

A Future for United Church Ministry in the Fraser Valley

Report & Recommendations

prepared for

Fraser Presbytery
United Church of Canada

prepared by

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the first phase of a strategic review of Fraser Presbytery, undertaken with a view to providing a basis for developing planning options for an appropriate and sustainable United Church ministry in the region for the coming decade and beyond.

Following an outline of the methodology and analytical assumptions guiding the review, the report considers a number of the key factors in the external context that are expected to exert a significant influence on the challenges and opportunities facing the Presbytery. These include major demographic trends and regional development policies. The report goes on to examine the performance of the Presbytery during the past ten years in relation to a range of key indicators, such as finances and core constituency. This data is used to develop a baseline trend analysis to project likely future capacities. Finally, the report draws upon the results of a survey of and preliminary consultation with congregational and Presbytery leaders in order to identify current and emerging needs and priorities.

The key findings of this analysis are that the United Church in the region is significantly over-extended, with perhaps twice as many congregations as its active supporting base can sustain financially or in terms of the human resource capacity required. Indeed, the baseline and demographic analyses indicate that in the coming decade the church's core constituency is likely to decline at an escalated rate and the Presbytery is likely to face on-going structural deficits in its annual operating budgets. Further, the United Church as a whole appears to currently lack some of the key competencies required to effectively the emerging challenges and opportunities – notably in relation to multicultural ministry and promotional strategies.

At the same time, the United Church in the region has a significant asset base and a committed core constituency, sufficient to enable it to undertake a strategic re-development program. A number of possible scenarios are presented as providing possible elements for the design of a new and sustainable model. The report proposes the key elements of a Strategic Framework for the future re-development of the Presbytery, comprising a Mission, a set of Key Directions, and the Core Competencies required to deliver the proposed Mission and to implement the proposed Key Directions.

The report recommends that Fraser Presbytery undertake a concerted consultation process with a view to adopting a strategic framework in March 2009, and finalizing a strategic plan in October 2009. It also presents a number of other recommendations, including in relation to policy development and specialized ministries.

2. BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

This report arises out of a deep and widely-shared concern for the health and future of the United Church in the region encompassed by the Fraser Presbytery. It sets out the results of the first part of a project initiated in June 2008 to undertake a strategic review of the ministries carried out by the Presbytery. The purpose of the review is to provide a basis for developing planning options for an appropriate and sustainable United Church ministry in the region for the coming decade and beyond.ⁱ

2.1 Analytical Assumptions

In fact, the search for clarity in relation to issues of the direction, identity, structure, and distribution of the United Church's presence in the region is not new. Indeed, this report may be seen as the latest in a series of studies that have addressed such matters during the past two decades or more – from the work of the Metropolitan Council in the 1970s to the Water Project at the turn of the Millennium, from “To Build and to Plant” in 1990 to “Discerning the Vision” in 2005.ⁱⁱ

To some extent, this on-going struggle simply reflects the challenging nature of the external context in which the Presbytery engages its life and work. The region comprised by the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) and the eastern portion of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) has been characterized by a very high degree of diversification (increasing economic disparity, ethnic/cultural mix, transition of rural/semi-urban/urban communities) and change (development, demographic shifts, population growth) throughout this period. All social and economic forecasts project that the region will continue to experience these factors at very high levels for at least the next three decades.ⁱⁱⁱ

The continuing search for strategic direction is also a reflection of internal dynamics characteristic of the United Church on a broader institutional level. That is, on the one hand, the United Church has been confronted during this period with a number of critical challenges, notably an aging and shrinking membership within a socio-cultural environment in which the role of organized religion has altered and the predominant public identity of Christianity has narrowed significantly. On the other hand, the structure and polity of the United Church is predominantly designed to provide for mutual oversight through the maintenance of volunteer-based administrative systems. Neither the Presbytery nor any other body is equipped with the authority to exercise strategic leadership or directive management. Furthermore, the general capacity of the church to provide professional program or other services has diminished at all levels.

One consequence of these internal dynamics has been a tendency, reflected in most of the previous reviews, to focus on the resolution of immediate, localized or discrete problems. Although there may be a wide range of concerns to be considered – such as a high proportion of clergy on medical or disability leave, administrative

procedures, the periodic closure of a particular congregation, or the scope and priority of specialized ministries or services – this remains essentially a symptomatic approach. As such, it is incapable of addressing the complexity of the issues currently facing the Presbytery, or of generating the system-wide and strategic perspective required to formulate sustainable solutions.

In light of these considerations, this report has been prepared on the basis of three key assumptions:

A. It is necessary to start with a big picture approach.

We assume that the complexity and gravity of the challenges facing the Presbytery at this time make the adoption of a more strategic approach inescapable. While more immediate concerns will need to be addressed, resolution of these issues should be seen as short-term in nature and should be set within a framework of longer-term goals and plans. Starting with a “big picture” approach is not an invitation to abstraction; rather, it involves adopting a “whole system” perspective that is as concrete as possible. This is a major challenge for an organization, like the United Church, that tends to operate as a federation of widely-dispersed, semi-autonomous units.

B. It is necessary to consider being church differently.

We assume that the current model of the “being church” is not sustainable, and that finding a viable way forward will therefore require exploring approaches that may not be provided for or consistent with the existing framework. Einstein famously defined insanity as “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” Trying “other” rather than simply continuing to try “harder” does not come naturally, and is especially challenging in that it may require clarifying what is essential to one’s tradition and mission, and what is simply a reflection of comfort and custom.

C. The Presbytery has the means and ability to choose its way forward.

We assume that Fraser Presbytery, as is the case for any group with a shared sense of calling or purpose, is able to choose the path it wishes to follow in seeking a new future. While we may not always have control over outcomes, the biblical narratives – from exodus to exile and back again – seem to affirm that faithfulness is more a matter of choosing and risking than predicting and hoping. Choosing well involves clarity of vision, but we understand this to be less about dreaming dreams than about building a future that is as well grounded as possible in the reality of who we are and what we seek to achieve. We assume that the Presbytery has, or has access to, the resources required – financial assets, skilled and experienced staff, dedicated volunteers – to implement almost any vision it may choose, if it is able to mobilize those resources effectively.

2.2 Methodology

This report has been prepared on the basis of:

- A review and analysis of previous consultancy and special project reports related to congregational development in the region between 1990 and 2005;
- A review and analysis of Congregational “Annual Reports”, including in most cases audited financial statements, for the year 2007, and a review and analysis of Presbytery financial and other statistical data between 1990 and 2007;
- A review of the literature related to demographics and social planning in the region, including analysis arising from the 2006 Census; and a review of the literature related to models of congregational development, including those of Baas, Borg, Hadaway, and Schwarz.
- Consultation with BC Conference and General Council officials related to:
 - Policy and analysis of financial data;
 - Policy and practice in multicultural ministry;
 - Performance and planning of the “Emerging Spirit” program.
- Development of a 10 year pre/post baseline analysis of key indicators related to financial performance, human resources and constituency health;
- Analysis of responses to a Leadership Survey Instrument designed for and addressed to all members of Presbytery, all persons in paid accountable ministry, all Chairs of Congregational Boards or Councils. Responses were received from 42 individuals, in some cases reflecting wider discussions, including input from members of all but two congregations in the Presbytery. Follow-up interviews were carried out with 10 individuals and site visits to three congregations (one each in the eastern, central, and western parts of the Presbytery);
- A review and analysis of feedback from a plenary session of Fraser Presbytery (October 2008) based on the outcomes of the baseline analysis and the survey responses.

In addition to this report, the following documents produced by the project have been made publicly available on the Fraser Presbytery website (www.bc.united-church.ca/fraser/minutes/):

- *Leadership Survey – Compilation of Responses;*
- *Leadership Survey – Analysis of Responses;*
- *Preliminary Statistical Analysis;*
- *Plenary Presentation to Fraser Presbytery;*
- *Presbytery Feedback – Responses to Presentation.*

3. THE BIG PICTURE: OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

The life and value of person can never be adequately described by the myriad of numbers that attach to us and, too often, serve to fix our place in society – age, PIN, credit rating, or net worth. That is true also for any human or dynamic system, be it a relationship, a family, a community, or a church. At least as important in assessing or defining such entities are the elements of character: what we care about, what purpose we aspire to serve, how our actions and practices reflect and express such concerns.

While not the only source of information, numbers and statistics related to certain key indicators can provide us with an important means to describe ourselves and our situation. They can enable us both to concretely measure the material foundations of our lives and to bring into a sharper focus the more qualitative dimensions of our purpose, values and priorities. They can help us to be more accountable to ourselves and to each other, by forcing us to examine a self-portrait that may be somewhat different than the more customary ones that may be based more on the way we wish to see ourselves. Statistics cannot present the whole picture, but they can offer a perspective that is essential to coming to terms with reality.

To draw the “big picture” of Fraser Presbytery we have developed a “ten-year pre/post baseline analysis” of a set of key indicators related to the health and well-being of the United Church in the region. That is, taking 2005 as a relatively recent point of reference or baseline, we have examined the experience of the Presbytery in relation to areas such as finances and membership during the previous ten years. We have then used that information as a basis to project the impact on the Presbytery if that experience were to be repeated in the next ten years.

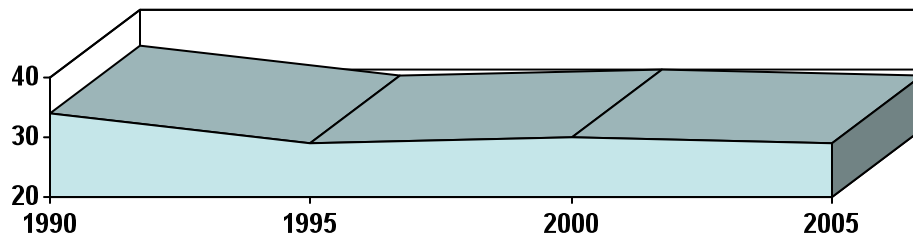
Of course, this analysis provides only statistical averages – and no such “average” congregation exists in the real world. Yet, despite the exceptions of our particular circumstances, there are likely more aspects of the picture that emerges that most of us will be able to recognize as a critical part of who we are, and who we are to become, together – which is the key issue at stake in this study. The purpose of the baseline analysis, then, is:

- To get a real sense of what has actually happened to us during the immediate past (1995 – 2005);
- To recognize the emerging patterns or trends that describe and shape who we are now;
- To identify some of the key issues or problems facing us in the immediate future (2005 – 2015);
- To recognize what will likely happen to us – unless we act deliberately to change the trends;
- To come to grips with the kind of future we want and the kind of changes we will need to engage if we are to be serious about trying to create it.

3.1 Congregational Presence & Distribution

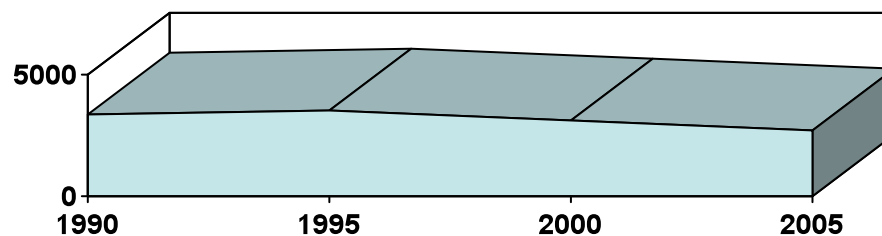
The number of congregations or distinct United Church “preaching places” in the Presbytery has remained extremely stable during the 1995-2005 period. We have used the term “congregation” to refer to these for two reasons: it appears to reflect the self-concept operating in these entities, and it recognizes that they represent an operational unit with actual institutional and financial costs and resources. In 2005 there were 29 congregations in the Presbytery – exactly the same number as in 1995.

Fig. 1: *Number of United Church “Congregations”*



However, this situation represents “stability” only from an external perspective and in highly notional terms. That is, it must be considered alongside the internal reality of those congregations, especially with respect to the number of people or households providing actual financial support to them. On this basis, a very different picture presents itself – between 1995 and 2005 the number of financially supporting households across the Presbytery declined from 3,522 to 2,712, a rate of change of -23% .

Fig. 2: *Number of Supporting Households*



In practical terms, while in 1995 each of the 29 congregations depended on the support of some 122 financially contributing households on average, in 2005 the same number of congregations was being sustained by an average of only 94 households. In other words, if the 1995 ratio is used as the basis for determining a viable support base, then it would suggest that there “should” have been a maximum of 22 congregations in the Presbytery in 2005.^{iv}

Considering that the critical support base declined by about one-quarter between 1995 and 2005 without any reduction in the number of operating congregations, it may be assumed that the result has been a general weakening of infrastructure and capacity across the system. The picture of the Presbytery that emerges from this internal reality is

of a system that has avoided or failed to take necessary strategic decisions in relation to its infrastructure and is seriously over-extended in terms of both finances and human resources.

Indeed, this conclusion is also suggested by considering the external reality in comparison with the presence and distribution of other traditional Christian denominations serving similar sectors of the population in the region. The United Church currently maintains almost twice the number of congregations compared to the average number congregations in the region operated by the Anglican, Baptist Conference,

Fig. 3: *Comparative Distribution of Congregations in Fraser Presbytery Region – 2007*

Denomination	Total Congregations	Surrey / White Rock	Valley
Anglican	14	6	8
Baptist Conference	11	6	5
Roman Catholic	16	7	9
Presbyterian	6	3	3
United	27	12	15
Average: non-UCC	11.75	5.5	6.25
Average: incl-UCC	14.8	6.8	8

Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches. If the United Church reflected the operational practice of these other denominations, the Presbytery would consist of about a dozen congregations, including 5-6 in the Surrey-Delta-White Rock area and 6-7 in the rest of the Valley between Langley and Hope.

It is salutary to note that such a scale and distribution of congregations would closely parallel the strategic planning frameworks of the two Regional Districts (Fraser Valley and Greater Vancouver) for the medium to long-term future. These plans seek to focus population growth, infrastructure development, and social and public services in “network” 13 designated “sustainable communities” throughout the region:

FVRD

- Abbotsford
- Chilliwack
- Harrison
- Hope
- Kent/Agassiz
- Mission

GVRD

- Aldergrove
- Cloverdale
- Guildford
- Langley
- Newton
- Surrey Centre
- White Rock

3.2 Core Constituency

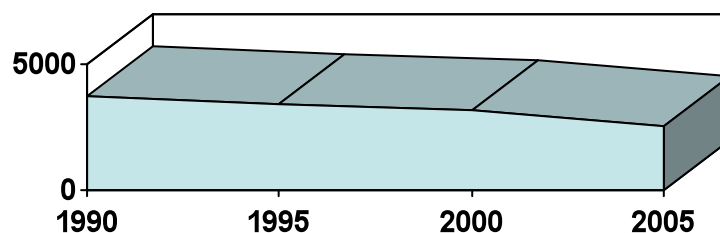
A key indicator for assessing the strength and capacity of any organization is its core constituency. This refers to the people who not only generally identify with the goals and values of an organization, but who are active participants in or contributors to the specific work of the organization. Being clear about the nature of the core constituency is critical because it is those people who constitute the practical point of reference for designing, deciding and implementing strategic options for the future. In the case of the United Church, identifying the core constituency is a difficult but no less critical matter.

It is difficult because of the conjuncture of two powerful internal and external forces. On the one hand, a primary internal value of the United Church is “inclusion”. This value is strongly held and has, of course, many positive expressions. It also has a number of problematic consequences: for example, one may be or claim to be or be claimed as a “Member” of the United Church without having any active relationship or practical investment in the life and work of the organization. On the other hand, this dynamic and the broadly “liberal” disposition of the United Church in Canadian society have for many decades conspired to produce highly inflated and unfounded polling and census “data” reporting on United Church membership.

It is our view that, for planning purposes, data related to “Members” or census-based identification with the UCC should be considered to be of marginal relevance or limited validity. Indeed, they may serve only to sustain delusions and distract from the real challenges at hand. Thus, for example, the general United Church membership declined from 5,558 in 1995 to 4,697 in 2005, a rate of change of -15.5% . While that is significant, it is also misleading.

It is our view that the most meaningful and reliable point of reference for determining the core constituency is a combination of financially “Supporting Households” (see Fig. 3) and “Sunday Attendance”. These two categories approximate

Fig. 4: *Sunday Attenders*

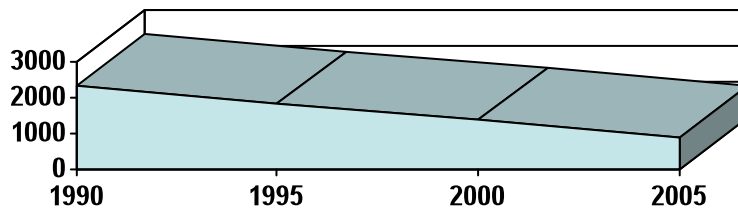


each other very closely in both actual numbers and the ten year trend. In the case of attendance, this declined during the ten-year period from 3,501 to 2,574, a rate of change of -24% . In other words, the active core constituency is only about half the size of the “Membership” and is declining at a much faster rate. Furthermore, the rate of decline of

“Sunday Attendance” is greater than “Supporting Households”, and by 2005 had come to represent a smaller group in absolute terms. This is significant because it suggests that the core constituency or active organizational base of the United Church in the Presbytery is not only smaller (about 2,500 people) but is also becoming substantially weaker.^v

Perhaps the most important indicator in assessing the nature and capacity of the core constituency in relation to future strategic development is the rate of replacement. This is difficult to gauge. During the review period, the number of members removed due to death or an act of relocation tends to run ahead of new members, but overall these numbers tend to be small and somewhat uncertain. The other relevant measure is “Church School Participants”, assuming these represent the children and youth most likely to enter the core constituency in the future.

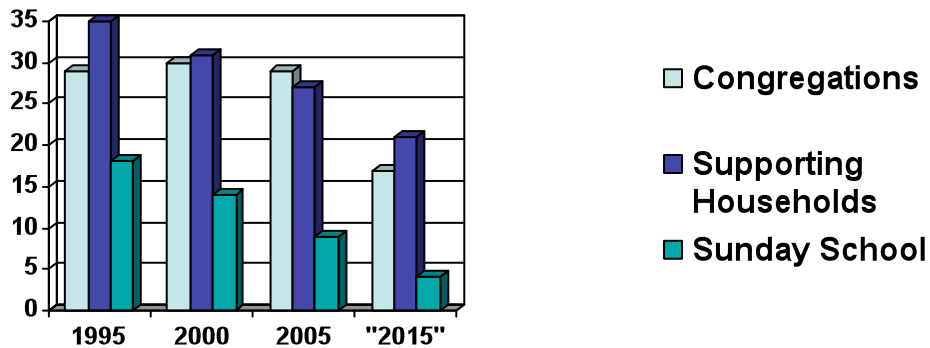
Fig.5: Church School Participants



It is this cohort in which the scale and pace of decline has been most extreme, from 1,832 in 1995 to 894 in 2005, a rate of change of -51 %. This is especially significant statistically in that it indicates that the trends or general patterns emerging from this analysis are not likely to continue in a gradual manner at the established rate. Rather, the aging and decline of the core constituency and their non-replacement will more likely – if nothing is done to alter the trend – reach a “tipping point” at which the rate of decline becomes exponential.

However, not taking into account either a tipping point or actions to alter the patterns, a “raw projection” of the trends of the past ten years applied ten years into the future would result in the following picture: a much diminished Fraser Presbytery consisting of perhaps 15-17 struggling congregations supported a core constituency of about 2,075 households and with less than 450 church school participants.

Fig. 6: Raw Trend Projection – 10 Year Pre/Post



3.3 Demographic Shifts & Other Factors

As noted, the “raw projection” is merely a statistical representation of the future that assumes a “steady state” condition affected neither by “tipping points” leading to exponential rates of change, nor by “strategic interventions” intended to alter the situation, nor by the impact of the unanticipated “x-factors”. It also does not take into account the likely effect of the major demographic shifts that will take place in the region during the next two decades. It simply forecasts the most likely outcomes if the current established trends continue without the influence of other factors. However, there certainly will be other factors to consider.

3.3.1 Population Growth

The major population growth anticipated to continue in the region during the coming decades is generally assumed to provide the congregations in the Presbytery with significant opportunities to expand their core constituencies. In some cases this indeed may be the case, but in no case can it be considered to be a “slam-dunk” inevitability. After all, in terms of scale and character the projected growth is essentially an extension of the regional development patterns that have been in effect for the past twenty years, and as demonstrated above these have had no discernable positive impact on the United Church.

Indeed, the detailed nature of the demographic shifts poses some very specific challenges to the United Church. On the one hand, the population of the region is projected to almost double over the next two decades. Overall, the population of the region will generally be younger and with more children than in the Lower Mainland or the Province as a whole. However, this will very largely be a result of growth driven by international migration. In other words, the cultural and linguistic diversity of the region will substantially increase, and the major component of population growth is likely to have strong natural or prior identification with non-Christian religious traditions – primarily Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, or none.

On the other hand, demographic analyses anticipate an absolute decline in the established population base of the region as a result of aging and net out-migration. Driven partly by economics and retirement patterns, there is projected to be a growing net loss of established population through intra-provincial migration to other regions, especially to Vancouver, Vancouver Island, and the Okanagan Valley. Not including international migration, the population under-30 in the region is projected to decline from about 30% in 2004 to 27% in 2024 and to 23% in 2044. Without international migration, the under-45 population would see a net decline of some 25% over the next 40 years; instead, with migration, a net increase of almost 15% is projected.

In other words, the age of the existing traditional United Church population base will increase at a faster rate relative to the general population, and will decline in absolute terms. To use a different metaphor, the natural “market” of the United Church in the

region will likely become smaller, and the emerging “market” is for the most part one that is not naturally accessible to the United Church. This is not to suggest that the growth and diversification of the population in the region does not represent an important opportunity for the United Church. It is simply to recognize that it can only become an opportunity – an accessible market – if very significant and deliberate action is taken to make it so.

Such actions would entail a major structural and cultural shift within the organization, but would likely need to focus at the outset on capacity building in relation to two specific areas in which the United Church currently appears to have little or no demonstrated experience. One is developing and exercising ministry within a truly multicultural or inter-cultural framework. Although there are indications of a move in this direction at the General Council level, the existing approach within the United Church remains either one of inter-faith dialogue or segregated ethnic ministries. A second area is developing the capacity to develop and implement public outreach and promotion. Although the United Church has considerable skills in welcoming people and in advocacy for external causes, it has little experience in promoting or attracting people to itself.

3.3.2 “Emerging Spirit”

The “Emerging Spirit” program clearly represents an important initiative in the direction of these needs, and during the next phase may offer training and other resources related to promotional strategies. Many leaders in the Presbytery see the program as an important means of attracting new members. It is clear, however, that the program cannot be effective if used in a passive or stand-alone manner. Rather, it needs to be seen as a resource to support locally-based, active strategies.

While the project is generally directed toward engaging the middle generation in matters of spirituality, it is not possible at this point to what extent it may serve as an active means of attracting new members to United Church congregations, or more specifically this cohort in the Fraser Presbytery region. Available data indicates there are approximately 8,000 persons registered with “Wondercafe” nation-wide, and it appears that many of these are individuals who are already associated with the United Church.

3.4 Finances

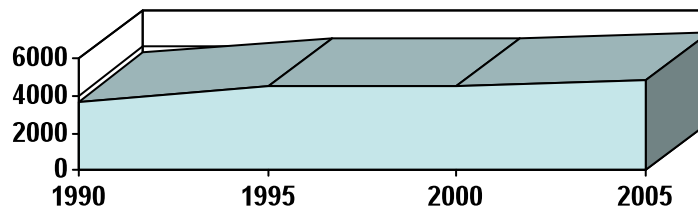
Money matters, insofar as it is one of the key resources influencing our ability to realize our Mission. Perhaps even more influential is the attitude we hold towards it, in that whether we approach our financial resources with a perspective of scarcity or of abundance, with a preoccupation with security or a tolerance for risk, tends to have a substantial bearing on the scope and content of our Mission and the degree of our commitment to it.

In this regard, the first observation to make is that from a macro point of view Fraser Presbytery is financially well-endowed. The Presbytery has significant property holdings, valued at about \$65,000,000 in 2005, a very modest level of debt, and a core constituency capable of generating annual revenue of about \$5,000,000. In the broadest terms, this constitutes an asset base that could enable the Presbytery to pursue almost any Mission or development model it chooses.

However, under the current operating model the members of Presbytery generally do not perceive themselves as leading an organization that enjoys financial abundance. This would appear to be due largely to the over-extension described above, resulting in a very high level of operating overheads that allow for very narrow margins, little scope for investment, and a preoccupation with maintenance and survival. Indeed, the annual operating accounts of the Presbytery as a whole do indicate some worrisome trends, especially when considered in conjunction with constituency projections noted above.

For one thing, although the level of indebtedness is modest relative to the asset base, this may be somewhat deceiving given the tight operational margins and the very limited reserves of the Presbytery. The level of debt has been growing steadily and is substantial relative to the annual “budget” (36% of revenue in 2005). Perhaps most encouraging, revenue has continued to grow in real terms throughout the period despite the declining constituency base. Adjusted to constant 2005 values, gross revenue has

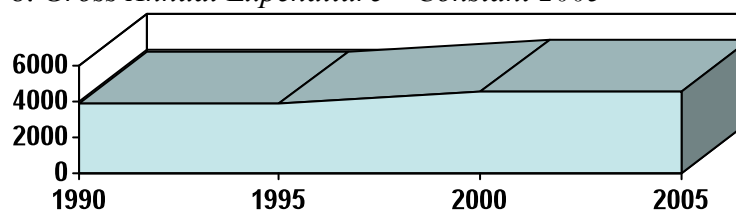
Fig. 7: *Gross Annual Revenue – Constant 2005*



increased from \$4,528,000 in 1995 to \$4,840,000 in 2005, a rate of change of +6%. Given the reduction of supporting households during this period, this must be seen as a real achievement. In addition to increased individual giving, however, this represents a growth in revenue from other activities. More than a quarter of total income now derives from non-congregational sources, and a number of congregations report a high dependency on business activities such as space rentals, which in some cases has become problematic in terms of management and mission.

At the same time, expenditure has also increased throughout the period, from

Fig. 8: *Gross Annual Expenditure – Constant 2005*

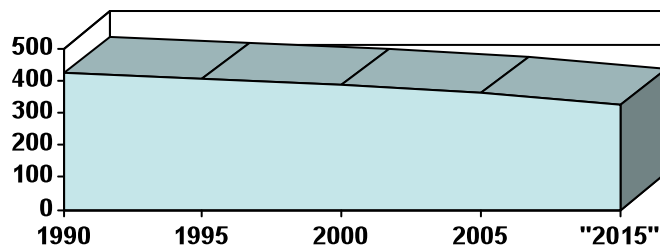


\$3,876,000 in 1995 to \$4,540,000 in 2005, a rate of change of +15 %. That is, expenditure has grown at roughly 2.5 times the rate of income during the previous ten years, and projected forward this trend will soon begin to result in an on-going and increasing structural operating deficit.

Congregational accounts indicate that as their operating margins tighten, a greater proportion of their annual budget is dedicated to maintaining their existing infrastructure and fixed costs (buildings and salary) and less is invested in mission and program. Most congregations currently allocate only a very small and decreasing proportion of their budgets to non-structural program costs – in some cases none, in most cases approximately 3-5% of total expenditure (often under-spent at year-end).

This trend toward reduced investment in mission and program is most noticeable, however, in relation to contributions to the Mission & Service Fund. Although annual

Fig. 9: *M&S Contributions – Constant 2005*



reports suggest small increases year-on-year, when adjusted to constant 2005 values M&S contributions from the Presbytery demonstrate a long-term gradual decline throughout the period and beyond, from \$403,000 in 1995 to less than \$362,000 in 2005, a rate of change of –11 %. In 1990, M&S contributions constituted a tithe at just over 11% of income, while in 2005 it represented less than 7.5% of income.

4. THE INTIMATE PICTURE: INSIDE LOOKING OUT

While it may be disconcerting in many ways, the portrait of Fraser Presbytery that emerges from this statistical analysis will come as no surprise to many members. Indeed, it echoes many of the key themes and concerns that members commonly refer to in describing their actual experience of the church. Leaders typically refer to a common set of characteristics in describing the challenges facing their congregations:

- Lack of financial resources or flexibility;
- Lack of human resources / critical mass;
- “Huge amounts of inertia” and volunteer fatigue;
- Inability to attract younger members and new members;
- Decreasing and aging membership;
- Reluctance to promote ourselves;
- Fear of conflict and/or new ideas;
- Busyness of work and home life;
- Lack of diversity;
- Mortgage, maintenance and renovation needs.

The indicators identified by the statistical analysis may, however, be more pointed and suggest a greater critical urgency. The question is: what do we want the picture of the United Church in the Fraser Valley to be in the future, and what do we need to do in order to get there?

4.1 Mission & Context

Almost all congregations have a clear and readily available Mission Statement. Although each is unique and together they reflect a moderate level of diversity, there are a number of characteristics that may be considered as the core elements which are widely shared, and to therefore constitute the required building blocks of any strategic development of the Presbytery. These are:

- An experience of a caring, intimate community;
- Dedicated to spiritual nurture;
- Practicing Christian worship and music;
- Seeking to be welcoming and inclusive;
- Concerned with social justice and community service.

It should also be noted that the Mission Statements, like the congregational budgets, are generally focused internally. That is, they give expression, almost exclusively, to the congregation's intentions about what it seeks to BE in relation to itself or its own members. With only one or two exceptions, none of the Mission Statements indicate what the congregation seeks to DO in relation to the community or world in which it functions.

In light of this it is not surprising that almost no congregations in the presbytery have a strategy for or significant investment in promotion or public outreach. However, it is clear from the statistical trends that the prospect for a church that is primarily self-referenced is terminal. For current United Church members it appears that the primary concept “church” is based in the ability to experience a relatively small, intimate set of caring relationships. Further, these are set within a framework that is able to provide an experience of high quality worship/music and spiritual nurture. Delivery of high quality worship together with intimate communities of spiritual support in a manner that is coherent and satisfying will require the design and development of a radically different congregational model than currently exists in the United Church.

In addition to the shared internal challenges, most leaders in the Presbytery also identify a consistent set of competitive factors that need to be recognized in seeking a future for the United Church in the region. These are:

- A. Churches, generally evangelical or fundamentalist in orientation, that exhibit a willingness and ability to invest significant resources in programs directed toward youth and families, and supported by multiple, specialized ministry staff;
- B. Churches, generally evangelical or fundamentalist in orientation, that publicly articulate a clear theological perspective and visibly demonstrate their commitment to social outreach and service;
- C. The secular, consumerist culture in which work demands on families have substantially increased, volunteer time is increasingly constrained, Sundays are highly committed to youth sports and other social/civic activities, and a generalized distrust of institutional religion;
- D. The prevalence and proximity of other United Churches in the region and, at the same time, the mutual isolation and lack of a clear identity within the United Church as a whole.

While most regard A, B and C as the most visible and immediate challenges, many regard D as the most difficult and critical issue needing to be addressed in the development of a new strategic direction.

In view of the weight of these internal difficulties and external challenges, it is understandable that some find it impossible to envision either a different model or a viable and sustainable future for the United Church. Indeed, about 25% to the “Leadership Survey” indicated that the most likely scenario for their congregation was some form of closure within the next five years. About another 25% expressed the expectation that their congregation will maintain the status quo, continue more or less as it is currently or continue slowly down the same baseline trend. For these groups, the priorities envisioned on the basis of new, additional financial resources becoming available to their congregation were directed to maintenance: pay down the mortgage, fix the building, extend the hours of the minister, fund some local program initiatives.

For others, perhaps about half of the respondents to the “Leadership Survey”, the trends and challenges contained the seed of a new opportunity and a sense of mission – to foster “genuine Christian community in an increasingly depersonalized culture.” Rooted in the value of inclusion, these people emphasized that the United Church represents an “alternative” form of Christianity in a context in which the “mainstream” is now defined by the evangelical or fundamentalist churches. In this context, the United Church may be uniquely called and equipped to offer a “welcoming, non-judgmental spiritual home” to individuals and groups who feel excluded or marginalized by the new Christian mainstream.

Embracing such a mission would require the development of a United Church that is able and willing to visibly project its identity as an alternative Christian community that is proactive in its inclusion. As one leader commented: “We would need to move beyond our self-satisfaction with our insights about a loving God and a caring community. If you’ve got it, flaunt it. If you don’t flaunt it, you have to wonder if you’ve really got it!” In order to undertake this challenge, the following major organizational capacities would be required:

- A. An approach to planning and congregational development that is integrated and coordinated, including in relation to financing, facilities and staffing;
- B. The development of a capacity for multicultural outreach and ministry, as distinct from the traditional segregated approach to ethnic ministries;
- C. The development and implementation of a public outreach and promotional strategy based on projection of a clear and distinctive United Church identity;
- D. The provision and support of ministry personnel skilled in and dedicated to youth and family ministry;
- E. The ability to mobilize resources from the existing asset base of the United Church in the Presbytery for reinvestment in support of a comprehensive, mission-focused, strategic approach.

4.2 Functional Needs & Emergent Priorities

Fraser Presbytery has operated for many years within an organizational culture that has traditionally constrained the allocation of financial resources for Presbytery-wide activities or services. It has generally had little capacity for coordination of work or strategic development, and has relied on high levels of seconded and/or volunteer human resources to carry out its extensive management, oversight and other responsibilities. Although not normally quantified or recognized, it has been estimated that these responsibilities are assumed to constitute approximately 15% of the workload of the persons in paid accountable ministry in Fraser Presbytery. That would represent a staff

requirement of about 3.5 FTE, in addition to an approximately equivalent volunteer investment.

Without reference to existing resources,^{vi} the “Leadership Survey” invited respondents to indicate where new, additional resources should be directed to address Presbytery-wide needs. Five needs emerged as clear and common priorities:

- Regional youth workers;
- Support for congregational ministries with children and young families;
- Spiritual care for clergy and lay leaders;
- Presbytery staff and financial support for congregational redevelopment;
- Presbytery staff for communications and personnel management.

A number of issues were identified as proposals suggesting areas for the reform or development of the role, practice and profile of Presbytery itself. These were:

- Increased professional capacity (executive, personnel, spiritual direction, planning and promotion);
- Increased programmatic capacity (retreats, leadership training, support for youth and family ministry);
- Reduction of the number of persons required to attend Presbytery or carry out its functions, and specifically the level of demand on clergy;
- Increased coordination and interaction among congregations, and work to understand their situation and rationalize resources;
- Greater scope or flexibility for church development grants and loans.

These priorities and proposals were premised on the availability of new, additional resources. However, it is important to note that they do not represent simply an appeal for “more”. Rather, they arise very concretely from the widespread situation and experience of a critical lack of basic capacity (finances, time, and skills) at the congregational level. That is, the base constituency is unable to support and maintain the infrastructure prescribed by the United Church system, apparently at both congregational and Presbytery levels. Further, the system demands volunteer time dedicated to those activities that least attract or motivate members to join the United Church.

The priorities and proposals indicate the need for more than an administrative adjustment of current organizational arrangements. They need to be recognized as critical factors that are in direct correlation with the performance of the United Church in the region as reflected in the baseline trends. They suggest the need to be open to a more fundamental shift in relation to some of the core characteristics of the existing model, notably:

- A. Away from relatively autonomous congregational units and toward a more integrated and coordinated denominational presence across the Presbytery;

- B. Away from a system of oversight and direction that is volunteer based and human resource-intensive and toward more stream-lined systems and professional management;
- C. Away from dispersed, generalized and duplicated facilities and staff resources, and toward a more strategically focused, specialized and programmatic capacity.

4.3 Design Options

The current model of the United Church in the Fraser Valley may be described as a “duplicate congregational model”. That is, the church sought to develop as many congregations as possible based on the demographic patterns of the original heritage settlement and the development initiatives of the 1955-1975 period. These congregations have been, in large part, duplications of each other in their respective local communities. They tend to have had a strong neighbourhood orientation, and have provided modest community service programs based on the use of their facilities. Clergy tend to be generalists, providing a similar range of worship, pastoral care, administrative and community leadership functions. The operation is characterized by high infrastructure and administrative overheads, and a heavy reliance on volunteer and seconded management. Due to a range of factors, this model is now under severe stress and is unsustainable on a general basis across the Presbytery.

In considering options for responding to these various needs, there can be a temptation for some to rush to the proverbial drawing board to design a new structure or model. And when confronted with the unwanted necessity of change there can be a strong desire on the part of many to want to know “exactly” what things will look like. While some broad strokes of design are helpful in generating vision, the fact is that questions of structure are only a small part of creating a new future, and it is wise to resist the temptation to become too concrete too quickly.

Some change authorities advocate adopting a “principle-based” rather than a “model-based” approach to church growth and development. The Willow Creek Community Church movement, for example, seeks to design church development on the basis of what it considers the “eight essential characteristics of successful congregations”. These are: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships.^{vii} Such a list could well serve to guide the development of the United Church in the Fraser Presbytery.

But how could these characteristics be applied in the context that is emerging for the Presbytery, given the various needs, challenges and trends we have considered. In preparing for the task of beginning to sketch out the elements of possible design options, it may be useful to consider a number of potential scenarios. While none of these is likely to be wholly appropriate or applicable on their own, each may contain elements

that could contribute to the emergency of a new model. There appear to be three main scenarios available for what the Presbytery could look like within 10 years (2015-2020).

4.3.1 Scenario A – **“Follow the Trend”**

This could also be referred to as the “do nothing” option. That is, it assumes that no deliberate action is taken to attempt to alter the statistical trends emerging from the baseline analysis. It also assumes that the trends continue to apply more or less as they have during the past 10 years, which would be highly optimistic.

In this case, about 10-12 congregations across the Presbytery will have closed, determined primarily by local conditions. There will be 3-4 relatively healthy congregations, while most of the remaining congregations will be struggling to sustain themselves. The primary organizational principle will be the “neighbourhood”, and congregations will focus on pastoral care and worship but have little program profile or mission capacity. The congregations will tend to operate on the basis of the minimal scale required for viability, and will express a fair degree of localized diversity. The congregation sees itself as part of the general social fabric, has limited resource flexibility, and may be financially dependent on the provision of ancillary public services (space rentals, thrift shops, etc.).

The Presbytery will continue to function as a network of semi-autonomous, replicate congregations, with little capacity for program or strategic direction. The life and work of the church as a whole will be characterized by an on-going preoccupation with issues of survival and maintenance. The trend toward general and terminal decline of the United Church presence in the region will continue and accelerate.

4.3.2 Scenario B – **“Local Consolidation”**

This scenario could also be referred to as the “circling the wagons” option. It assumes that the Presbytery seeks to engage in a moderate level of deliberate action or strategic intervention. It also assumes that the statistical trends will generally continue to apply, perhaps moderated by some promotional and outreach initiatives, and that action has been taken in order to prevent gradual deterioration from simply eroding the asset base and to focus renewal efforts in the areas of greatest potential.

In this case, about 10-14 congregations across the Presbytery will be closed, determined largely on the basis of a consultative process carried out in collaboration with regional groups or clusters of congregations, with a view to generating resources for reinvestment in a few selected centres. The result will be a mix of small neighbourhood and medium-sized program congregations. The primary organizational principle will be the “parish”, with a moderate but limited number of congregations selected and/or developed on the basis of a number strategic considerations (likely linked to the regional development strategies), and with the goal of providing Presbytery-wide coverage. The

congregations will emphasize their program capacity, and sees themselves as active agents of the development of social capital.

The Presbytery will be required to act as a facilitator of difficult decision-making and planning processes, and will need to develop a strong ability to articulate and maintain an organizational vision and to foster and sustain a greater degree of collective identity and endeavour. The life and work of the church as a whole will be characterized by an emphasis on program planning and the need to coordinate human and financial resources.

4.3.3 Scenario C – **“Regional Strategy”**

This scenario could also be referred to as the “blank slate” option. That is, it assumes that the Presbytery recognizes and acts on the need for a more fundamental and comprehensive initiative to re-constitute the United Church presence in the region. It also assumes that the statistical trends identified in the baseline analysis will generally continue to apply, though likely at an accelerated rate despite promotional and outreach initiatives.

In this case, most congregations will be closed, with a view to generating resources to re-invest in developing a handful of perhaps 3-5 United Church “signature” congregations or ministry centres. A few small congregations, perhaps another 3-5, would also be maintained on the basis of strong local support or other considerations. The primary organizational principle will be the “region”, with a view to expressing a denominational presence in selected strategic locations in order to support the people of the United Church and “attract through excellence”. The “signature” congregations will offer a range of professional ministry and program resources capable of generating high public visibility for a United Church perspective, providing high quality music and worship experiences, and the ability to support a web of individuals, small groups and “house churches” with pastoral care and spiritual nurture.

The Presbytery will be required to act as an executive Board, able to mobilize and govern professional resources in a relatively sophisticated re-development process. The Presbytery will need to be able to gather a high degree of constituency support and offer strong political leadership. The life and work of the church as a whole will be characterized by an emphasis on management, public presence and outreach, and quality service delivery.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is nothing terribly new or surprising in the findings of this analytical review of the health of and challenges facing Fraser Presbytery. The stark reality is that the “fundamentals” of this economy are definitely “un-sound”. In this, the review echoes the sometimes under-stated but no less apparent conclusions of previous consultant reports. In 1990, for example, the “To Build & To Plant” study on Langley and East Surrey clearly recognized that the social ministry needs of the region were significant and growing, and that the United Church’s capacity in to address them was marginal and diminishing. It identified three primary needs as the basis for church development: to develop the role of youth in the church, to develop leadership that is development oriented, and to develop the ability to “let go in order to move ahead”.

More recently the “Water Project”, designed to focus on the church’s mission based on recognition of a number of major trends and to promote renewal and transformation of the United Church in the Lower Mainland, identified a number of key organizational and contextual challenges. These included the need to increase administrative and professional staff support to the Presbyteries, the need to deal with dramatic demographic shifts and a declining church membership, and the need to shift from an “ethnic” approach in order to address issues of secularism and multiculturalism. It recommended in 2000 an increasingly regionally-oriented approach to structures that place an “emphasis on what is best for people not the buildings”, to organizing ministries on the basis of geographic logic rather than established patterns, and to building “pools of skills and leadership” to support development.

The recommendations arising from the present review should be seen as being in continuity with those findings of the earlier studies. However, they are also qualitatively different insofar as they come at a distinctively more critical juncture in the life of the Presbytery. That is, assuming the general validity of the contextual and constituency analysis presented above, the need for the Presbytery to engage taking strategic decisions is now both urgent and unavoidable. Not to decide to take some form of deliberate and directive action to renew or re-build the United Church presence in the region will be, in effect, to choose a future most likely described by Scenario A. In any case, given the scale of the current over-extension of the Presbytery, it is assumed that any re-development plan will likely entail a reduction of the number of congregations or ministry centres by approximately half the current distribution.

5.1 Consultation & Decision-Making

- 5.1.1 Fraser Presbytery Executive should decide to move forward with Phase 2 of the Project. This should take place during January – March 2009, and would consist of a series of consultations within leading to decision-making at the March 2009 meeting of Presbytery. The balance of the Project budget should

be used to facilitate consultations and the development of Presbytery agreement of a strategic framework for future development.

- 5.1.2 The substance and focus of the consultations should be identification of the elements of the **Strategic Framework** (Mission, Key Directions, and Core Competencies) that should guide the redevelopment of the Presbytery.
- a. This Report and the other materials produced during Phase 1 of the Project will serve as the background materials to support the consultations.
 - b. Congregations should be encouraged to undertake their own study and discussion of the background analysis and proposals. A series of regionally-based consultations to consider the elements of the proposed strategic framework. It is suggested that these regional consultations be held on the basis of the clusters or the following:
 - Chilliwack & East;
 - Abbotsford – Aldergrove – Mission;
 - Langley – Maple Ridge;
 - Delta – Surrey – White Rock.
 - c. The regional consultations should be facilitated with a view to generating response to the overall proposal and, in particular, identifying necessary adjustments or additions to the elements of the proposed strategic framework. The facilitator should present a report on the consultations and a revised set of proposals to Presbytery in March 2009, and facilitate a process at the meeting with a view to their adoption.
- 5.1.3 The consultations should proceed on the basis that the following is proposed as the **Mission** guiding the strategic re-development: *The Mission of Fraser Presbytery is to foster genuine, inclusive Christian community by providing excellent ministry and an alternative, welcoming, non-judgmental spiritual home for individuals and groups who feel excluded or marginalized.*
- 5.1.4 In particular, the consultations should proceed on the basis that the following are proposed as the **Key Directions** for development of the future Strategic Plan for Fraser Presbytery:
- A. *Away from relatively autonomous congregational units, and toward a more integrated and coordinated denominational presence across the Presbytery;*
 - B. *Away from a system of oversight and direction that is volunteer based and human resource-intensive, and toward more stream-lined systems and professional management;*

C. Away from dispersed, generalized, duplicated and over-extended facilities and staff resources, and toward a more strategically focused, specialized and programmatic capacity.

5.1.5 Further, the consultations should proceed on the basis that the following are proposed as the **Core Competencies** required to deliver the proposed Mission and to implement the proposed Key Directions:

- a. An approach to planning and congregational development that is integrated and coordinated, including in relation to financing, facilities and staffing;*
- b. The development of a capacity for multicultural outreach and ministry, distinct from the traditional segregated approach to ethnic ministries;*
- c. The development and implementation of a public outreach and promotional strategy based on projection of a clear and distinctive United Church identity;*
- d. The provision and support of professional capacity (executive leadership and personnel management) and ministry personnel skilled in and dedicated to youth and family ministry;*
- e. The ability to mobilize resources from the existing asset base of the United Church in the Presbytery for reinvestment in support of a comprehensive, mission-focused, strategic approach.*

5.2 Strategic Planning & Implementation

5.2.1 Assuming the adoption of a strategic framework consistent to some degree with the proposed Mission, Key Directions, and Core Competencies, Fraser Presbytery Executive should proceed with Phase 3 of the Project. This would take place during March – October 2009, and would consist of the development of a strategic plan and the negotiation of the policy agreements necessary to support it, with a view to adoption of the strategic plan by Presbytery at its October 2009 meeting. A consultant should be hired to carry this work forward, and additional budget would be required.

5.2.2 In addition to the elaboration of the future development design of the Presbytery, a primary focus for Phase 3 will be the preparation of the financial plan and time-line. This will include working with the clusters or the regional groupings noted above to identify which properties should be sold and when in order to provide the financial resources required for implementing the strategy. It is assumed, given the scale of the current over-extension of the Presbytery, that any re-development plan will likely entail a reduction of the

number of congregations or ministry centres by approximately half the current distribution.

5.2.3 On the basis of the agreed strategic framework, Presbytery should seek agreement-in-principle from BC Conference to allow the proceeds of property sales to be retained by the Presbytery for the purposes of implementing the strategic plan, with a view to being confirmed following the adoption of a strategic plan.

5.2.4 Following the adoption of a strategic plan, Presbytery should recruit an executive staff whose primary responsibility will be to lead the implementation of the plan.

5.3 Presbytery Ministries

5.3.1 It is recommended that during the coming period, as a general principle or guideline, specialized Presbytery ministries should focus on capacity building rather than program delivery. This may be especially relevant to the Youth & Young Adult ministry.

5.3.2 With respect to the Cultus Lake Camp, it is recommended that Presbytery consider seeking to invite or facilitate the establishment of an independent Society to operate the Camp in the interests of the community organizations it serves, and to negotiate access to the Camp for specified periods for provision of church programs.

5.3.3 With respect to the Resource Centre, it does not appear that the Presbytery as it is currently constituted offers a sufficient market to justify maintaining such a service. It is recommended that Presbytery consider whether it may be time to move toward closure of this business.

6. ENDNOTES

ⁱ The Terms of Reference for the review directed that it should "... include, but not be limited to, identification of demographic and other socio-economic and cultural trends, an evaluation of properties, an assessment of the viability of congregations and ministries and the potential for growth and development, a consideration of issues of capacity and sustainability in the work of Presbytery, an articulation of a vision for ministry of the Presbytery, and the formulation of options and recommendations for action."

The project has been directed by a Presbytery Team consisting of Bill Booth, Cari Copeman-Haynes, Joan McMurtry, David Martyn and Sylvia Mountain. This review has been carried out by Derek Evans, an Associate of the Centre for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University and Principal of Evans & Associates, a professional consulting firm providing training, resources and leadership in human rights, policy and organizational development, conflict transformation, and strategic evaluation. The Team and the Consultant are grateful for the active and constructive participation of members of Fraser Presbytery, as well as the kindness and generosity expressed by all who have contributed to this review.

ⁱⁱ See, for example:

- B. Teixeira, "To Build and To Plant: A Review of Congregations in the Langleys & East Surrey". Vancouver: Fraser Presbytery, 1990.
- The Water Project, "Proposal for the Lower Mainland Mission Enhancement Project". Vancouver: BC Conference, 1997.
- The Water Project, "Where We Have Been and Where We Are Going". Vancouver: BC Conference, 2000.
- R. McGinnis, "Discerning the Vision". Vancouver: Fraser Presbytery, 2005.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example:

- Fraser Valley Regional District, "Choices for our Future: Regional Growth Strategy for the FVRD". Chilliwack: FVRD, 2004.
- Greater Vancouver Regional District, "Livable Region Strategic Plan (Regional Growth Strategy)". Burnaby: GVRD, 1996.
- Greater Vancouver Regional District, "Livable Region Strategic Plan – 2005 Annual Report". Burnaby, GVRD, 2005.
- Urban Futures Institute, "The Next Century of Population Growth and Change: A Projection of Metro Vancouver's Population, 1999-2101" (D. Baxter & A. Ramlo). Vancouver: UFI, 2000.
- Urban Futures Institute "The Context for Change: Demographics, Life Cycles, Economics, and the Lower Mainland of BC over the Next Four Decades". Vancouver: UFI, 2004.
- Urban Futures Institute, "Dimensions of Diversity: 2006 Census Snapshot". Vancouver: UFI, 2008.

^{iv} There is no assumption suggested here that 122 is, in fact, an ideal or sustainable support base – it is used here simply as an historic point of reference. The question of what constitutes the critical mass necessary for congregational viability depends largely on the type or model of congregation envisioned. The classical typology used by the Alban Institute and others distinguishes:

- the “family church” – emphasizing kinship relationships and pastoral care, typically involving about 50 persons;
- the “pastoral church” – emphasizing intimate neighbourhood relationships and pastoral care and worship, typically involving 50 to 150 persons;
- the “program church” – emphasizing community relationships and worship and programs, typically involving 150 to 300 persons;
- the “corporate church” – emphasizing focused relationships within a comprehensive program framework, typically involving over 300 persons.

This, of course, raises the more critical question of what model members of the United Church regard as “ideal”. This may be a matter in which there is a basic tension or “cultural dissonance” operating within the system. For example, the key values expressed by many members of Fraser Presbytery tend to reflect the attributes typical of a “family” or “pastoral” model, while the organization and structure of the United Church seems to resemble something more like a “program” model.

^v If “supporting households” is taken as the key point of reference for defining “core constituency”, and if this category is increasingly taken as representing a single active individual member, the institutional stress on the system becomes starkly evident. Assuming that each congregational entity requires ~10 persons to be involved in institutional maintenance and governance, in addition to providing volunteers for ancillary Boards and Committees (special ministries, JNACs, etc.), this would suggest that some 15-20% of the active constituency base is currently required for such leadership functions.

This is simply an untenable burden for any broad membership organization. Further, in the context of a declining membership base, it suggests that people are increasingly required to volunteer for responsibilities that are least reflective of their interests or needs in relation to church, and therefore functions as an impediment to attracting active members.

^{vi} Presbytery Ministries

Within this organizational context of scarcity and constraint, the practice within the Presbytery has been to provide budget support for a small number of specialized ministries. These projects tend to operate on the basis of relatively short-term mandates and, as we have seen in relation to congregational program budgets, have a high degree of vulnerability in the face of financial pressures. Naturally, these projects can become a

field for protective competition among different sectors of presbytery that have a special interest in or support for the respective ministries. This study has specifically not been asked to assess the effectiveness of the existing ministries.

The “Leadership Survey” indicated a considerable disparity with respect to support for and participation in the four Presbytery ministries. A substantial minority of respondents, perhaps 25%, indicated no involvement in relation to any of the ministries on the part of their congregations. This appears to derive from a congregational lack of basic capacity and/or a diminished presence of children and youth rather than any issues related to the ministries themselves.

The Youth & Young Adult ministry appears to enjoy the most general and widespread involvement across the Presbytery – a clear majority of congregations – but this is often referenced to the past and appears to be somewhat localized. Congregational engagement is expressed primarily through supporting youth to participate in events. However, the project appears to suffer from a mandate that seeks to respond to the wide variety of interests and needs related to this field of work – program delivery, network development, and capacity building within congregations.

Cultus Lake Camp is also widely supported, especially in the central part of the Presbytery. Congregational engagement is expressed primarily through the provision of volunteers and financial support. The project appears to suffer from a chronic lack of sufficient volunteers to sustain its governance, maintenance and program needs. The impact of the baseline trends with respect children in the church is evident in its operations, and the mission of the project is increasingly directed to the provision of service to community groups.

Very limited involvement is indicated in relation to the Resource Centre or Oak Avenue Mission, and engagement is generally passive in nature. Oak Avenue Mission has now closed, and the Resource Centre could benefit from clarification of its mandate and financial rationale. As a text-based operation, the Resource Centre suffers from the decline of church schools (curriculum now accounts for only about 3% of the Resource Centre’s projected turnover of about \$30,000 for 2009), as well as the fact that most of its general materials are available on-line or through a range of commercial or church-dedicated book-sellers. The Resource Centre sees its expanded facility as a key asset, and envisions its role increasingly as providing a gathering place for discussions and workshops.

^{vii} C.A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: How Your Congregation Can Develop the Eight Essential Qualities of a Healthy Church*. Winfield BC: The Leadership Centre/Willow Creek Canada, 2002.