

## REMIT and PROPOSAL INTEGRITY POLICY

Origin: Rev. Amadeus Pyralis

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

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

1. The Remit and Proposals process was designed to allow for democratic input from the appropriate groups within the denomination so that the decision-making process is upheld with integrity and safety against one group running roughshod over others. We have witnessed “legal loopholes” allow for prior Remits to be circumvented using the Proposal process.

#### **We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:**

- Protect the Remit process to uphold its integrity within our democratic and conciliar denomination
- Close up “legal loopholes” that permit the Remit process to be circumvented by other processes and groups within the denomination.

### 2. What is happening now?

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

- The new governance model proposed more accountability to the Remit process to make broad and sweeping decisions that affect the denomination and those within it instead of Presbyteries and Conferences which, at the time, could circumvent some processes.
- In the wake of events like the General Council Executive closing its doors on Broadview reporting, creating a system that emboldens transparency while bolstering integrity is essential to keeping our system democratic and fair, counting as many voices as possible in our decision-making.
- The Proposal Process (*The Manual, Bylaws F, Initiating Action and Change*) does not prescribe any methods for ensuring this process for decision-making does not conflict with another, specifically Remits, thus creating “legal loopholes”.
- As we saw with the Ordination of Designated Lay Ministers in 2024, the General Council Executive stated it was the General Council who pushed the Proposal through, and the General Council Executive is responsible for work in the interim which includes any denomination/faith shaping issue (*The Manual, D.5.3.2 – D5.3.2*). However, the Judicial Committee deferred accountability claiming that the General Council (which the Proposal

originated from) was not accountable to the Appeals process. This kind of legalistic thinking is not in line with the spirit of our denomination and General Council Executive has used this “legal loophole” in the form of a Proposal to bypass the Remit process to move denomination-wide decisions through General Council Executive instead of consulting, or adhering to, the wisdom of the church.

- The recent issue involving the General Secretary undermining Remit NI01 by dissolving the National Indigenous Council without consultation exposes a critical problem with our belief in Remits and their integrity. The Calls to the United Church cite: “*We (Indigenous people) will decide for ourselves who we are, Colonialism took community control away from us and placed it in a colonial centre of authority*”. (<https://broadview.org/united-church-restructuring-revisited/>)
- We are neither a business nor a corporation, we are a church first and foremost and thus “legal loopholes” should not be the target of any one group to find satisfaction.
- Exploitation of the process degrades our denomination in the eyes of our parishioners, congregations, churches, and our integrity within the public sphere as well.

### 3. What is the recommendation?

Describe how the General Council might respond to the issue.

- A. Making a public and consistent commitment to the Proposal and Remit process by affirming and enforcing who the General Council Executive is accountable to when Remits are circumvented...
  - With a mandate to name exactly who the General Council Executive is accountable to, and a process for when these events do arise along with appropriate guidelines on process to remedy the situation.
  - The party the General Council Executive is accountable to should have unbiased and appropriate representation to promote a fair decision in the remedy.
  - The mandate should be specific, and the guidelines should seek to not encumber or burden those reporting the situation needlessly.

- B. Mandate that any Proposal coming through its meetings will first be checked against previous Remits to ensure they are not in conflict with one another in spirit and in verbiage...
- This effectively closes the “legal loophole” that has been used to make decisions within the denomination that were previously turned down through the Remit process.
- C. Advise the Manual Committee to close these “legal loopholes” by editing the wording of section F.1. to include the following:
- “The General Council Executive will, with due diligence, check its records for Remits that match or resemble the Proposal on its table to ensure there is no conflict with a previous decision of the denomination. If such a conflict exists, the Proposal should be turned down in favour of the party attempting the Remit process again to see if the wisdom of the church has changed”,
  - “The General Council Executive will not pass any Proposal that conflicts with a previously passed or failed Remit without consulting with the same bodies that previous Remit came from. In that event, a tertiary Remit can be initiated to see if the wisdom of the church has changed”,

#### 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.

The Remit process relies on the entire Body of The United Church of Canada to make its final decisions on various matters that affect the church as a whole. When these matters are circumvented by a separate process that does not count their voices in any way, we cheapen our democratic roots and degrade the unique and valuable voices of our denomination. This proposal ensure that ALL voices, regardless of gender, race, ability and other identities are all 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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