

This correspondence from the Rev. Fred Monteith, Business Chair for the 42nd General Council was sent to Conference Executive Secretaries and Speaker in February 2015 and March 2014. It is posted on the GC42 website as guidance for Commissioners preparing for General Council, and for those who are planning to develop proposals for presbyteries or Conferences to send to General Council.

Greetings to the Conference Executive Secretaries and Speaker,

The attached Proposal package was sent to you in March 2014. It is being circulated again as a reminder of the process as you plan your Conference Annual Meetings. The following information may also be helpful.

The Comprehensive Review Task Group Report will be out by early March. We anticipate that there will be six or seven proposals associated with it. In addition, there will be various other pieces of work going to the General Council, some of which will be reflected in the workbook for the March meeting of the Executive of the General Council.

In preparing your Commissioners to come to the 42nd General Council or resourcing your Conference in creating proposals, we would offer the following considerations:

1. As every proposal generates a piece of business to be dealt with by the General Council, please consider whether your issue needs to be dealt with by a proposal, or is it a matter for discernment and debate at the 42nd General Council about which your commissioners need to be aware.
2. Proposals should offer changes needed for the proposal to have your support.
3. If the originator is offering a “yes” or “no” to a proposal, this opinion does not belong in a subsequent proposal. It is an opinion which becomes part of the decision-making process at General Council.
4. Should you determine that a proposal is required from a congregation, presbytery, or your Conference, it would be helpful to the business of the Council if you could:
 - a) Create a proposal which includes categories or sections which align with the individual proposals.
 - b) Please state each idea or improvement, which is needed for your support of the proposal, as a separate point.
5. Any further information you believe to be helpful to the Council as it considers your suggested improvement should be included in the “Background” section of your Proposal. Any information you wish to have the court consider should be listed in paragraph form after your suggestions.

6. Not to be overly legalistic and to be clear we have left “whereas clauses” behind. If proposals come with “whereas” clauses these points will be moved into the background information.
7. General Council workbooks will include response sheets for use by Commissioners. As they do their work prior to Council, we would encourage Commissioners to use these response sheets to record questions and changes that are need for the proposal to receive their support and bring these response sheets to the General Council.
8. There will be ample Table Group time at the 42nd General Council. Table groups will be encouraged to create response sheets from the collective wisdom of the table group. Table group response sheets will be forwarded to the Sessional Committee and the Commissions for their consideration.

Just a reminder that the following proposals were adopted by the Executive of the General Council:

G&A6 PRIORITIZING OUR WORK: OPENING BUSINESS PROCEDURAL MOTIONS FOR THE 42ND GENERAL COUNCIL

That the Executive of the General Council recommend that:

The 42nd General Council (2015): shall prioritize its work in the following manner:

Category 1

Proposals are those that deal directly with the Comprehensive Review Task Group report and recommendations and all related Proposals and Response forms. These will receive priority attention at the 42nd General Council (2015). They shall be referred to a Sessional Committee that shall bring its recommendations to full court for decision.

Category 2

Proposals are those, other than those outlined in Category 1, which contemplate substantive changes to the Basis of Union that affect denominational identity and would require the 42nd General Council (2015) to authorize a Category 3 Remit. They shall be brought before the full court for decision.

Category 3

Proposals are those calling the church to take a time-bound stand on national or global issues and/or on an issue for which the church does not have an existing policy or statement. They shall be referred to a Commission for decision.

Category 4

Proposals are those which contemplate changes to existing General Council policies and procedures, or those which more properly fall within the purview of another court of the church. They shall be referred to the Business Committee for prioritization and may be

referred to the full court, a Commission, the General Council Executive, or to the court which has responsibility, for decision.

Category 5

Proposals are those calling the church to broader support for existing statements, policies, or procedures of the General Council. They shall be referred to the General Council Executive for decision or the General Secretary General Council for action.

G&A7 REPORTS TO THE 42ND GENERAL COUNCIL

That the Executive of the General Council directs that:

Reports to be put before the 42nd General Council (2015) shall normally be between two and five pages in length.

And that, with the exception of the report and recommendations of the Comprehensive Review Task group, any report put before the 42nd General Council (2015) shall be a maximum of ten pages in length, which shall include an executive summary as the first page of said reports,

And that at the discretion of the General Secretary, General Council, background material to reports put before the 42nd General Council (2015) shall be available to all Commissioners and to the church as a whole through links to the web page for the 42nd General Council (2015) or upon request to their Conference office.

At the discretion of the General Secretary of the General Council, said background material may be included as appendices to the Record of Proceedings of the 42nd General Council (2015).

G&A8 PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING A CHANGE – WITHDRAWING A PROPOSAL FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE 42ND GENERAL COUNCIL

That the Executive of the General Council recommends to the 42nd General Council that:

The 42nd General Council adopt the following procedure in the event that a Commissioner desires that a Proposal be withdrawn from an Omnibus motion and/or that a Proposal be assigned to a body other than that recommended by the Business Committee:

- 1) The Commissioner making such a request shall normally have one minute to make their request and provide their rationale for their request.
- 2) The Moderator or his designate will ask, having heard the request and rationale, “Are there TWENTY Commissioners who support the request and rationale? Please indicate your support of this position by holding up your voting card.

- 3) If there are not TWENTY Commissioners who support the request and rationale then the request is denied.
- 4) If there are TWENTY Commissioners who support the request then the Moderator will direct the Business Committee to find a place for the work consistent with the request.

G&A9 ADDRESSING THE WORK OF THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW TASK GROUP AT THE 42ND GENERAL COUNCIL

That the Executive of the General Council approve that:

1. The report and recommendations of the Comprehensive Review Task Group and related Response Sheets and Proposals shall be referred to a Sessional Committee of the 42nd General Council (2015);
2. The role of the Sessional Committee shall be to consider said material with a view to bringing recommendations to the full court for consideration and decision.
3. Said Sessional Committee shall be comprised of one Commissioner from each of the Conferences. Each Conference shall nominate two Commissioners, one lay and one ministry personnel, in a manner appropriate to their particular context given the following criteria:
 - An ability to think clearly and reflect theologically.
 - A strong knowledge of the ethos and history of The United Church of Canada.
 - An openness to the leading of the Spirit in the context of a rapidly changing society and church.
 - An ability to hold the tension between their own particular perspectives and the good of the whole church.
 - An ability to articulate their thoughts and beliefs, in a clear and concise manner.
 - A demonstrated ability to work in a collegial and collaborative manner.
4. Cognizant of the criteria outlined above, the Business Committee shall determine the Conference representation and have the power to add up to five members, and to appoint the chair to the Sessional Committee in addition to those named by the Conference.

Please share this information with your Presbytery Secretaries, so that it may be shared with those who wish to create and/or process proposals to the 42nd General Council.

A package of resources to assist you with orientation of your Commissioners will be sent to you by the end of March.

In relation to the Comprehensive Review's work, if there are presbyteries which are not able to meet after the release date of the report in order to bring proposals to Conference annual meetings, we recommend that the Conference meeting adopt a flexible approach to receiving proposals that may come forward from congregational representatives at Conference annual meetings.

If you have any questions or require any further information, please let me know.

Blessings,

Fred Monteith
Business Chair, 42nd General Council

To: Presbytery Secretaries, Conference Presidents/Leading Elders, and Conference Executive Secretaries/Speakers

Date: March 30, 2014

From: Fred Monteith, Business Coordinator, GC42 Agenda and Planning Committee

RE: Proposals to General Council 42 from Your Respective Courts

As you consider whether or not to prepare a proposal for General Council we seek your support. Your 42nd General Council Planning Committee is responding to the evaluations of previous General Councils. To ensure that the work before Commissioners is timely, substantive and clear, your 42nd General Council Planning Committee is asking you to please consider the following:

Is this a Proposal?

Is this a request for a topic to be considered by the General Council or a comment on an existing topic?

- A single Proposal creates an agenda item; Proposals that echo the original are more truthfully votes of support or proposed amendments to the original Proposal. A note to the Commissioners from your Conference might be a more helpful way to inform the debate at General Council.
- A Proposal that is in response to a Report that is to be presented to the General Council is in fact debate on the Report. A note to the Commissioners from your Conference might be a more helpful way to inform the debate.
- A test of this might be: "Are we proposing something new or are we engaged in debate?"
- A proposal to General Council should be proposing something new.

Should this call for action be a Proposal?

Is the specific action requested consistent with existing policy?

- If so a Proposal may not be required to obtain action.
- A direct request to the appropriate body may be made to ensure a timelier and equally effective response.
- If not local action may be more significant than action of the General Council. For example, if your Proposal is asking that the General Secretary, General Council write to some level of government about a specific issue a local letter campaign might well be more effective.
- A test of this question might be "are we doing what we can right now?"

Does this Proposal focus on substance?

Is the General Council being asked to undertake a specific action that has a measurable objective?

- Focus on questions of what and why rather than give attention to the how and who.
- Leave details such as how a goal may be achieved to the Executive of the General Council and the General Secretary. Details can detract from the immediate task of the General Council Commissioners.

- A test whether or not the Proposal focuses on the substantive may be whether the Proposal is asking a question “Should we?” or giving an answer “We should.”

Will this Proposal be understood?

Does the background information explain the presenting circumstances and the need for action?

- Does it provide adequate explanation of what has been done and rationale for the proposed action?
- Is the language and wording of the Proposal, that portion that will be voted upon, clear and complete?
- A simple test: If you were encountering this for the first time would the background information inform you of the problem, guide you through your questions and lead you to the specific action requested by the Proposal? If you had never seen the material before would the Proposal inform you of what was to be achieved and why?

Neither the questions above nor the attached outline of a Proposal will be sufficiently comprehensive for all circumstances. Perhaps the best guiding principle is “Does this Proposal engage us together into seeing the new thing that God is doing in our time.

In order that the Council has as much information for its discernment and debate, should your Conference choose to transmit a Proposal to General Council the General Council Planning Committee requests that your commissioners will be prepared to speak to the work that is coming from your conference.

Fred Monteith
Business Co-ordinator
42nd General Council Planning Committee

A typical Proposal will be formatted to include:

Title:

Originating Body:

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The *[originating body]* proposes that

The 42nd General Council (2015):

[This section is typed in bold text. Within this section the specific action is proposed. The words must stand alone when the decision is made. The specific action requested needs to be a measurable objective or doable task. It need not explain in detail how but should be clear as to what is to be achieved. The action need be directed to either:

- a. the Executive of the General Council for implementation or study [The Executive may refer to appropriate Permanent Committee or to the General Secretary for staff action]***
- b. a Committee of the General Council [i.e. Theology and Faith]***
- c. the General Secretary, General Council for action.]***

[Formatting should be uniform in all proposals; multiple sections should be numbered and lettered for easy reference. Care should be taken to avoid acronyms and pronouns which hinder clarity.]

Background:

[In paragraph form tell the story of how and why the question emerged; what the matter to be addressed is; relevant information that has been considered; the implications of the recommended action; how the proposed action addresses the need. The background information is not to convince others of your conclusion but to assist them in their discernment. The Proposal and background summary should not normally exceed two pages. Major work may be accompanied by a more comprehensive report as required. The background is for information and does not form part of the Decision.]

Intermediate Court Action:

[Outline the journey of the Proposal indicating each Court and Action taken including and Recommendations if made. If “transmitted without concurrence” an explanation as to why it was transmitted should be included.]

An example (see Acts 1:15-26):

ACTS 1 – Appointment of an Apostle

Origin: Peter

Financial Implications: nil

Staffing Implications: 1 fulltime

Source of Funding: The Jerusalem church

Peter proposes that:

The Believers:

1. **Approve the appointment of an overseer from among those who have accompanied the followers during the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us, and,**
2. **Direct the Executive of the Way to seek nominations and determine the method of selection.**

Background:

Jesus chose 12 disciples but the scriptures had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus – for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in the ministry. Now this man acquired a field with his reward for his wickedness and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. This became known to all the residents in Jerusalem, so that the field was called Field of Blood. For it stands written in the book of Psalms, “let the place where he lodged be desolate and let no one stay in it (Psalm 69:25) and further as instructed in Psalm 109: 8 “Let another receive his office.”

Intermediate Court Action: transmitted with concurrence by the Apostles

General Council 41 – Proposal Form

Title:

Originating Body:

Financial Implications if known:

Staffing Implications if known:

Source of Funding if known:

The _____ **proposes that:**

The 42nd General Council (2015)

Background:

Intermediate Court Action: