

FINDING AID

Administrative Records of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Fonds

Series 516/2 Worship and Education Council Women's Groups

- 516/2/1 UCW Co-ordinating Committee
- 516/2/2 Women's Concerns Task Group
- 516/2/3 Women's Consultation
- 516/2/4 Committee of Women's Ministries

Author Linda White, 2002; Revised 2003, 2006, 2013, 2014

United Church of Canada Archives
Winnipeg

uccarchiveswinnipeg.ca

© 2006

500 Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference fonds. -- 1917 - 2004; predominant 1954-1993. -- 43m of textual records and other material.

The Conference of Manitoba came into existence in June of 1925 with the creation of The United Church of Canada through the union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Local Union Churches of Canada. The name was changed in 1980 to the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario as a result of a successful petition to the General Council of the United Church by Cambrian Presbytery. The Conference encompasses the entire province of Manitoba and the area of Northwestern Ontario drained by the Rainy River and Winnipeg River systems as far east as Marathon, Ontario and south to the United States border.

The Conference has an administrative as well as a geographic meaning. The thirteen conferences within The United Church of Canada function as a governing body or court of the church. Very simply, they are composed of members of the Order of Ministry on the roll of Presbyteries within the geographical bounds of the Conference and lay persons under appointment to administrative or staff positions within the Conference by a court of the church or the United Church General Council. These are matched by an equal number of lay representatives elected from the Pastoral Charges within the Conference. Chairpersons of Conference Committees and the President of the Conference United Church Women are also members of Conference. In addition to the obligation to meet annually and to appoint a Conference Executive, the Conference was charged with appointing Standing and Special Committees to carry out the day to day work of the Conference. In 1925 these were Education and Students, Evangelism and Social Service, Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Pensions, Publications, Religious Education, Missionary and Maintenance Fund, Church Property, Settlement, Statistics, Historical and Obituaries.

With a few exceptions, the structure of Conference remained essentially the same until 1972 when a major realignment of the administrative structure of the United Church at the General Council (National) and Conference levels took place. In 1972, the Boards of Home Missions, Evangelism and Social Service and Christian Education had ceased to exist along with the staff positions associated with that work. New paid staff positions which made their first appearance around this time were Regional Director of Broadcasting in 1971 (lasting only until 1972), the positions of Conference Personnel and Conference Administrative Support in 1972 and the positions of Leadership Development and Program Resource in 1973. In 1975 and 1976, and again from 1989 to 1993, a staff position for Communications was added. In 1983, the Conference staff position of Christian Development and Outreach was created and, in 1986, an Evangelism and Social Action staff person as well as a full time Conference Archivist was hired.

The changes in National and Conference administrative structure, which resulted from a move towards more regional and local control of church programs, were reflected in the evolution of Conference Committees. The powerful Conference Home Missions Committee and its sub-committees, responsible for overseeing the mission initiatives of Conference and the administration of mission grants according to Board of Home Missions directives, had been replaced by the Administrative Support Committee (briefly called the Congregational Support Committee) by 1973. Another major reorganisation of the Conference committee structure took place in 1983 when a system for the division of the work of Conference committees among four Councils (Stewardship, Worship and Education, Ministry and Personnel, Evangelism and Social Action) was devised. Committee chairs reported to their respective Councils that in turn were represented on the Conference Executive.

Another major reorganisation of Conference Structure took place in 1993. At that time, the pressure of meeting current demands with dwindling resources resulted in a move to reduce the number of Presbyteries from eight to six. The work previously allocated among four Conference Councils was then divided between three Program Units (Education and Justice, Ministry and Personnel, and Stewardship and Mission). The number of Committees reporting to the Program Units, and through them to the Conference Executive was reduced. Salaried staff were also decreased and reorganised to include the positions of Executive Secretary, Education and Justice staff person, Stewardship and Mission staff

person, Personnel staff person and Conference Archivist. Further changes to the Conference Structure were made in 2005.

Many of the materials which make up this Conference fonds had been stored in the basement of the Conference administrative offices at 120 Maryland Street in Winnipeg in an ad hoc manner for varying lengths of time over a period of approximately forty years before coming into the Archives. Generally, the records of Conference executive, staff and committee chairs were transferred to the basement at the end of their term of office. Renovations to and rearrangement of the basement area resulted in the movement of the materials around the storage area on more than one occasion. It is probable that space constraints resulted in the unrecorded disposal of an undetermined number of documents and other materials throughout the storage period. Administrative records in storage at 120 Maryland were formally transferred to the Archives in 1989. The movement of the Conference administrative offices to a new address in the fall of 1996 precipitated an inventory and the relocation of those records in 1995 prior to the move. The balance of the fonds consists of record series that had been accessioned by the Archives at various periods prior to 1995. The provenance of records accessioned prior to 1976 is often obscure.

The fonds consists of textual and other materials generated by the Conference, the Conference Executive, Conference Staff Associates and Conference Committee members in the fulfilment of their mandate as outlined in *The Manual of The United Church of Canada* from 1925 to 1994. Throughout the life of the fonds, several Conference staff members have served in more than one church or community administration simultaneously while keeping unified files. This has resulted in materials from other administrative jurisdictions being interspersed among the fonds.

Fonds are composed of the following series: Conference Annual Meetings, 1925-1993; Conference Executive, 1925-2002; Conference Offices, 1958-1989; Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups Answering to the Executive and Sub-Executive, 1968-1993; Manitoba Conference Branch of The United Church Woman's Missionary Society, 1918-1962; Manitoba Conference Branch Woman's Missionary Society Archives Collection, [ca.1885-ca.1960]; Manitoba Conference Lay Association, [ca.1910]-1962; District Council AOTS, 1964-1977; Conference Committee on Christian Education, 1927-1992; Conference Home Missions Committee, 1926-1973; Superintendents of Home Missions, 1926-1973; records of the Administration of Norway House Residential School, 1954-1967; Conference Hospitals, 1923-1982; Home Missions Inter-Conference and Ecumenical Groups, 1956-1969; Conference Evangelism and Social Service Committee, 1933-1976; Conference Congregational Life and Work, 1952-1979; Church in Society Committee, 1976-1983; Evangelsim and Social Action Council, 1983-1993; Inter-Conference and Ecumenical Groups reporting to the Evangelsim and Social Action Council, 1972-1999; Conference Communications, 1964-1992; Worship and Education Council, 1981-1994; Worship and Education Council Women's Groups, 1982-1992; Education and Justice Unit, 1987 - 2004 (predominately 1993 - 1998); Committee on Education, Students and Church Vocations, 1975-1978; Conference Education Committee, 1972-1983; [Interim] Placement Committee, 1970-1972; Conference Settlement Committee, 1971-1980; Conference Staff Committee, 1966-1992; Ministry and Personnel Council, 1982-1993; Conference Personnel Officer, 1972-1993; Conference Personnel Records, 1957-1993; records of the Conference Finance Committee, 1964-1974; records of Conference Administrative Support, 1973-1983; records of Administrative Support Staff, 1972-1993; Conference Stewardship, 1967-1993; Church Camps, 1918-1975; Church Home for Girls, 1945-1976; Women's Union, 1926-1958; Manitoba Conference Woman's Association, 1946-1962; Conference United Church Women, 1963-2002; Fellowship of Professional Women, 1949-1980; Manitoba Canadian Girls in Training, 1918-1990; and the Manitoba Student Christian Movement, 1923-1981.

Title based on contents of fonds.

The fonds also includes ephemera, photographs, slides, audio tape recordings, video tape recordings and 50 sets of blueprints, plans and architects' drawings.

Original order of many of the series of the fonds was substantially obscured during the storage period and many materials were in an extremely disorganised state with no original order or access points apparent; where necessary, order based on administrative function has been reconstructed by the arranging archivist.

Some restrictions on access; see series descriptions.

Finding Aids consist of series descriptions and box lists; some sub-series and file level description available.

Further accruals are expected.

Worship and Education Council Women's Groups. -- 1982-1992. -- 6 folders.

As a result of the Conference Women's Consultation held in April 1980, the Conference Executive became committed to creating mechanisms whereby women could raise issues of particular concern to them and communicate on women's issues within the Conference. The Women's Committee, created in 1980, was succeeded in 1982 by the United Church Women Coordinating Committee and the Women's Concern's Task Group/Committee. Following Conference re-structuring in 1983, these two committees were represented on the Worship and Education Council by the Women's Groups portfolio. Women's portfolios were also created under the Ministry and Personnel Council (Women in Ministry Committee) and the Evangelism and Social Action Council (Women's Issues/Justice) in 1987, and under the Stewardship Council in 1988. All Conference women's committees had representation on and communicated with each other through the Conference Committee of Women's Ministries, also created in 1988.

Another Conference committee concerned with women's issues was the Committee on Sexism. This committee was formed under the umbrella of the Worship and Education Council in 1991 to look at how sexism operated in the church and how to deal with it. It was planned that the committee would take an education role pertaining to harassment concerns and the creation of resources, programming and networking within Conference on the topic of sexism was encouraged. The Committee made presentations to Presbyteries and Councils on aspects of church life where sexism might be a concern (safety, employment practices, theology, programme and resources, leadership and structure). As well, the Committee on Sexism was requested to take on an enabling and monitoring role for Conference's marking of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women in Church and Society. As part of the process of defining its mandate, members of the Committee on Sexism met with members of the Committee on Women's Ministries and the Sexual Harassment Team. The Decade Roadshow Kit Group, which was initially part of the Committee on Women's Ministries operated as an ad hoc sub-committee of the Sexism Committee.

This Committee of Women's Ministries met twice a year for a day and a half at meetings that were facilitated by the Women's Concerns Committee. The Conference Committee of Women's Ministries included representation from the Women's Justice Committee (Evangelism and Social Action Council), the Women's Concerns Committee (Worship and Education Council), the Women in Ministry Committee (Ministry & Personnel Council), and the Sexism Committee (Worship and Education Council). After further Conference re-structuring in 1993, the Committee of Women's Ministries ceased to exist along with several constituent members. The Sexism Committee continued to function as a sub-committee of the Justice Committee under the newly formed Education and Justice Unit. Women in Ministry continued under the Ministry and Personnel Council and the United Church Women were lodged under the Stewardship and Mission Unit.

The surviving record for these committees is somewhat sparse and large gaps exist. The record described here was created or acquired by a number of individuals including both Conference staff and Committee members and was in an extremely disorganised state with no existing order or access points apparent when accessioned. The arranging archivist has imposed order based on administrative structure. Many of the items described here were created or acquired by the Conference Christian Development and Outreach staff person, Rev. Ted J. Dodd, between 1983 and 1993.

This series consists of the following sub-series: the UCW Coordinating Committee for Kenyan Women Decade Exchange, 1991-1992; the Women's Concern's Committee, 1989-1992; Women's Concern's Task Group, 1982-1989; and the Women's Consultation, 1986/87.

Title based on contents.

Sub-series descriptions; box lists available.

For information on the [Conference] Women's Committee see the file on that name described as part of the series "501/1 Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups Answering to the Executive and Sub-Executive and Special Committees of Conference".

For items pertaining to the Women in Ministry Committee see the file of that name described as part of the series "518/3 Ministry and Personnel Council".

Accession: 1996-21.

516/2/1 UCW Co-ordinating Committee. -- 1991-1992. -- 1 folder.

The United Church Women (UCW) Co-ordinating Team/Committee met for the first time in 1982. The absence of a Conference level women's group since 1969 had been keenly felt and the main purpose of the Co-ordinating Committee was to function as a liaison between the UCW groups of Conference, Presbyteries and the National Consultation of Women. Following Conference restructuring in 1983, the UCW Co-ordinating Committee was housed under the Worship and Education Council. Eventually a representative from each Presbytery would serve on the Co-ordinating Committee and the committee would meet in 1989 to elect officers for the first time in twenty years. The UCW Co-ordinating Committee also met as a part of the Committee of Women's Ministries, an umbrella group for women's issues that was formed in 1988. The Co-ordinating Committee was responsible for the production of a UCW Newsletter, which was included in Confopac mailings. One of the major events with which the Co-ordinating Committee was involved was the Kenyan Women's Decade Exchange in 1992. This event was planned to coincide with celebrations for the UCW's 30th anniversary. Following the re-organisation of Conference in 1993, the UCW Co-ordinating Committee was relocated under the Stewardship and Mission Unit.

Items found here include that which pertains to the organisation of the Kenyan Women Decade Exchange, including meeting notes and correspondence dating from 1991/92.

Title based on contents.

For further information on Conference level UCW prior to 1983, see the series "524/1 Records of the Conference United Church Women"; for records pertaining to Presbyterial/Presbytery UCWs see the Presbyterial UCW collections.

Location: Box 516/1-1 (former S-8-0).

516/2/2 Women's Concerns Task Group. -- 1982-1989. -- 4 folders.

The decision to set up the Women's Concerns Task Group was made in 1982 as a result of a recommendation of the Conference Women's Committee (1980-1982). The mandate of this task group was to raise the awareness of the Conference to the issues being raised by and about women, especially as pertains to worship. To this end the Task Group strove to raise awareness of language and imagery in the church courts and in worship and study materials and to affirm styles of leadership that encourage the participation of women. The Task Group was also concerned with supporting women not covered by other women's committees and planning for Women's Conferences. The Task Group had a membership of six to eight, one of whom represented the UCW Co-ordinating Team. Following Conference restructuring in 1983, the Women's Concerns Task Group was housed under the Worship and Education Council. The Task Group met four times a year and chose an issue, such as wife abuse or women's spirituality, to focus on each year. Representatives from the task group attended the 1983 Consultation of the Women of the United Church held in Toronto and arranged a gathering place for women at Conference '83. In 1988, the Task Group changed its names to the Women's Concerns Committee although both names were used until 1989.

After the formation of the Conference Committee on Women's Ministries, the Women's Concerns Committee also had responsibility for co-ordinating the meetings of the Committee on Women's Ministries. This included planning and enabling the business of twice yearly meetings of this umbrella group, ensuring projects are initiated and completed, and maintaining communication between the Committee of Women's Ministries and Conference as well as between the constituent committees of the umbrella group until 1992. The Women's Concerns Committee was not continued following Conference restructuring in 1993.

Items found here include minutes of meetings of the Task Group dating from 1982 to 1989 and correspondence dating from 1985 to 1988. Also found here are minutes of meetings of the Women's Concerns Committee dating from 1989 to 1992 as well as correspondence dating from 1990 to 1992.

Title based on contents.

Known as the Women's Concerns Committee from October 1988.

Location: Box 516/1-1 (former S-8-0).

516/2/3 Women's Consultation. -- 1986-1987. -- 1 folder.

The Women's Consultation came about as a result of concerns raised by the Conference Executive as to the lack of clarity and cohesiveness that characterised the existing women's issue groups then operating within Conference. Representatives of the Women's Task Group, the UCW Co-ordinating Team, and the Women in Ministry Group along with two representatives from each Presbyterial UCW met to explore networking possibilities and the relation of Conference women's groups to the national bodies. The Women's Consultation made a recommendation to form a Council of Women's Ministries to act as an umbrella group. This recommendation was not followed, however, a Committee of Women's Ministries was formed in 1988. The Consultation also recommended a new Conference staff person be appointed to deal with women's issues. In January 1987, Janet Silman was called to this ministry.

Items found here include minutes of consultation meetings, correspondence, and surveys, as well as interim and final reports and proposals.

Title based on contents.

Location: Box 516/1-1 (former S-8-0).

516/2/4 Committee of Women's Ministries

The Committee of Women's Ministries, created as an umbrella group to co-ordinate the activities of all Conference committees concerned with women's issues, was formed as a result of the recommendation of the Women's Consultation in 1988. Membership included members of Council Committees related to women's issues, the UCW Co-ordinating Committee; a representative from the National Women in Ministry Committee, the National Standing Committee on Sexism, and the National UCW; and the Conference staff person with responsibility for women's issues. The Committee of Women's Ministries was not continued after Conference restructuring in 1993.

A distinct body of records has not yet been located for this Conference Committee.

Title based on contents.

Box List

Box 516/1-1 (former Box S-8-0)

Conference Women's Groups.

- UCW Co-ordinating Committee. -- 1991-1992. -- 1 folder.
- Women's Concerns Task Group. -- 1982-1989. -- 4 folders.
- Women's Consultation. -- 1986-1987. -- 1 folder.