

Proposal 5: CRITERIA AND AUTHORITY for a REGIONAL COUNCIL to END a PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

Council of Action: 44th General Council

What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

Refine the process of ending a pastoral relationship when it is deemed to be dysfunctional by the Regional Council, allowing a quick and timely response that responds to the knowledge that continuing the relationship is foreseeably detrimental to the health and welfare of the Community of Faith and/or the Ministry Personnel.

Why is this issue important?

The Regional Council is responsible for creating pastoral relationships through the approval of Calls and Appointments. It is also responsible for approving changes in pastoral relations upon request from ministry personnel or communities of faith, or under section I.3.1.7 of The Manual (2021), which says:

I.3.1.7 Change Initiated by Regional Council.

The Regional Council is responsible for ending the pastoral relationship without a request by the ministry personnel or the community of faith only when notified by the Office of Vocation that the name of the ministry personnel has been placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List.

The Regional Council is responsible for the oversight of communities of faith, and in exercising that responsibility, there are times when the Regional Council becomes aware of a dysfunctional pastoral relationship which ought to be ended quickly to protect the health and well-being of the ministry personnel and/or the Community of faith. There is no authority for the Regional Council to do this, however, in the Pastoral Relations policy of the United Church of Canada.

How might the Regional Council or General Council respond to the issue?

We propose that the General Council might respond to this issue by:

- reconsidering the Pastoral Relations policy of The United Church of Canada to include criteria and authority allowing the Regional Council to end a pastoral relationship without undue delay when it is deemed to be dysfunctional by the Regional Council.

Origin: McDougall United Church (Edmonton). Passed by motion of Council, May 2, 2021.

Supported by the Communities of Faith Support Committee of the Northern Spirit Regional Council