world is dusty with death and  
we are grey with trying.

In the valley of this exile from the familiar and lively,  
the successful and reassuring,  
we are no longer certain.

Have we not already been dead many days?

See:

our eyes are bleached with discouragement,  
our muscles flabby from forgetfulness,  
our stewardship dulled and spiritless and  
its generosity jeopardized and calcified.

You:

come journeying into our grave situation,  
taking your own time,  
on your way to your own destination,  
and lift up your dust-dried voice  
crying "come forth" and "hear the word of the Lord"

And:

we stand up surprised, still bound,  
with a rattle of faith in our bones,  
and say THANK YOU, God of life  
and hope and new beginnings,

Thank you. Amen.

*David Allan*

### **INTERCESSION: (A BIDDING PRAYER)**

Let us pray for the lifeless people, sprawled across the  
landscape of the Sudan,  
where hunger has wasted and thirst parched  
their bodies; (silence)

Let us pray for the prisoners languishing unknown in  
the jails of Syria and Peru and Burma and  
China, and the forgotten ones in our own  
prisons who live in death; (silence)

Let us pray for those with Alzheimer's or a stroke or  
who, unconscious, are unable to speak their  
need, say their name, help themselves in any  
way; (silence)

Let us pray for children on the threshold of life, and  
congregations at the turn of the road, and  
adults at some new intersection of this life's  
journey  
- vigour, hope, energy, enthusiasm,  
companionship and joy, and a readiness to give  
and share again...(silence)

Lord, hear our prayer; we are the stewards of their  
dreams. Let our cry come unto You. Amen.

*David Allan*



**SERMON NOTES (EZEKIEL 37:1-14;  
ROMANS 8:6-11; JOHN 11:1-45)**

The Ezekiel and John passages both call us from death to life. The state of the world and of the church today, can both be dry bones. Stewardship can put sinews, tendons and flesh on them through time and talent commitments. In John, we hear a call to come out of the stone crypts of cold churches into lively service in the world, into new life.

Ezekiel's dry bones - Israel living in exile - are called to life again, to hope. Stewardship flash: acts of faithfulness bring flesh to our beliefs. Ezekiel is addressed repeatedly as "mortal man" - one who will die. Listening to the word of the Lord brings new life. Putting flesh on bones through acts of stewardship still does not result in life without God's input. God is the one who commands breath and life into the dead bodies.

In John, one sees a note of resignation to the status quo of death. Martha says, "I know he will rise to death on the last day." In this resurrection story, Lazarus is recycled back into life in this world. This is stewardship that is temporary, as Lazarus will physically die again. Stewardship as experienced in our church programs is recycled over and over. The effects of a financial response campaign are short lived and will have to be repeated again and again.

As one of the Johanne "I am" passages, Jesus is identified with the God whose name is "I am." Jesus says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Jesus as God's master steward of life shows us the way to life.

Romans 8 stewardship implications - there is both good and poor stewardship: living by the spirit versus being controlled by human nature. The results of the latter are sin and death; results of the former are life and peace. "But if Christ lives in you, the Spirit is life for you..." (Romans 8:10)

*Barbara Fullerton*

**PALM SUNDAY**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Open the gates of God's temple!  
All: Let us give thanks to God!  
One: God has given us light;  
All: With palm branches let us march to the altar.  
One: This is the day God has made;  
All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!  
Hosanna in the highest.

*Fred Graham*

**PRAYER OF APPROACH**

We praise you, O God, for the faithfulness we see in  
Jesus your anointed.

The crowds proclaimed him Messiah and King  
as if his crown would not be thorns.

Still, he rode on.

They waved their branches and shouted "Hosanna!"  
as if his victory were not a cross.

Still, he rode on.

They laid their garments and offered their blessing as  
if they would not watch him die.

Still, he rode on.

We are the crowds.

Still, we come,  
that despite our blindness we may see,  
that in our doubt we may believe,  
that in Christ's faithfulness and cross,  
we too may know a final and glorious victory.  
Amen.

*Rob Dalgleish*

**INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

As the crowds freely offered their garments and praise  
to Jesus, let us offer our hearts, our lives and means to  
enable the world to rejoice in the victory of new life  
in Christ.

*Fred Graham*

**DEDICATION PRAYER**

All glory, laud, and honour  
to you, Redeemer of the world.  
We bring you hosannas and hopes;  
we bring you praises and prayers;  
we bring you gifts, and gratitude  
for the grace of God in life, in death, and  
in resurrection to life eternal.

*Fred Graham*

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: May the blood of the Passover Lamb  
mark the doorposts of our habitation as  
sign of our continuing covenant.

All: That the Lord God may see it and  
spare us the destruction that is to befall  
the land of Egypt.

*Bob Matton*

## **PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE**

Jesus said, "Come follow me." Of course we would rather not, because to choose the cross brings with it great cost. We know that in following Christ we must set our own priorities aside and work towards changing the social structures that are now in place. It is far easier to follow the ways of the world. We confess our lack of commitment and unwillingness to keep the Spirit of Christ alive within our world. O God, we humbly stand before You, searching your mercy.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

In naming our humanness and in seeking guidance from the Divine Presence, we acknowledge that God is indeed active in our lives and in our world. We have the assurance that God will never leave us nor forsake us - we are not alone. Thanks be to God.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

In washing of his disciples feet, Jesus showed us that we are to put others before ourselves. Christ Jesus calls us into a life of shared community where every person's basic needs are met. But somehow this task seems too difficult. Instead of serving others, we serve our own desires. Instead of caring for creation, we deplete God's rich resources. Instead of loving God, we turn away and concentrate on our own worldly values.

God of Mercy and compassion, turn our self filled hearts outward. Guide and nurture us into selfless creatures, able to participate in loving, interdependent, right relationships, so that there is justice for all.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

**One:** God gives to each of us abundance of mercy, compassion and love. In following the ways of Christ, we are able to do the same for all of God's creation.

**All:** We praise Our Creator for every opportunity of serving, fulfilling God's Vision of Shalom.

Amen.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

## **OFFERING INVITATIONS**

In acknowledging God's power, the passover lamb was killed.

In living God's love, Christ was killed.

May the giving of our tithes and offerings show the love that overcomes death.

Our tithes and offerings will be received.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

In the washing of his disciples' feet Jesus set before us the example of servanthood, that we might do for others what he has done for us. As Jesus has loved us, let our offering be a sign of our devotion to his example, conveying our love for one another.

*Bob Matton*

## **PRAYERS OF DEDICATION**

It is easy to give our tithes and offerings - as we have plenty left for ourselves.

Help us to understand the totality of Christ's gift as his body was broken and his blood was spilled. In our understanding, may our tithes and offerings reflect the totality of our lives lived in response to the gift of Christ.

Bless the gifts and the givers. AMEN.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

Through this offering and the giving of ourselves, may others come to know that we are Jesus' disciples. Receive our gifts in the name of the One we call Teacher and Lord.

*Bob Matton*

## **COMMISSIONING**

As you have received of the bread of life  
So give life to others.

As you have drunk the wine of life  
So share life with others.

As you know the life of Christ  
go and make him known in the world.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

## **BENEDICTION**

May the life God has given in Christ, be a blessing  
for you

as you watch through this night.

May the life that comes through Christ  
hold you in the days ahead,

And may the spirit living in you  
keep you until the new dawn, the new life.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

## **GOOD FRIDAY**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**One:** I will tell of your name to my brothers  
and sisters.

**All:** In the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

**One:** Posterity will serve him and future generations will be told about our Lord.

**All:** May we proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, telling all what he has done.

*Bob Matton*

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Today, God's Day, we stand before the cross. We recognize our ineffectiveness as Christians, followers of the Truth. We struggle to discern our call, to follow the same path as Christ Jesus was called to follow. Our hearts tell us to work diligently to serve others and your creation, but our need for materialism and individualism pull us in another direction. Holy One, stir within our humble hearts a willingness to recommit ourselves to lives of mercy, compassion, and justice so that Your Divine Vision of Shalom can be established among all your people.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

### **PRAYER OF ASSURANCE**

As Christ liberates us from the things that keep us bound to earthly values, we, too, as his disciples, are called to moments of grace with one another. In this action, we feel God's Love and Mercy and know the task of discipleship is worth the cost.

*Janelle Towle-Dittus*

In Christ's death we are driven to sadness  
With Christ's gift of Himself we are  
provoked to  
give as he gave - unreservedly.  
Our tithes and offerings will be received.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

### **OFFERING INVITATIONS**

As the Suffering Servant, Jesus made his life an offering for the sin of the world. In imitation of our Lord may we, his followers, make of our lives an offering worthy of the name we bear.

*Bob Matton*

### **OFFERING DEDICATIONS**

Christ, your gift of self has freed us from death. May what we place before you now  
give life to the givers and  
speak of Christ's life to and for others.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

As bearers of Jesus' anguish and reflectors of his light, as recipients of Christ's intercession and righteousness, we ask now that you might receive our offering in his name, and instill in us an abiding desire that your will may prosper.

*Bob Matton*

### **BENEDICTIONS**

Wait in the darkness for the light  
that comes through the Christ  
whose love is seen this day as on no other day  
A new dawn is coming. Amen.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

His body broken upon a cross, God's gift to the world gave his life for us. In darkness and confusion we scatter like lost sheep...without our Shepherd.

*Bob Matton*

### **COMMISSIONING**

As God so loved you - love  
As Christ so loves you. - love  
Go and love and wait.

*Wm. Ralph Taylor*

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON INTEREST IN AND SUPPORT OF  
THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH  
WITHIN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA.**

16. *One way to generate interest in the Mission and Service Fund of the church is:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. *As a congregation, we tend to support mission projects which:  
(check all that apply)*

- Meet people's basic needs of food, shelter, and health
- Provide educational programs
- Have an evangelical component
- Keep administration costs below 20%
- Work in the local community
- Serve an overseas community
- Provide hands-on experience for volunteers
- Serve primarily women and children
- Are sponsored by the United Church of Canada
- Are ecumenical in nature
- Have been visited by one or more of our members
- Print an annual audited statement

18. *Other comments on your funding for mission and outreach activities (feel free to add paper for fuller answer):*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ALL REPLIES HELD IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE**  
**PLEASE SEND COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO:**

**THE REV. BILL STEADMAN  
ROSEDALE UNITED CHURCH  
159 ROXBOROUGH DR.  
TORONTO, ONTARIO M4W 1X7**

*by October 15, 1998.*

This questionnaire seeks to determine the ways in which individuals and congregations within the United Church support the wider mission of the church, including the Mission and Service Fund. It has been designed by the Rev. Bill Steadman as part of his research for the Doctor of Ministry degree at McMaster Divinity College. The final compilation of data and the report itself will be shared with the Department of Stewardship Services of the United Church of Canada.

*You are under no obligation to complete this questionnaire.* The ultimate goal, though, is to attempt to draw conclusions with regard to trends in mission funding in local congregations. ***In order to complete this project, a response is requested by October 15, 1998.***

1. *Respondent:* Ministry Personnel  Chairperson of the Board   
Mission/Outreach Committee Member  Lay Volunteer   
Other Staff  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Home congregation about which this data applies:*  
Rural  Small Town  Urban  Suburban  Other

3. *Average attendance on a Sunday in November:*  
Less than 25  25-49  50-99  100-199  200-349  350+

4. *Percentage of the Church Budget given to the work of the Mission and Service (M. & S.) Fund in 1997:*  
Under 10%  10-19%  20-29%  30-39%  40-49%  50%+

5. *Percentage of the Church Budget given to Local Community Groups, Non-Church Agencies, and Local Church Mission Groups (include all projects) in 1997:*  
Under 10%  10-19%  20-29%  30-39%  40-49%  50%+

6. *In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to the M. & S. Fund have:* Increased  Decreased  Remained the Same

7. *In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to Local Community Groups and Non-Church Agencies have:*  
Increased  Decreased  Remained the Same

APPENDIX B

8. In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to **Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies** have:

Increase \_\_\_ Decreased \_\_\_ Remained the Same \_\_\_

9. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for the **Mission and Service Fund of the Church** will:

Increase \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_

10. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for **Local Community Groups and non-Church Agencies** will:

Increase: \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_

11. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for **Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies** will:

Increase: \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_

12. The following statements apply to my home congregation now (check all that apply):

- Mission is the essence of the church
- Our main concern is supporting local mission and outreach
- The prime focus of mission work is through the Mission and Service Fund
- Our people like to have "hands-on" experience in mission work
- Our people like to give primarily through monetary donations
- We could do more in the area of mission projects and outreach
- We are doing all that we can in the area of mission
- Funds for the Mission and Service Fund of the church come after all staff and building costs are met
- Our mission givings are augmented by the United Church Women
- Mission education is a focus of our congregation
- Children learn about the church's mission in Sunday School
- Mission issues are raised in the worship service every month
- Mission issues are raised in the worship service 2-3 times/year
- We could learn more about the mission of the church
- We have an annual Stewardship Visitation program

13. The following statements would apply to my home congregation ten years ago:

(check all that apply)

- Mission is the essence of the church
- Our main concern is supporting local mission and outreach
- The prime focus of mission work is through the Mission and Service Fund
- Our people like to have "hands-on" experience in mission work
- Our people like to give primarily through monetary donations
- We could do more in the area of mission projects and outreach
- We are doing all that we can in the area of mission
- Funds for the Mission and Service Fund of the church come after all staff and building costs are met
- Our mission givings are augmented by the United Church Women
- Mission education is a focus of our congregation
- Children learn about the church's mission in Sunday School
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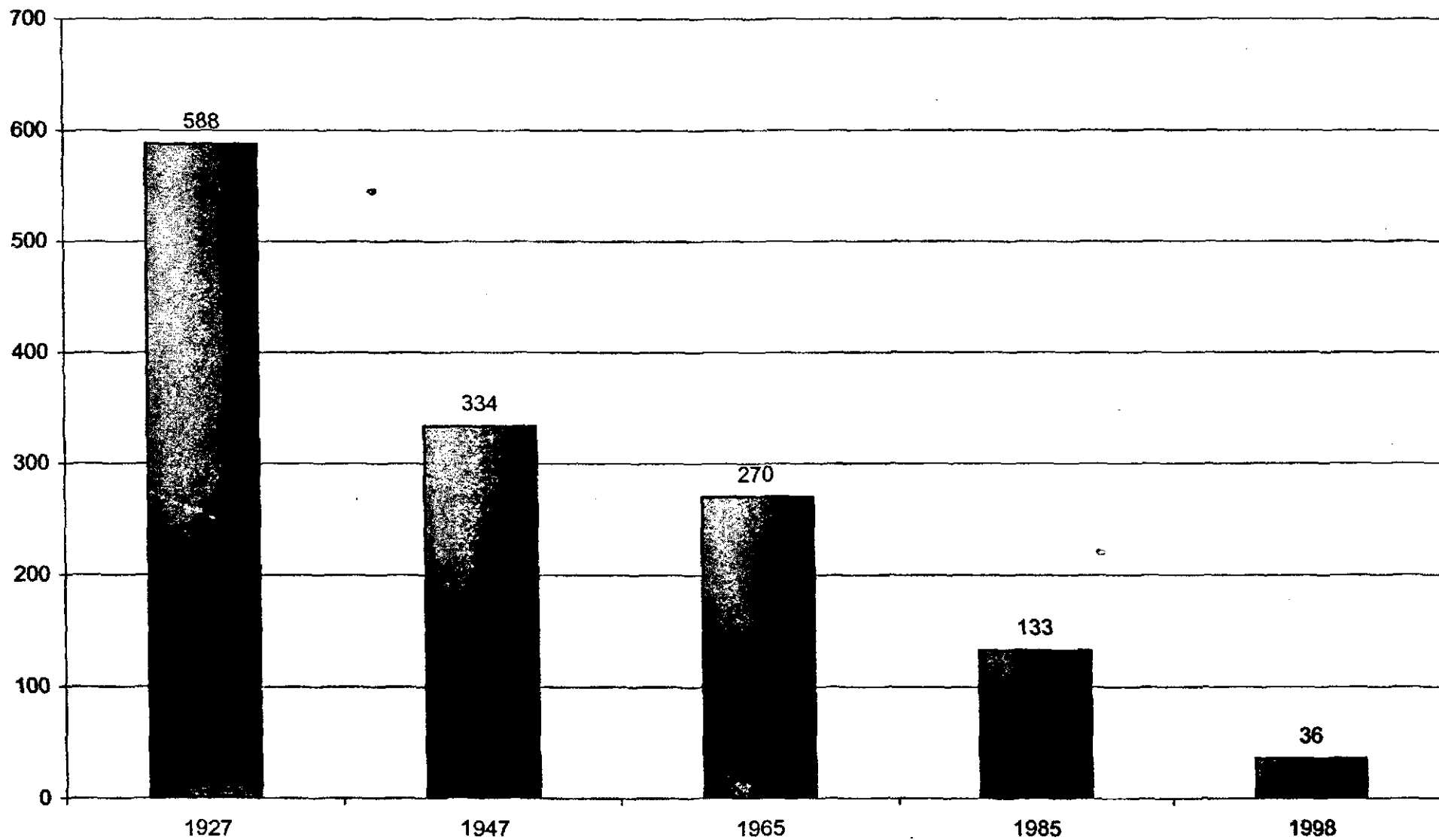
14. In the next three years, I expect overall support for the **Mission and Service Fund of the United Church** will:

Increase \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the same \_\_\_

15. Less than 50% of the members of the United Church of Canada support the Mission and Service Fund. Reasons given by people in my congregation for not supporting the Mission and Service Fund include the following (check all that apply):

- Fund too impersonal
- Protest against U.C. policies
- Rather give to local causes
- Administration costs too high
- Disagree with mission priorities
- Let Official Board set budget
- Need money for local church
- Never heard of Mission and Service Fund
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

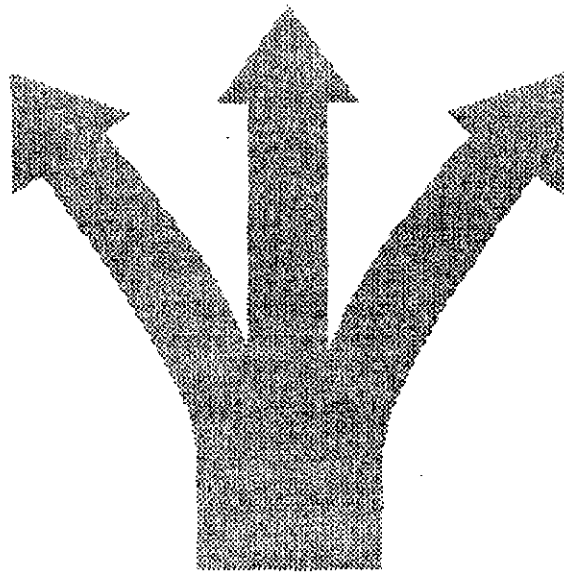
The United Church of Canada  
Overseas Personnel 1927 - 1998



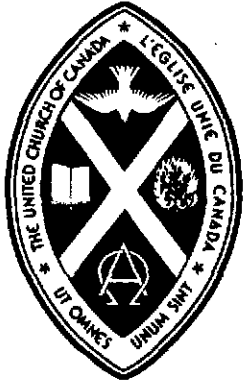
\* 1927 includes Woman's Missionary Society (186); 1947 includes WMS (126); Information includes spouses

# Options for Mission and Ministry Funding in The United Church of Canada

## Questions for Discussion



Department of Stewardship Services  
Mission and Service Fund Committee  
October 1, 1998



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Etobicoke, Ontario  
M8X 2Y4  
Canada

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## AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

September 30, 1999

Dear Friends in Christ,

The attached "paper" is pretty basic but also very important. There's a set of discussion questions about funding the wider mission of the United Church and an "appendix" with some interesting opinions and ideas. The "paper", entitled "Options for Mission and Ministry Funding in the United Church", is designed to help the wider church reflect on what needs to happen in order to provide secure mission funding in the United Church. How do we feel about unified (pooled) or designated giving systems? What principles do we uphold in raising funds to support mission across Canada and around the world? What changes, if any, would we like to see in the way we raise funds as a national church? Should we be taking new directions with the Mission and Service Fund or should we "stay the course" and intensify our efforts?

Mandated by the United Church's General Council Executive, the Department of Stewardship Services is seeking to generate discussion throughout the church on the critical issue of mission funding. Copies of this document, generated with the support and counsel of the Department's Mission and Service Fund Committee, will go to every pastoral charge, every presbytery, every Conference, every General Council Division, selected mission units, and overseas partners (through the Division of World Outreach). We want to hear what a broad cross-section of people think about how we fund (or could fund) the church's wider mission.

The opinions we receive from you are an important step along the way to determining if our mission funding efforts are on track for a brand new century.

So, please have a "go" at this in whatever representative grouping is appropriate — Church Board, church committee, UCW, presbytery, presbytery or Conference committee, Conference Executive, staff groups, partners, ad hoc groups, etc. We need your input. We value your input. Let's talk and dream about the future.

Thanks for considering this important exercise in the life of the church.

Sincerely,

W.D. Salter  
Mission Funding Officer  
Department of Stewardship Services



Le Fond "Mission et Service" - supportant le travaille de l'Eglise Unie au Canada et à travers le mo  
The Mission and Service Fund — supporting United Church work in Canada and around the wo



**OPTIONS FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY FUNDING  
IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA  
Questions for Discussion**

There has always been dialogue in the United Church about the methods we use to fund mission and ministry as a national church. The discussion often centres around whether unified funding or designated funding is the most faithful and effective means for raising mission dollars. **Unified funding** means that mission giving from congregations and individuals is placed into a pooled fund. Decisions about allocations are then made by mandated committees, Divisions, Departments, etc. **Designated funding** means that the giver can specify how donated funds will be used in the system. This designation is usually done within parameters set out by the denomination.

The United Church of Canada currently operates with a unified funding system in which mission giving is pooled into what is known as the Mission and Service Fund.

Mandated by the United Church's General Council Executive, the Department of Stewardship Services continues to explore a very important question in the overall life of our church: "What do we need to do to provide for the secure funding of our mission and ministry as a national church?" This question involves a wide variety of issues, including some renewed discussion about the relative merits of unified and designated giving systems.

The following questions are aimed at helping a variety of groups discuss the way we fund the mission of the church. Your comments are important. Please have a recorder make notes in the spaces provided on these sheets. The papers can then be forwarded to the Department of Stewardship Services.

*Note to leaders:* As a leader for this discussion, you'll need to make some decisions prior to any gathering of participants. How do you want to configure the room? Do you want one large group or two or more smaller table groups? Does each group need a flipchart? Should each group have a photocopy of the question sheet? What information do you want people to give as they introduce themselves? How will you introduce the "task" at hand (do you want to repeat or adapt the introduction that's written above)?

The documents in the appendix are intended to be background documents. They could serve only as background for you as the leader. You may, then, provide background information, or not, depending on the needs of your group. Alternatively, you may feel it would help the discussion if everyone had a copy of the appendix. If you choose to have extra appendix copies available, it would be helpful to give people 20 minutes (after the initial introduction of people and purpose) to go over the material and make any notes they wish to make.

Feel free to shorten the time frames or divide the following questions up among your small groups if you're in a situation where time is limited. Please ensure that each group has a recorder.

***Questions for discussion: Unified Giving (20 minutes discussion; 10 minutes report back)***

- 1. Proponents of unified giving argue that it's the fairest, most flexible and most faithful system available to us. Do you agree? Disagree? Please share your comments:**

***Questions for Discussion: Designated Giving (20 minutes discussion; 10 minutes report back)***

- 1. Proponents of designated giving believe that people don't really develop a "fire" for mission until there's a personal relationship to it. The unified funding system, they say, severely limits relationship. They believe that designated giving is a good way to start developing those key relationships. Do you agree? Disagree? Please share your comments:**

***Question for Discussion: Mission Funding Principles (20 minutes discussion; 10 minutes report back)***

- 1. Based on the above discussion, what basic principles do you affirm in the church's approach to mission funding?**

***Question for Discussion: Mission Funding for the Millennium (20 minutes discussion; 10 minutes report back)***

- 1. What do you think needs to happen for the United Church of Canada to have secure mission funding in the future?**

***A STRAW POLL***

Where do you stand right now? Do you prefer:

A unified giving system? \_\_\_\_\_ (please record the number of votes for this option)

A designated giving system? \_\_\_\_\_ (record the number of votes)

Other (please explain below) \_\_\_\_\_ (record the number of votes)

This is what I mean by "other":

*Please let us know:*

Who you are:

In what context are you answering these questions (a presbytery meeting, a Conference workshop, a Board meeting, a committee meeting, etc.):

**Many thanks for your help.**

Your notes/comments/responses can be forwarded to:

Dean Salter/Shirley Welch  
Department of Stewardship Services  
3250 Bloor Street West, Suite 300  
Etobicoke, Ontario M8X 1Y4  
fax: 416-232-6003  
e-mail: [dsalter@uccan.org](mailto:dsalter@uccan.org) or [swelch@uccan.org](mailto:swelch@uccan.org)  
phone: 416-231-5931  
voice mail: 416-231-7680 x 3156 or 3157

We would appreciate receiving your comments **not later than January 15, 1999**, so that we can collate data and present information to the Department of Stewardship Services and the General Council Executive.

## **APPENDIX**

**The material included in the following appendix is intended as background information only. It is intended to be a helpful mix of opinions and ideas on mission funding. The leader and/or participants may find information here that can be drawn into the discussion. However, this information should not detract (or sidetrack) you from your work on the key questions listed above.**

## A LOOK AT FOUR MISSION FUNDING OPTIONS

Elsie Manley-Casimir, Director of the Department of Stewardship Services, prepared this paper for the Department cataloguing what she sees as the advantages and disadvantages of four types of mission funding.

### *Background*

The Mission and Service Fund has been a major source of annual funds for both operational and mission work. In the last ten years, it has experienced little or declining growth.

A three-year initiative to increase revenue to the Mission and Service Fund was launched in 1997 with most of the funds focused on work within Conferences. As part of the way in which revenue might be increased, the General Council Executive requested that the Department of Stewardship Services, through the Division of Finance, explore the place of "designated giving" through the Mission and Service Fund.

This working paper raises the advantages and disadvantages of four possible approaches. One option is always to remain with the present approach. Another is to have a modified designated giving approach similar to the approach used in previous years through the *Live Love Project*. A third approach would be to allow givers discretion to designate entirely according to their interest and passion. Another option is to fund mission work separately from operational work. Combinations and permutations of the presented options are also possible.

It is recommended that input from Conferences and the wider church be sought to determine the best approach for the Mission and Service Fund into the 21st century.

### *Options:*

**Option 1: Status quo. Keep the Mission and Service Fund as it presently exists.**

This means that individuals and congregations will continue to gift the wider work of the United Church both locally and globally mainly through the unified fund. Gifts they wish to designate will be treated as "supra-gifts". In effect, without a policy on "designations", some people are presently "designating" their gifts by indicating that they wish their gift to go directly for the work of the Division of World Outreach, the Division of Mission in Canada, the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, etc. In the Special Gifts program, people can and do designate where they wish their gifts to go. Under the present system this is allowed, but not widely promoted or viewed as "designated giving" except for Special Gifts.

### **Advantages**

1. This has been the mode of operation for over seventy years. Keeping the same system minimizes confusion. The underlying theological rationale that

we need to trust others and have faith that others can make those decisions is still a legitimate one.

2. It allows the greatest flexibility and discretion for allocation of funds. These decisions can be made by a core group of volunteers who understand the need.
3. It is easiest to administer. Administrative costs can be kept to a minimum. Not-for-profit organizations calculate that acceptable fund-raising costs are in the range of 11% -25%. The administrative costs for the Mission and Service Fund, regardless of what is included is lower than this. Most people view this as an advantage.

### **Disadvantages**

1. The present general awareness level about the Mission and Service Fund is low and has been for some time. A general fund does not generate enthusiasm. Low administrative costs jeopardize our ability to communicate and promote the work made possible through the Mission and Service Fund effectively. An all encompassing Fund requires rigorous communication and promotion to ensure a well informed donor base. Keeping administrative costs low makes this task extremely difficult. Insufficient resources creates a sense of frustration and apathy among workers, givers, and potential givers.
2. It is difficult to "personalize" the message. We have received considerable feedback that indicates people would like to be more "in touch" with what their mission gifts enable. This requires research, writing, distribution and communication not only for stories of mission work and people helped, but also research of and communication with congregations to determine their interests so the stories are relevant and aligned with congregational interest. At the same time, because it is a unified fund, there is a need to give an overall picture of the scope of mission work supported. This is overwhelming, resulting in "information overload", lack of focus, and the "impersonal" feeling.
3. We continue to encourage people associated with the United Church to view their givings through the church not as discretionary dollars but as much an integral part of their budget as food and rent. This is true for the core of loyal givers to the Mission and Service Fund. However, this core of support is decreasing. By continuing this approach, we are calling on fewer donors to give more. We need to find ways to connect with new people in new ways. This approach will result in decreased revenues for the Mission and Service Fund.
4. There are many competing demands on funds to do "good works". Government funding for social services has been decreasing. The charitable sector has been growing and everyone, especially those with religious affiliations, receives more requests for gifts. Many within the charitable sector spend more on fund-raising and are able to mount effective appeals and "campaigns". Keeping the Mission and Service Fund as an amorphous entity makes it difficult to "compete".

5. Two trends in society work against a unified fund approach:
  - the lack of trust in national bodies. This lack of trust in national organizations is not unique to the church. Regionalism (even congregationalism) appears to be the trend.
  - the desire for choice. There is an expectation and desire among many givers and potential givers to be able to choose not only which organizations to support but also which programs.

**Option 2: Segment the Mission and Service Fund into component parts and have a modified designations approach.** This would require identifying and grouping services and/or people served within the unified fund. People would be able to designate which areas of mission work they wish to support. It could be suggested that each congregation choose one overseas, one Canadian and one area of work at General Council (or one staff person).

**Advantages:**

1. This would maintain the unified fund and can be positioned to maintain the flexibility for allocation.
2. By grouping "like-services", it can increase the possibility for more "personalizing". Givers can indicate support for work with seniors, or the economically disadvantaged, or in Africa and be provided information about their areas of interest. They can provide financial support as well as prayer support and become more knowledgeable about a particular mission supported by the Mission and Service Fund.
3. It will require all volunteers and staff with national responsibilities to be familiar and effective communicators for this approach to be successful. This means wider ownership of both the Mission and Service Fund and this approach.
4. It will give an indication about the mission work that congregations are most willing to support and can inform future decisions about funding or help determine areas that need improved communication.

**Disadvantages:**

1. It will require precise, effective communication to eliminate confusion. This approach is similar to the *Live Love Project* where congregations were encouraged to choose one aspect of the work funded through the Mission and Service Fund and study it in depth. Some congregations thought all their gifts went only to fund that particular project and felt deceived when they found out that their gifts went into the unified fund. Effective communication is always a challenge, especially over a large geographic region within a large organization. One way this might be addressed is to match congregations to mission work that was funded to the amount they gave to the Mission and Service Fund the previous year.
2. Administrative costs could increase. Research, consultation, additional resources and education are all essential for this approach to succeed.



3. This approach does not deal with the disadvantages listed above about the trends toward distrust of national organizations or that of "real" choice.

**Option 3: Have a full designation program which includes the option of gifting through a unified fund.** This approach allows givers to indicate which mission and/or service they wish to support and/or if they wish their gifts to go into the unified fund. The full range of options for support can be available and at the discretion of individuals and/or congregations.

**Advantages:**

1. This allows givers full choice. They can direct their funds to the mission work they are passionate about. This could be a decision by local congregations or by individuals.
2. This will require clear communication about the advantages of the unified fund approach *as an option*. With the unified fund as only an option, it will require all people who view this as the desired option to communicate effectively about its advantages.
3. Personalizing would be optimized, both in the initial information provided and the thanks after the gift is received.

**Disadvantages:**

1. Administrative costs would increase significantly. This approach will require more research, communication and education. Additional staff like a designation clerk(s) would be necessary to process gifts, clarify intent, and record gift information.
2. Administration at the congregational level would also increase. This will impact volunteer treasurers or Mission and Service Committee members. Individual designations would need to be recorded and sent on to national for tallying and re-directing to the mission work indicated. Initially, there will be occasion to communicate with givers to ensure that their gifts are directed accurately.
3. The allocation process would be revised. Only decisions for use of gifts designated for the unified fund would require allocation, possibly to "top up" areas where designated gifts were insufficient. (This might be regarded as an advantage by some).
4. Some mission work currently funded may no longer be funded. Those decisions would be made by the givers directly.

**Option 4: Separate the "mission" from "service" and fund separately.** This approach will require a clear definition of what constitutes "mission" and what constitutes "service". If "operational" costs -- that of running the General Council offices -- could be funded through revenues from investment interest, sales and possibly "assessments" if necessary, then all the free-will offerings to the present Mission and Service Fund could support "mission" work. In 1996, approximately 60% of the unified budget revenue was from the Mission and Service Fund.

**Advantages:**

1. This would eliminate (or minimize) the impact that “unpopular” decisions have on the Mission and Service Fund. Feedback indicates that one of the ways people express their disapproval at present is by withdrawing their support to the Mission and Service Fund.
2. Growth in the Mission and Service Fund can be used to expand mission work. This correlation could provide added incentive for givers to increase support to the Mission and Service Fund.
3. Communication would be easier. A simplified overall message is possible.
4. The unified funding for mission work can be retained. This retains flexibility for the allocation of funds.
5. A clearer understanding of mission and administration could emerge and force a rigorous examination of our operations.

**Disadvantages:**

- It may be difficult to arrive at an acceptable understanding of “mission” and “service” since all such distinctions require “subjective” categorization.
- Declines in gifts to the Mission and Service Fund would directly affect mission work.
- Funding operational costs would be dependent on interest rates, “entrepreneurial” income, and possibly assessments. (Some would view this as an advantage.)

## **THE ARGUMENT FOR A UNIFIED FUND**

### **Funding the Mission of the Church ... Being the Body of Christ**

The following is an "executive summary" of a 17-page report prepared by the Department of Stewardship Services for the 32nd General Council meeting, August, 1988, in Victoria, B.C. The Department had been asked by General Council Executive "to conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of augmenting the present unified budget (Mission and Service Fund) with a certain amount of designated giving."

#### *Definitions:*

The report defined "The Unified Budget Concept" as a system in which "all income to the Mission and Service Fund is raised and disbursed according to policies determined by the General Council." In other words, money is contributed to a general fund and decisions about dispersal are made by the appropriate bodies within our conciliar system.

The report defined "The Designated Giving Concept" as a system in which individual donors or congregations are asked to support specific projects, institutions or crisis intervention needs. Such support would be outlined and approved by the appropriate courts of the church.

The Department's report, entitled "Funding the Mission of the Church ... Being the Body of Christ", approached the task by using the Wesley Quadrilateral formula for theological reflection. In other words, such analysis should be based on Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience.

#### *Scripture:*

Two scripture passages are used. Both passages support the spirit and intent of a unified budgeting system.

The story of the death and subsequent resurrection of Lazarus (John 11) is presented with key emphasis on Mary's words: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." This is used as a metaphor for the ability of a unified fund to be flexible in order to meet a wide variety of key mission needs as they arise. In a sense "the Lord is here" for a wide variety of needs.

The second scripture passage, 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27, talks about the Body of Christ, the Church, being made up of many different parts — each one important to the functioning of the whole body. This scripture is also used as a metaphor for unified mission funding which ensures that "glamorous and non-glamorous, mundane and exciting, lowly and exalted, local and distant, seemingly routine as well as innovative expressions of the Body of Christ receive appropriate funding."

#### *Tradition:*

The report recognizes that our denominational history is something of a "mixed bag" when it comes to mission funding. The Methodist Church, prior to church union in 1925, had various mission and education funds that members could support. The Congregational

Church was similar. The Presbyterians and, later, the Evangelical United Brethren had unified systems which allowed for some designation.

However, in 1928, three years after the United Church was formed, funding decisions were made by the new church and the Manual outlined a "cooperative and unified plan for financing the work of the church through a fund to be known as the Maintenance and Extension Fund." The fund was designed to finance the work of all the national church departments that existed at the time. The funding plan would involve "a united appeal to the whole Church for the entire amount required."

This, of course, formed the basis for the unified budgeting concept we have today. The report also notes that there has been "an evolutionary process inherent in a changing church." In other words, we have always been subject to special appeals. Apart from the Maintenance and Extension Fund, members were also asked to support the Missionary and Maintenance Fund (the actual forerunner of the Mission and Service Fund). In addition, there were presbytery and Conference assessments. In 1941, there was the War Savings Certificate Campaign to erase the church's Depression era debts. In 1944 there was the Pension Fund Capital Drive. In the 50's there were special appeals for summer camps, lay training centres, seniors' homes and more. Church Extension councils began to raise money for new churches. In fact, there have been countless special appeals over the years. The \$40 million Ventures in Mission appeal of the early 1980's is a major case in point.

But, overall, from the perspective of "tradition", the report strongly favours the Unified Budget Concept based on decisions by the United Church shortly after Union to have a united appeal to the whole church which would equitably fund the work of all national church departments.

The report also notes some of the educational history — efforts to personalize the Mission and Service Fund by connecting local churches to mission projects: In the 1970s, "Live Love" proved confusing because of the "symbolic" nature of the program (there was no actual financial designation from church to project). It also had high administrative costs. "Faith in Action" was a program current in the Department at the time of the report which provided specific project information to local congregations.

*Reason:*

The report notes that unified funding does seem large and shapeless to the donor. It makes it difficult to personalize the work of mission. It tends to fly in the face of the need people have to give to people, rather than institutions. However, according to the report, "reason" favours the unified funding concept for two primary reasons:

1. "Each project funded through the unified appeal represents a ministry that has been tested by an appropriate structure of the church and deemed to be a faithful expression of Christ's call to serve others."
2. The overall sense that unbridled designated giving would degenerate into a "survival of the fittest" (i.e. largest, most visible) mission units. It would mean local congregations

could be deluged with countless special appeals. The unified fund ensures some form of order and fairness in the collection and distribution of mission dollars.

At the same time, the report recognizes the essential dilemma of unified funding: "Some congregations deplore the Mission and Service Fund, seeing it as a faceless creature, little understood but in need of constant feeding. Recognizing that people give to people, there needs to be a continuing development of better strategies for storytelling which increase the personal ownership of the Mission and Service Fund by the members of the United Church of Canada."

*Experience:*

The report highlights some of the research done on how 12 North American denominations secure their mission funding. The churches offer a genuine smorgasbord of funding strategies from full unified funding to high levels of designation. Most systems, however, are a form of hybrid that maintain some form of unified giving with some options for designation.

The report draws the following insights from the above research:

1. There is virtually no "unbridled" designation. Where designation exists, there are limits placed on how much money any one project can receive. When projects are fully subscribed, denominations have "equalization" systems to assist under-funded areas.
2. Designation, if not managed correctly by the denomination, may have the effect of imposing the judgement of donors on overseas partners. Partnership can be replaced by images of North American financial power.
3. Guaranteed budgets (i.e. unified funding) ensure that energy goes into mission and ministry work and not into fundraising to keep the organization alive.
4. The administration of designated giving programs is costly with the need for computer programs, additional staff and office space.
5. People respond to a unified appeal when it is personalized by clear and effective information. Good information and highly trained mission fund interpreters are critical to the unified fund approach.

*Conclusions:*

The Report strongly supported the continuation of the United Church's unified budgeting system. According to the report: "The continued use of a unified budget approach is a reflection of who we are and what we want to remain: a united and uniting church reaching out in mission and service across Canada and around the world. Despite the pressure to increase the present practices of designated giving, a unified budget system remains the most sound approach to funding the mission of our church."

**BUT, WHERE IS THE FIRE FOR MISSION?**  
**A brief theological reflection on designated giving**

It would, perhaps, be a challenging exercise to develop competing lists of scripture passages that seem to extol the virtues of either pooled funding or designated funding as “proper” stewardship of our financial resources.

One significant problem might be the desire of proponents to interpret the same story in quite different ways. The “Great Collection” in support of the Jerusalem church, for example, may appear to one person as a classic pooled mission fund. Another person may call it a classic example of designating money for a specific cause. Some may say that the disciples pooled their resources. Others may argue that the disciples designated their resources for food, shelter, etc.

It might be helpful to move a different way to engage the theological discussion about how we’re called to share financial resources. This writer, quite obviously not a biblical scholar, has always been quite taken with two passages from Matthew’s gospel: Matthew 19:16-22 “The Rich Young Man” and Matthew 25:31-46 “The Judgement of the Nations”. The rich young man, in order to have a radical engagement with God, must have a radical engagement with mission. He must deny the supremacy of his riches by engaging all of it in mission with the poor. Only then can he recognize the supremacy of God in his life.

In Luke 25, “the nations” are challenged to be radically engaged with God’s mission in order to “inherit the kingdom”. “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing ...” There is no detachment, there is no sitting back. The “live” question is, “Can you fully commit to God by fully engaging in mission with a broken world?”

The theological question with regard to pooled funding or designated funding may not rest in proof-texting their various appearances in the scripture. The question may be more related to how, in our time, pooled funding or designated funding draws us closer to God and God’s kingdom by powerfully engaging us in mission with a broken world.

If I was to answer the question for myself, I’d say that both types of funding are honourable and faithful and both types engage people in mission. But, I would complain that, in our time, pooled or “institutional” funds are often supported with detachment, diffidence, lack of knowledge and lack of zeal that clearly doesn’t bode well for our theological goal of firing people up to engage in mission to a broken world. In our time, it seems clear that our pooled funds have become too remote. The giver is far too separated from the mission. There is little or no real relationship.

Designated funding, while it carries its own set of drawbacks, does honour the theological drive for relationship. It places our financial and, hopefully, our other personal gifts in specific relationship to mission. With closer relationship there can be a deeper

*The following two papers give an overview of two much-discussed variations on mission funding and what they might look like when applied to the mission givings of a mythical St. James United Church.*

## **REFLECTIONS ON A MODIFIED DESIGNATED GIVING PROGRAM**

*Assumption:* that the church is divided over the value and impact of designated giving plans. People like to have choices. They want to know that their dollars make a difference. They want personal relationship with the work they are funding. They do not like funding "administration". We know that "designation" is already happening in different ways in the churches. People "designate" to charities all the time. The tradition and history of the United Church, in recent memory has been giving to a unified budget. Again, there are exceptions. WDR is an "allowable" designation. Special emergency appeals are happening more and more with very strong responses. People are concerned that designated giving will hurt smaller, less "prominent" or less "popular" ministries — ironically, the ones that need financial support the most. They worry that full blown designation will force international partners into a costly competition for dollars that is the antithesis of partnership. They worry that the national and Conference work will atrophy and die because they are seen as bureaucracy and "bureaucracy" is virtually always unpopular. It is hard to excite people to be in mission without the ability to strongly personalize and offer relationship to mission. "Funds" are not personal. Institutional funds seem shapeless to givers. Great strides have been made in trying to personalize the Mission and Service Fund, but people still punish the institution by punishing the Fund — which says something about perceptions.

### *The ever-present dilemma:*

By honoring the donor's need to have a personal relationship with the recipient you can create a situation where programs and projects have to do a "funding dance" to survive. Those who have resources do the better dance and get the money. Would "cutting edge" ministry and mission ever be supported?

One the other hand, by honoring the recipients' needs only, the donor is little more than a "funding tap" that needs to be turned on. No relationship means little fire for mission which means shrinking dollars. New givers have little reason to come on board and, in the end, the whole funding enterprise grinds to a halt.

### *Is there an acceptable United Church middle ground compromise available?*

Since we already have a designation option (WDR) within the current Fund — can we keep the Unified Funding basis and establish a second designation option within the current Fund. In addition to WDR, we could set up the "Partnership Program" (or choose another name) within the Mission and Service Fund. A church could opt to contribute up to 15% of its Mission and Service Fund budget to the Partnership Program. The central piece of the Partnership Program would be a Partners in Mission booklet that describes all United Church partners, mission work and mission units (e.g. Wesley Urban Ministries, the Christian Council of Tanzania). An alternative would be a booklet that gives less specific, more generic options (e.g. Canadian urban missions, New Church Development, Native Ministry, partners in southern Africa, etc.). The urban missions, for example,

would be listed, capsuled in the booklet and additional information may be made available. But the designation is for "Canadian Urban Missions". Those who opt for the Partnership Program would be encouraged to choose a Canadian and an international ministry to support. In some ways the more generic option may be easier to manage and less competitive among mission units. This program, with additional staffing, could be managed through the Department of Stewardship Services. Fifteen cents on every dollar is held out for the local church's designated choices. There is a Partnership in Mission booklet that helps the local church make its two choices. There is some follow up material produced for each general area that encourages personal involvement in mission.

- No church is "required" to participate in the Partnership Program — it's strictly optional.
- Any money that accrues to mission supported units will be weighed against their usual grant — this way additional money may be freed up for other forms of mission.
- The spirit of this program has to be one of growth: growth in contributions, growth in number of givers, growth in personal commitment to mission. The Global budget 85% allows the church to move money to where its needed for mission and ministry. This no strings money is critical and must be an integral part of the overall appeal.
- WDR is another key giving option. We need to create a second option within WDR called WDR Special Appeals where churches, particularly, can send crisis money for floods, tornadoes, famine relief, etc. and receive credit within the Mission and Service Fund. This would be enormously beneficial for the profile of the Mission and Service Fund overall. It also sets up the natural appeal for regular WDR money where a special fund isn't deemed necessary.

The mission giving profile of a local church, under this new system, might look like this:

**Mission and Service Fund — St. James United Church**

WDR		\$15,000
WDR Special Appeal	(Ice Storm \$1,500, North Korea \$1,500)	\$3,000
<b>Total of Other Gifts</b>		<b>\$60,000</b>
• Global Gift 85% (for mission in Canada and around the world)		\$51,000
• Partners in Mission Gift 15% (designated for Canadian urban mission and partners in Brazil)		\$9,000

**Total Credited Mission and Service Fund Gifts, St. James United Church \$78,000**

**Worst case scenario:** we are simply recycling the same money in a different way.

**Best case scenario:** the Partners in Mission Program creates personal relationship, direct contact with mission. More people get excited about mission and want to participate personally and through their financial gifts. The overall Mission and Service Fund benefits from the increased interest in mission.



## WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO 'SPLIT UP' THE MISSION AND SERVICE FUND?

There have been numerous suggestions that the best way to "grow" our mission funding in the future is to split our current Mission and Service Fund into a Mission Fund and a Service Fund.

Many people feel that our givers often wrap together the Mission and Service Fund and the national bureaucracy. People, by and large, don't like the idea of funding bureaucracy and they are particularly reluctant if the "national office" is associated with something controversial. As a result, when people are angry with the national (General Council) office, the Mission and Service Fund, as a whole, can be the object of "punishment". This, more particularly, is because the bureaucracy, in the giver's mind, is associated with the "Service" part of the Mission and Service Fund.

On the other hand, people are highly motivated to support "mission". If we present programs and projects that evangelize, develop, heal or support peace, justice and social advancement, people will provide high levels of funding because they want their support "to make a difference". They feel that these are the areas that make a difference.

In point of fact, proponents say, splitting the Fund isn't a "wild" idea at all given the way we set up our budget at the national level. The General Council's "unified budget" is considerably larger than what's raised through the current Mission and Service Fund. About 60% of this budget comes from the Mission and Service Fund. The other 40% comes from resource sales, fee for service, designated gifts and grants, pension and group insurance income, reserve and trust transfers and reserve and trust investment income. Could this 40%, plus a small congregational assessment, become the "Service Fund"? If so, then all the rest of the money raised by our local congregations would be for the "Mission Fund". And, this is the type of funding we know that our members and adherents are highly motivated to do.

The mission giving profile of a local church, under this new system, might look like this:

### Service Fund and Mission Fund givings— St. James United Church

Service Fund Assessment (based on \$2 per resident member)	\$600
<b>Mission Fund Gifts</b>	
• Global Gift (for mission in Canada and around the world)	\$51,000
• Partners in Mission Gift (15% of all non-WDR gifts can be designated to 1 Canadian and 1 international program)	\$9,000
• World Development and Relief	\$15,000
• WDR Special Appeal (Ice Storm \$1,500, North Korea \$1,500)	\$3,000
<b>Total Credited Mission Fund, St. James United Church</b>	<b>\$78,000</b>

**(N.E. "Partners in Mission" and "WDR Special Appeal" do not need to be part of this system. The Mission Fund could be a completely unified fund.)**

**The Service Fund Assessment could either come off the top of monies remitted to the national office by congregations or it could be incorporated into the current assessment system used by Conferences and presbyteries. Presumably the split fund system could only work if all churches are part of the Service Fund Assessment.**

*There is a growing body of literature that helps us reflect on our giving (why we give/why we should give, etc.). You may want to add other notes to the ideas of Kennon Callahan and Ralph Milton.*

## **MOTIVATION FOR GIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

by Kennon Callahan

A speech given at the North American Conference on Christian Philanthropy  
Orlando, Florida, February 10, 1998  
as reported by Terry Shillington, Lethbridge, Alberta

### ***Paradigm Shift #1***

**Some people are marathon runners and others short sprinters**, United Methodist teacher and leader Kennon Callahan argues. Marathon runners go the distance. They see the "long view". They pace their energies and resources. They run steadily, with perseverance, until they have finished the race. Sprinters are known for short bursts of intense energy and effort. Most cultures in our history (nomadic, agrarian and early industrial) have favoured the marathon runner mentality. However, the technological society often encourages the sprinter — short bursts of intense energy that are required to get the job done quickly and effectively.

Callahan uses this metaphor to describe how people give to the church. Many people, in committing time and money, talents and resources to the church, really think in terms of sprinting. They prefer short bursts, limited projects and commitments. They might renew those commitments again and again, but they approach their giving as sprinters. Others, often long-time members, pastors and key leaders, think of giving in terms of the marathon runner — sustained giving, year-long pledges, one or three year terms to committees, a long-range view of giving. Most people who serve on church committees may be marathoners.

(Note: While Callahan does not speak about baby boomers and busters, those who have studied generations would agree with him that many boomers and "Gen Xers" think in terms of short-term commitments, i.e. of sprinting.)

Callahan's critique of the modern church is that we often challenge our members to "marathon" giving and support, when we would get much more response if we offered short sprints. For example, he sees six sources for giving in the average church:

**Spontaneous Giving** -- response to a particular crisis: hunger in Korea, a local family whose house has burned down.

**Major Community Worship** -- inviting people (particularly the unchurched) to worship around a particular issue (e.g. parenting, a community concern).

**Special Planned Giving** -- inviting a special offering to a mission or ministry issue.

**Short Term Major Projects** -- inviting pledging and gifts to support a new building or expansion, youth ministry, a new program.

**Annual Giving** -- on-going giving to the budget and the needs of the church.

**Enduring Giving** -- giving to endowments or projects with long term purpose.

Callahan argues that most churches appeal to the last two, and primarily annual giving to the church. However, he says many people are sprinters in their church giving too. They will give generously to special projects, and significantly increase their giving. They gladly respond to these short-term and immediate requests, because they are essential sprinters, not marathoners. He says such appeals and projects spaced carefully during the year will not subtract from most people's regular church giving. It will increase their total giving.

Understanding that many give as sprinters has a variety of practical implications. While quarterly financial statements may fit the mentality of marathoners, sprinters need more frequent reminders. Quarterly statements simply leave them feeling hopelessly behind. Research has indicated, he says, that congregations who send out monthly statements record an average giving increase of 11% (over and above the cost of mailings).

If we accept that many people approach giving as sprinters, not marathoners, it may change many of the ways we invite people into giving.

### ***Paradigm Shift #2***

Most people are motivated to give by appeals to compassion and community, Kennon Callahan observes. However, that is not the primary basis most churches use to appeal for support. He sees five motivations for giving in the 21st century:

**Compassion** -- sharing, caring, giving, loving, serving

**Community** -- good fun, good times, fellowship, affiliation, belonging, sense of family

**Challenge** -- accomplishment, achievement, attainment

**Reasonability** -- data, analysis, logic, thinking, "it makes sense"

**Commitment** -- dedication, faithfulness, duty, vow, obligation, loyalty

Most pastors and many key church leaders may be inclined to appeal through challenge and commitment. So we invite people to fill out "commitment cards". We name the church shortfall in giving and challenge them to respond. We use percentage giving forms to challenge and increase commitment.

But, most "grassroots people" are moved far more by appeals to compassion and a sense of community. They may give because they care about children, youth ministry or people affected by our missions. They may give because of their sense of belonging. They care about their community and its health. Repeated appeals to them on the basis of challenge or commitment may sound "like their mother asking them to clean up their room again."

In preaching and mailings, recruitment of volunteers and talk about church finances, we need to explain our ministry in terms of compassion and community. Many will also grow into commitment and challenge, as they mature in giving. We should encourage such growth. However, most people in the church and those outside we often appeal to, are moved first of all by compassion and community appeals.

## **WHY THE UNITED CHURCH HAS A UNIFIED BUDGET**

By Ralph Milton

I have the gift of the gab. I do quite well with words. Believe me, there are lots of things I don't do well, but talking and writing is not one of them.

So I wrote letters from the Philippines to my Canadian friends. I soon realized that I could describe my pet projects in ways that would generate bundles of cash and other kinds of gifts. So I did quite well for the Christian radio station where I worked.

I had a friend, a doctor, who worked quietly in his lab. Rolando didn't write letters raising money. He didn't have time, and he was a terrible writer. Rolando simply worked at fighting rabies, a terrifying disease which sent thousands of people to horrible deaths every year. He almost lost his life on one occasion when he was bitten by a rabid dog.

Rolando's work was always under-funded. My work brought in lots of money. But was my work more important than Rolando's?

"The wheel that does the squeaking gets the grease," but the wheel that does the squeaking isn't necessarily carrying the heaviest or most important load.

Those of us who are a bit long in the tooth remember the days before the United Way, when every worthy cause in town would come knocking at your door. Each of them was convinced their cause was more worthy than all the others.

The idea behind the United Way was to get all those organizations together and have one huge campaign. Then a group of responsible people would take a long, hard look at the needs of each organization and slice the pie accordingly.

In the church we had more or less the same thing. Every couple of weeks there'd be someone wanting money. It might be Ralph's radio project in the Philippines or wanting to put Bibles into hotel rooms.

This is true. No kidding. In the sixties, I was approached by a group of people who wanted to evangelize China. The idea was to hang Bibles from helium balloons and release them into the air just off the coast of China. The trade winds would carry the Bibles inland. When the balloons got high enough, they would burst and the Bibles would fall on the heads of the Chinese.

I've often wondered what kind of religion would have developed in China among people who were knocked silly by Bibles falling from the sky.

How do we know which is the best place to put our dollars? How do we know which outfit is genuine and who is the con artist?

And even worse, how do we decide between two projects when we know both deserve our support?

So there are two problems: 1) Too many appeals and 2) people not able to know where best to put their money.

In the United Church, and in many other denominations, the solution was based on an idea very much like the United Way. In the United Church we called it the Unified Budget.

It's a very simple idea, really. All the money raised by the national United Church goes into one pot. Then you gather a group of responsible people from across the country, you look carefully at the needs, and then divvy it up accordingly.

Sounds good, but it's not that easy. There's a down side.

For one thing, when I give my hard-earned money away, I want to know where it's going. I don't want some faceless bureaucrat putting my money into things I don't like.

Secondly, it's far harder to raise money when you ask people to give to a United Way or a Unified Budget. The idea of giving to a "fund" or a "budget" just doesn't turn people's cranks. People give to people. Or to things they can touch and see and smell.

You can also do very well if you push people's "guilt" or "compassion" buttons. Let me give you a picture of a sad-eyed child with a swollen belly and skinny legs. "Give me fifty bucks to feed this child," I say, and I've got you reaching for your chequebook.

But, if I tell you that the United Church works with partner churches in that child's country, and those partner churches are trying to get at the reasons why that child, and millions like it, are starving, then I've got a tough sell ahead of me.

The United Church could raise far more money if it threw out the idea of the Unified Budget. And every year or two somebody comes along and makes a good case for just that.

There are good arguments on both sides of the question. And there's been some tough thinking and hard debate about it. Almost everyone has an opinion.

I believe we should stick with the Unified Budget. Sure, there may be special appeals from time to time, but they should be the exception rather than the rule. We've got to keep that Unified Budget strong to have a national church doing things out there in a hurting world on our behalf.

It would help if we could stop thinking of these funds being administered by a bunch of faceless bean counters. It makes me angry when people talk that way because I know from first-hand experience that most of the people involved in the United Church in the

national office are caring, committed Christians who are doing their best to live out the gospel.

Most of my church activity is in a middle-sized congregation in Kelowna, B.C. When I put my envelope in the plate I know that part of it does some pretty boring but necessary things. Like a replacement for a photocopier that eats paper or stuff to clean the floor.

But, I also know what happens to the part of my offering that goes to the Mission and Service Fund. For many years I was a representative to the Division of World Outreach at the national church. Every year people like me came from all over the country to decide how the Division of World Outreach would spend the part of the money they got from my offering envelope.

The decisions were agonizing. We'd argue and fuss and sweat trying to make the money go around. We heard stories and first-hand reports about an aching, crying world full of people in need. Real people. People with names and faces and personalities. What we had to offer seemed like so little.

Believe me, the folks in the national office of the United Church are not a bunch of faceless bureaucrats. They are a group of Christians who care very deeply. So are the various boards and committees that gather from across Canada to do the very painful work of budget-making.

Now, I don't agree with all the decisions that are made by the national boards and committees. But, of course, neither does anyone else. The United Church is a democracy. Sometimes the arguments get pretty hot. Often, I find myself holding a minority opinion, at the local area or at the national church.. That's OK. That's how democracy works.

If I were a dictator running the whole show, I'd do things differently. Because I am often convinced that only I know best. Fortunately, I also know that much more sound decisions are made in a democracy. Everybody gets to have their say. Then we vote.

The Unified Budget may not be the perfect solution to the problem. But, it's a democratic solution. It's the best solution we've come up with so far.

Yes, the wheel that does the squeaking often gets the grease. That's a problem. With the Unified Budget, the wheel that does the work gets the power.

The church can make sure that when people like Rolando ask for money for his light bill, it's there. It hasn't all gone to fast talkers like me.

excerpted from *Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Why the United Church has a Unified Budget* by Ralph Milton



MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

June 20, 1996

The United Church of Canada  
Department of Stewardship  
3250 Bloor Street West  
Etobicoke, Ontario  
M8X 2X4

Attention: Ms. J. Rowles and  
Members of the Denominational Finance Committee

Dear Ms. *Rowles* Rowles:

**Re: Report Findings  
Mission and Service Fund  
Survey, June 1996**

Please regard the attached analysis of the 1996 Mission and Service Fund Surveys. My sincere appreciation is extended to your committee members in particular to Ms. Liz Muir, Mr. Ron Hughes and the Rev. Bill Steadman for so willingly assisting in the preparation of the document as well as their time in helping this lay member to a better understanding of the issues.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to work with this collegial group and hope that findings from this endeavour will assist the larger committee with their deliberations.

Thank you again and best wishes.

Sincerely,

*R. S. Orange*  
R. S. Orange  
President

RSO:co  
encl.



# **MISSION AND SERVICE FUND SURVEY**

**JUNE 1996**

## **GENERAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND**

During February 1996, the Denominational Finance Committee of the Stewardship Services Department undertook to evaluate the effective use of the Mission and Service Funds resource budget relating to print and video resources. Under the direction of Mrs. J. Rowles, a four member group contracted Kenron Management to initiate drafting a survey document for distribution to the pastoral charges throughout Canada.

The survey set out to categorize respondents by the nature and size of their congregations, along with information as to the effectiveness of each of the seven categories of Mission and Service Fund publications and the video resource. Each respondent was advised that further budget cuts are pending during 1996-97 and the importance of conveying through the survey what resources were required, in what form and how often.

The surveys were distributed by the United Church House through the pastoral charge bundles during April 1996 with a requested response date of May 31, 1996 by prepaid postage directed to Kenron Management of Sarnia, Ontario. Surveys received up to and including June 10th, 1996 have been included in this analysis. To ensure an open response from the largest possible selection of respondents, no specific controls or identifiers were requested. Further the inclusion of Other Staff and Committee Volunteer was set out in question number 1 to encourage wider participation. Submissions in the form of photocopies of the original survey were also processed and included in these findings.

## **DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS**

Approximately 2,400 survey documents were distributed care of the pastoral charges. In turn, the responses generated 579 completed surveys or an average return rate of 24%. A number of surveys were distributed during June 1996 at the Saskatchewan Annual Conference. The status of those surveys are unknown as they were collected and returned to Church House in Toronto and thus the findings are not included in this report.

Overall the survey format provided quality information and will assist the committee in budget driven decisions. However, some of the questions were too complex and thus allowed respondents to vary the methods for answers from the instructions provided. In addition, several opportunities for free written comments and suggestions were provided in the survey format. Although somewhat difficult to compile and analyse, the large volume of written input was significant (over 70% of submissions) and may in turn prove to be the best aspect of this survey process. The willingness of individuals to take the time to write notes and letters addressing issues facing both this committee and the church at large, is important and I'm certain will be welcomed. Most comments were both constructively supportive and generally positive in nature. By comparison to other general survey documents, this response demonstrates a commitment to improving and supporting the ongoing efforts of the Mission and Service Fund.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

### Question #1

Needs vary by Church, Region & Individual. Please identify: (check one)

- a) Your role:            Pastor, Other Staff, Committee Volunteer
- b) Congregation:    Rural, Urban, Small Town/Village
- c) Please indicate size of pastoral charge using number attending Sunday worship.  
- less than 100; 100 - 150; 150-200; 200-250; 250 or greater.

### FINDINGS

#### QUESTION #1 a)

Of 579 submissions, respondents consisted of:

ROLE	# OF SUBMISSIONS	PERCENTAGE
Pastor/Minister	418	72.0%
Other Staff	26	4.5%
Comittee Volunteer	130	22.5%
Not Specified	5	1.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

#### QUESTION #1 b)

The nature of participating congregations broke into the following categories:

CONGREGATION	# OF SUBMISSIONS	PERCENTAGE
Rural	163	28.0%
Urban	213	37.0%
Small Town	156	27.0%
Not Specified (not answered)	47	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**QUESTION #1 e)**

The size of pastoral charge based on the numbers attending Sunday worship was reported as follows:

SIZE OF CHARGE	# OF SUBMISSIONS	PERCENTAGE
Less than 100	214	37.0%
100 - 150	185	32%
150 - 200	84	14.0%
200 - 250	42	7.0%
250 or Greater	42	7.0%
Not answered	12	3.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**QUESTION # 2**

Technology is important for future communication between Stewardship Services and pastoral charges.

Yours resources include: (check as required)

	Internally Available	Available External to Church
Computer (386 or larger)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modem Capabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-Mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CD-ROM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VCR/TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other widely used audio/visual supports _____		

This question dealt with the availability of technical resources both within the church (pastoral charge) and those external. Accessibility was the implied meaning associated to the external category and may not realistically reflect more than some respondents best guess. Under the category marked "Other widely used resources" approximately 30% of submissions listed overhead projectors, tape recorders, video recorders and flip charts.

Resource	Internal	External	No Response
Computer (386 or larger)	329	149	101
Modem Capabilities	121	127	331
Internet	34	116	429
E-mail	37	107	435
Fax	135	213	231
CD ROM	74	121	384
VCR/TV	444	81	54

As expected, most comments concerned the larger and urban congregations' desire to access E-mail, the internet and computer CD-ROM technology as a means to effect the timely use of worship materials and also reduce the expense and storage of some print materials.

### QUESTION #3

Mission and Service Fund Publications:

Please identify the following publications that you are familiar with, the main user(s), and whether a publication is kept or discarded within a short period. (check each box as appropriate)...etc.

This question format was referred to previously under the Overview as too complex particularly when respondents were asked to complete the "Familiar With" and the "Kept on File" or "Discard" categories. When input analysis of surveys did not indicate "Kept on File" the assumption taken was "Discard" for the purpose of computer analysis. In turn, readers should take note of higher than average support for those resource materials ranking high in the "Kept on File" category.

Further the category for "Familiar With" the list of resources was often left blank even though respondents continued to identify both the users and the disposition of individual resource materials.

In summary, the user group and file rates give stronger than average support for the Pastors use of the Special Edition of Mandate and the Minutes for Mission resources. Similarly congregations face a large exposure to the White Gift Service and Mission and Service Fund Theme Posters and subsequently ranked them accordingly.

Publications	Pastor	Church Rep.	Full Congregation	Kept on File	Discard
<b>M&amp;S Mandate</b>	452	227	292	298	255
<b>Minutes for Mission</b>	313	254	300	211	340
<b>White Gift Service</b>	257	136	309	158	348
<b>M&amp;S Bulletin Inserts</b>	217	96	336	82	383
<b>Fact Sheet</b>	253	145	187	150	308
<b>M&amp;S Theme Posters</b>	195	119	336	82	404
<b>Advertising in the Observer</b>	146	83	111	60	311
<b>M&amp;S Video</b>	216	181	110	194	207

#### QUESTION #4

In your opinion, how effective are each of the following in motivating and inspiring people in your congregation to give to the Mission and Service Fund? (Please circle)

(A) - most effective; (B) - somewhat effective; (C) - requires change; (D) - delete - not effective; (E) - no opinion.

In many instances, survey results tend to fall short of expectations because participants will often take a "middle of the road" approach if provided, when answering. In this questions, we sought the respondents fair minded nature, by the use of subtle qualifiers and alpha characters verses the usual numeric rankings for each of the (8) Mission and Service Fund resources.

Further on the following chart, we cross referenced responses from this questions with the role, congregation type and size obtained from questions 1 a), b), c).

**Readers of this report should note the following:**

1. On the attached chart, totals by category will not equal as some respondents chose to omit answering part or all of question 1 a), b), c).
2. Due to the higher number of small-medium congregations/pastoral charges, readers are cautioned to consider & balance the percentage of those respondents for each category. (i.e. 20 responses of the total 42 congregations having 250+ attending worship is approximately 50%. In comparison, 38 responses of the total 185 congregations having 100-150 attending worship equals 20%).

QUESTION #4 MISSION & SERVICE SPECIAL EDITION OF MANDATE												
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+
MOST EFFECTIVE	109	77	5	26	26	43	28	41	38	15	7	8
SOMEWHAT USEFUL	341	246	16	79	94	132	91	121	96	48	30	29
REQUIRES CHANGE	36	30	1	4	11	9	10	14	15	4	2	1
DELETE	30	25	0	5	11	12	9	9	21	3	3	2
NO OPINION	51	33	4	13	20	14	13	23	14	12	0	1
NO ANSWER	10	7	0	3	1	3	5	6	1	2	0	1
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42

QUESTION #4 MINUTES FOR MISSION												
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RUR	URB	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+
MOST EFFECTIVE	268	196	14	58	78	94	71	104	83	34	21	20
SOMEWHAT USEFUL	223	164	9	49	59	88	61	74	80	34	15	15
REQUIRES CHANGE	34	25	0	8	7	14	9	10	9	6	4	5
DELETE	14	11	1	2	5	5	4	5	3	4	2	0
NO OPINION	29	16	2	9	12	8	7	15	9	5	0	1
NO ANSWER	9	6	0	4	2	4	4	6	1	1	0	1
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42

QUESTION #4 MISSION & SERVICE FUND ADVERTISING IN THE OBSERVER												
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RUR	URB	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+
MOST EFFECTIVE	27	21	1	4	7	11	5	9	12	3	2	1
SOMEWHAT USEFUL	198	136	7	52	47	81	53	73	69	21	17	17
REQUIRES CHANGE	48	40	1	8	13	20	9	15	15	8	5	3
DELETE	69	80	1	8	25	18	22	28	21	10	3	4
NO OPINION	221	151	16	54	67	82	61	80	65	41	15	17
NO ANSWER	14	10	0	4	4	1	6	9	3	1	0	0
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42

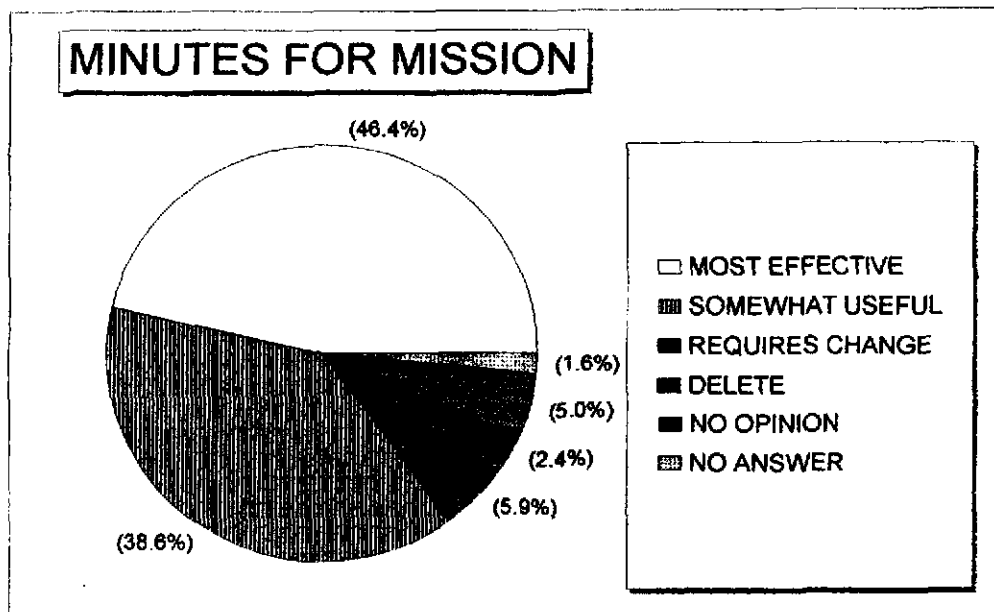
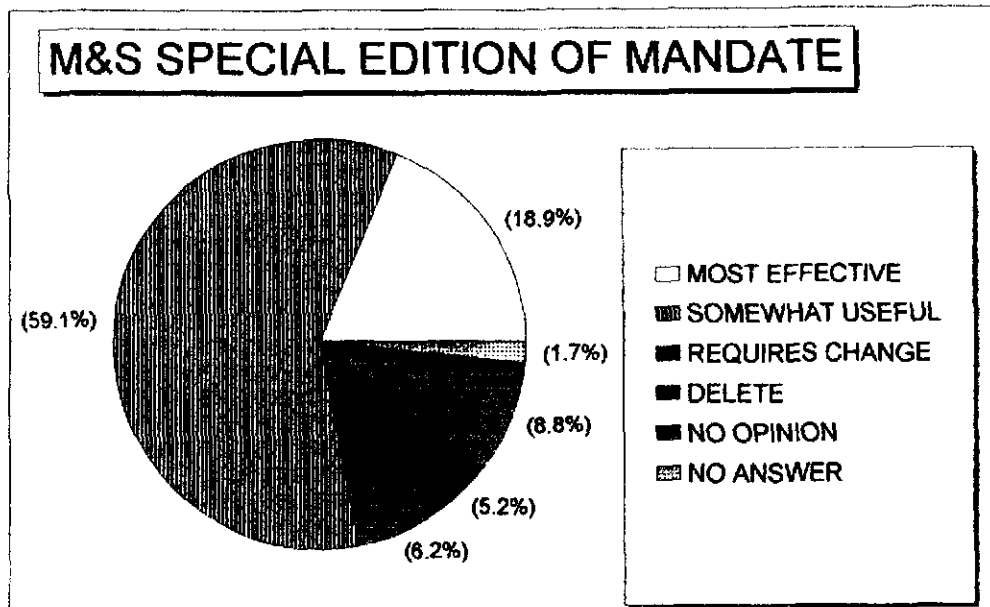
QUESTION #4 WHITE GIFT SERVICE												
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RUR	URB	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+
MOST EFFECTIVE	146	108	9	31	47	47	40	53	50	23	8	8
SOMEWHAT USEFUL	190	136	13	38	57	62	51	67	67	24	14	15
REQUIRES CHANGE	76	69	0	7	28	28	13	32	21	7	8	7
DELETE	57	49	2	6	12	22	21	19	17	11	5	5
NO OPINION	96	51	2	41	18	49	26	37	28	15	7	7
NO ANSWER	12	5	0	7	1	5	5	6	2	4	0	0
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42

QUESTION #4 MISSION & SERVICE FUND BULLETIN INSERTS												
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RUR	URB	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+
MOST EFFECTIVE	119	85	7	29	36	47	31	41	41	18	9	8
SOMEWHAT USEFUL	281	200	14	65	69	108	79	106	91	41	18	18
REQUIRES CHANGE	41	37	0	3	16	11	9	17	16	4	2	1
DELETE	32	21	2	9	9	7	12	12	6	6	3	5
NO OPINION	97	70	3	22	33	37	21	35	28	14	10	10
NO ANSWER	7	5	0	2	0	3	4	3	3	1	0	0
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42

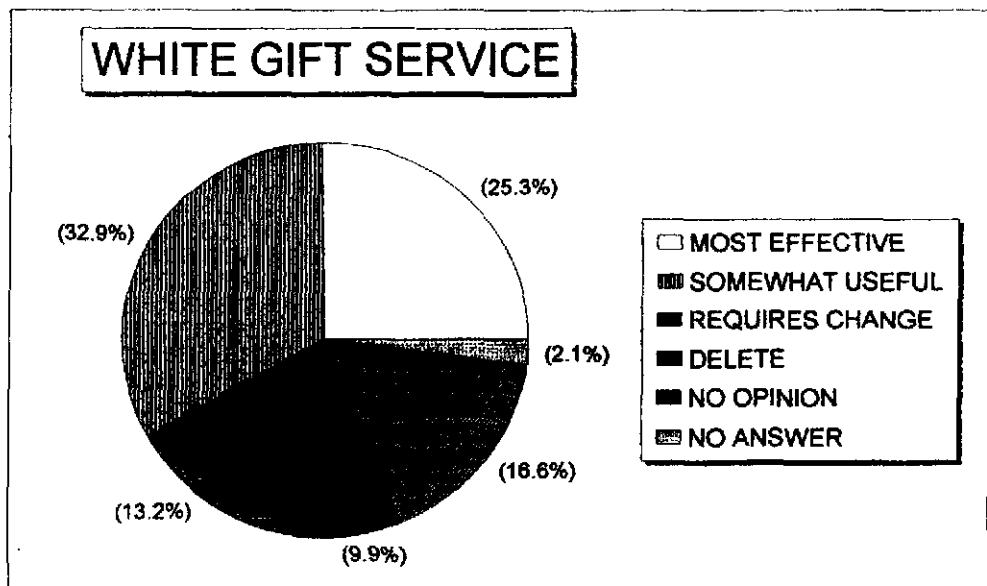
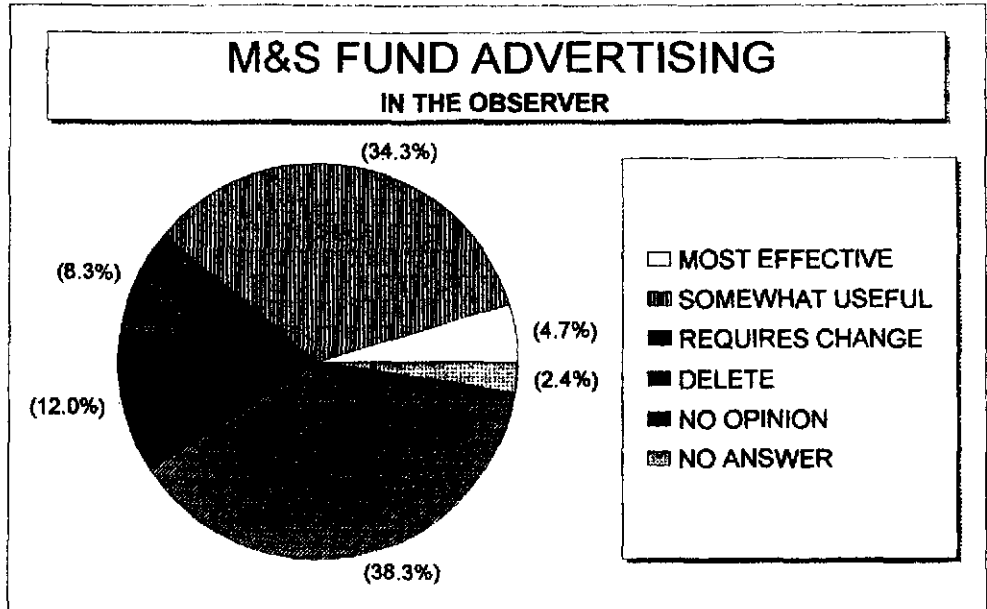
QUESTION #4 MISSION & SERVICE FUND POSTERS												
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RUR	URB	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+
MOST EFFECTIVE	89	62	6	22	23	35	28	29	32	16	5	6
SOMEWHAT USEFUL	310	225	14	69	66	117	79	111	97	47	26	23
REQUIRES CHANGE	29	23	1	4	9	7	8	17	8	1	1	2
DELETE	41	26	1	13	14	9	14	16	17	3	1	4
NO OPINION	86	74	4	18	30	41	21	37	28	15	8	7
NO ANSWER	12	8	0	4	1	4	6	4	5	2	1	0
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42

QUESTION #4 FACT SHEET (1995 - 1996)												
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RUR	URB	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+
MOST EFFECTIVE	92	69	3	18	29	34	26	44	28	9	9	1
SOMEWHAT USEFUL	252	178	14	59	69	98	65	90	79	45	17	15
REQUIRES CHANGE	39	29	1	7	11	15	8	13	12	5	1	8
DELETE	35	27	1	7	13	15	6	13	12	5	1	4
NO OPINION	146	107	7	34	38	48	48	50	49	19	11	14
NO ANSWER	13	8	0	5	3	5	3	4	5	1	3	0
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42

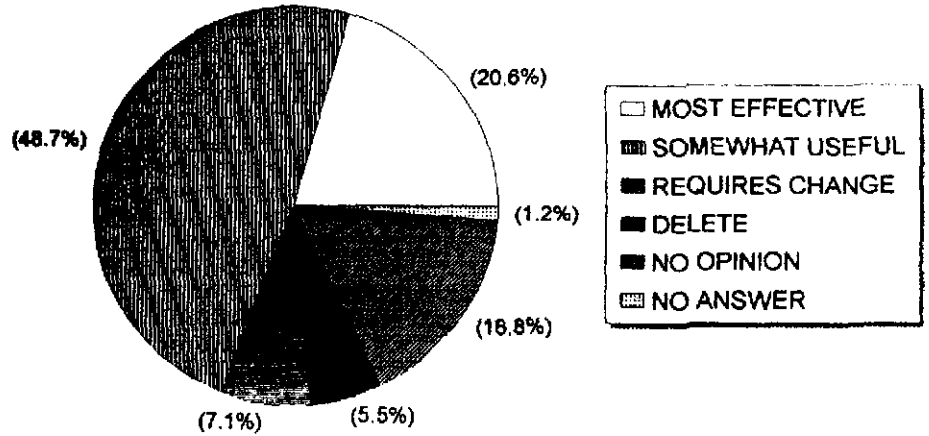
QUESTION #4 MISSION & SERVICE FUND VIDEO												
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RUR	URB	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+
MOST EFFECTIVE	100	68	8	22	23	38	32	45	30	11	4	8
SOMEWHAT USEFUL	182	139	5	36	55	71	46	64	59	27	15	15
REQUIRES CHANGE	28	24	0	4	11	9	5	11	10	5	1	1
DELETE	50	38	3	10	16	15	12	21	13	6	6	3
NO OPINION	205	142	9	53	57	71	59	69	67	34	16	14
NO ANSWER	12	7	1	5	1	9	2	4	6	1	0	1
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42



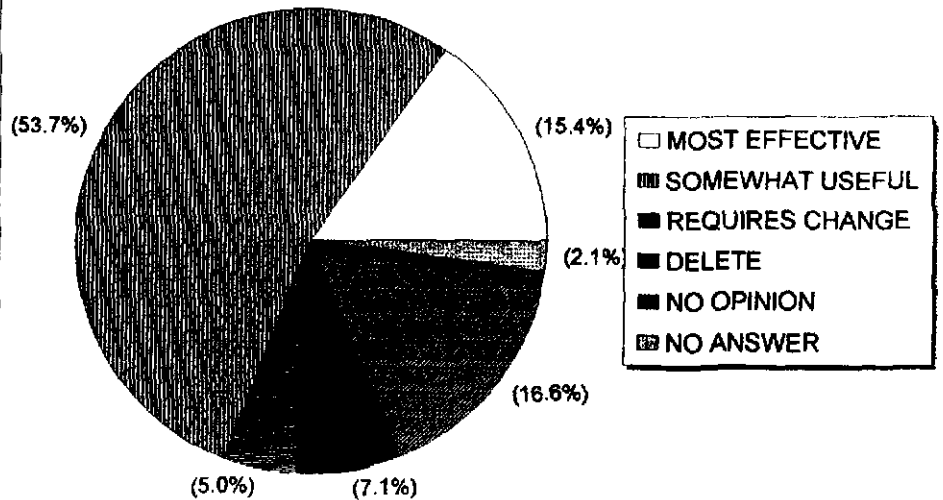


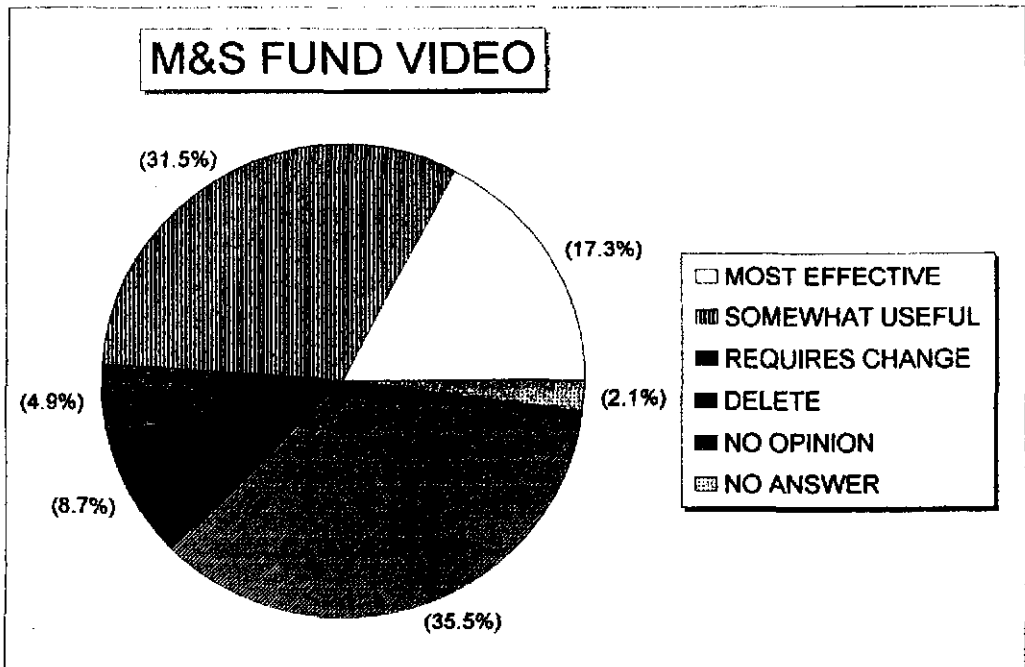
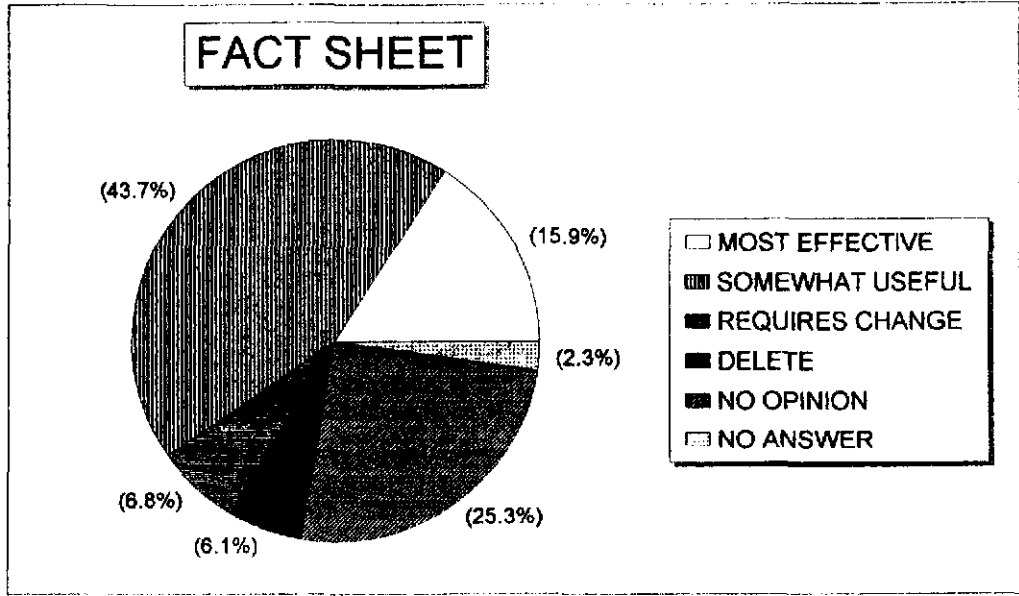


### M&S FUND BULLETIN INSERTS



### M&S FUND POSTERS





## **QUESTION #4**

### **OBSERVATIONS**

#### **Special Edition of Mandate**

The popularity and support for this resource is evident, however, from the associated reader comments, two recommendations might assist in converting the 341 respondents from "somewhat useful" to the "most effective" category.

**Recommendation #1:** Incorporate articles that are pertinent to or may assist Pastors in their preparation of Sunday worship.

**Recommendation #2:** Reflect respondents' needs to identify with the magazine's content through more stories and events of a human interest nature.

#### **Minutes for Mission**

This is certainly the most widely favoured publication by all of those surveyed. Not unlike the previous two recommendations, respondents enjoy the human interest articles.

#### **Mission and Service Fund Advertising in the Observer**

Through respondent comments, many of the United Church members particularly in eastern Canada do not subscribe or regularly review the Observer. Many respondents had difficulty in quantifying the benefits from advertising and in turn chose the "somewhat useful" or "no opinion" categories. This is one area of expenditure that could be reduced if not eliminated with few complaints from user groups.

#### **White Gift Service**

This is one of the more difficult resources to assess. From comments, one is led to believe that it is highly valued by some or hardly valued, and yet the scoring clearly indicates reasonable support from a cross-section of those surveyed. The Pastor's influence of this resource is indicated by the 236 "somewhat and most effective" responses, while 165 are of "no opinion" or did not provide an answer. In addition, 76 more, desire some changes. The committee may want to test the concept of user fees for this resource to solidify the basis for continued support.

### **Mission and Service Fund Bulletin Inserts**

There were numerous comments pertaining to the inclusion of this material with another publication. Further the strong support tended to be relative to those Pastors that incorporated this information into Sunday worship materials. One might consider this resource to be included in a "subscription package" for the various pastoral charges along with "Fact Sheets" and select "Video" presentations.

### **Mission and Service Fund Theme Posters**

Similar to the Observer advertising, benefits to the Mission and Service Fund are difficult to qualify with exception to the high visibility and aesthetic nature of this resource. Again, this is an area where strong support is indicated under the "somewhat useful" but at what cost? One possible recommendation is to consider jointly producing this resource with an agency or other suitable sponsorship partner.

### **Fact Sheet**

See comments for Mission and Service Fund Bulletin Inserts.

### **Video Resource (United in Action)**

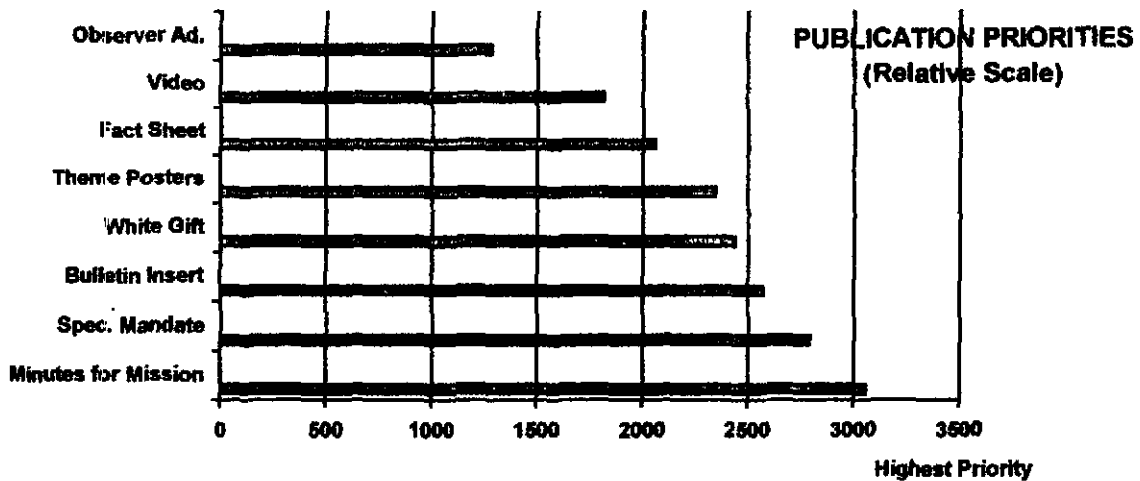
Those congregations that have viewed this resource commented overwhelmingly that it was valued and enjoyed. However, many charges do not have the TV/VCR readily available or have not promoted its use. As you will observe, the aspect of charging user fees for this type of resource in the form of cost recovery or rental through AVEL was strongly endorsed as many respondents perceived videos overall to be expensive if not an extravagant expenditure for struggling charges.

**QUESTION #5**

Please rank each of the following (8) resources (1 being most useful, 8 being least useful) to help us in determining your priorities/needs. (do not repeat number)

This question called for a ranking or priority given by respondents for each of the eight resources. Through numerically compiling the 579 submissions results provide the following list of most preferred resource to the least preferred:

- Minutes for Mission
- Special Edition of Mandate
- Bulletin Inserts
- White Gift Service
- Theme Posters
- Fact Sheet
- Video (United in Action)
- Observer Advertising



## QUESTION #6

Which of the following means do you feel would be the most useful in motivating and inspiring people in your congregation to give to the Mission and Service Fund? (check one)

Mission and Service Fund Advertising in the Observer	
Magazines (e.g. Mandate)	Worship Materials
Bulletin Inserts	Promotional Materials
Posters	Videos
Computer discs	Internet
E-mail	

This question requests participants to identify which of the resources would be useful in motivating and inspiring people to give to the Mission and Service Fund. The four choices offered included; Yes, Definitely, Somewhat, Rarely and Not at All. The following outlines the responses for each type of resource and interestingly, the results correspond exceptionally close to the responses outline in question #4.

### Advertising In The Observer

A total of 309 chose "Rarely, Not at all" or did not answer versus 268 that indicated "Yes, and Somewhat". When comparisons are made with responses from question #4, the results seem to indicate that respondents feel that in general advertising can be effective, however, for those that do not have access to the resource (i.e. do not subscribe to the Observer) view this as an unnecessary expenditure. Some may also find the content of advertising uninspiring or in need of change.

### Magazines (e.g. Mandate)

Using a different approach with the general classification of magazines as a resource had little effect on the results from question #4. Overall, respondents seem to strongly favour both the format and present practice.

### Bulletin Inserts

As an inspirational tool, this resource seemed to gain stronger acceptance. Again, the endorsement and nature of use by Pastors/Ministers is clearly an important aspect to determine the benefits or return on investment.

### **Posters**

At this point in the survey, I question whether the qualifier "Somewhat" and "Rarely" might not be interchangeable? I suspect that respondents are fair minded and understanding if a change on the emphasis was directed to another resource.

### **Videos**

Almost one third of responses are not yet committed to this resource. Similar to question #4, if it has not been used then few see the merits of such expense.

### **Worship Materials**

This is an extremely desirable resource with a broad spectrum, particularly by Pastors/Ministers. Many have expressed through comments their wish to have, in some instances, "ready to use" stories and "theme oriented" Mission and Service Fund materials for use during Sunday worship.

### **Promotional Material**

Results from the survey would strongly indicate that few would value or appreciate Mission and Service Funds being used in this manner.

### **Computer Discs**

Although only a few respondents are eager for this medium or resource as comments indicate, the primary reasons relate to the lack of technological resources and readiness rather than a disdain for the concept. Keep the thought, time will make this a more acceptable type of resource.

### **Internet**

Similar to the above, many of the smaller communities are unable to provide a reliable and affordable connection to the internet. The availability of 386 or larger capacity computers are in the minority at this time.

### **E-mail**

Somewhat misunderstood by those unfamiliar with computers. It may be too soon to consider as a suitable resource.



QUESTION #6		MISSION & SERVICE FUND ADVERTISING IN THE OBSERVER											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	43	27	1	14	13	19	9	13	16	8	3	3	
SOMEWHAT	225	162	10	52	60	90	59	91	64	34	19	15	
RARELY	205	155	12	39	63	64	60	72	69	25	16	17	
NOT AT ALL	59	44	2	12	13	26	16	19	21	12	2	5	
NO ANSWER	45	30	1	13	14	14	12	19	15	5	2	2	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		MAGAZINES (E.G. MANDATE)											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	170	119	9	41	46	56	55	75	57	17	7	10	
SOMEWHAT	275	206	10	59	86	111	59	91	87	45	25	22	
RARELY	96	70	4	20	21	32	30	36	32	14	7	6	
NOT AT ALL	13	9	2	2	2	6	5	3	4	5	0	1	
NO ANSWER	23	14	1	8	8	8	7	9	5	3	3	3	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		BULLETIN INSERTS											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	258	193	8	54	78	92	63	92	84	37	18	22	
SOMEWHAT	233	164	13	56	66	93	64	84	74	36	18	17	
RARELY	52	38	2	11	13	15	18	25	18	5	4	0	
NOT AT ALL	11	9	0	2	1	5	3	4	5	1	0	1	
NO ANSWER	23	14	3	7	5	8	8	9	4	5	2	2	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		POSTERS											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	135	95	6	32	33	58	37	51	46	22	10	5	
SOMEWHAT	267	197	10	59	89	87	67	96	91	34	20	20	
RARELY	112	76	5	31	27	49	29	43	29	16	10	12	
NOT AT ALL	25	19	2	4	7	8	8	8	9	5	2	1	
NO ANSWER	38	31	3	4	7	11	15	16	10	7	0	4	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		VIDEOS											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL.	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	151	113	7	32	40	62	33	62	39	23	15	10	
SOMEWHAT	209	145	5	58	53	84	58	77	68	30	15	16	
RARELY	113	83	7	24	40	35	32	38	40	19	5	8	
NOT AT ALL	53	43	4	5	16	16	17	21	16	7	2	6	
NO ANSWER	51	34	3	13	14	16	16	16	22	5	5	2	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		WORSHIP MATERIALS											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	300	210	12	74	89	119	74	116	88	45	22	21	
SOMEWHAT	176	133	7	36	52	51	54	66	60	28	14	8	
RARELY	60	45	8	10	13	23	16	21	21	4	5	8	
NOT AT ALL	8	7	0	1	3	2	3	3	4	1	0	0	
NO ANSWER	33	23	1	9	6	18	9	8	12	6	1	5	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	46	34	1	11	12	14	13	23	13	4	4	1	
SOMEWHAT	115	87	3	26	34	42	34	37	38	18	6	14	
RARELY	200	141	13	45	48	84	51	73	69	22	15	18	
NOT AT ALL	168	123	6	37	56	57	45	67	50	32	12	5	
NO ANSWER	48	33	3	11	13	16	13	14	15	8	5	4	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		COMPUTER DISCS											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	26	21	0	4	12	5	6	12	6	5	2	1	
SOMEWHAT	62	44	2	15	22	21	15	28	18	8	3	5	
RARELY	154	109	7	35	41	48	45	54	59	22	7	9	
NOT AT ALL	244	179	12	55	71	95	60	90	76	36	23	13	
NO ANSWER	91	65	5	21	17	44	30	30	26	13	7	14	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		INTERNET											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	18	14	0	2	6	6	3	6	3	3	1	3	
SOMEWHAT	50	36	0	14	14	27	7	17	20	7	1	5	
RARELY	135	103	6	27	30	66	34	41	39	28	13	10	
NOT AT ALL	282	200	13	68	91	86	82	117	88	38	18	17	
NO ANSWER	94	65	7	19	22	28	30	33	35	8	9	7	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

QUESTION #6		E - MAIL											
	#	PASTOR	STAFF	VOL	RURAL	URBAN	TOWN	-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250+	
YES, DEFINITELY	15	12	0	3	6	5	3	5	8	1	1	0	
SOMEWHAT	47	39	2	6	15	18	9	19	17	5	0	5	
RARELY	130	94	7	26	41	39	36	50	42	16	8	9	
NOT AT ALL	290	201	15	75	80	110	82	108	86	48	24	21	
NO ANSWER	95	72	2	20	21	41	26	32	32	14	9	7	
TOTAL	577	418	26	130	163	213	156	214	185	84	42	42	

### QUESTION #7

Budget reductions will require greater innovation and creativity to enable production of publications and audio-visual resources to serve congregational needs. Should user fee(s) be introduced for any of the following Mission and Service Fund Resources? Yes or No.

This question asked respondents to determine the suitability of charging a user fee for the following four resources.

<b>PUBLICATION</b>	<b># OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>Special Edition of Mandate</b>	552	65% said NO
<b>Minutes for Mission</b>	559	81% said NO
<b>White Gift Service</b>	549	69% said NO
<b>Videos</b>	545	66% said YES

### QUESTION #8

Would you accept advertising in Mission and Service Fund materials to help offset production costs? Yes or No.

This was a singular choice questions to determine if advertising would be an acceptable way to offset production costs in Mission and Service Fund materials.

Of the 533 responses, 68% selected YES in support of this option to attract additional revenues. 8% per respondents did not select a choice and further, many responses added qualifiers in writing to ensure suitability for both the advertiser's product/service and nature or content of proposed advertising.

## QUESTION #9

What other means would you suggest to offset expenses for print and audio-visual resources?  
Comments.

This questions required a written comment or suggestions to offset expenses for print and audio-visual resources. The Denominational Finance Committee has volunteered to review the approximately 400 plus surveys having written comments to ensure each submission receives the appropriate considerations.

Below, however, are a number of the more popular responses.

- *Congratulations on doing what you are doing. Re examining priorities.*
- *"dove tail" efforts with other denominations, agencies.*
- *create standing order forms to know better the production required.*
- *contracting out printing and production.*
- *user fees for more than one copy.*
- *ensure accuracy of mailing lists to avoid duplication.*
- *occasional use of special Mission and Service offering envelopes, special event consistently held each year.*
- *make one copy of document (black & white only) available in a photocopy ready format...we'll copy as required.*
- *ship magazines in bulk for local distribution.*
- *send "overheads" rather than bulletins.*
- *Mandate produced in format of bulletin inserts.*
- *Include bulletin inserts in Minutes for Mission booklets.*
- *Videos produced in fewer numbers made available for rent through AVEL.*

## QUESTION #10

This broad ranging questions asked respondents to provide suggestions pertaining to encouraging a commitment to the Mission and Service Fund. Some of the answers provided, must have confused the Mission and Service Fund with the larger aspect of Church. Nevertheless, as in question #9, an overwhelming number of responses were extremely supportive and will be reviewed in greater detail by members of the Denominational Finance Committee to be acted upon.

Below are some of the most frequent responses noted:

- *sell Minister's on keeping the message before the whole congregation. - in service training.*
- *identify one week each year for Mission and Service Fund structured activities.*
- *less wordiness - more personal stories "the human touch".*
- *identify a committed Mission and Service Fund representative in every charge - train them.*
- *establish a "speakers roster" at a fee for congregational use.*
- *more person to person contact with congregation members - people make an impact.*
- *team congregations to strengthen Mission and Service Fund awareness and support.*
- *more "project related" videos depicting the good things done with congregation dollars.*
- *educate people better on the uses. Provide a breakdown of dollars and reasons for giving to Mission and Service.*
- *start with education the young in Sunday school and a project relating to this group.*
- *"Mission Sunday Brunches" - four each year.*
- *people must feel a part of something in order to commit.*
- *provide "ready to serve" (canned) worship/sermon materials dealing with Mission and Service Fund Themes.*
- *adapt Minutes for Mission minutes as part of Sunday services.*
- *people respond to concrete, identifiable causes. The Mission and Service Fund is too abstract and distant for many. Give them a tornado and watch them respond.*



With: BV  
2595  
.45357.  
1999

**Rev. Bill Steadman  
Rosedale United Church  
159 Roxborough Dr.  
Toronto, Ontario M4W 1X7**

August, 1998

Dear Mission and Service Fund Contact:

Enclosed with your summer, 1998 mailing from the Department of Stewardship Services is a copy of a questionnaire to help us evaluate the ways in which individual congregations support the wider mission of the church, including the Mission and Service Fund. This questionnaire has been developed by myself as part of the data collection for my thesis-project within the Doctor of Ministry program at McMaster Divinity College.

You are under no obligation to answer this questionnaire. Your willingness to reply will give myself, and the church at large, a greater sample of opinion from which to draw conclusions. Care has been taken to make sure there are no identifying marks on the individual questionnaires, and you are invited to submit your completed form in a plain white envelope. All envelopes will be discarded before the questionnaires are tabulated, so there will be no attempt to link any individual answer sheet with a particular church or pastoral charge. Your response will remain strictly confidential -- I shall be the only one opening the mail received and tabulating the results from the original questionnaire.

This project is under the supervision of Dr. William Brackney, Principal of McMaster Divinity College. He can be reached at (905) 525-9140, ext. 23501 should you wish further clarification on the use of this material. Since the Department of Stewardship Services has authorized the mailing of this questionnaire with their regular mailing of resources, a copy of the final results and report will be filed with the Department. Questions regarding the role of the church in this matter can be addressed to Elsie Manley-Casimir, Director of the Department of Stewardship Services, at (416) 231-5931. Individual requests for the compiled data will be honoured, and may be submitted to Elsie or to myself. The final report should be available by February 28, 1999

You also are free to contact myself (416) 924-0725. ext. 24 if you have any questions. Results also may be faxed to (416) 924-9505. (Faxed returns will be photocopied for tabulation purposes with no identifying marks on the copied version).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

(Rev.) Bill Steadman

With:  
BV  
2595  
.U53S7  
1999

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON INTEREST IN AND SUPPORT OF  
THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH  
WITHIN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA.**

This questionnaire seeks to determine the ways in which individuals and congregations within the United Church support the wider mission of the church, including the Mission and Service Fund. It has been designed by the Rev. Bill Steadman as part of his research for the Doctor of Ministry degree at McMaster Divinity College. The final compilation of data and the report itself will be shared with the Department of Stewardship Services of the United Church of Canada.

The ultimate goal is to attempt to draw conclusions with regard to trends in mission funding in local congregations. In order to complete this project, **a response is desired by October 15, 1998.**

1. Respondent: Ministry Personnel \_\_\_ Chairperson of the Board \_\_\_  
Mission/Outreach Committee Member \_\_\_ Lay Volunteer \_\_\_  
Other Staff \_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Home congregation about which this data applies:  
Rural \_\_\_ Small Town \_\_\_ Urban \_\_\_ Suburban \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_
3. Average attendance on a Sunday in November  
Less than 25 \_\_\_ 25-49 \_\_\_ 50-99 \_\_\_ 100-199 \_\_\_ 200-349 \_\_\_ 350+ \_\_\_
4. Percentage of the Church Budget given to the work of the Mission and Service Fund *in 1997*:  
Under 10% \_\_\_ 10-19% \_\_\_ 20-29% \_\_\_ 30-39% \_\_\_ 40-49% \_\_\_ 50%+ \_\_\_
5. Percentage of the Church Budget given to Local Community Groups, Non-Church Agencies, and Local Church Mission Groups (include all projects) *in 1997*:  
Under 10% \_\_\_ 10-19% \_\_\_ 20-29% \_\_\_ 30-39% \_\_\_ 40-49% \_\_\_ 50%+ \_\_\_
6. In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to the Mission and Service Fund have:  
Increased \_\_\_ Decreased \_\_\_ Remained the Same \_\_\_
7. In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to Local Community Groups and Non-Church Agencies have:  
Increased \_\_\_ Decreased \_\_\_ Remained the Same \_\_\_



8. In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies have:  
Increased \_\_\_ Decreased \_\_\_ Remained the Same \_\_\_
9. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for the Mission and Service Fund of the Church will:  
Increase \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_
10. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for Local Community Groups and non-Church Agencies will:  
Increase: \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_
11. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies will:  
Increase: \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_
12. The following statements apply to my home congregation now (check all that apply):
- Mission is the essence of the church
  - Our main concern is supporting local mission and outreach
  - The prime focus of mission work is through the Mission and Service Fund
  - Our people like to have "hands-on" experience in mission work
  - Our people like to give primarily through monetary donations
  - We could do more in the area of mission projects and outreach
  - We are doing all that we can in the area of mission
  - Funds for the Mission and Service Fund of the church come after all staff and building costs are met
  - Our Mission givings are augmented by the United Church Women
  - Mission education is a focus of our congregation
  - Children learn about the church's mission in Sunday School
  - Mission issues are raised in the worship service every month
  - Mission issues are raised in the worship service 2-3 times/year
  - We could learn more about the mission of the church
  - We have an annual Stewardship Visitation program

13. The following statements would apply to my home congregation ten years ago:

(check all that apply)

- Mission is the essence of the church
- Our main concern is supporting local mission and outreach
- The prime focus of mission work is through the Mission and Service Fund
- Our people like to have "hands-on" experience in mission work
- Our people like to give primarily through monetary donations
- We could do more in the area of mission projects and outreach
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- We could learn more about the mission of the church
- We have an annual Stewardship Visitation program

14. In the next three years, I expect overall support for the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church will:

Increase       Decrease       Remain the same

15. Less than 50% of the members of the United Church of Canada support the Mission and Service Fund. Reasons given by people in my congregation for not supporting the Mission and Service Fund include the following (check all that apply):

- Fund too impersonal
- Protest against U.C. policies
- Rather give to local causes
- Administration costs too high
- Disagree with mission priorities
- Let Official Board set budget
- Need money for local church
- Never heard of Mission and Service Fund
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

16. One way to generate interest in the Mission and Service Fund of the church is:

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17. As a congregation, we tend to support mission projects which:  
(check all that apply)

- Meet people's basic needs of food, shelter, and health  
 Provide educational programs  
 Have an evangelical component  
 Keep administration costs below 20%  
 Work in the local community  
 Serve an overseas community  
 Provide hands-on experience for volunteers  
 Serve primarily women and children  
 Are sponsored by the United Church of Canada  
 Are ecumenical in nature  
 Have been visited by one or more of our members  
 Print an annual audited statement

18. Other comments on your funding for mission and outreach activities:

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***ALL REPLIES HELD IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE***

**PLEASE SEND COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO:**

**THE REV. BILL STEADMAN  
ROSEDALE UNITED CHURCH  
159 ROXBOROUGH DR.**

**TORONTO, ONTARIO M4W 1X7 by October 15, 1998.**

QUESTIONNAIRE ON INTEREST IN AND SUPPORT OF  
THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH  
WITHIN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA. <sup>With: BV</sup>  
<sup>2595</sup>  
<sup>U53S74</sup>  
<sup>1999</sup>

16. One way to generate interest in the Mission and Service Fund of the church is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**PLEASE SEND COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO:**  
**THE REV. BILL STEADMAN**  
**ROSEDALE UNITED CHURCH**  
**159 ROXBOROUGH DR.**  
**TORONTO, ONTARIO M4W 1X7 by October 15, 1998.**

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The ultimate goal is to attempt to draw conclusions with regard to trends in mission funding in local congregations. In order to complete this project, a response is desired by October 15, 1998.

1. Respondent: Ministry Personnel  Chairperson of the Board   
Mission/Outreach Committee Member  Lay Volunteer   
Other Staff  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Home congregation about which this data applies:  
Rural  Small Town  Urban  Suburban  Other

3. Average attendance on a Sunday in November  
Less than 25  25-49  50-99  100-199  200-349  350+

4. Percentage of the Church Budget given to the work of the Mission and Service Fund in 1997:  
Under 10%  10-19%  20-29%  30-39%  40-49%  50%+

5. Percentage of the Church Budget given to Local Community Groups, Non-Church Agencies, and Local Church Mission Groups (include all projects) in 1997:  
Under 10%  10-19%  20-29%  30-39%  40-49%  50%+

6. In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to the Mission and Service Fund have:  
Increased  Decreased  Remained the Same

7. In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to Local Community Groups and Non-Church Agencies have:  
Increased  Decreased  Remained the Same

8. In the last ten years, our congregation's givings to Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies have:  
Increased \_\_\_ Decreased \_\_\_ Remained the Same \_\_\_

9. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for the Mission and Service Fund of the Church will:  
Increase \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_

10. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for Local Community Groups and non-Church Agencies will:  
Increase: \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_

11. In the next three years, I expect our congregation's support for Local Church Mission Groups and Agencies will:  
Increase: \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the Same \_\_\_

12. The following statements apply to my home congregation now (check all that apply):
- Mission is the essence of the church
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  - The prime focus of mission work is through the Mission and Service Fund
  - Our people like to have "hands-on" experience in mission work
  - Our people like to give primarily through monetary donations
  - We could do more in the area of mission projects and outreach
  - We are doing all that we can in the area of mission
  - Funds for the Mission and Service Fund of the church come after all staff and building costs are met
  - Our Mission givings are augmented by the United Church Women
  - Mission education is a focus of our congregation
  - Children learn about the church's mission in Sunday School
  - Mission issues are raised in the worship service every month
  - Mission issues are raised in the worship service 2-3 times/year
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13. The following statements would apply to my home congregation ten years ago:  
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14. In the next three years, I expect overall support for the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church will:  
Increase \_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_ Remain the same \_\_\_

15. Less than 50% of the members of the United Church of Canada support the Mission and Service Fund. Reasons given by people in my congregation for not supporting the Mission and Service Fund include the following (check all that apply):

- Fund too impersonal
- Rather give to local causes
- Disagree with mission priorities
- Need money for local church
- Protest against U.C. policies
- Administration costs too high
- Let Official Board set budget
- Never heard of Mission and Service Fund
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_