BACKGROUNDER

Contextual Summary

Over the past 60 years there has been a significant decline in participation in the life of our Canadian churches. While the reasons for this are varied and complex, they include an ageing population, a decline in youth participation, a decline in the participation rate of visible minorities, an increase in small ethnic churches and an increase in the number of individuals declared as having "no religion."

Further, the Canadian society has become more culturally diverse. These changes are a result of the effects of globalization, technological changes, financial systems interconnectedness, trade initiatives, cultural awareness across the globe, and immigration from non-traditional regions of the World. In some respects, we are becoming a society with increasingly permeable borders in time and space.

In a 2012 report to General Council, the Task Group on Intercultural Ministries in The United Church of Canada, stated that:

> "To focus *only* on policy solutions will never effect the kind of deep and transformative change for which we are striving. In addition, we are all being called to deeply examine our attitudes, values, and personal [*sic*] around difference—and risk doing things differently to create a better space of belonging for all."[1]

The Task Group goes on to say:

> "It is important to note that understanding of "intercultural" is indeed now much broader than racial and linguistic groups only; however, focusing on these communities of difference can help deepen our understanding of the cultural context in which we find ourselves today. It is for illustrative purposes that this report will offer background information on race and language as a lens through which we can better understand the churches attitude towards difference."[2]

As noted in The United Church of Canada's *Identity Survey*, its members put a high priority on lived experiences which include "questioning, debate, doubt, and ongoing discovery."[3] Canadians define themselves by their values, personal priorities and the choices that they make in life. They are less hierarchical and lend themselves to individual expression.[4] The time is therefore ideal to move beyond the

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[1] Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry, Task Group on Intercultural Ministries, PCPMM17 Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation, Executive of General Council March 24-26, 2012, 153.

[2] Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry, Task Group on Intercultural Ministries, PCPMM17 Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation, Executive of General Council March 24-26, 2012, 163.

[3] Jane Armstrong. "Interpretive Report on the Results of The United Church Identity Survey 2011" Jane Armstrong Research Associates, http://www.gc40.uited-church.ca/files/gce_1111_identity_armstrong.pdf, 3, downloaded March 9, 2013.

[4] Michael Adams, *Sex in the Snow*: The Surprising Revolution in Canadian Social Values (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2006), 20-41.

regular welcome. Going deeper means that The United Church of Canada must be fully engaged in understanding the values and spirituality/religiousness of its traditional, modern and post-modern cohorts. This necessarily means that it must be able to facilitate a thoughtful reflection on the nature of the church from the time when Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational denominations came together for the formation of The United Church of Canada in 1925, to a conversation with those immigrants and others who joined in the 1960s at the crossroads of changes in church development, to those immigrants who arrived in the 1980 when there was a significant shift in trends from "Old World" to "New World" immigrants, and finally with those immigrants and others who join the church today who are increasingly members of visible minorities and of other faiths.

In a video welcome message recorded by Richard Bott, the 43rd Moderator of The United Church of Canada, he said:

> "I've been asked what it is that I'm hoping to focus on over the next three years. I'd really like to see us—as individuals, as communities of faith, and as a denomination—to explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in The United Church of Canada in the 21st century.[…] I believe that the Holy Spirit was moving at the 43rd General Council—in a gale-force whirlwind, when racialized commissioners and commissioners who are differently abled spoke of the experiences in their lives of racism and ableism—not just in the world but in The United Church of Canada. In those few hours, God challenged those of us who are part of the dominant church to realize that every single person is a beloved child of God and to do the deep, hard work of rooting out and changing our internalized and overt racism and ableism." [5]

Bott challenges us to recognize that much work remains towards giving life to The United Church of Canada's policies of becoming a more inclusive church. The United Church of Canada is challenged to respond to the following questions: (a) What can we do to be more inclusive to visible minorities? (b) What are the changes in the ecclesial structure, governance, polity, worship, rules, roles, and other elements of the church, that are needed to be addressed in order to improve the participation of visible minorities? (c) How can the church maintain the Gospel message of loving God and loving others who are culturally different from the culturally dominant group? These may be difficult questions given the continuing decline in membership and financial resources that follow.

The outcome of this study was to determine how visible and non-visible minorities can continue to celebrate the commonality in their cultures, values and traditions while recognizing and finding ways to mitigate the inhibiting consequences of their differences. The study explored whether the similarities and differences between the individual values, and spirituality/religiousness between the visible minority population and the White population provide indicators that will help to advance the need to become a more intercultural and inclusive church. Further, how can the church reach out to visible minorities who are both inside and outside of the church? Lastly, since the church plays a central role in maintaining the Gospel message, how can Scripture inform the church towards the treatment of "strangers in your midst" (visible minorities)?

The study of values is a difficult task but history shows that The United Church of Canada is committed to a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity in its congregations in order to develop practical and meaningful solutions towards becoming an intercultural church. The attainment of the diversity in the church allows for the return and reinforcement of an authentic Christian Spirit – one that will revitalize the community through the flow of fresh talent, and equips it for inclusiveness and growth.

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[5]Bott, Richard. Moderator's Welcome Message (Transcript of Videotaped Message: September 2018) https://www.united-church.ca/news/moderators-welcome-message, Downloaded September 27, 2018.

The Research Questions

This research was synonymous with the needs expressed by The United Church of Canada to identify and to understand its "core values" and traditions within the context of a multi-generational, postmodern, and changing society. Values and tradition have been defined as elements of culture where values are defined as individual values and tradition as a composite of spirituality/religiousness and Scripture. The study is designed to gain an understanding of individual values, spirituality/religiousness and Scripture as related to visible minorities that comprise The United Church of Canada.

Research Question 1: Individual Values

 (a) What are the individual value priorities for the study groups?
 (b) What are the similarities and differences between the study groups?
 (c) Are there significant statistical differences between the study groups?

Research Question 2: Spirituality/Religiousness Measures

 (a) What are the spirituality/religiousness measures for the study groups?
 (b) What are the similarities and differences between the study groups?
 (c) Are there significant statistical differences between the study groups?

Research Question 3: Scripture

 (a) What historical situation does Scripture address that would allow for comparative application to today's setting?
 (b) Who are the key players in the texts?
 (c) What actions do they initiate?
 (d) How do their actions influence the future development of the church?
 (e) What are the social, cultural and spiritual values of that time?
 (f) How can these social, cultural and spiritual values transform the praxis within all levels of The United Church of Canada so that immigrants (visible minorities) can become full partners within the Church today?

The results of this research study will have significance in a wide range of applications in The United Church of Canada and beyond. It is my hope that the findings will challenge both clergy and laity to make strategic changes in current ideas and processes concerning church ministries in pastoral care, homiletics, worship, religious education, and ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue.

Theoretical Framework

Culture is a deeply rooted phenomenon which cannot be adequately described or understood. Culture is a construct of several variables of interest - some known and some remain unknown or difficult to fully define. The process of defining culture in any context will therefore remain in flux - ever changing and never static. Culture dances with the historical past while forging into the future with the influences of the present. Culture is a composite of things that are borrowed, interpreted and reinterpreted. It is individuals and groups who act together within a social structure to define culture that then gives meaning to the environment and social structure in which humans exist. We are therefore called to regularly construct new cultures by challenging the past and welcoming new cultural influences in order to move into the future.

This study proposes that culture, in part, is formed by individual values, and tradition, where tradition is defined by spirituality/religiousness, and the faith in the Scripture message.

<u>Values</u>

T.J. Gorringe writes:

> "In constructing the world materially we interpret it, set values on it. To talk of values is to talk of a culture's self-understanding, its account of its priorities. The everyday world, the built environment, rituals, symbols, ideals and practices all rest on these values." [6] […] "Values set down the final standards for desired social relations, individual modes of behaviour, social and political structures, life-goals and ideals for the individual and the collective self. Furthermore, they also bind people's feeling and guide their moral judgment.' "[7]

<u>Schwartz Individual Value Model</u>

Although the concepts of social, cultural and spiritual values are difficult to define with full precision, recent studies have provided models which have been used successfully to operationalize and measure these concepts. One author who has done significant work in this area is Shalom Schwartz who has been able to study several types of research questions which relate to both individual social values and group values.

According to Schwartz, there are, in general, six attributes of values:

(1) "Values are beliefs that are linked inextricably to affect.
(2) Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action.
(3) Values transcend specific actions and situations.
(4) Values serve as standards or criteria that guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events.
(5) Values are ordered by importance relative to one another to form a system of priorities. This hierarchical feature also distinguishes values from norms and attitudes.
(6) The relative importance of values guides action. The trade-off among relevant, competing values is what guides attitudes and behaviours." [8]

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[6] T.J. Gorringe, *Furthering Humanity: A Theology of Culture* (Burlington VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 3.

[7] Gorringe, 3. Cited in T. Meyer, Identity Mania: Fundamentalism and the Politicisation of Cultural Differences, (London: Zed, 2001), 71.

[8] Shalom Schwartz. "A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations: Explication and Application" *Comparative Sociology* 5, no. 2-3, (2006), 143.

Further, in order to effectively use a model concerning values, Schwartz's constraints say that the model must be:

    (a) comprehensive in identifying all elements which comprise the measure;
    (b) the measure must have the same meaning across cultures and groups (i.e., each culture must exhibit some level of affiliation with each value);
    (c) the content of the human values must be recognized and used to form priorities across cultures;
    (d) there should be very minimal variation in the value structure across social strata.[9]

These are key attributes in understanding value differences among groups in the study.

Spirituality/religiousness

The religious/spiritual dimensions used in this study are multidimensional in nature. They provide several definitions of spirituality/religiousness. Each definition is comprised of multiple characteristics.

Scripture

The study relies on Acts 15, characterized as the Jerusalem Assembly, as the key text towards understanding how the early church integrated people of different cultures into the believing Christian community. There is also an exegetical review of other programmatic Lucan texts that support the theological framework for discussing Acts 15 (Luke 4:14-30; Acts 1:1-11; Acts 2:1-13; and Acts 10:1-11:18).

Target Population and Sample Selection

The survey targeted all individuals in The United Church of Canada who were 18 years and older and attended church services at least once during the year.

The initial sample design called for the selection of 150 pastoral charges across all Conferences that comprised all ethnic[10] ministries/congregations (take-all), selected congregations that could be identified as having a visible cultural or diverse membership, and a sample from all other congregations. The final study groups post data collection were Blacks, Chinese, First Nations, Japanese and Whites (although the original design was directed at all visible minority group in The United Church of Canada.

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[9] Shalom Schwartz. "Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries" *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 25, (1992):2-3.

[10] The ethnic ministries are comprised of: Korean, Japanese, German, Welsh, Taiwanese, Hungarian, Finnish, Ugandan, Ghanaian, Armenian, Filipino, African Canadian/Black and Tamil congregations.

Data Collection

The survey was conducted between October 2013 and June 2014 across The United Church of Canada. An invitation to participate was sent to selected pastoral charges. However, after the first two months of follow-up emails, the response rate remained low with only about 10 pastoral charges responding to the invitation. As a result, I contacted the regional Conference Offices to solicit their support for the project and to request that they send out the survey information to their Presbyteries and Pastoral Charges. Each Conference, except the Montreal & Ottawa Conference and the All Native Circle Conference, responded to my request.[11] In early December 2013, I issued an information package to the participating Conferences. The package was comprised of a one-page instruction of how to administer the survey and a prepared insert that pastoral charges would be requested to place in their bulletins. The Conference leaders were asked to forward my email to their local pastoral charges.[12]

The decision to participate in the survey came directly from the local minister or from their congregational council representative. Each pastoral charge was asked to make a verbal announcement about the survey at their Sunday service and to place regular announcements in their bulletins for an average period of six weeks. Each respondent was asked to complete a consent form which was his or her authorization to participate in the study.

The initial request to participate included a secured online link where participants could go to complete the questionnaire. Alternately, paper copies of the questionnaire were sent to those pastoral charges that requested them. Paper copies were returned to me at the end of the survey period. Approximately 30% of the 655 respondents completed the survey by paper.

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[11] Although the Ottawa Conference Office did not responded to my request, the sample distribution will show later that the majority of responses came from this Conference. On the other hand, sample from the All Native Circle Conference was zero.

[12] Some Conferences opted to send the information to their Presbyteries who forwarded the information to their pastoral charges.

Other methods were also used to encourage participation. They include:

- An e-news bulletin, "God's Mission Our Gift – Philanthropy News," was sent to about 4,000 individuals by The United Church of Canada's Mission and Service, Congregational Giving Unit in February 2014.
- A link to the survey was advertised on The United Church of Canada's Facebook and Twitter pages.
- The survey information was incorporated into an advertisement in the January 2014 issue of The United Church of Canada's monthly *Observer* magazine.
- The survey information was incorporated into an article in the May 2014 issue of The United Church of Canada's quarterly *Mandate* magazine.

Finally, I sent several follow-up emails to pastoral charges with the assistance of the regional Conference Offices. In general, there was minimal response from the ethnic ministries in The United Church of Canada although several call letters for participation were sent to them from different sources over the survey period. It is not immediately apparent why the ethnic ministries did not participate more directly in the survey. However, visible minorities did participate in the study.

On average, the online questionnaire took about 28 minutes to complete. A total of 166 pastoral charges participated in the survey that resulted in 655 usable questionnaires.

Sample Distribution

The following groups[13] responded to the survey: Blacks (1.8%), Chinese (1.8%), First Nations (2.0%), Japanese (0.6%), Koreans (0.2%), Latin Americans (0.2%), Southeast Asians (0.3), South Asians (0.3%), and Whites (87.3%), Unknown (5.5%). First Nations and Whites were included in the response categories for identification purposes although they are not defined as visible minorities according to the Employment Equity Act.

National Coverage

Table 1 summarizes the sample distribution, the post-sampling rate[14] and the response rate based on the average weekly attendance by Conference. The effective sampling rate across The United Church of Canada was 8.7% and ranged from 4% in Newfoundland and Labrador Conference to 21% in Saskatchewan. The overall response rate was approximately 4.3% and ranged from 0.9% in the London Conference to 10.8% in the Ottawa and Montreal Conference.

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[13] The groups are sometimes referred to as "the visible minority group" to which the respondent belongs. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The survey used the visible minority question as developed by Statistics Canada.

[14] The sampling rate is calculated post-data collection although some effort was made to carry out a structured random sample design with pre-selection.

Table 1: Sample Distribution, 2011 Average Attendance, Post Sampling Rate and Response Rate by Conference in The United Church of Canada.

Conference	Sample Count (a)	Overall Average Attendance at Sunday Worship (b)	Average Attendance at Sunday Worship for Pastoral Charges Selected in the Sample (c)	Approximate Post Sample rate (d)=(c)/(b) (%)	Response rate (e)=(a)/(c) (%)	Percent of Sample (f)
Alberta and Northwest	87	14,814	1,724	11.6	5.0	13.3
Bay of Quinte	44	17,339	1,508	8.7	2.9	6.7
British Columbia	18	14,589	480	3.3	3.8	2.7
Hamilton	9	20,422	848	4.2	1.1	1.4
London	9	17,645	990	5.6	0.9	1.4
Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario	92	10,982	1,578	14.4	5.8	14.0
Manitou	2	2,741	200	7.3	1.0	0.3
Maritime	42	24,679	1,988	8.1	2.1	6.4
Montreal & Ottawa	187	11,898	1,724	14.5	10.8	28.5
Newfoundland and Labrador	9	7,909	312	3.9	2.9	1.4
Saskatchewan	82	10,358	2,157	20.8	3.8	12.5
Toronto	50	20,418	1,722	8.4	2.9	7.6
All Native Circle	0	866	-	-	-	0
Unknown	24	-	-	-	-	3.7
Total	655	174,660	15,231	8.7	4.3	100.1

Across The United Church of Canada, the lowest number of responses came from the Manitou Conference (0.3%) while most of the responses came from the Ottawa and Montreal Conference (28.5%). However, on an aggregate level, the percent of sample was consistent with other surveys carried out in The United Church of Canada. For example, in the 2011 United Church of Canada Identity Study (IS),[15] the percent of sample compared with this study was: West (44%IS vs. 43%), Ontario (46%IS vs. 46%), and East (11%IS vs. 8%).[16]

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[15] Jane Armstrong Research Associates, *"Report on Results of The United Church of Canada Identity Survey 2011,"* gc40.united-church.ca/files/gce_1111_identity_report.pdf. Fieldwork completed May/June 2011, (unable to identify page number).

[16] West = Alberta and Northwest, British Columbia, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, and Saskatchewan Conferences. Ontario = Bay of Quinte, Hamilton, London, Manitou, Montreal & Ottawa, and Toronto Conferences. East = Maritime, and Newfoundland and Labrador Conferences.

Table 2 provides a summary of the pastoral charges that participated in the survey

Table-2: Summary of Pastoral Charges and Congregations in the Sample by Conference, Presbytery and City/Town.

Conference	Presbytery	City/Town	Pastoral Charge or Congregation
Alberta and Northwest	Calgary	Calgary	Chinese (EM) Robert McClure Southwood Symons Valley
	Edmonton	Edmonton	Ebenezer Highlands Knox-Metropolitan St. Paul's
	Foothills	Claresholm	Claresholm
		Strathmore	Strathmore
	Red Deer	Cremona	Cremona
		Olds	Olds
	South Alberta	Bow Island	Burdett-Bow Island
		Coaldale	Coaldale-Raymond
		Lethbridge	South Alberta Japanese (EM)
		Medicine Hat	Fifth Avenue Memorial Westminster
	St. Paul	Paradise Valley	Edgerton/Paradise Valley
	Yellowhead	Barrhead	Grizzly Trail
		Slave Lake	Slave Lake (SM)
Bay of Quinte	Four Rivers/Renfrew	Lanark	Lanark-Balderson
		Perth	Elmsley-Lombardy
		Perth Road	Perth Road
	Four Winds	Kingston	St. Andrew's By-The-Lake
	Kawartha Highlands	Greenbank	Greenbank-Seagrave
	Lakeridge	Ajax	Pickering Village-Audley
		Oshawa	St. Stephen's
	Northern Waters	Grey Highlands	Maxwell-Badjeros
	Renfrew	Carleton Place	Zion-Memorial
	Shining Waters	Peterborough	Grace Trinity Unknown
	Upper Valley	Pembroke	Zion-Mount Zion
		Westmeath	St Andrew's, Westmeath
British Columbia	Kamloops-Okanagan	Salmon Arm	Salmon Arm
		Sorrento	St. Mary's Anglican/United Church SM
	Prince Rupert	Kitimat	Kitimat: First
	Unknown	New Denver	Unknown
	Vancouver-South	Delta	Tsawwassen
		Richmond	Gilmore Park
		Vancouver	Dunbar Heights
Hamilton	Bruce	Neyaashiinigmiing	Cape Croker
	Halton	Mississauga	Erin Mills
		Oakville	Walton Memorial
	Hamilton	Hamilton	Emmanuel
	Niagara	St. Catharines	First Grantham
	Waterloo	Guelph	Harcourt
London	Algoma	Echo Bay	Echo Bay
		Sault Ste Marie	Bruce Mines
	Kent	Cedar Springs	Cedar Springs
		Merlin	South Buxton
	Lambton	Camlachie	Camlachie
		Inwood	Shiloh-Inwood
	Middlesex	London	Metropolitan
	Oxford	Embro	Embro: Knox

Table 2 continued

Conference	Presbytery	City/Town	Pastoral Charge or Congregation
Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario	Agassiz	Morris	Morris
	Assiniboine	Brandon	Knox
		Waskada	Cornerstone
	Cambrian	Rosslyn	Pinegrove
		Thunder Bay	Westminster
	Northland	Snow Lake	Snow Lake: Anglican-United (SM)
		The Pas	The Pas: Westminster
	Selkirk	Dugald	Dugald
		Steinbach	Steinbach
		Stony Mountain	Stony Mountain-Lilyfield
	Winnipeg	Winnipeg	Atlantic-Garden City
			Augustine
			Charleswood
			St. Andrew's, River Heights
			Trinity
			Young
	North Bay	North Bay	Trinity
Maritime	Bermuda	Bermuda	Hamilton: Wesley Methodist
	Chignecto	Amherst	Amherst: Trinity-St. Stephen's
		Moncton	Mount Royal
			Visions
	Halifax	Halifax	Edgewood-Oxford
			Fairview
			Rockingham
			United Memorial
			Unknown
		Uniacke	St. John's-St. Paul's
	Inverness-Guysborough	Baddeck	Greenwood
	Miramichi	New Carlisle	New Carlisle
	South Shore	Bridgewater	Bridgewater
		New Germany	New Germany
		Yarmouth	Yarmouth: Beacon
	Sydney	Cape North	North Highlands
	Truro	Tatamagouche	Tatamagouche
		Truro	First
		Valley	Coldstream
	Woolastook	Estey's Bridge	Kingsley-Birdton
		Fredericton	Gibson Memorial
		Harvey Station	Harvey Station
Montreal & Ottawa	Laurentian	Quebec	Saint-Pierre & Pinguet
	Montreal	Mount Royal	Mount Royal
		Westmount	Mountainside
	Ottawa	Kanata	Kanata
		Nepean	Knox
		Orleans	Orleans
		Ottawa	Centretown
			Dominion Chalmers
			First
			Parkdale
			Riverside
		Stittsville	Stittsville
	Seaway Valley	Ingleside	Ingleside-Newington

Table 2 continued

Conference	Presbytery	City/Town	Pastoral Charge or Congregation
Newfoundland and Labrador	East District	St. John's	Cochrane Street
			Cowan Heights
	West District	Gander	Fraser Road
		Northern Arm	Northern Arm
Saskatchewan	Chinook	Abbey	Abbey-Lancer-Portreeve
		Gull Lake	Gull Lake: Knox
		Shaunavon	Pine Cree
		Tugaske	Spirit Hills
	Good Spirit	Canora	Canora-Norquay-Pelly
		Lanigan	Lanigan-Nokomis
		Yorkton	St. Andrew's
	Prairie Pine	Maidstone	Maidstone-Paynton
		Outlook	Outlook: St. Andrew's
		Plenty	Plenty-Dodsland
		Luseland	Luseland
	River Bend	Humboldt	Humboldt
		Saskatoon	Grace-Westminster
			Knox
			McClure
			Meewasin Valley
			St. Martin's
			St. Thomas-Wesley
		Wakaw	Wakaw
	Tamarak	Nipawin	Bridging Waters
		Star City	Star City
	Twin Valleys	Arcola	Arcola-Kisbey
		Carlyle	Carlyle
	Wascana	Regina	Knox-Metropolitan
Toronto	Living Waters	Gravenhurst	Gravenhurst: Trinity
			Trinity
		Queensville	Queensville Holland Landing
	Northern Waters	Alliston	Alliston: St. John's
		Collingwood	Trinity
		Cookstown	Cookstown-Thornton
		Creemore	Creemore
		Erin	Erin
		Kemble	Kemble, Sarawak, and Zion
		Markdale	Markdale: Annesley
		Stayner	Stayner: Centennial
		Thornton	Trinity
	South West	Brampton	Emmanuel
	Toronto Southeast	North York	Toronto Southeast
		Toronto	College Street
			Jubilee
Unknown	Unknown	Corner Brook	All Saints Anglican
		Imperial	St. Andrew's
		Ottawa	Unknown
		Saskatoon	St. Andrew's College
			Unknown
		St. Catharines	Unknown
		Unknown	Behold Conference, Halifax
			Ebenezer
			St Mark's
			St. Andrew's
			St. James
			St. John's
			Unknown
		Vankleek Hill	Genesis Cooperative Ministry Cluster