

Title: Francophone representation on the Denominational Council and General Council Executive

Origin: Consistoire Laurentien

Financial implications, if known: None

Staffing implications, if known: None

Funding source, if known: None

A proposal already adopted by General Council Executive provides assurance that there will be Francophone representation on the Denominational Council and General Council Executive. In making the two proposals that follow, Consistoire Laurentien aims to ensure that this policy of linguistic and cultural diversity is actually implemented.

Whereas, in 2015, the 42nd General Council reaffirmed that the Francophone presence is fundamental and indispensable to the national identity of The United Church of Canada and requested that any future structural changes include measures intended to guarantee the ongoing, dynamic presence of this dimension of the Church's identity (Proposal 17, 2015);

Whereas General Council Executive endorsed recognition of the French Ministries Table at its meeting in November 2017;

"Whereas the United Church strives to be relevant and sensitive to different realities across the country and, consequently, is positioning itself to be able to better respond to the needs of a constantly changing society. In order to foster the development of French ministries, the Executive of General Council approved a bilingualism protocol recognizing that The United Church of Canada is an officially bilingual church (PMM 8, French Language Translation Strategy, March 2014) and a National Strategy for Ministries in French (PMM 14, General Council Executive, November 2014). The United Church of Canada is currently undergoing a major transition in order to better fulfill its mission to a Canadian society that is searching for spirituality in a time of rapid change.

"Francophones constitute 25% of the Canadian population. This segment of the population, which is concentrated in Québec but present across the entire country, is a vitally important domestic mission field for The United Church of Canada. A significant number of migrants and immigrants from French-speaking countries settle in all regions of Canada." (As adopted on May 31, 2015 by the Annual General Meeting of the Montreal & Ottawa Conference);

Whereas Québec society and Francophone communities across Canada constitute in and of themselves an intercultural host society offering integration through their institutions, diverse cultures, language and even, in the case of Québec, civil law. Welcoming, witnessing and mission exist contextually in this French host society. This specificity expresses both the constitutional reality that defines the country and a vital identity of The United Church of Canada.

In 2009, the 40th General Council meeting in Kelowna declared that "Francophone ministries are an integral part of the identity, mission and vision for the future of The United Church of Canada." We therefore consider it vital that Francophones be clearly and expressly represented on decision-making bodies (Denominational Council and General Council Executive) as a clear message that this constituency does indeed have a place in the United Church, for this is critical to the credibility of our ministries, our welcome, our witness and our mission.

The Francophone members who will be appointed to the Denominational Council must understand the issues and cultures of French ministries, have close ties to those ministries, and be involved in a ministry associated with the French Ministries Table. For this reason, we propose that the French Ministries Table be given the responsibility of preparing a list of individuals apt to fulfill such a role.

Proposal 1: That at least four seats on the Denominational Council be reserved for representatives of French ministries and that the names of candidates be put forward to the nominating committee by the French Ministries Table.

Proposal 2: That one or two seats on General Council Executive be reserved for representatives of French ministries and that the names of candidates be put forward to the nominating committee by the French Ministries Table.