

PROPOSAL GCE 1

Title:	Isolation in Ministry
Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the “Isolation in Ministry” report.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Refer the “Proposed Actions for Isolation in Ministry” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Workbook 1

Report – see COMM 65-88

Proposal GCE 1 – COMM 89-90 (the same proposal)

Proposed Action to GCE – COMM 91-92

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PROPOSAL GCE 2

Title:	Ministry Compensation
Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report on “Ministry Compensation”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statements to be developed by this General Council.
3. Receive for information the “Proposed Actions for Ministry Compensation” (on the purple pages).
4. Refer the “Ministry Compensation Proposed Actions” to the Executive of the General Council for consideration following the 39th General Council 2006.

Workbook 1

Report – see COMM 93-116

Proposal GCE 2 – COMM 117 (the same proposal)

Proposed Action to GCE – COMM 119-120

PROPOSAL GCE 3

Title:	Ministry Compensation
Origin:	Executive of the General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

Whereas the Executive of the General Council received a number of recommendations for Ministry Compensation, one of which was a recommendation for a denominationally funded salary administration system, and

Whereas a denominationally funded salary administration system may be an opportunity to more fully live out the principles listed in the report.

Whereas as a Denomination it is our desire to share resources faithfully.

Whereas it is the role of General Council to determine the direction of the Church.

Whereas this would be a major shift in the policy of the Church.

Whereas further development of this model involves significant use of General Council Office time and resources,

The Executive of the General Council proposes:

The 39th General Council 2006:

Take no action on a denominationally funded salary administration system at this time until progress is made on other proposed actions suggested by the “Ministry Compensation” report.

Workbook 1

Report – see COMM 93-116

Proposal GCE 3 – COMM 118 (the same proposal)

Proposed Action to GCE – COMM 119-120

PROPOSAL LON 2

Title: Statement of Faith
Origin: London Conference with non-concurrence
Source: Lambton Presbytery
London Road West United Church with concurrence

Whereas a statement of faith identifies who we are and what we believe as a church, and

Whereas a statement of faith must be understood and be defensible by all members of the denomination,

Therefore London Road West United Church through Lambton Presbytery and London Conference proposes:

That before the 39th General Council 2006:

approves the draft statement of faith as presented, it be approved, in writing, by the majority of pastoral charges within The United Church of Canada.

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PROPOSAL M&O 11

Title: Additional consultation prior to final adoption of
The United Church of Canada's Statement of Faith
Origin: Montreal and Ottawa Conference with non-concurrence
Source: Laurentien Presbytery

To ensure that congregations are consulted further regarding The United Church of Canada's proposed Statement of Faith.

Whereas The United Church of Canada's Statement of Faith must reflect the evolution of the United Church and its current beliefs;

Whereas the document presented for congregational discussion does not accurately reflect the current theology of the United Church, specifically because its content and underlying theological approach differ from those of The United Church of Canada's Creed;

Whereas this document should employ language that is meaningful to contemporary men and women but fails to do so, being based rather on notions and wordings intended for those already familiar with traditional Church concepts;

Whereas this Statement could potentially serve no useful purpose if its wording and theology are not meaningful to members of congregations and to those who would join our Church;

Whereas the General Council must adopt the final version of this Statement of Faith at its current session;

We, the Laurentien Presbytery, therefore propose:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

- not adopt the final version of the Statement of Faith until after the current wording has been revised to better reflect the commonly shared theology of the United Church,
- extend the period for congregational consultation, and that it delay final adoption of the Statement until the 40th General Council 2009.

PROPOSITION M&O 11

Titre: Consultation supplémentaire avant l'adoption définitive de la Déclaration de foi de l'Église Unie du Canada
Origine: Synode Montréal et Ottawa en désaccord
Source: Consistoire Laurentien

Consultation supplémentaire des paroisses sur la formulation proposée de la Déclaration de foi de l'Église Unie.

Attendu que le document sur la Déclaration de foi de l'Église Unie du Canada doit refléter l'évolution de l'Église Unie et ses croyances actuelles;

Attendu que le document présenté à la discussion dans les paroisses reflétait mal la théologie actuelle de l'Église Unie notamment en différant dans son contenu et son approche théologique sous-jacente à ceux du Credo de l'Église Unie du Canada;

Attendu que le document devrait utiliser un langage qui soit significatif pour les hommes et les femmes d'aujourd'hui, ce qu'il ne fait pas en se servant de concepts et de formulations destinés à des personnes déjà acquises aux concepts traditionnels des Églises;

Attendu qu'il y a danger que cette Déclaration reste lettre morte si elle ne rejoint pas dans sa formulation et sa théologie les membres de ses paroisses et ceux qui voudraient se joindre à notre Église;

Attendu que le Conseil Général doit adopter la version finale de cette Déclaration de foi à cette session;

Nous, Consistoire Laurentien, proposons, en conséquence,

Que le Conseil Général n'adopte la version définitive de la Déclaration de foi qu'après un examen de sa formulation actuelle afin qu'elle reflète davantage la théologie partagée à la base dans l'Église Unie, qu'il prévoie une étape supplémentaire de consultation des paroisses et que l'adoption définitive de cette Déclaration soit reportée au prochain Conseil général de 2009.

PROPOSAL GS 1

Title:	Proposed Statement of Faith
Origin:	General Secretary, General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The General Secretary, on behalf of the Committee on Theology and Faith, proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Adopt “A Song of Faith” as the statement of faith of the United Church of Canada for this generation of the church.
2. Commend it to the church for faith formation and education and for theological guidance of policy and practice.

Workbook 1

Report – see COMM 1-62

Proposal GS 1 – COMM 63-64 (the same proposal)

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Title: Emerging Spirit
Origin: General Secretary, General Council
From Keith Howard, Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Emerging Spirit grew out of a motion passed by the Executive of the General Council at its April 2005 meeting. At that meeting, authorization was given for the research and development of a proposal for an initiative that would:

1. Raise awareness and recognition of the values and beliefs of The United Church of Canada among 30-45 year olds
2. Create a willingness among non-church-goers to discover a United Church congregation
3. Renew a sense of positive identity and enthusiasm for mission among United Church congregations
4. Equip United Church congregations for ministry in the new Canadian context.

This report contains the results of the year-long process of research and development.

The initial research, encompassing six different strands, indicates some powerful realities.

1. There exists significant interest among those Canadians between the ages of 30 and 45 years of age, not currently associated with another faith group, in establishing some relationship with a church like The United Church of Canada. Some researchers place the number of those interested as high as 77 percent.
2. The perception of organized religion is that its followers are judgmental, arrogant, and unwilling to listen. Response to The United Church of Canada is virtually indistinguishable from the larger category.
3. There are deep rooted congregational cultures highly resistant to change; and
4. There are leaders who do not feel equipped or supported in their efforts to lead change.

The **recommendation** is to proceed with an initiative to reach out to those Canadians between the ages of 30 and 45 years of age, not currently associated with another faith group, and that the initiative proceed with profound awareness of the significant communication challenge posed by certain fundamental attitudes towards organized religion.

In-depth investigation of the media use patterns of this demographic, combined with sensitivities engendered by other research and good stewardship, leads to the **recommendation** that the prime media vehicles used in the reach out initiative include magazines, direct to home mailing, and viral video spots and that a unique web site be developed which models key aspects of The United Church of Canada and provides access to information about United Church congregations.

Extensive conversations with people representing different positions and levels of the church engenders the **recommendation** that Emerging Spirit conduct a significant number of regional training events in an effort to engage as many congregations and regions as possible throughout the country during the next three years.

Persistent concerns about the challenges faced by congregational leaders prompt the **recommendation** that Emerging Spirit, in consultation with other units of the church, continue to develop an effective response in the area of leadership development for emerging leaders within the church.



Emerging Spirit Report

There is cause for hope.

Theologically we believe this to be true because the God known through Easter and Pentecost is on the loose creating and re-creating. The discernment, including sociological and demographic research conducted by Emerging Spirit, confirms that the time is right for a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as provided by The United Church of Canada. And, across the church, the preparation and exploration of Emerging Spirit has been greeted with encouragement, helpful, and well-meaning critique combined with holy impatience.

A year of intensive research and development under girds this proposal. We on the Emerging Spirit team are grateful for the opportunity presented to us by the Executive of the General Council to develop this initiative. Among the many deserving of thanks are the members of the Senior Leadership Team, six regional teams who offered support and guidance, and the 26 congregations across the country who tested interest in the project plus some preliminary drafts of educational material. Thanks also must be given for the fine work offered by those firms with which we have specialized contract relationships: Environics Research Group; Terra Nova Market Strategies, Environics Analytics, and Smith & Roberts Advertising Design.

In reviewing this proposal two cautions need to be highlighted.

1. The language of market research and advertising companies assumes the desire and the ability to influence and sell. Upon initial announcement that Emerging Spirit was in development, many began to fear that the gospel and the church would be diminished in an effort to make it more saleable. The image with which many struggled was that of the church becoming akin to a shady used-car salesperson.

The premise of this proposal is that, as a church, we are neither interested in selling the gospel nor the church. **We are interested in developing a relationship** with those Canadians between the ages of 30 and 45 who do not currently have a relationship with a faith group.

2. Emerging Spirit has conducted extensive research. Rachael Smith, Senior Media Strategist at Smith Roberts + Co., has 22 years of experience in planning media for companies like Pepsi-Cola, Proctor and Gamble, and Unilever. She

comments that she has never worked with a client that has done as much research as The United Church of Canada.

However, it must be noted that **research results merely constitute the first step in a conversation**. The research was conducted in order to gauge interest and feasibility and to give a clearer picture of those with whom we seek a deeper relationship. There is no assumption or presumption that the church should move simply to “meet the needs” expressed by those between the ages of 30 and 45. If anything, the research has revealed the opposite. What is important and desired is that the church enters into conversation and relationship with something to say that has integrity and authenticity. There is no implication that the church should simply become a spiritual service provider. The call and the relationship are much more nuanced.

The Proposal

This proposal:

- I. Summarizes key research findings (**The Research**);
 - II. Offers a framework for the Media Plan (**Reaching Out Through the Media**);
 - III. Outlines a series of Regional Training Events to enhance the ability of congregations to express a ministry of welcoming (**Living the Welcome**); and
 - IV. Identifies leadership as a significant strategic challenge with respect to welcoming ministries and proposes an initiative in response (**Leadership Support**).
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I. THE RESEARCH

Six major levels of research have been completed.

1. Environics Research Group – two waves; quantitative statistical analysis
2. TerraNova Market Strategies – qualitative analysis
3. Emerging Spirit Questionnaires – anecdotal; relationship building
4. Impact Teams – leadership; proximity based with 26 “lead” congregations
5. Environics Analytics – lifestyle and values focused
6. One-on-one interviews

The Questions

The basic questions to which we sought answers include:

- What degree of interest exists among those between the ages of 30 and 45 years of age in a relationship with The United Church of Canada?
- Which dimensions of the church provoke interest?
- What stands in the way of a great relationship between those between the ages of 30 and 45 and The United Church of Canada?
- What is the best media for the church to use to reach out to them?



Environics Research Group

There is an audience for The United Church of Canada's message.

Emerging Spirit worked with the prominent Canadian firm Environics Research Group to assess whether there exists any interest among the proposed age group in being involved with a church like The United Church of Canada and, if so, which attributes seem most appealing.

Values and Beliefs

Environics found that by far the most important things to those between the ages of 30 and 45 who do not go to church are their children (74%) and family (71%), followed by their friends (34%), their job (27%), and financial situation (27%). Among those in the designated population, 24% said that faith and spiritual beliefs were very important to them.

Sixty-four percent of those in this age group (who, remember, do not go to church) claimed some religious affiliation. (See Reginald W. Bibby, *Restless Churches: How Canada's Churches Can Contribute to the Emerging Religious Renaissance*, Novalis/Wood Lake Press, 2004 for a discussion that complements the Environics findings.)

Environics found that people in this demographic do not identify worship styles or time constraints as the *prime* barriers to joining a faith community. More than anything, it is the attitudes they presume they will find at church that deters them from involvement.

Seventy-three percent of those in the focus population think that “organized religion tells you what you have to believe” and say that they would rather work out these beliefs by themselves or with those close to them. Sixty-two percent believe that “organized religion makes things too black and white,” and a majority (59%) say they believe in God, “but not in the traditional way.” In fact, 59% would also say that “if Jesus were alive today, he would not be associated with an organized religion.” About half of those surveyed (51%) believe that the music, images, and practices they associate with church “are totally alien to my life and style.”

Less than half of the chosen population believe they have nothing to gain by participating in church life (45%), that church leaders lack credibility (44%), and that they are too busy to get themselves and their families to church (36%).

Major Themes and Communication Opportunities

Environics sorted the attributes which have the greatest appeal and which represent the maximum opportunity into three major themes: “achieving personal faith,” “connecting and reaching out,” and “questing and embracing.”

Achieving Personal Faith

- builds deep personal relationships
- offers the possibility of personal transformation
- engages both emotion and the intellect

- offers new ways of looking at faith

Connecting and Reaching Out

- values all ages
- reaches out to the needy
- translates personal faith into action
- is welcoming to everyone
- works with the poor to improve their situation
- emphasizes helping people
- respects all people
- works for justice in the world
- respects the earth and the environment

Questing and Embracing

- encourages questioning
- respects personal freedom and choice
- builds relationships with other traditions
- is open to change
- celebrates all, including gays and lesbians

To determine the strongest marketing opportunities for The United Church of Canada, Environics measured each of these 18 attributes for its level of interest among people in the focus population, whether or not they believed that such a characteristic could be found in a church (believability), or that the attribute would be unique to a specific church (uniqueness).



Environics concluded that, while people expect churches to have the attributes found within the themes of achieving personal faith and connecting and reaching out, the theme of questing and embracing represents the best opportunity for The United Church of Canada to distinguish itself from other faith communities. This theme connects with the chosen population's greatest area of interest yet they do not believe these attributes can be found in a church. This combination makes the attributes of this theme the most feasible points of distinction for The United Church of Canada.

Segments of the Focus Population

Environics distinguished three different segments of the focus population (30- to 45-year olds who do not go to church): the Potentials, the Traditionalists, and the Cynics.

The Potentials make up 77% of the chosen population and hold the greatest possibility of building relationships with The United Church of Canada.

Who Are the Potentials? *The Possibilities are Significant*

The Potentials group is made up of slightly more women than men, three-quarters are married and the majority have children. They are slightly more likely to have graduated from a community college than a university. The geographic distribution of those in the Potentials segment is generally representative of the Canadian population as a whole, with four in 10 living in Ontario and three in 10 living in Quebec. Most are Anglophones. One in 10 Potentials claim some affiliation with The United Church of Canada.

The values of the Potentials show that they:

- are postmodern and so more open than others to complexity and ambiguity
- are open to new definitions of family
- place a high value on equality of the sexes
- are early adopters of new technologies
- put happiness before duty
- seek personal autonomy
- are creative and spontaneous
- have an interest in the mysterious

The Potentials also are:

- less likely to see the importance of organized religion
- not active in the community
- concerned about their financial futures

Potentials would be most interested in the message of a church that:

- reaches out to those in need and works for justice in the world
- is welcoming to everyone
- builds relationships between people of different faiths
- is open to questioning, debate, and change
- respects the earth and the environment

Like other Canadians in their age group who do not go to church, Potentials do not see worship style or time as prime barriers to becoming involved in a faith community. Rather, they are most concerned that at church things would be made "too black and white," and that they will be told what to believe. Most believe in God, but "not in the traditional way," and think that if Jesus were alive today he would not be associated with organized religion.

The Potentials prefer the complexity and ambiguity associated with a postmodern worldview and would be interested in a church that is provocative in challenging both their intellect and their emotion and provides a stimulating place they can explore the "big questions" of life and faith together with others.

The challenge—and opportunity—for The United Church of Canada is that **most Potentials do not believe a church with these attributes exists**. However, Environics discovered that if Potentials did know about such a church they would be interested in visiting or attending it.

This Environics survey shows that, contrary to what is commonly thought, interest among many adults for a church with the attributes that The United Church of Canada possesses remains strong. Reaching the 30- to 45-year-old age group with a message about the church that is strong enough to overcome the apprehensions that many in this demographic have about organized religion will be a challenge, but certainly worth the effort.



TerraNova Discovery Workshop

Seeing life and faith through a different lens

TerraNova Discovery Workshops are community-based gatherings that bring together 18-30 participants for an active three-hour working session. They are based on collaboration rather than evaluation, and are designed to provide a comfortable environment for naturally sharing thoughts and experiences and for creatively exploring issues and new avenues of opportunity.

Unlike a traditional marketing focus group, there are no one-way observation mirrors; clients are active observer-participants in the session.

Participants were led through a series of questions, exercises, and discussions to determine what they thought about spirituality, religion, and The United Church of Canada.

Life Today

When asked what is important in life, lessons learned, celebrations, and regrets the responses revealed the following attitudes, values, and perspectives.

- Life is complex, often stressful.
- You have to be pragmatic - "That's the way it is, you have to deal with it ..."
- Personal connections provide the primary source of contentment.
- Improve yourself always.
- Make the most of life, enjoy and celebrate it.

Faith, Spirituality, and God

Those who attend The United Church of Canada connect the words “faith,” “spirituality,” and “God.” Those who do not attend church give these same words distinct and often different meanings. These beliefs emerge:

- Spirituality is rooted in a sense of connection.
- Contemplation and introspection are key factors in spirituality.
- For some, “faith” means having faith in themselves; for others, “faith” represents a test; some think of faith as a highly personal feeling.
- God as a mystery is both appealing and perplexing.
- To church-goers, God has been humanized, while to others God remains a much more abstract concept.

Religion and Going to Church

Discussion about why or why not people might attend church yielded a number of insights.

Going to church has overtones of duty

If they do not attend, there is an uncomfortable feeling of guilt which is very hard to ignore. Lapsed or infrequent attendees cite this as a key reason they find it difficult to return. “Going back again” carries feelings of a student facing a teacher’s reprimand for truancy. One woman said she feared it would be like calling your mother when you hadn’t for a while. You would spend the first 10 minutes being told off before you could actually begin your conversation!

Going to church is a serious pursuit

To most people, church cannot or should not be taken lightly. Missing church is difficult for people to talk about. Some already have a lot of guilt and anxiety about time, schedules, and commitment and adding church attendance to the list of responsibilities that may not be fulfilled well is seen as bringing more stress to an already complicated life. Participation in church life is not viewed as a casual drop-in activity.

Easy excuses!

While participants easily list “reasons” not to go to church they openly acknowledge most are actually excuses.

The question of church attendance makes people defensive

The fact that people feel the need to defend themselves underlines the implication of personal deficiency that church attendance inevitably raises.

When pressed slightly, respondents identify some of the deeper attitudes and perceptions that contribute to their reluctance about organized religion:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - lack of interest | - too controlling |
| - “money grabbing” church | - shy |
| - feel unaccepted | - do not feel I belong |
| - judgmental | - do not like the people there |
| - not single friendly | - not child friendly |
| - children will misbehave | - intolerance |

The church is considered judgmental

In the minds of non-attendeers, even asking the question about why they do not attend church can be experienced as judgmental. The perception remains that organized religions teaches that the faithful will be rewarded and the unfaithful damned.

Intimidation/not belonging is a key obstacle

Even for those who are not defensive about church attendance a psychological barrier remains. They worry they won't fit in. The fear of being judged, not by God but by the "regulars," emerged as a big issue for people. The United Church of Canada regulars did not really relate to the reasoning and concerns of the other participants and in some cases were quite dismissive, inadvertently proving the validity of these concerns.

In many ways, people feel they have to prove they are serious about attending before they are welcomed. Initial exposure to church services often provokes a feeling that cliques exist within the church.

The physical space and style of service are daunting to many

Participants comment that churches are usually built to inspire and humble and that the service itself reinforces a feeling of superiority and judgment. As one participant put it, "Churches can be intimidating, they are built to be that way. You're down here, they're up there."

For many, the style of the minister can go a long way to either reinforce or remove these anxieties. A friendly and conversational tone makes all the difference for some people and sends a strong message about the style of the church.

Religion has a "telling" and "controlling" culture

Most feel religion focuses upon telling people how their beliefs, morals and lifestyles can be corrected—it's a one-way and one-sided delivery of a message. There is no room for dialogue, conversation, or questioning. In this time when people are encouraged to express their views, no matter how different or controversial, the "telling" style rarely compels and usually alienates.

"My opinion should matter."

"I do not like feeling 'unworthy.'"

"I'm an adult now. I'm entitled to my own views."

When people speak about what they consider to be the judgmental characteristics of the church, they express this same frustration. "Why are they always right and I'm misguided?" Many of the reasons not to attend relate to the perception of the "controlling" nature of church.

Attendance at church has little to do with their own spirituality

In talking about organized religion and church attendance, **it was rarely the faith-based aspects of the experience that were criticized.** No one took issue with the central philosophies or objectives of those who are committed. Instead, **it was the politics, the posing, the intimidation of the building itself, the structure of the service, the cliques, the sense of being judged, the culture of "telling" and all the attendant "paraphernalia" and ritual that goes along with it that are off-putting.**

Positive themes are community-related; negatives are all to do with dogmatism

Positive words used of the church include caring, sharing, friendship, giving, support, and teaching children good values. Helping others was a consistent undercurrent. Participants felt the need to do this and acknowledged that the church can play a major role in it. Unfortunately, many church functions also carry “do-gooder” overtones.

Negative words include hell, sacrifice, confession, sin, commitment, offerings, holy, Jesus (when considered as judge). The negatives were all rooted in the fear and dislike of dogma and intimidating ritual. Interestingly, both God and Jesus were raised in the context of “bad” words, but only when thought of in the sense of judgment or cult connotations. Several participants mentioned TV evangelists and how “that’s all really terrifying!”

Church can be an important source of comfort

Apart from “default” occasions like weddings, funerals, Christmas and Easter, it is also clear that going to church can be a comfort in times of grief, loss, anxiety or personal sadness. In these cases, church offers something that goes beyond sympathy or the kind words of friends and family. One person described this as the “the time when you are closest to God”. This is an indication of the more profound and often unfulfilled needs of many people, especially in today’s tumultuous and stressful world. When something happens that causes trauma, it is often a “wake-up call.” People realize they have been ignoring or repressing some deeper needs. The sanctuary of the church and the sense of connecting to a greater force can be very compelling.

There is a need for inspirational leadership

Despite all the fears of dogma and entrapment, many voiced the need for spiritual leadership.

They wanted someone not to follow but to be inspired by—someone to challenge them. True leadership is rare in business, politics, or in life in general, and the lack of it leaves some people foundering. The manner in which this leadership is delivered, however, proves critical.

Perceptions of The United Church of Canada

1. The perception is vague, but positive

The general perception was that The United Church of Canada was more open to new ideas, had fewer “rules,” was more liberal and more forgiving than other churches. It compares very favourably to the perceived strict rules and unpopular doctrine of other denominations. Some spoke about going to The United Church of Canada to be married when they did not meet the criteria demanded by other churches.

2. The United Church of Canada is flexible, willing to listen and open

The United Church of Canada is credited with being open to the ordination of women, to gay marriage, and other issues considered controversial. People believe there is a more relaxed atmosphere and fewer rules. The word “open” came up frequently, as in both “open door” and “open minded.” This key characteristic should not be undervalued. Openness suggests greater tolerance, wider arms, a broader and wiser perspective on life. The reverse is also considered true for other denominations: closed door, closed minded.

3. The United Church of Canada suffers from the general fear of organized religion

Despite its positive attributes, the very fact that it is organized religion and does involve actually going to a church building makes The United Church of Canada a tough sell. The researchers

report with emphasis: **The brand is compromised by the category! The United Church of Canada must establish its own unique positioning, promote its own values, and help people break damaging stereotypes of organized religion.**

In light of this research TerraNova Marketing Strategies offered the following recommendations:

Make it a “coming together” not a “come to us”

It is extremely important that people feel they have something The United Church of Canada would like to engage. Instead of “come and find out what we’re all about,” it should be “we want to know more about what you’re all about – your views, your challenges, your wisdom.” Parting words should be, “Thanks for coming! If you want to know more be in touch ...” not “hope to see you next week.”

Help people to see the bigger picture

The non-church-goers see life on a very immediate and personal level, and often feel stressed out and constrained by day-to-day demands. The United Church of Canada regulars are more philosophical about this. They accept the ups and downs more easily or they are driven to change the world.

Anchor initiatives in connection and sharing

Provide ways for people to connect with others, share thoughts and ideas, a forum where all opinions are welcome and there are no bad ideas.

Let God and the minister be the “guide on the side” not the “sage on the stage”

Recover the role of minister as mentor as opposed to the person in whose presence others are supposed to be humble and receptive. While God is clearly seen as powerful and important, the concept of getting closer to God would be more attractive if God is seen as a guide and mentor rather than primarily a judge.

Position The United Church of Canada as a facilitator, not an end in itself

The United Church of Canada should be the means to an end, the catalyst, the facilitator, the maker of introductions—in short, it should create the environment for more active participation not be the central reason for it.

Part of the challenge with this positioning is the temptation to focus on what The United Church of Canada “stands for.” Actually communicating this, no matter how honourable the intent, risks reinforcing negative attitudes. The philosophy of The United Church of Canada and its objectives should be apparent in the content and the delivery, not the “packaging.”

Communication which reflects the desire to hear the opinions of others and encourages a different kind of participation will say far more about the church than an announcement of its values and points of view.

Ask more questions, encourage collaboration rather than being the one with all the answers

While this may be a part of The United Church of Canada culture, it is not widely perceived to be a skill of religious people. In the marketing world, consumers have moved from being people you talk to, to people you listen to and, now, people you must work with. Inviting participation

and collaboration is a far better way to address issues, solve problems, and make people think differently.

Encourage people to express and explore their own spirituality

The word “spirituality” had the greatest resonance with these participants. Many spoke of being “spiritual but not religious.” Spirituality goes beyond church and beyond religion. It is more personal and signifies a connection, a “oneness” with the world beyond day-to-day life.

Make your space as friendly as possible

The word “open” needs to also apply to the physical surroundings. Friendly, comfortable places to chat, to relax, and to socialize will help people feel a sense of belonging. Also, the energy of children needs to be viewed as a positive factor.

Celebrate life itself and help people dream

The United Church of Canada can help people recognize and appreciate the joys of day to day life, the excitement of the journey, the pleasure of interaction with others, and the comfort of sharing both good and bad experiences.

When asked to provide guiding principles for the ideal church, participants were unanimous, using very enthusiastic, lively words: alive, motivated, uplifting, non-judgmental, relevant and inclusive.



Emerging Spirit Questionnaires

Emerging Spirit emphasizes communication. Asking questions and listening has been at the heart of our questionnaires.

Emerging Spirit launched its on-line questionnaire by asking the question “Where are the 30-45 year olds?” on the back cover of the October 2005 *Observer*. A second ad, asking “Will it be like sex?”, appeared in the November 2005 issue of the *Observer*.

The Audience and the Response

The Emerging Spirit questionnaire was developed with three different audiences with distinct perspectives in mind:

- Those already attending a United Church congregation who are not between the ages of 30-45.
- Those between the ages of 30-45 who already attend a United Church congregation.
- Those between the ages of 30-45 who are not part of any faith community.

A total of 298 individuals filled out the multi-question survey for their category. Those between the ages of 30 and 45 who already attend a United Church were the group with the highest number of responses, with 143.

The next largest number of responses was from those who attend a United Church congregation and who are not between the ages of 30 and 45 (they could be either older or younger than that age range). From this category 101 people offered their responses. The majority of these

respondents were older than 45 (the average age was 52), though several people younger than 30 also filled out the questionnaire.

As might be expected, the group with the fewest number of responses (54) were those between the ages of 30 and 45 who are not part of any faith community.

Initial Findings

The responses received are as wildly diverse as The United Church of Canada itself.

Families and career/finances two prime concerns

Respondents to the questionnaire across all three audience categories agree that the two most important concerns of 30-45 year olds are family (especially children and parents) and career/finances.

Welcoming aspects of a congregation

Those who attend The United Church of Canada, both those within the 30-45 age range and those outside of it, believe that the friendly greetings, nice people, good music, and the ministers of their congregations would be the welcoming aspects to newcomers. Those in the 30-45 age range add that the outreach/social justice work of their church would make it inviting. Those not in the 30-45 age range see vital Sunday school and youth programs as also important to welcoming people to their congregation.

Respondents who do not attend church hope to be welcomed by friendly people, “community,” and good music. They are also very concerned about being accepted for who they are. Among these respondents there is a strong concern about finding hypocrisy, intolerance, and “money-grubbing” in the church.

Will there be “room in the inn” for those 30-45

By a ratio of more than two to one respondents between the ages of 30-45 who already attend a United Church believe there is “space” in their congregation for the ideas and beliefs that newcomers in this demographic might bring. Yet, about half of the respondents who are outside of the 30-45 demographic raise concerns about the ability or willingness of their congregation to “adapt” if more 30 to 45 year olds start to attend in greater numbers.

Will the church change

Respondents outside the target demographic who attend The United Church of Canada believe the denomination should be attractive to those in the 30-45 age range because it is liberal, accepting of all, embraces social justice, and is able to offer the spiritual satisfaction they think people of all ages are seeking. This group also believes that more people between 30-45 will not be motivated to participate in religious life unless the church is open to adaptation and change and makes an intentional effort to become more diverse.

Those in the 30-45 age range who attend a United Church also wonder if the church is open to the level of change they think it will take to attract other 30-45 year olds. The question of flexibility around the time of services came up in many responses, with many thinking that people in this age range were too busy with work and family life to participate regularly during the traditional Sunday morning timeslot. The quality and availability of child care was

mentioned by many of the respondents as a major factor in whether or not people between 30-45 would attend in greater numbers.

Seek the presence of God

Respondents in this age range who attend church were more likely than others to say that people between the ages of 30-45 would be more motivated to participate in church if it were challenging spiritually. Many of the respondents mention that 30-45 year olds want to experience the “active, living presence of God” and find a place where they have access to spiritual mentoring. Some of these respondents felt that The United Church of Canada was not strong enough in this area.

The responses of 30-45 year olds who do not attend church were less consistent, but many answered that their attitude and motivation about attending church might change if they found a church that was open to all people and other religions, had a strong “community,” and was relevant, active, and orientated toward the practical, real issues of life. Many expressed strong concerns about hypocrisy and judgmentalism that they believe is found in organized religion.

Want to share faith

Many of the respondents who attend The United Church of Canada gave passionate, moving answers to the question of how they came to The United Church of Canada and what they wanted to share with others about their faith life. Many expressed that they have found great joy, hope, peace, and meaning through their faith and through The United Church of Canada. Roughly more than half of these people (both those within the 30-45 demographic and those outside of it) first came to The United Church of Canada because their family attended. Some of these respondents drifted away from the church during their teenage or college years, but returned after a death of a loved one or a marriage to a person who attends The United Church of Canada. Several said that they left other denominations and came to The United Church of Canada because it was a church that would accept them. These respondents want to share their faith with others, primarily through sharing their own stories and listening to the stories of others.

Observations

- A vast gap exists between those who attend The United Church of Canada (of whatever age) and those who do not attend. These two groups often do not speak the same language or see life in the same way.
- The perception of the church for those on the outside is negative. Hypocrisy and a tone of judgment are probably the biggest issues they identify with organized religion.
- A very big difference also exists between the responses from 30-45 year olds (both those who attend church and those who do not) and the respondents from The United Church of Canada who are outside of this age range. At times their answers are the exact opposites of each other (i.e. some 30-45 year olds are concerned that if they go to church they will be expected to serve on committees, teach Sunday school, etc. Some of those outside of this age group believe 30-45 year olds will find their congregation welcoming because there are lots of opportunities to “serve.”)
- Among those who attend church, there is a noticeable difference between what those within the age range of 30-45 want from church and what those outside of this age range want.

Many respondents from both categories have a perception that this difference is even greater than the collected responses would indicate.

- The concept of “balance,” especially the balance between work and family life, is very important to many 30-45 year olds who responded, whether they attend church or not. Many mentioned this as something with which they hoped the church could help.
- People of all ages look to the church to provide community and social groups, but they do not have the same expectations about what that would look like.

Emerging Spirit Impact Teams



Emerging Spirit Impact Teams were formed in Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver. Each Impact Team included seven to ten members who tested and developed welcoming resources, sought out and engaged “best practices” of welcoming, and extended the invitation of

Emerging Spirit to congregations in their areas.

The Impact Teams spent time engaging in discernment and theological reflection. They brought experience and critique to the many aspects of welcoming ministry.

The collected wisdom of the Impact Team members includes the following thoughts.

Characteristics of Welcoming Congregations

- They respect diversity and affirm in the broadest sense of the word.
- They are open to choice and questioning
- They ask, listen, and invite.
- They offer acceptance.
- They provide a feeling of home.
- They offer the opportunity to do something meaningful.
- They provide multiple points of entry.
- They provide safe space for intimate conversation.
- They encourage laughter.
- They are open to learning new things.
- They are gracious.
- They offer tools to enter the “church culture.”
- They know “who they are” and present that identity as welcoming.
- They provide space for difference.

Beliefs about 30-45 Year Olds

- They are not aware of The United Church of Canada.
- There is a lot of cynicism or malaise among people in this demographic.
- They like to talk and to debate.
- If they come to church they may push for change.
- As those who live in a consumer society, they will move on if they do not like something.
- They come to church mainly for community and not spirituality.
- This very broad demographic contains a wide range of experiences and backgrounds, as well as the very diverse perspectives and expectations of first and second generation Canadians.

- They do not easily trust institutions.
- This demographic is finding ways to gather, to create their own communities, maybe the church needs to find ways to enter these conversational circles.
- Children and raising children is a very high priority for this demographic.

Beliefs about the Church

- What we model on Sunday is not the “18 attributes” the Environics study says we exhibit.
- The United Church of Canada stands against the oppressor.
- The church provides a safe and challenging place.
- The United Church of Canada accepts all.
- There is a lot of uncertainty—if people do come to our door, will we be able to change and will we also be able to challenge them to change?
- The church must remain relevant as it intersects with culture.
- Does the church care enough about 30-45 year olds to change?
- We need to be true to who we are as gospel people.
- We spend a lot of time spinning our wheels in the area of adult education.
- Welcoming will **present a significant challenge for people inside the church**
- The church will need to be prepared for a high level of conflict if it wants to pursue significant change.
- Expressions of faith are more than cultural trappings.
- The United Church of Canada is distinct and this is our strength.
- The image of The United Church of Canada is “loosy goosy”
- The United Church of Canada should not worry too much about competing with other churches, we need to be who we are and represent ourselves as such, we should not change who we are to meet the needs of the demographic.
- The United Church of Canada has gotten far away from using faith-based language
- We need to be very careful of what is a church’s perception and what is an actual reality.
- The language of the church and church people is foreign to those outside of it.
- There are some things that characterize The United Church of Canada and if people do not agree with them then they do not fit in.
- The United Church of Canada accepts a diversity and complexity of opinion

Welcoming Ministries

- We need to remember that it is God’s house to which people are being welcomed.
- We must allow people to be a part of genuine community.
- The strength of the program might be to lift up unique congregations.
- We need to beware of the dangers of buying into a consumer model of church. We must present an alternative model to a consumer culture.
- Use “real life” experiences and give examples of things to do and not to do that help people begin the conversation and to do some self-reflection.
- We really need to know that to which we are welcoming people. It’s good to get them in the door, but we also must prepare for them to come back or keep coming.
- It’s very important to identify the people within a congregation who are committed to or have the “calling” to “transmit” (share the faith) and “transform” (open others to new life).
- The congregational identity work needs to be on-going and well connected to the work of a welcoming ministry.

- Process is extremely important. There are many good resources already available, but not a lot that guide a congregation to helpful outcomes.
- Generations understand “welcoming” differently. It’s important to pay attention to this.
- Different cultures have different expectations and norms around “welcoming.”
- Are we encouraging the church to go after people or do we want people to get something out of the church?
- It’s very important to articulate some kind of a theological statement that guides and governs the program.
- Can we express our faith base without coming off like fundamentalists?
- Worship is an alternative act in itself, it doesn’t meet any of the values expected by the dominant culture.
- Postmodernism may offer the greatest opportunity for the church to preach the gospel than it has had in years.
- The focus in welcoming can not be on targeting but rather must be on “being the body of Christ” - authentic, genuine, and real.
- Theological and biblical resources need to be accessible by people with all levels of “exposure,” but they also need to disturb and challenge.



Environics Analytics

The church faces three distinct challenges in its use and purchase of media:

1. a limited advertising budget.
2. a product that will not be universally available (i.e. not all congregations will be welcoming those between the ages of 30 and 45 years); and
3. Our target market research outlines a demographic, Adults 30-45, that is not a traditional media measured demographic (i.e. Adults 25-54).

As a matter of stewardship we will:

- focus upon the “Potentials” group, as ascertained by Environics Research, and reach them in the media they are most likely to use; and
- match the media to the locations where “Emerging Spirit” churches are located.

Environics Analytics is a separate company within the Environics Group that specializes in demographic and geo-demographic modeling. Emerging Spirit contracted them to:

1. Determine the media that are most appealing to the group upon whom we are focusing.
2. Ascertain the times our selected audience are most receptive to receiving messages.
3. Determine the major areas of the country, defined by postal code, where our audience live.

This research enables specific media usage data and market usage data that can **directly** link our media selection with those who have expressed some interest in a relationship with The United Church of Canada.

The results of this work form the foundation of the Communications Strategy.

II. REACHING OUT THROUGH THE MEDIA

Communications Strategy Summary

SMITH ROBERTS
advertising | design



Smith Roberts + Co. refined the research data to paint an audience description far richer and deeper than the original broad description of *Adults 30-45 years old*.

General Profile

These people lead busy, interesting lives. While they believe in hard work, they are devoted to their families and make family time a priority. Like most Canadians, they feel varying degrees of stress as the pressures of daily life ebb and flow and they try to juggle their priorities.

They feel a sense of empowerment and believe that they have the power to make the key decisions that affect their lives. They tend to be involved in their communities and have a keen sense of being part of the larger (global) arena. They believe they can make a difference in the world (and in their own neighbourhoods). They are engaged in life – they do not sit around waiting for it to happen to them. Nor do they wish for things they cannot have. It is less about material possessions for these people and more about making the most of what you have. Although life gets to them sometimes, they are generally positive in their outlook – they try to see the bright side. They are open to exploration and learning new things, all to broaden their perspective and enrich the quality of their lives.

They are looking to understand what is going on around them in the world. They have faith and a sense of spirituality although it may not bubble on the surface. They are open to considering worshipping at a church that reflects their values and is relevant to them.

Those who have shown interest in a relationship with The United Church of Canada include: **Young couples** starting out in neighbourhoods that are a mix of very young and old households with singles and widowers, newly married couples and empty-nesting retirees. They are widely scattered throughout the country's older city and suburban neighbourhoods.

Single parents and young singles scattered across English Canada's towns and small cities. They often work at entry-level service jobs. In these low-rise apartment neighbourhoods, visitors find the streets jam-packed with active, young families as well as a few long-time, elderly maintainers. From soccer and football to basketball and curling, there's hardly a sport that isn't pursued at above-average rates in this group. Child-friendly to a fault, \$35,000 household incomes are stretched by thrift shops.

Young parents who work at skilled **blue-collar** jobs. These high school-educated Canadians have secured well-paying positions that allow them to pursue leisure-intensive lifestyles. For these residents of homes and row houses, relaxation means nothing more taxing than watching comedy videos, tuning in to TV sports, or playing video games. They have enough money in their jeans to travel but many of these wage earners are content to go only as far as the local pizza parlour or Chinese restaurant for a night out.

Younger, middle-class households with lots of children who live in the satellite suburbs of older towns and cities where the exurban housing is affordable. The educational levels are typically high school, trade school, or community college.

Young, upwardly mobile, multi-ethnic families who live in single-home and townhouse subdivisions where they have moved in the last five years. Some of these are among the highest-earning families who have expressed an interest in The United Church of Canada. They live an active, child-centered lifestyle.

The Francophone, Ethnic, First Nations and Rural Realities

After conversations with people and staff in Montreal-Ottawa Conference and Ministries in French it became clear that while much of the general thrust of the advertising will be applicable in their contexts, much remains to be done that requires particular sensitivities and a different order of implementation than in many other parts of the country. For example, in Montreal-Ottawa, it may well be that an intensive sequence of training events will occur before any advertising appears in French (although available in English), even though the concepts will be developed in harmony with other advertising.

Contexts of great ethnic diversity will also require a different approach. We have begun conversations and projects are in the formation stage. We anticipate being able to provide clear updates on these at the General Council meeting.

Conversations with First Nations elders and communities have yet to occur on a formal basis but we remain committed to those conversations.

Rural ministry encompasses many different scenarios including the traditional farm community, resource based situations, fishing villages and small towns on the edge of expanding urban centres. Some of the Impact Team and lead congregation members provided insight into ministry in these contexts. We will continue conversation about how Emerging Spirit can be most effective in a variety of settings.

The particular opportunities and challenges presented by each of these have contributed greatly to the selection of media forms outlined below.

The Challenges

The Audience is Large but Relatively Well Defined

From a demographic and psychographic point of view the information is rich but even those who declare interest are fragile with many negative attitudes toward “organized religion.”

Approached in the right way they are more than receptive but they do not want to be “sold.”

Any creative approach must reflect this and media choices must recognize this sensitivity and take into account the deep scepticism and fear of many people.

The Marketing Challenges

- How do we create effective communications that will attract the group’s attention without appearing too slick, too packaged, too evangelical?

- How do we encourage people without appearing to be recruiting them as if to join a cult or fill a labour shortage?
- How do we maximize the opportunities for those interested to be guided to Emerging Spirit-friendly churches in their area?

At the congregational level the task is huge and delicate

Wide variation exists in congregational ministries of welcoming. One clear message from the research is that welcoming needs to be handled carefully since it proves extremely easy to feed into people’s perceptions and fears. Subtleties become significant.

Creating a truly welcoming environment is about respect, relevance, listening, and understanding, not only providing the right welcoming “etiquette” and the “correct” physical trappings of greeting.

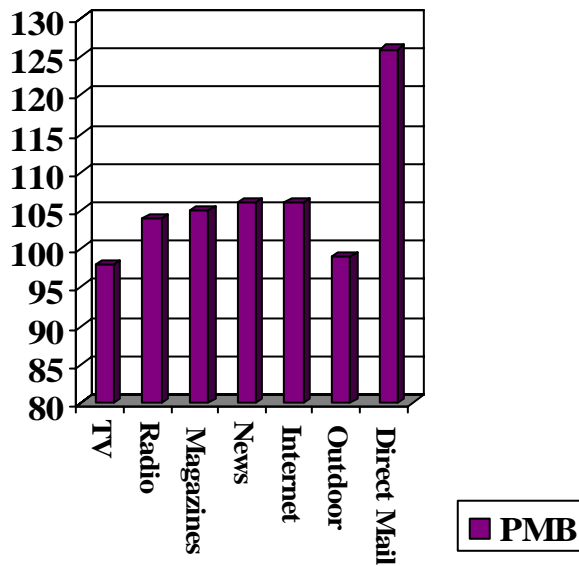
Within the church these issues emerge

- How do we ensure that we have the maximum possible number of Emerging Spirit-friendly churches trained and ready to go (and in sync with where we know our target audience lives) while at the same time upholding expectations of quality for congregations to ensure that those who come are not disappointed?
- How do we ensure on an ongoing basis that Emerging Spirit churches remain true to their mandate?

The Media Mix

In determining which media vehicles offer the greatest potential we consulted industry sources.

The Print Measurement Bureau (PMB) – a major media analysis firm - indicates an average usage for all media with the exception of direct mail (direct-to-home). Given the extensive data provided by the Environics Research Group, direct-to-home becomes a significant strategic option.



Those who expressed some interested in being associated with a church like The United Church of Canada show high usage of radio and magazines.

Given the other research, strict usage numbers could not be the governing criteria. Intangibles like a sense of intimacy, control, and safety also surfaced as critically important. This led to an examination of and eventual focus upon magazines.

The magazines (full page ads in full colour) recommended include:

Parenting Publications

- Today's Parent
- Canadian Family

Home & Garden Publications

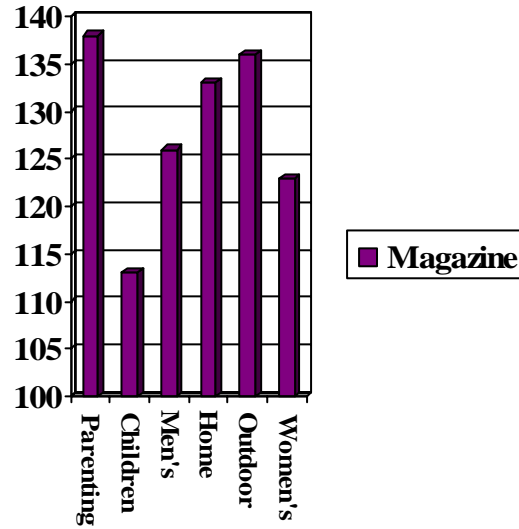
- Style at Home
- Canadian House & Home
- Harrowsmith/Country Life
- Canadian Home & Country
- Gardening Life

Outdoor Publications

- Outdoor Canada
- Canadian Geographic

Women's Service & General Interest

- Reader's Digest - Polybag insert to selected groups
- Reader's Digest
- Canadian Living
- Chatelaine



Also important to Emerging Spirit and the church is the ability to speak with an edge, to raise, when appropriate, a voice critical of such things as consumer culture, and to challenge some of the dominant and simplistic responses to faith, life, and morality that masquerade as religion. This criteria led to the selection of the third major media vehicle – viral video spots.

Based upon the selected group’s bias towards communication, their propensity to use a particular media vehicle, cost constraints, and creative requirements:

The major outreach through the media will be through magazines, direct mail and (viral) video.

Other research also indicates that people between the ages of 30 and 45 feel very comfortable seeking further information and testing ideas and opinions through web sites. We propose the development of a uniquely designed interactive website. This website will play a critical role in the Emerging Spirit initiative. A prototype of the site will be available for exploration at the Emerging Spirit booth and workshop at the General Council meeting.

Core Elements of the Media Outreach Strategy

The media message centers around the words “inspiration,” “exploration” and “respect.”

Basic message Living through and responding to the issues of life in a way that fosters wholeness and joy requires much more than simple answers.

Posture of the church The United Church of Canada is a community that explores the moral and spiritual dimensions of life in a way that welcomes and encourages conversation among

different perspectives even while drawing upon its own historic Christian practices and convictions to contribute to the conversation.

The United Church of Canada inspires you to explore in conversation the moral and spiritual dimensions of life on your own terms.

Media Through the use of magazine advertising, direct-to-home mailings and viral video spots, The United Church of Canada will invite people to explore the moral and spiritual dimensions of life through investigation of and participation in a uniquely designed web site.

This web site will model that The United Church of Canada is a safe place to explore the deeper dimensions of life in a way that provokes learning and allows the church to contribute to the conversation with integrity from a Christian perspective.

When people are ready to investigate a congregational affiliation, a search engine will generate a list of United Church congregations in the area who have participated in a Regional Training Event (see below). Each of these congregations will have their own micro-site available on this site where they will describe, using a template provided, the character and ministry emphases of their congregation. Links will also be available to current congregational web sites and to the general church locator on the main national The United Church of Canada's General Council site.

The feel of the ads will be upbeat - with a joie de vivre – down to earth and friendly, flexible and open minded.

Prototypes of the magazine ads, the direct-to-home pieces and the web site will be available for viewing at the Emerging Spirit booth and Learning Options at the General Council meeting.

A Public Relations firm will also help leverage the impact of the advertising initiative.

Benefits of this Media Mix

- It reflects the audience's actual use of media
- Offers more intimacy and control (especially magazines & direct-to-home mailing)
- Allows a variety of uses by different types of congregations, particularly those in rural or "ethnic" communities (e.g. insertion in local weekly community papers, hand delivery, bundling with specific initiatives of the congregation to this age group, etc.)
- Allows for greater partnerships between congregations and the Emerging Spirit process
- Provides the kind of constant exposure, with potential for significant bursts at various times during the year, which allows for the gradual, continual growth of awareness and association that a challenge of this scope requires.

III. LIVING THE WELCOME: CONGREGATIONAL WELCOMING

Research does not settle every question

The research paints a picture of the people who would be interested, perhaps, in exploring some relationship with the church and assists the church by highlighting some characteristics, traits and fears – on both sides – that could sabotage a conversation.

As a church we are now faced with a number of very important strategic, ethical, theological, political, and spiritual questions. Included in this bundle are questions such as these:

- Even though the identified groups may be potentially the most “productive” field to harvest (Matt 9:37) should we be focusing upon these groups? (ethical/theological question)
- What about segments of the population which do not register strongly because of research and analytical protocols? Can we devise a process that is, where appropriate and chosen, flexible enough to allow education and customization without losing the invitational tone and national impetus? (strategic communication question)
- What is the language we should be using to witness to our faith that is true to our tradition and experience and yet does not block conversation with those not steeped in traditional language? (apologetic question)
- Can we devise a process that identifies emerging leaders who are struggling to scratch the right itch but feel their skills, knowledge and practice of leadership could be more effective? (educational, leadership development question)

These are some of the questions that form the context for the development of **Living the Welcome: Congregational Welcoming**.

Emerging Spirit is about change

Initial formulation of the goals for Emerging Spirit included raising awareness and recognition of the values and beliefs of The United Church of Canada among 30-45 year olds; creating a willingness among non-church-goers to discover a United Church congregation and renewing a sense of positive identity and enthusiasm for mission among United Church congregations. All of these goals are about changing attitudes, beliefs and practices.

Whatever the specific terminology employed, those involved with organizational change identify three different types of change.

Developmental change focuses upon improvement of skills, knowledge, practice and performance.

Transitional change focuses upon redesigning strategy, structures, systems, programs and practices (not culture).

Transformational change deals with a reorientation of organizational culture and can involve an overhaul of strategy, structure, systems, work, behaviours and mindset (a change of culture).

Emerging Spirit can be about each of these types of changes.

For many who approved the project, the assumption was that we would primarily be about Development and Transitional change. At the same time we heard concerns that if the campaign was “only about ads” or “some quick dos and do nots” for congregations the initiative would be a waste of money.

The need – and perhaps even the desire - for change runs much deeper and, in fact, underlies much of the anxiety we hear voiced through such comments as: Will the congregations be ready? Will they be able or willing to change?

The strategic challenges before us include

- deep rooted congregational cultures highly resistant to change; and
- leaders who do not feel equipped or supported in their efforts to lead change.

The Living the Welcome: Congregational Welcoming dimension of Emerging Spirit provides a mechanism for congregations to address the issues and question of change at a variety of levels and to promote skills for congregational leaders to be effective change agents at the level appropriate and possible for them.

Basic Posture

- (i) *We are ready to invest in congregations that demonstrate readiness to engage the process of change.*
- (ii) *We recognize that work is already being conceived and delivered around both congregational transformation and leadership development in a number of places within the church, including: the Support to Local Ministries (SLM), Faith Formation and Education (FFE), Ministries in French, Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS), Ethnic Ministries, Justice Global & Ecumenical Relations (JGER) Units of General Council; Conferences; presbyteries; theological schools and educational centers. Refinement of this strategy will involve further conversations with many parties to ensure greatest effectiveness and efficiency. Nonetheless, Emerging Spirit does want to signal strongly that we have heard deep and persistent concerns about the need for regional training with respect to change initiatives and leadership development. We offer the following proposal in order to be faithful to our conversations to date and as a way of moving the larger conversation forward.*

Regional Training Events

These events would be for congregational teams that should include a paid, accountable staff person plus other key lay leaders.

Purpose of the Regional Training Events

To allow congregations to engage the research, learning, resources and processes of the Emerging Spirit program in a way that fosters the renewal and practice of the ministry of welcoming in their context (particularly with those between the ages of 30 and 45).

The Goals of the Regional Training Events

- To create an event environment where honest conversations investigate reality, provoke learning and foster the growth of relationships within congregational teams and between the Emerging Spirit team and the congregational teams
- To assist congregational teams
- to discern the contour of their local context and clarify the nature of their congregation's call to ministry and the call of each congregation to promote a ministry of welcoming
- to identify the key conditions necessary for the creation of a safe environment for hospitality/welcoming in this time
- in the identification of key strategies, tactics and resources necessary for them to exercise creative, effective and faithful leadership in a welcoming ministry within their congregations
- To have fun
- To provide opportunities for the congregational teams to leave inspired and with a sense of possibility and joy about the work to which they will commit.

Outcomes of the Regional Training Events

By the end of each Regional Training Event congregational teams will

- be able to identify three things that excite them about encouraging the welcoming ministry of their congregation
- identify the three prime strategic challenges/barriers they face in their context
- understand the main elements of the Emerging Spirit research
- Have intimate familiarity with the resources available within the Emerging Spirit workbook plus know how to acquire resource updates and supplements
- articulate the theological and biblical basis for hospitality and identify some spiritual obstacles to an intentional and persistent ministry of hospitality/welcoming
- articulate the depth of their commitment to this initiative and the spiritual struggles that most tempt them individually and as a team with respect to their participation in this welcoming initiative
- Articulate how they envision the response of their congregation to the national advertising initiative
- identify two implications of the Statistics Canada and Environics Analytics data for their congregation and its (welcoming) ministry
- be able to articulate a basic model of organizational change and how it would apply to their context
- Identify the major type of change that will form the focus of their work during the next six months
- Articulate the successful outcomes they hope to achieve in and with their congregation by June 30, 2007 and December 30, 2007.
- Identify five elements that could be improved in the welcoming etiquette of their congregation during the next six months
- Identify two possible opportunities and challenges of transitional change within their congregation
- Provide a clear, accurate one paragraph description of the current state of their ministry with children and the next steps that are possible in the development of this ministry
- Provide a clear, accurate one paragraph description of the ethnic/Francophone/First Nations composition of their context for ministry and the implications of this for the ministry of their congregation
- Be clear about the purpose, goals and organizational structure of their team, complete with individual responsibilities plus the next step for each member upon return to their congregation
- Identify the person within their team who will serve as the prime contact person with the national Emerging Spirit team and determine two dates to check in with a national team member within the following six months.

During the first year 20-24 Regional Training Events will be held.

A full description of the Regional Training Events, complete with a listing of workshops and their goals, will be available at the General Council meeting.

Congregational Commitment

Cost: TBA

Participation:

Avg. Attendance at Sunday worship	Number in the Emerging Spirit congregational team to attend training event
Up to 80 people	3-5
81 to 150	5-8
151 and above	8-10

IV. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This program will be 12 months long and will seek to increase the level of skill, knowledge, confidence and practice of select emerging leaders within the church. The initiative will involve: attendance at a regional training event; three three-day intensive residential gatherings that focus upon training in certain leadership skill areas (e.g. change management, crucial conversations, etc.); and an intentional Emerging Spirit related project and reading.

A rough timetable would include major gatherings in: June, October, January.

The goal is to train 80 people per year for three years for a total of 240 people.

There will be a fee to participate in the program. Resources and leadership costs for the program will be subsidized by Emerging Spirit.

The expectation is that further development of this initiative will require extensive consultation with various units of the church. A full proposal, including costs, will be brought to the Executive of the General Council. At this point we simply intend to signal that we have heard the many voices which have raised this concern and that we stand committed to pursuing conversations that lead, in a relatively short period of time, to effective strategies that respond to the need.

Selection process: TBA

Cost: TBA (costs of resources, room and board, travel)

Conclusion

Emerging Spirit is about reaching out to establish and nurture relationships between The United Church of Canada and Canadians between the ages of 30 and 45 who are not currently a part of any faith community.

Through the use of a variety of media we will extend the invitation to enter into conversation.

We will prepare ourselves through Regional Training Events and intentional local leadership development to be people who welcome as we have been welcomed by the God we know in and through Jesus Christ.

PROPOSAL GS 32

Title:	Emerging Spirit
Origin:	General Secretary, General Council
Financial Implications:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
Staffing Implications:	To be determined by the General Secretary
Source of Funding:	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

The General Secretary proposes:

That the 39th General Council 2006:

1. Receive for information the report on “Emerging Spirit”.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statements to be developed by this General Council.
3. Approve in principle the Emerging Spirit Project as outlined in the report.
4. Direct the Executive of the General Council in November 2006 to consider an expenditure of up to \$10.5 million dollars for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 for the Emerging Spirit Project.
5. Direct the General Secretary to secure interim funding to initiate the media campaign for the Emerging Spirit Project in 2006.

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