

## GS xx FRENCH TRANSLATION OF *THE MANUAL*

Origin: General Secretary, General Council and the Manual Committee

**1. What is the issue?** (describe in broad terms)

We believe God is calling us to honour our commitments to interculturalism, and specifically to equitable key resources such as The Manual in French.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

Our commitment to interculturalism must be more than just symbolic and theological, it must also be expressed in practical terms such as translating important Church documents and resources into French. Partnering with French ministries in our Church to work toward this goal is vital.

The 2013 edition of The Manual was published in English as a complete re-write of the by-laws contained in the previous edition of The Manual. The 2013 Manual has now been translated into French. Montreal Presbytery and the Consistoire Laurientien have each given their approval to the translated version.

**3. How might the General Council Executive respond to the issue?**

Notice the word *could*

The 42nd General Council 2015 could recognize the version of The Manual 2013 posted at the link below as the official French translation of The Manual:  
[http://www.united-church.ca/fr/files/handbooks/manual\\_2013.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/fr/files/handbooks/manual_2013.pdf)

**4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive:**

*(Comments if needed)*

**Is this proposal in response to assigned work – either from General Council or a previous GCE meeting? Please list proposal / motion numbers.**

*(Comments if needed)*

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## GS 11 FRENCH TRANSLATION OF *THE MANUAL*

From GC42

Origin: General Secretary, General Council and the Manual Committee

The General Secretary proposes that:

The 42nd General Council 2015 recognize the version of The Manual 2013 posted at the link below as the official French translation of The Manual:

This became sect. 3

[http://www.united-church.ca/fr/files/handbooks/manual\\_2013.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/fr/files/handbooks/manual_2013.pdf)

**Background:**

The 2013 edition of The Manual was published in English as a complete re-write of the by-laws contained in the previous edition of The Manual. The 2013 Manual has now been translated into French. Montreal Presbytery and the Consistoire Laurientien have each given their approval to the translated version.

This became Parag 2 sect. 2

Complex but still  
“Operational” proposal  
Example using TorConf mat’l

## Proposal – becoming an Affirming Ministry

### 1. What is the issue?

We believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to implement the fruits of the conversations and work Toronto Conference has engaged in regarding becoming an Affirming Conference.

### 2. Why is this issue important?

For many years The United Church of Canada has spoken about God’s vision of inclusion of all people including those who are marginalized because of sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental abilities, etc.

For the last two years the Conference has been engaged in conversation about whether to become an Affirming Ministry within The United Church of Canada, as have many communities of faith, presbyteries and Conferences, and other institutions and organizations.

Affirming Ministries have a particular focus on being open and welcoming to people of any sexual orientation and gender identity, but the focus is also on those who are marginalized in other ways. Some resources for this conversation have come from Affirm United at <http://affirmunited.ause.ca/affirming-ministries-program/>.

In a world with increasingly overt forms of intolerance and prejudice, it’s important that Toronto Conference join others in declaring that Conference is a safe and welcoming place for those who may experience discrimination in other parts of their lives. Conference can make such a statement on its own behalf, but it does not presume that others in the church take a similar action. Each part of the church’s conciliar system has the right to make its own decisions. If approved, the vision statement and plan of action would outline what Toronto Conference itself is going to do; it is not what we’re telling others to do.

A task group was appointed to guide the process. They conducted conversations at previous annual meetings, met with all Conference committees and/or working groups, drafted a vision statement and a plan of action, and gave all this work to the Conference Executive for consideration. The material was translated into a number of languages, was put on the Conference’s website, and a request for feedback was sent out. The Executive reviewed the feedback on the Affirming Ministry vision statement and plan of action and engaged in extensive discussion and changes to the documents that had been circulated.

### 3. How might Toronto Conference respond to this issue?

Toronto Conference could [*agree in principle to*] implement the program outlined in appendix A.

Rather than demanding agreement with a line-by-line program this wording encourages “agreement in principle” and DESCRIBES a process without the need to fight over every word – and gives freedom to modify during implementation.

## **Appendix A**

The Executive discussed numerous practical ways in which the vision statement and plan of action could become living documents that reflect changes in attitude and practice. Some of those ideas include:

- Maintain its properties, striving to ensure accessibility for all people
- Hold Conference events and meetings in locations that are accessible
- Prepare and publicize an inventory of accessible locations within Toronto Conference communities of faith
- Engage guest speakers/preachers at events to reflect diversity
- Follow the practice of having introductions/name tags that indicate gender pronoun preferences.
- Review all policies with an affirming lens
- Monitor diversity in its nominations procedures
- Identify, challenge and/or eliminate barriers in hiring or ministry development processes
- Develop consistency in signage acknowledging the Conference as being an Affirming Ministry

The Conference's Executive is proposing that the annual meeting approve the following Affirming Ministry vision statement and plan of action:

### **Vision statement**

Striving to be faithful followers of Jesus in our time and place, Toronto Conference will continue to remove barriers to participation in the life and work of the Conference and society, committing itself to be open to the Spirit. Resisting all forms of oppression, we welcome and celebrate people of any sexual orientation and gender identity, and those who are marginalized.

### **Plan of action**

The Executive and Executive Secretary will report annually on actions taken to fulfill the vision statement: "Striving to be faithful followers of Jesus in our time and place, Toronto Conference will continue to remove barriers to participation in the life and work of the Conference and society, committing itself to be open to the Spirit. Resisting all forms of oppression, we welcome and celebrate people of any sexual orientation and gender identity, and those who are marginalized." The reports will focus on...

#### Removing barriers to participation in the life and work of the Conference

Toronto Conference will...

- Review all policies and actions with a view to removing barriers

- Commit itself to relationship building in its business and activities
- Engage in education continually

#### Removing barriers to participation in society

Toronto Conference will...

- Advocate for municipal, provincial and federal government policies and laws that reflect a diverse and inclusive society
- Speak out on current events that demean, stigmatize or incite violence against others
- Encourage conversation with interchurch or interfaith groups

#### Being open to the Spirit

Toronto Conference will...

- Listen together for God's on-going revelation
- Discern new voices and seek them out
- Strive to hear and engage the diverse voices within the Conference

#### Welcoming and celebrating people of any sexual orientation and gender identity

Toronto Conference will...

- Encourage communities of faith to engage in conversations about being safe spaces for people of any sexual orientation and gender identity within the church and community
  - Provide education on evolving gender identity language

#### Celebrating and acknowledging diversity

Toronto Conference will...

- Conduct its business and activities in a respectful manner that allows for open discussion and shared opinions

**PENSION BOARD AND GOLDCORP**  
**Origin: Maritime Conference**

NB – this was a working copy to help re-write their proposal in the new format.  
This is NOT their final version!

**1. What is the issue?** (describe in broad terms)

We believe God is calling us to act in accordance with our professed social justice values.

**2. Why is this issue important?**

We believe the United Church has a responsibility to respond to the ethical imperative of our faith as expressed in the social policies of The United Church of Canada, and commitments to partnership and right relations including support for free, prior and informed consent.

A proposal was passed at General Council 42 calling on The United Church of Canada Pension Board (UCCPB) to divest of its shares in Goldcorp and make public that divestment. The UCCPB responded that it was not able to act on this request due to fiduciary responsibility to the pension plan members.

This has revealed a disconnect between the Church's desire to try to act ethically in accordance with our social justice values and the realities of the limits of our ability to directly influence organizations that are connected to our Church but operate at arm's length from it.

The Maritime Conference Mining the Connections Working Group sent a letter in April 2017 to the General Council Executive, as the Administrator of the United Church Pension Plan, asking that the General Council Executive request that the Pension Board re-consider its decision, based on the detailed information and analysis outlining the grievous environmental and social harms of Goldcorp mining projects in Guatemala provided by the Mining the Connections Working Group in its letter of April 2017.

**3. How might the General Council Executive respond to the issue?**

The General Council Executive could ask the UCCPB to re-consider its decision to refuse to divest from Goldcorp.

The General Council Executive could draft (or seek to draft) /or refine a set of guiding principles for ethical investments.

The General Council Executive could develop educational and resource materials, in partnership with existing environmental justice groups within the church, to raise this discussion within communities of faith across the Church.

Notice the inclusion of actions for communities of faith!