

United Church of Canada Financial Trends

Using the National totals of the United Church of Canada Year Book data which have been provided by Tom Broadhurst of the General Council offices, I have been able to do some rough analysis of financial trends from 1965 to 2005.

The analysis is “rough” because the Year Book statistics combine some data that I would rather be able to look at separately.

The “Total Raised for All Purposes” is reported as Item 32 in the Year Book, and is shown as four amounts:

- A. By Congregational Givings
- B. By United Church Women
- C. By Other Organizations, Sources and Means
- D. Total Amount Raised.

32A includes givings for the M&S Fund as well as for local capital or building funds, so it is not possible to isolate givings for local operating expenses.

32C includes givings by other groups such as Sunday School, Youth and other groups; special fund raisers such as bake sales; bequests and property sales; and the category I am most interested in: property rental and investment income. This category cannot be isolated from the data in the Year Book.

And the year by year historic summary, reports the data in yet other categories:

- A. Received for M&S by (National) Treasurer
- B. Raised for other UC Capital Appeals, Funds
- C. Other Purposes, Bible Society, etc.
- D. Raised by UCW and its Predecessors
- E. All Other Organizations & Means
- F. Grand Total – All Purposes

Nonetheless, if the dollar amounts are first converted to uniform 2005 values (using the average annual CPI – Consumer Price Index), the following comparisons emerge:

	1965	2005	Change
Total Raised	390,140,000	373,919,000	-4.2%
Raised by UCW	43,697,000	15,796,00	-63.9%
Other Org's & Means	29,323,000	98,812,00	+237.0%
Congregation	317,120,000	259,311,000	-18.2%
M&S*	57,356,000	27,882,000	-51.4%

** Note that the M&S amount (row 5) is included in the Total Raised (row 1). Total Raised is the sum of rows 2, 3, and 4: Raised by UCW, Other Org's & Means, and Congregation.*

My guess is that the significant increase in the amount raised by Other Organizations & Means is primarily due to bequests, sales of property, and investment and rental income, and not bake sales. The increase in this category has almost completely off set the decreases from the Congregational and UCW amounts, so that the Total Amount raised remained comparatively stable over the decades. (See attached Chart 1.)

The relative stability of the Total Amount Raised has created a false sense of financial security as other, more crucial, “core purpose and identity” data (i.e., people) have steadily declined year after year. (See attached Chart 2.)

My prediction is that if nothing changes the steady decline in our “people data,” the tremendous assets of our property and investments will become an unmanageable burden that will overwhelm the capabilities of many congregations and force their closure as they are unable to cope with building operation, maintenance, and capital repairs and upgrades. We are asset rich and people poor, and our wealth just might be the death of us.

Chart 1

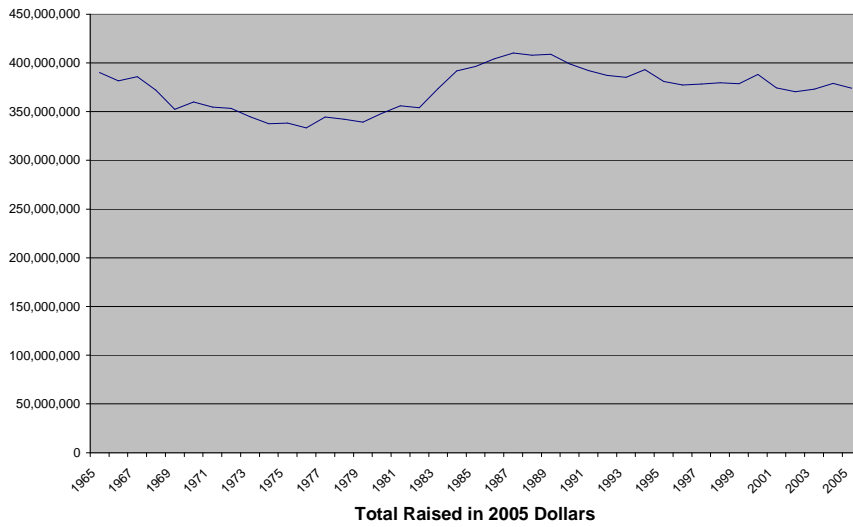


Chart 2

