

**Title:** Governance Model as Alternative to Empire

**Originating Body:** Montreal Presbytery

**Proposal:** The 40<sup>th</sup> General Council (2009) name a Task Group:

- to examine the nature, authority, accountability, and other issues related to church governance, particularly as they relate to roles of the Office of the General Council and the Executive of General Council, in light of *Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire* and *Mending the World*,
- to note any differences between present governance structures and those mandated by the Manual, and policies that have informed our practices historically,
- to report and make recommendations to the 41<sup>st</sup> General Council.

**Background:**

1. The General Council in previous years has approved documents such as **Mending the World** and **Living Faithfully in the Midst of Empire** and recommended that all parts of The United Church of Canada use them as lenses through which to test the faithfulness and direction of the church's mission and ministry;
2. Since 2000 there has been no opportunity for the church as a whole to reflect on its governance from an explicit biblical and theological perspective in the light of those documents;
3. Such reflection and testing has not been demonstrably present in some of the decisions made by the GCE in 2007;
4. The Montreal Presbytery expressed "strong objection to the GCE regarding the process by which decisions were made where there was little or no consultation by members of the GCE and/or the General Council Office staff with those in the church specifically involved with social justice advocacy" (Montreal Presbytery motion to GCE, September 2007); and
5. There are many across the church who are concerned that the church's decision-making processes and structures have become more hierarchical and less conciliar in the last 2 decades, noting as one example, the steep increase in the proportion of staff to elected members.

**Recommended Court Action:**

The Montreal Presbytery approve the proposal and transmit it to the Montreal & Ottawa Conference with a recommendation that it be transmitted with concurrence to General Council.