

RECOGNITION OF LA TABLE DES MINISTÈRES EN FRANÇAIS

Origin: [Regional Council Name]

1. What is the issue?

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

- be inclusive, adaptive and live into our commitment to be a functionally bilingual church
- recognize the way that God is at work in parts of our country that are significantly underserved by the United Church of Canada
- to be active and present in the mother tongue of one quarter of the country's population, one of the country's two official languages

2. Why is this issue important?

With the loss of presbyteries in the restructuring of the church, the church lost one of its key francophone voices with the closing of the Consistoire Laurentien, the United Church's French language presbytery. The General Council Executive recognized the need for a network and governance structure for francophone expressions of our church by naming La Table des ministères en français.

Over the last few years, La Table has entered into covenants with half of the Regional Councils and offers Francophone ministry support in all its expressions across Canada. Its work carries three main goals: support of existing Francophone congregations and ministry personnel, development of new bilingual and Francophone ministries, and supporting the national church in its Francophone expression.

In order to ensure a long-term presence of such a body of the church, a recognition in the Manual of its status and mandate would be one way to manifest a commitment to this part of our church historically and into the future. We believe that the recognition of La Table is needed to support the vitality of the ministry and to recognize this particular space for Francophones and French Protestant ministry in Canada and in the United Church of Canada.

3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

As a minority language within the church, a recognition of the role of Francophone ministry would be a significant way in which the United Church could demonstrate a commitment to equity. It would also render the General Council Executive's recognition more formal and less precarious into the future.

Half of all Francophone ministries within the United Church are seeing growth as a result of new migrant communities. Formalizing the voice of francophone ministries would further the integration and mutual transformation we seek when we name ourselves an intercultural church.

Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed “with” people, or “on behalf of” people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?

This proposal was prepared by members of *La Table des ministères en français*' governing council.

4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The (regional council) proposes that the General Council could:

Amend the manual to recognize *La Table des ministères en français* as an official body of the church, with a mandate to serve the whole church in supporting existing francophone ministries, developing new ones, and assist the church in expressing itself in the French language.

As part of this recognition, *La Table des ministères en français* would also be given the authority to submit proposals directly to the General Council and would be recognized as a body that could enter into covenants with Regional Councils and congregations.

5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to info@generalcouncil44.ca.