

**PC Pak/October/2002**

# For \_\_\_\_\_ Elders



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## Congregations and the Session

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Congregations within the Presbyterian Church do not exist on their own but are part of a bigger body, linked by presbyteries and synods, extending across Canada. Through the mission work of the denomination they are also linked with people and partners overseas and in Canada. These linkages are important for congregations to develop and maintain. This happens through prayer, education, and financial support, including the support of *Presbyterians Sharing* . . .

How do congregations learn about *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . ? The session plays an important roll in raising an awareness and understanding in congregations about *Presbyterians Sharing* . . .

The session's responsibility for stewardship and mission is outlined in *The Book of Forms*:

Section 113 The session is responsible for all aspects of stewardship and mission, both spiritual and material, within the congregation.

This responsibility is then addressed in a number of subsections. The following subsections have specific implications for *Presbyterians Sharing* . . .

113.1 The session will keep before the congregation the life and work of the church around the world, encouraging participation in that work through prayer, service and gifts.

113.5 The session will seek to ensure that the congregation in its commission to spread the gospel among all persons is contributing according to its ability, both for the maintenance of its own witness and ministry to the community and for the mission of the whole church.

113.6.1 The session will ensure that the congregation is made aware of the allocation for the General Assembly budget (known as *Presbyterians Sharing* . . .) submitted by the presbytery, and report to the presbytery the response of the congregation to that allocation.

The next two *For Elders* issues seek to provide information that will help the session in its leadership role with respect to *Presbyterians Sharing* . . .

This issue addresses some of the questions that are frequently asked about *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . : What is it? What's the difference between *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . and PWS&D? How does the allocation system work? How do we know how much money to give to *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . ? Where does the money go?

The next issue will look at some of the challenges congregations face in raising funds for *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . It will also include suggestions for raising awareness of *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . in a way that will encourage participation through prayer and financial support.

Annemarie Klassen

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## Christian Principles of Giving

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### The Great Collection (II Corinthians 8-9) A bible study for a meeting of session

This portion of scripture is a fundraising appeal on behalf of the broader church. Here Paul is administering a collection for the mother church in Jerusalem – a church that is in need of financial help due to a severe famine. Paul appeals to the Corinthian church to give generously, and makes reference to the Macedonian churches who have given joyfully and liberally, out of their extreme poverty. Corinth, by comparison, was a great trading centre, rich and prosperous.

In his appeal Paul sets out a theology of stewardship and giving that has become a hallmark of Christian giving. This could be a helpful place to begin as the session looks at how it will provide leadership with regards to *Presbyterians Sharing*. . . .

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Divide the session into five groups.

Give each group one of the following scripture references to read: I Corinthians 8: 1-7; 8-15; 16-24; 2 Corinthians 9: 1-6; 7-15. Ask them, in just a few minutes, to list all the principles of giving found in their particular portion.

Bring the groups together and write each group's principles of giving on a flip chart.

With these giving principles in mind, read the two chapters from II Corinthians again and **think about how they could be applied to *Presbyterians Sharing***. . . .

Keep in mind:

- The interconnectedness of the congregations in Macedonia, Corinth and Jerusalem
- The money that will be sent far away from the local congregation
- The disparities between the congregations – economic differences, ethnic/racial/language differences (e.g., Jewish, Greek, Hellenistic Jews)
- The role of Paul and Titus, the administrators of the collection
- The spirit in which the money is requested and given
- The benefits of giving, both for the giver and the receiver

### You Are There With . . .

. . . the many children who find a loving community at Anishinabe Fellowship Centre and Flora House in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Canada Ministries: Native Ministry)

. . . David Pandy as he works with churches and schools with our partners in Eastern Europe (International Ministries)

. . . the people at King's Church, New Minas, Nova Scotia, as they reach into the community in the name of Jesus Christ (Canada Ministries: New Church Development)

. . . national office staff and regional staff as they support local congregations in many vital areas of ministry

. . . Rev. Christopher Jorna as he serves six congregations of our partner church in Guyana (International Ministries)

. . . women and men as they study at our theological colleges to become ordained ministers in preparation for service in our congregations (Theological Colleges)

. . . Ken Kim as he works with partners to seek justice for Guatemalan sweatshop workers (International Ministries)

. . . the commissioners who attend the annual meeting of the General Assembly of our church

. . . Rev. Glynis Williams as she seeks to provide support and hope for refugee claimants in Montreal through Action Réfugiés Montréal (Canada Ministries: Inner City Ministry)

**Through *Presbyterians Sharing*. . .  
you are there.**

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## Commonly Asked Questions about *Presbyterians Sharing* . .

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### **What is *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . ?**

*Presbyterians Sharing* . . . is the name of the budget of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It was formerly called the General Assembly Budget. *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . ensures that we have money to meet our mission goals in Canada and around the world.

*Presbyterians Sharing* . . . is a unified budget. That means that one budget funds a wide variety of national programs and ministries of the church. This includes the work of the Life and Mission Agency and its departments – International Ministries, Canada Ministries, Justice Ministries, Ministry and Church Vocations, Education for Discipleship, Communications. It also includes the work of the General Assembly, Financial Support Services and the theological colleges in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

What does this mean? It means that Presbyterians are sharing in a wide range of ministries – over 40 mission staff in 20 countries; inner city, native, refugee, urban, remote, and chaplaincy ministries in Canada; new church developments; support for congregations in faith education, worship, evangelism, stewardship, mission education; youth ministries; justice and ecumenical work; training of ministers. It means that the denomination's national office is supported so programs and services can be coordinated and unified. It means that the church continues to do God's work in this world.

This budget is voted on annually by the commissioners to General Assembly, who are the representatives of congregations and presbyteries from across Canada.

### **What is the difference between *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . and Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D)?**

While *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . supports the work of International Ministries, PWS&D has a specific focus, namely development and emergency relief. Working with overseas church and community partners and ecumenical bodies, PWS&D responds to human need in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. It operates with its own budget and raises money directly from individuals and congregations and through matching government grants.

International Ministries and PWS&D work closely together. PWS&D does not employ overseas staff. It often happens, though, that International Ministries mission personnel, funded through *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . , work with PWS&D partners.

For further information, see the brochure "*Presbyterians Sharing* . . . and PWS&D: What's the Difference?" (available through the Bookroom).

### **Why can't we just give our money to a mission project of our choice and have it credited to *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . ?**

If everyone only supported the project of their choice, the less glamorous, less advertised budget items would have difficulty receiving enough support. Yet they may be of equal or even greater importance, or they may be essential to the smooth functioning of the mission and ministries, and organization, of our church. A pooled fund means that everybody contributes to all parts of the budget. *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . is a pooled fund designed to support the entire body so that it may faithfully fulfill its God-given mandate to proclaim Christ in word and deed (see Our Mission, *Living Faith*, 9.1).

### **What if we want to give to specific projects or ministries outside of *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . and PWS&D?**

*Something Extra* is a way to designate money to specific projects. *Something Extra* is a resource booklet that contains about 60 projects. These projects are selected by Canada Ministries, International Ministries and PWS&D in consultation with our mission partners. Whether church building or theological resources in Africa, or materials for self-sustainable development in Central America, or food and recreational equipment for an inner city ministry in

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Canada – these concrete projects help support our partners in Canada and around the world. Many congregations do creative mission education using *Something Extra*, and find it a great way to raise enthusiasm and participation in mission work.

### **How does a congregation know what it should give?**

#### **Suggested allocations**

Each congregation is given a suggested allocation. The allocation is simply a *fair share* guide, based on the dollar base of the congregation. The dollar base is money raised by the congregation for all congregational purposes in a given year, **minus** funds collected for *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . , other mission givings, or money used for debt repayment (principal and interest). These figures are taken from the statistical report which is received from each congregation annually. A formula, on a graduated scale, is then applied to the resulting dollar base (see attached: Calculating the *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . allocation).

In the fall, presbyteries receive the total allocation for their presbytery for the coming year, with the breakdown for each congregation. It is the responsibility of presbytery to review the suggested congregational allocations, taking into account the particular situation of each congregation and making adjustments as necessary. The goal of such adjustments should be that the presbytery meets its total allocation.

The presbytery then passes the suggested and/or adjusted allocation to each congregation.

#### **Accepted allocations**

It is the session's responsibility to inform the congregation of the suggested allocation and to report the amount accepted by the congregation back to presbytery (*The Book of Forms*, 113.6.1).

The congregation decides, usually at its annual meeting, what allocation it will accept. The accepted allocation is reported back to presbytery immediately after the congregation's annual meeting.

When the presbytery has gathered the accepted allocations from all its congregations, it reports these back to the stewardship office of the national church.

### **So how do we decide what allocation we should accept?**

Allocations are not assessments; that is, they are not mandatory. Here are some guidelines that our church has suggested over the years:

- Congregations are urged to accept or meet their allocations; they may even accept a higher figure than that set by presbytery.
- Congregations may work at growth in giving. It has been the policy of some presbyteries to encourage congregations that are giving at their suggested level not to let their givings drop *even when their suggested allocation drops in a given year*.
- If a congregation is far short of its suggested allocation, it is encouraged to make a plan that will help it to grow towards that allocation. Positive growth, even in incremental steps over time, motivates congregations and affirms that they are moving in the right direction.
- **Stewardship is at the heart of the matter.** While suggested allocations are a general guide for *fair share* giving, they do not speak to the heart of what stewardship is about. Congregations are asked to give joyfully and with prayer the amount they wish to give, in response to God's gracious blessings and in the spirit of Paul in his fund-raising appeal to the Corinthian church:

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Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

II Corinthians 9:7, 8

**When we accept an allocation, does that mean we guarantee that it will be fulfilled? Should it be part of our annual budget?**

Those congregations that consistently meet or even exceed their commitment typically include their accepted allocation in their annual budget, with the intention that it will be fulfilled. By including it in the overall congregational budget, everybody participates. These congregations may or may not have a separate line for *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . on their offering envelope. Many find it helpful to keep the line on the envelope as a weekly reminder of their participation in the work of the broader church.

All monies designated by givers to *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . must be remitted within the year of designation, even if they exceed the accepted amount.

**Mission education is a key element.** It is important for all congregations – even those that guarantee an allocation – to provide ongoing education for members so that they know how their money is being used, so that they will pray with understanding for the ministries of the church, and so that a sense of connectedness with the broader church will be fostered. (See the next issue of *For Elders* for “Telling the Story of *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . .”)

**When and how often should our donations to *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . be remitted?**

Since the budgetary needs are current -- that is, the money received in a given year is required for that specific year -- congregations are encouraged to send in their gifts on a regular basis. An increasing number of congregations have chosen to honour the recommendation of the 1992 General Assembly and submit their gifts on a monthly basis. Others submit quarterly, and a few submit annually (however this is not encouraged). The Presbyterian Church in Canada receives approximately 25 per cent of its budget for a given year after December 15, and 17 per cent is received between January 1 and January 15 of the following year. This means that there is a lag between when the money is needed and when it is received.

**What happens if we do not send in our suggested allocation?**

If a congregation's allocation is not met, the impact on the *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . budget depends on how well the remainder of congregations meet their allocations. The budget is spent in faith that the monies will be received. Clearly, if many congregations fail to accept their allocation or ignore it entirely, this has a negative impact on the ability of the church to maintain existing programs or to develop new ministries.

**Why should we give to *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . when we have difficulty meeting our own budget?**

**Congregations have many very real needs of their own. Stipends must be paid, buildings need to be maintained, and local ministries require funds as well. Shouldn't we look after our own needs first?**

First of all, why give to mission and ministry beyond our walls? The principle of proportional giving – whether a tithe or some other percent of our income – is a biblical principle. It applies not only to individuals but also to communities of faith. Congregations that have a concern beyond their own survival and their own programs, however important and necessary, will likely find that their own ministries grow as they also reach out beyond themselves.

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Secondly, The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a connec-tional church. This means that we covenant to support each other and to work together. Each year at General Assembly we approve the church's ministries and the bud-get required to achieve them.

Finally, if one congregation falls far short of its fair share, this places a greater responsibility on other congregations, who are also often struggling, to make up the difference.

Having stated these reasons for giving, there are times and circumstances when a congregation has to decrease its giv-ings, at least for a time.

**How has the *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . budget fared in the past?**

Givings to *Presbyterians Sharing* . . . in 2001 totalled \$8,630,583. This exceeded the budget by \$30,583 and rep-resented an increase of almost \$31,000 over the previous year. At a time when many denominations are having diffi-culty meeting their budgets, this is good news to be cele-brated. About 69 per cent of congregations gave the same or more than they had in the previous year, indicating the ongoing commitment of many congregations from across Canada.

At the same time, it is important to note that givings over the past 10 years have increased by \$451,546 or 5.5 per cent. This represents a decrease when taking into account inflationary factors and the purchasing power of this money.

An increase of \$70,000 over 2001 is required to meet the budget for 2002. At the end of September 2002, 54.9 per cent of the target for 2002 had been received.

"The congregations who do  
the best in church finances  
have a rich, full, abiding  
compassion for mission.  
They are motivated by a  
theology of service, not a  
theology of survival. Their  
compelling, driving spirit is  
one of giving, serving,  
loving mission."

Kennon Callahan,  
*Effective Church Finances*

## Where Does the Money Go?

*Presbyterians Sharing* . . . is supporting the following ministries in 2003

<b>A. The Life and Mission Agency</b>	<b>\$6,502,698</b>	<b>63.1%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Ministries             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 43 mission personnel in 20 countries</li> <li>- international partnerships with churches around the world</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Canada Ministries             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- specialized ministries, such as ministries with people in the inner city, refugees, native people and chaplaincies</li> <li>- development and support of new congregations across Canada</li> <li>- continuing support for ongoing ministries, such as ethnic and remote congregations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• support for congregations in evangelism, education, worship, stewardship</li> <li>• support for youth work through Youth in Mission, Canada Youth 2003, Synod youth directors</li> <li>• justice work and education</li> <li>• congregations in their search for a new minister; guidance conferences for ministerial students</li> <li>• resource production and communication</li> <li>• program support and administration (church office and regional staff)</li> </ul>		
<b>B. Theological Education</b>	<b>\$856,935</b>	<b>8.3%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knox College, Toronto</li> <li>• The Presbyterian College, Montreal</li> <li>• St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver</li> </ul>		
<b>C. The General Assembly Office</b>	<b>\$1,054,797</b>	<b>10.2%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• costs related to the annual meeting of the General Assembly, our Church's highest decision-making body</li> <li>• expenses for the work of Assembly committees and the Assembly Office</li> <li>• operation of the Presbyterian Archives</li> </ul>		
<b>D. Support Services</b>	<b>\$1,500,538</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• human resources</li> <li>• sales and distribution resources</li> <li>• maintaining Church Offices building and a mission residence</li> <li>• overseeing salaries and benefits for national staff</li> </ul>		
<b>E. Contingency Fund</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,314,968</b>	

### Where Does the Money Come From?

The total budget for 2003 is \$10,314,968.

The major part of this money will come directly from congregations – \$8,750,000

The remainder of money is anticipated from other sources:

- Women's Missionary Society
- Atlantic Mission Society
- Bequests and gifts received for current use
- Other sources of income such as interest on investments and estates, individual gifts, proceeds from resource distribution, etc.