



***Trinity-St. Paul's United Church and
Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts***

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February 10, 2010

Nora Sanders
General Secretary
United Church of Canada

Dear Nora and members of the General Council Executive,

Thank you for the opportunity to give input to the decisions that are forthcoming with regard to the General Council's budget in the coming triennium. We are disappointed to hear that significant cuts are looming once again over the national and global work and witness of the United Church of Canada.

Following the service last Sunday, about 35 members of TSP gathered to listen to the issues and share their thoughts and concerns. Needless to say there was a diversity of views. However there was an overwhelming appreciation for the work of the General Council office and the ways in which it allows our weekly offering to join God's work of healing and justice-making across Canada and around the world.

We did not choose any of the three options put forward, but are recommending that you look at fourth option. We think the budget decisions of the church should be based on our core mission and vision. We want choices that strengthen and build up the contribution of the United Church to God's work in the world. We think it is time to invest in the connectional parts of ourselves. We encourage the United Church to recognize, value and focus on the many things it does so well, such as advocacy on social justice issues of the day in Canada and abroad; partnerships with organizations in Canada and among churches around the world that extend and strengthen God's mission in the world through local congregations, ecumenical organizations, interfaith groups, advocacy groups and so many others.

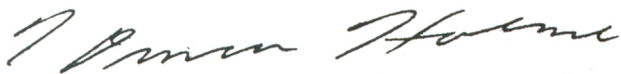
The United Church has been a formative national Canadian institution and needs to now find its place in an intercultural and interfaith Canada through strengthening relationships. As part of the fourth option, we want financial decisions that reflect a confidence in the continuing purpose of the United Church for God's mission in the Canadian context and with our global partners. We know the United Church is not alone in the challenges we face and would hope for deepening of ecumenical, interfaith and social sector partnerships to expand our perspectives and strengthen our witness as people of faith in the Canadian context.

We think there are revenue constituencies outside the church who appreciate the stands the United Church has taken on social and justice issues who would contribute financially to the work of the church. Can we experiment immediately with direct appeals to some of these wider communities? We appreciate the identification of five priorities for the work of the church. Some among us think we need to focus even more.

We do not regret that we are no longer living in Christendom and gladly leave behind the images and status of an imperial church. What is our image of a faithful church today? We look for the General Council to continue offering leadership to congregations and communities in the church so that we can grow into an image of a faithful church that carries forward the best of our past to contribute to a truly indigenous church in an intercultural and interfaith Canada. We are a wealthy and privileged community and look for leadership from the national church that helps us use all of our resources to be about the costly ministry of kingdom building and planning for the future of the United Church as servant of God's purposes in the world.

We offer our prayers and expectations of courageous discipleship on the part of the General Council Executive in its deliberations and decision-making on behalf of the whole church. Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Duncan Holmes".

Duncan Holmes, Chair, Church Board
Trinity-St. Paul's United Church