

Financial Campaign Planning Study

An Overview

The United Church of Canada faces opportunities and challenges in local and global ministry, and is addressing them in a variety of ways. Each discussion inevitably touches on funding.

In 2007, the Finance Committee of the Executive of the General Council began considering the possibility of initiating a three- to five-year fundraising campaign with a proposed goal of \$100 million to \$200 million to endow the work of the church. The committee sought answers to three questions:

- Should we take such an initiative (and therefore raise the funds)?
- Can we raise the funds?
- How would we raise the funds?

With the assistance of KMA Consultants (a Canadian fundraising consulting company with experience in the faith-based sector) a study was undertaken in which

- a description of the proposed use of the funds to be raised was drafted
- topics such as philanthropy in a denominational setting and United Church distinctiveness affecting financial campaigning were explored
- 54 interviews (involving 58 people) were conducted with representative stakeholders across Canada
- 7 discussion groups (involving a total of 62 people) were held (Truro, London, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, a subset of the Executive of the General Council and a subset of staff from the General Council Office)
- 1,340 ministry personnel responded to a survey mailed to 4,349 active and retired ministry personnel.

Progress reports were provided by the Finance Committee to the Executive of the General Council in May and November 2007. The study report was reviewed by the Finance Committee in February 2008 and presented to the Executive of the General Council at the meeting of May 2-4, 2008.

The most important finding of the study is that the church is not positioned to mount a significant financial campaign, nor are congregations ready to participate. This is despite broad affirmation of the future of the church, a clear love for the church, and a palpable yearning for vibrant ministry at every level. People consulted generally believe the constituency has the financial capacity to support a large campaign, but will not be moved to give to what has been proposed to date.

In May 2008, the Executive of the General Council, having reflected on the report, directed that a working group of five voting members of the Executive be established to work with the General Secretary to review the findings of the report. They will work to identify the implications of those findings for the future work of the church, and the issues that should be brought to the November 2008 meeting of the Executive and the 40th General Council (2009).