

[ENHANCING OUR CONCILIAR CHURCH]

Origin: [Rev. Amadeus Pyralis]

1. What is the issue? Why is it important?

Briefly describe (approximately four sentences) the issue and its significance.

In the spirit of living into our century-old identity as a conciliar Church, and in light of relatively recent structural changes which have consolidated power and decision-making into fewer and fewer hands, we believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit are calling us to:

- Ensure that the ethos of a just, fair, and safe Church is authentic and exists at every level of the Church through appropriate democratic process.
- Ensure that all levels of the Church are transparent and accountable and are available for discussion.

2. What is happening now?

Provide a description of the current practice or policy in question, identifying/citing the source of this information.

- The United Church of Canada has prided itself on being a Church which values all voices. The post-restructuring consolidation of decision-making into a few hands, combined with the insular nature of the current structure (since 2019) keeps non-elected personnel at a distance, and bestows too much power in the hands of non-elected personnel, especially the General Secretary, Executive Minister, Members of General Council and General Council Delegates. This has had the effect of transforming The UCC from a conciliar Church to an authoritarian, hierarchical one. The lack of time-limited appointments in these roles has also had the effect of restricting the number and diversity of voices that are heard.
- If we do not address this issue, we will continue to see a rise in distrust between the General Council, the Regions, and the Communities of Faith and a lack of “buy-in” from the grass-roots due to the disconnection from the decision-making processes of the Church.

3. What is the recommendation?

Describe how the General Council might respond to the issue.

- Fill all decision-making positions within the denomination (General Secretary, Executive Ministers, members of General Council

Executive and delegates to General Council,) by election across the denomination

- Limit the time periods that people are allowed to serve in these positions to 4 year terms with appropriate overlap for training. (Eg., Year 4 will be “outgoing” position. Year 1 will be “position-elect.”)
- Limited the renewal of positions such that all officers may be elected once and renewed once to ensure that decision-making is fluid and representative and not dynastic.
- Use the resources available to us in the 21st century to hold elections electronically, so that more rather than fewer voices are heard. All communities of faith should participate in the electoral process.

4. Background information:

Provide details the General Council needs to make an informed decision on the proposal.

5. How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?

Describe in broad terms how this proposal engages with the United Church’s established principles and positions on equity.

By electing all decision-making officers of The United Church through a denomination-wide electoral process, the grass-roots of the Church will have their concerns, needs and dreams heard and represented. A denomination-wide electoral process allows for all voices to be heard, regardless of race, gender, ability or other identities. Changing the personnel in decision-making positions more frequently equips the Church with a broader base of knowledge about the ecclesial working of The United Church of Canada and ensures that more diverse voices are heard.

For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Please select the appropriate option and provide the key discussion points for items being forwarded to the General Council:

- Agree
- Disagree without forwarding to the General Council
- Disagree and forwarding to the General Council
- Take no action at this time

Comments _____

Who will present (by prerecorded video) this proposal on behalf of the transmitting body?

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