# Remit—NIC 01: Restructuring of the Indigenous Church

## Transcript of [Video](https://youtu.be/d5KbFs8BRMw)

Hello, my name is Sara Stratton, and I work as a Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animator at the General Council Office of The United Church of Canada.

Hello, my name is Adele Halliday, and I work as the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead at the General Council Office of The United Church of Canada.

We are among the General Council staff who share responsibility for answering your questions about the remit. And to date, we have received quite a few questions!

Almost all of them have come from the non-Indigenous church, and they share some commonalities.

In this video, we would like to specifically address the non-Indigenous church and help to further respond to the questions that have emerged.

### We have received questions on what this remit is about.

The current remit question asks to remove structural barriers that would prevent the establishment of a self- determining Indigenous church within The United Church of Canada.

### We have received questions about where the remit came from.

The proposal that prompted the remit was sent to the 44th General Council in 2022 from the National Indigenous Council. It is NIC-01: Restructuring of the Indigenous Church.

This proposal named a vision, guided by the Calls to the Church of the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle. This vision names two parts of the church (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) working side-by-side. It also recommended the identification and removal of “all the structural barriers to developing and sustaining an autonomous Indigenous Church within The United Church of Canada.”

### We have received questions about why a remit process is needed to respond to the proposal.

When any requested change in church structure will alter the Basis of Union of *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada, as this will, a Category 3 Remit is required. The General Secretary therefore proposed “GS-10: Living into Reconciliation,” which asks the church to give pre-emptive remit approval for whatever the Indigenous Church determines as its place in the United Church, and to eliminate the need for further remits approval.

### We have received questions about the voting process.

This remit requires a vote from every regional council and each community of faith that is a pastoral charge. The vote is for the governing body, such as a church council or the board. It does not need to be a full vote of the congregation.

### We have also received several questions asking exactly what the new Indigenous church will look like and how it will function.

These questions have asked how it will be funded. Questions have been asked wanting to know what allows members and communities of faith to identify as part of the Indigenous Church. Questions have been asked about the alignment of policy, doctrine, theology, liturgical practices, and sacraments.

Some questions have been asked about how this National Indigenous Organization will be in relationship with the regions. Questions have also been asked about whether Indigenous people want to leave The United Church of Canada.

If this remit is approved, it would not immediately create a new Indigenous Church. Rather, the remit asks for the removal of barriers in order to give Indigenous people in the church the time and space they need to define their own future in relationship with the rest of the United Church.

In the meantime, the details about policy, practices, and overall function remain unknown.

There are questions, such as those of finances and many of the other issues raised, that we simply will not have the answers to until the process, and the accompanying conversations, take place.

Even though there is uncertainty about some of these details, there is certainty and clarity about one important aspect: being in relationship.

The proposal from the National Indigenous Council clarified that asking for the removal of structural barriers did not mean that a relationship was ending. The proposal describes a long relationship between the church and Indigenous Peoples, and expressed a desire to “set aside the notion of ‘mission’…and truly move towards being ‘partners in God’s call to all the earth.’”

It notes the importance of a continuing conversation between the National Indigenous Council and the General Council as the new structures are formed and the relationship continues.

The National Indigenous Council will also report back to the 45th General Council in 2025 on its progress and on the next phases of work.

When the United Church adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework of reconciliation in 2016, we acknowledged that “we are not sure what lies ahead as we deepen our commitment to a new identity, a new relationship, and a new way of being.” We as a church acknowledged that “a new relationship is waiting, and we turn our faces towards it.”

There are some things that we do not know.

What we do know is that a continued, renewed relationship awaits.

We hope that this video has offered helpful additional background information for you as you reflect on the remit question. You can also find the study guide for this remit, links to additional background information, links to the two proposals that we have named in this video, and also the voting cards on the website for the 44th General Council at [generalcouncil44.ca](https://generalcouncil44.ca/council/remit-1-establishing-autonomous-national-indigenous-organization).

Thank you for your participation in this important decision-making process.