



Endangered Places of Faith Roundtable
Prepared by the Heritage Canada Foundation
September 27, 2008, 10:40am-2:50pm
St. Andrew's Church, Quebec City

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1. Participants:

Meeting Moderator and Organizer:

Camille Girard-Ruel, Heritage Canada Foundation (HCF),
(cgirardruel@heritagecanada.org or 613-237-1066 ext.237)

Meeting Sponsor and Collaborator:

Luc Noppen, Canadian Forum for Public Research on Heritage (CFPRH)

Presenters (in order of appearance):

- Matthew Francis, Head, Municipal Heritage Services, Historic Resources Management, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit
- Jocelyn Groulx, Directeur général, Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec
- Richard Moorhouse, Executive Director, Ontario Heritage Trust
- Meghan P. Hallett, Senior Registrar, Historic Places Initiative Heritage Division



- Andrea O'Brien, Church Inventory Officer, Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador
- David Tremblay, Advocate, SOS-Églises
- André Chénier, Advocate, SOS-Églises
- Narcisse Kakegabon, Band Manager, Longlac 58 First Nation
- Reverend Arlen John Bonnar, Ministre, Église St.James, Montréal
- Ian Wainwright, Group Chief Surveyor, Ecclesiastical Insurance, United Kingdom
- Natalie Bull, Executive Director, Heritage Canada Foundation

People wanting to get involved in the initiative:

- Tania Martin, Canada's Built Heritage Research Chair, Professor at Laval University
- Anne Guérette, architect, Municipal Councillor, Quebec City
- David-John Fournier, Head Office Claims Specialist, Ecclesiastical Insurance
- Alain Dejeans, ICOMOS Canada, Religious Heritage Scientific Committee / Technipierre-Héritage
- Patricia Malicki, Architectural Conservancy of Ontario - Windsor Region Branch
- Sheila Moore Johnston, Past Chair Calgary Heritage Authority and Chair, Heritage Resources Committee of AB & NW Conference of the United Church
- Lillian Mac Mellon
- Marilyn Miller, Preservation Officer, Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto
- Ian McGillivray, McGillivray – Architect
- Beth Hanna, Director, Heritage Programs and Operations
- Allan Avis, Allan Avis Architects Inc.
- Erin Eldridge
- Rick McCready (Cape Breton)
- Maggie Holm (Halifax)
- Marilyn Williams, Director, Cliff Bungalow-Mission Community Heritage Director
- Jim Leonard, Heritage Coordinator, City of Brampton
- Kathy Dunster, Biologist and Landscape architect, Unfolding Landscapes

2. Meeting Minutes:

Introduction to the Meeting

Luc Noppen recollects the first meeting he had with the Heritage Canada Foundation and Natalie Bull on the idea of the initiative three years ago. He believes it to be a national social problem and Heritage Canada should be tackling this issue as it did for the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act [or, more recently, with the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act]. The difficulty is that heritage stems from a provincial

jurisdiction, but there could be Canadian solutions and funding. We should acknowledge that there may be something different in the Canadian perspective, in comparison to the US. We have to learn from each other. The initiative is a great solution to build our understanding of what is happening across Canada. Noppen mentions that Quebec and the *Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec* has learned a lot from other French speaking countries – like France and Belgium, but when they try to find examples in Canada, it is difficult to do so. He continues by stressing that this new initiative does not need a new entity or organization to fragment the heritage field even further “We already have a vehicle and lobby organization to help us answer these questions and that is Heritage Canada”. He highlights that the Roundtable meeting will be successful if there are some outcomes. The Canadian Forum for Public Research on Heritage is involved in publishing research and books – the publication of 50 books in 7 years is expected.

The National Situation: Presentations by Provincial Representatives

ALBERTA:

Matthew Francis, Head, Municipal Heritage Services, Historic Resources Management, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit: Francis works on behalf of the province of Alberta with municipalities to assist in the evaluation, protection, identification, stewardship of historic places of faith. The statistics shown on the hand out he prepared derive from the Albert Heritage Survey Program which grew out of the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings from the 1980s. Therefore, the record of the buildings is from the 70s and 80s and the buildings inventoried were at least 4 decades old at the time – we have to add another 30 years. It’s an ongoing process. The survey program contains around 200, 000 documented heritage places. The Alberta Survey records about 1768 resources with specific religious associations, of these, 99 are designated and listed on the Alberta and Canadian Registers for Historic Places affording them formal protection. 29 are designated provincial heritage resources, which is the highest level of designation in Alberta, recognizing places which are significant to all Albertans. 56 are designated as registered historic resources – a category no longer in use for future designations because it does not afford protection, it’s an honorific recognition. 14 are designated as municipal heritage resources, recognizing local significance and are legally protected through municipal bylaws.

Francis highlights that Eastern rite churches form a particular and specific and significant part of Alberta’s heritage. His personal academic background brought him to participate in a 1999-2001 study of historic 18th century Methodist meeting houses and chapels in Manchester, England. Francis presents the breakdown the type of resource of the 1768 currently included in the survey, making reference to the majority of resources are categorized as a “Place of Worship” – church, cathedral, synagogue, mosque, temple. Other types of resources are represented as well – missions, seminaries, offices, houses, convents, quarters. Numerous religious traditions are represented in Alberta.

Francis points out to an image on the slide which illustrates the historic Buddhist church in Raymond, the Japanese Buddhist community. Built in 1902 as the first school of the town of Raymond – Raymond is a predominantly Ladder Day Saints community in Alberta. In 1909, the building was sold and converted as a Ladder Day Saint church.

Then, the building was sold in 1929 to the Japanese. It recently changed hands once again last year to be sold to the town of Raymond, after its contents were removed, to become a performing arts facility.

Speaking about the challenges facing faith buildings in Alberta, the lack of human resources is the primary challenge for Alberta. Dwindling congregations really pose the greatest threat to sustain viability. Municipal engagement is the primary strategy used, however it is not specific to historic places of faith. In most communities -368 municipalities- historic places of faith remain a priority. The research is publicly available on the [Alberta Heritage Survey](#) Website.

The [Alberta Historical Resources Foundation](#) has increased the funding available for designated historic places. Places are now eligible to receive up to \$50,000 matching twice per year. In February and September they may apply for \$50,000 matching 50/50. The Foundation has agreed to faith groups and other non-for-profit groups to go beyond the 50% match.

QUEBEC

Jocelyn Groulx, Director General, Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec: Groulx explains that the *Conseil du patrimoine religieux* had been established under the name *Fondation du patrimoine du Québec* in 1995 as a non-profit organization with the mission to support and promote the enhancement of Quebec's religious heritage. Since 1995, there has been a partnership between the *Fondation* and the Quebec government. The organization is made up of 12 regional issue tables bringing together representatives of religious faiths, heritage experts, representatives from the *Ministère de la culture, des communications et de la condition féminine* as well as municipal representatives. These tables receive requests for financial assistance, analyse them and make recommendations to the *Conseil* and the *Ministère de la culture*.

The *Conseil* also has three specialized committees: for works of art, organs and archives. The religious heritage restoration assistance program has been in existence since 1995, and the *Conseil* has a management delegation with this program. The program has two components: restoration of religious buildings and restoration of moveable property. The beneficiaries of this program can receive up to 70% in financial assistance for restoring their assets, whether religious buildings or items.

In terms of statistics, since 1995, the Quebec government, through the *Conseil*, has invested \$197 million in the restoration of religious heritage, which has led to private investments of \$100 million. On average, that is \$15 million invested per year. This equates to about one hundred projects a year.

As for inventories, within the last 10 to 15 years, there has been significant advancement in knowledge. The inventory of Quebec's places of worship, which was drawn up by the *Conseil* in 2003-2004, lists 2,751 places of worship, all faiths included, built before 1975. At the same time, a heritage assessment of places of worship built before 1945 was carried out. Information on the places of worship inventoried is on the following web site: www.lieuxdeculte.qc.ca.

Several other inventories have also been done: convents and monasteries on Montreal Island and in Quebec City. There are several local and municipal inventories, such as in Montreal, Quebec and Chicoutimi. Several municipalities and MRCs in recent years have done inventories of their religious heritage.

In connection with symposiums on religious heritage, there was the 1997 symposium on the preservation of downtown churches that was held in Quebec. Since then, several symposiums have been held on that theme. Groulx mentions the 2004 symposium “Religious Heritage from Cult Object to Cult Object”, the 2005 symposium “What Future for Which Churches?” and there have been several local initiatives by universities and dioceses. The next symposium will be organized in the fall of 2009 and will deal with convents and monasteries.

Another major initiative in Quebec in 2006: there was a Parliamentary Commission of the National Assembly with the theme of religious heritage. That initiative resulted in a public consultation that enabled over a hundred individuals and groups to submit briefs before the Commission. That travelling Commission organized consultations in seven Quebec cities and resulted in a report and 33 recommendations on the inventories and the management of religious heritage. Also, a template agreement was prepared, which the *Ministère de la culture* adopted, on the use of churches for which a change in use is contemplated. That template agreement is proposed to Quebec’s various Catholic dioceses. For further information, visit the following web site:

<http://www.mcccf.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=2977>

The *Conseil* is now dedicating itself to listing examples of successful conversions in order to inspire others who will be repurposing places of worship.

ONTARIO

Richard Moorhouse, Executive Director, Ontario Heritage Trust: The Ontario Heritage Trust has been active in a places of worship program since 2006 after the Trust’s representatives attended Luc Noppen’s conferences and after working with the Conseil du patrimoine religieux in Quebec. Moorhouse went to the Minister of Culture recommending an investment in an inventory. Essentially, it will be an online province-wide inventory of religious properties with many research and supporting documents. The key components of the inventory is that it is of purpose built religious buildings designed for worship located in Ontario and more than 25 years old. OHT is conducting a contextual history of religion in Ontario and a brief history of major faith groups. Many examples of successful adaptive reuse are being put together. The website will be made available in 2009.

There are 68 different faith groups in Ontario which are reflected in the diversity of architectural styles. Approximately 7,000 properties have been inventoried, out of an estimated 12,000. Only 700 of these properties have been recorded, designated and protected in some way. In fact, only 300 properties are designated by a municipal council or protected by a conservation easement.

Under the Ontario Heritage Act, properties may be designated municipally or provincially and it also has the power to take conservation easements. The act was

amended in 2005 and at that time many faith groups came together and tried to prevent the act to have power over religious properties. Fortunately, they were unsuccessful.

A major challenge in Ontario lies in the rapid demolition of buildings, especially in rural areas, even before they can be considered for designation.

No funds are available to support conservation. However, the OHT hopes that once the inventory is completed, it will have the ability to secure funds.

The [September edition](#) of OHT's publication *Heritage Matters*, features information about the Trust's places of worship initiative.

NOVA SCOTIA

Meghan P. Hallett, Senior Registrar, Historic Places Initiative Heritage Division: Nova Scotia's challenges are similar to the rest of Canada's such as declining rural populations and congregations. In the case of Halifax, some congregations prefer leaving the downtown core for suburban areas; therefore, the loss of the more recognizable churches is immanent. As an example, Holy Trinity Church in downtown Halifax will be torn down by a developer to be replaced by a \$50 million, 19-storey building.

Other challenges include:

- Demolition is often seen as the easiest way out for many places;
- lack of financial assistance;
- for the rural churches, adaptive-reuse options are limited when churches are near a graveyard,
- churches of a certain age do not have plumbing;
- the urban churches are more considerable in size and require much more resources to keep them up;
- developers often exercise pressure to acquire land occupied by churches.

To start tackling these challenges, Hallett researched ways to inventory churches. The Nova Scotian inventory has now 800 pre-1940s churches identified. The next step is to figure out which ones are still there. Hallett talks directly with historical societies and community groups to understand what issues they are faced with. Additionally, she reads press clippings in order to get a sense of how the population is thinking.

Unfortunately, deregistration from the Canadian Register for Historic Places is growing. At the municipal level, churches are opting to remove themselves from any kind of legal bind by deregistering properties.

The Provincial Heritage Property Act provides protection at the provincial level and allows for municipal bylaws. Currently, 50 of 55 municipalities have adopted municipal heritage bylaws - but not many municipalities are buying into a heritage bylaw.

A recent problematic trend in Nova Scotia can be noted as churches that have in the past voluntarily registered properties at the provincial or municipal level aren't really paying attention to the law. In some cases, even registered churches have been torn down – disregarding the criminal penalties. The rational behind this trend is related to groups

thinking that the government will not fight a religious organization or they are willing to pay the fines which come with breaking the law.

Adaptive reuse is definitely a priority; however, lack of finances and human resources is a problem. A major challenge in adaptive reuse is that some religious groups don't seem to see the relevance and importance of a church once the building has been closed or deconsecrated. They don't seem to worry about the future of the building. Also some groups may find adaptive reuse disrespectful for sacred sites.

Getting information to groups about ways to move buildings, such as the costs of moving a church on a flatbed or how to take it apart, is part of the solution. There is a lack of general awareness of the possibilities available to groups – like moving a building and a composting toilet. For example, a church in Marsall Town in Digby County has fought for many years to stay alive by finding possible new uses, without success. The parish has decided to tear it down.

On a more positive note, in the past 6 months, Hallett has noticed more parishes have opted to try and sell their buildings rather than dealing with it internally. There is a growing interest in the media for adaptive reuse. Talking about the greenside of saving a building also helps to raise awareness –by saving a church you're helping to support green industries. Out of Acadia University is the Baptist church archive which is preparing an inventory of Baptists churches and creating a database.

A National strategy would be useful for Nova Scotia. Sharing success stories, clearing up misconceptions about reuse and bringing people to work together are important tasks to deal with. At the local level, there seems to be unwillingness for people to share or admit that they have a problem with others in their community.

NEWFOUNDLAND

Andrea O'Brien, Church Inventory Officer, Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador: Churches are our most visible sticking structures on our landscape with great aesthetic value. They have been a beacon of home for generations of sea fearers and they are the most distinct buildings in our communities. They have a great cultural value as they are reminders of a time when community cooperation was a way of life and stands as testaments to the faith of generations that came before us. They mark faith, memory and community. Many of these churches are in jeopardy due to a decline in church membership.

With this reality in mind, the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland initiated a provincial heritage church inventory in April 2007. A volunteer survey form was distributed to all major denominations, municipalities and heritage organizations in the province. A list of existing churches was also gathered. A total of 625 churches were documented and around 300 remain. This does not include the most recent evangelical churches. These numbers are not, at first glance, impressive in comparison with other provincial organizations, but the ratio churches/people amounts to about 1 church for every 500 Newfoundlanders. The inventory will be accessible to the public as it will be included on the Canadian Register for Historic Places.

Currently, the only protection offered for churches in NL is a voluntary provincial designation as a provincially registered heritage structure or as a municipal heritage building. To date, with the over 1000 churches the Foundation is aware of, 42 churches have been declared heritage structures – 10 of these are in the capital city and 13 are municipal heritage buildings.

The only external funding available for churches is through the Heritage Foundation's granting program for registered heritage structures. Meaning, only 5% of churches can apply for restoration funding.

On June 6-7 2008, the Heritage Foundation welcomed 150 delegates from religious groups, municipalities and heritage community to a forum on stewardship and historic religious buildings. Participants highlighted the historical value of religious buildings, explored present-day stewardship challenges and shared concerns for the future sustainability of these buildings. It was agreed that churches must be protected for their architectural merit and for their cultural and historical significance. Lack of funding is seen as an obstacle to continued use by congregations and it was noted that churches are not considered for provincial government grants to aid in maintenance or restoration. Participants suggested that while the will to save these buildings exists, the decisions are in the hands of the church hierarchy who does not always understand the value of these buildings to communities. It was noted that this is new ground for clergy who have been trained to minister, not to save buildings. There is also a perceived reluctance on the part of church officials to allow inactive churches to be used for non-religious purposes. They stress that possibilities for adaptive reuse should be considered and policies set down for the divestment of churches.

This fall, the Heritage Foundation of NL and Labrador plans to begin a consultation process with major denominations in the province to determine their needs for active buildings, especially for restoration. Traditional building materials are increasingly being replaced with modern features and finishes. Many see these changes as positive, because they believe modern materials require less maintenance in the long run.

O'Brien describes the example of a United church with a congregation of 10 people in a small community of 50. The church will be voting to decide the fate of the building – it will probably be demolished. The town is not incorporated, making it impossible to put a municipal heritage protection. The Foundation would like to work with denominations and religious groups to start a dialogue on policies for churches like this. Paraphrasing the Minister, O'Brien notes "What would this community be without this church on the landscape? Will our beautiful ocean view be so beautiful when our symbol of community will be gone? Will we even think of ourselves as a community or just a collection of houses on the side of a highway?"

ADVOCATES PERSPECTIVE

André Chénier, Advocate, SOS-Églises (www.soseglises.com) and David Tremblay, Advocate, SOS-Églises, South Western Ontario: The SOS-Églises group have been working for the protection of two churches belonging to the Diocese of London, one of the larger English-speaking Roman Catholic dioceses of Canada. Tremblay remarks that

most of the speakers addressed the issue of declining congregations and clergy negatively affecting the use of churches, however for the two communities of Saint-Joachim and Pointe-Aux-Roches, the challenge resides in the abandonment of historic churches for newer and larger facilities –to create a larger demand and to attract new comers. The new churches would be built in fields, where driving would be the only option. To avoid the demolition of these buildings the SOS-Églises group worked on designating the churches, without the consent of the Diocese and the municipality, stressing their significance and value to the French speaking minority in the region. When the Ontario Heritage Act was amended in 2005, the group felt it had more power to act, but the municipality still needs to buy in the designation.

The challenge now is to find solutions for these buildings once they are saved and protected – advocates need examples of adaptive reuse success stories in rural areas to make their case. The Diocese recently offered one of the churches for one dollar to the SOS-Églises group which believes it can become a model for other rural communities. Churches, Chénier explains, are more than architectural gems; they are spaces in which a community identifies itself. For minority groups, these places are especially important as public spaces.

Narcisse Kakegabon, Band Manager, Longlac 58 First Nation: Located 300 kilometers North East of Thunder Bay, the Long Lac 58 First Nation community has been struggling to keep their historic church alive. Scheduled for demolition in September due to liability and security issues, advocates from the community contacted the Heritage Canada Foundation to help them find solutions and funding. The church was built in 1948 and recognized as one of the most significant buildings in the area. On September 2, the community held a meeting with good attendance to discuss the future of it. The church is vulnerable to extreme weather and the costs of demolition a quite high - \$30,000. In 1999, the Diocese offered the church for one dollar to the community and now they are stricken with high maintenance costs.

The community wants to save this church. In 2002, there was an architectural study completed and options were explored. The first option was to restore it by reusing some existing materials, however the structure is considered to be unstable. The second option was to demolish it. The educational legacy of the Roman Catholic Church is slowly disappearing in the First Nations people and building in these communities which can be identified with the Church are being erased from our memory.

Long Lac 58 has a Facebook group where you can find photos and videos of the church and its community.

Reverend Arlen John Bonnar, Ministre, [Église St.James](#), Montréal: Built as a Methodist Church in 1887, the church became a United one in 1925. When a financial crisis hit Montreal in 1927, the church was covered by storefronts on a temporary basis. The storefronts were finally removed in 2005 and the Cathedral's beauty is now revealed. It was a challenge to undergo this project. In the 1970s, the idea of demolishing the whole area was considered. Thankfully, many advocates came together and decided that this option was unacceptable. The church benefits now from provincial and national heritage designations. Minister Bonnar stresses the important role of the provincial government, through the work of the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec, which supported the

project both morally and financially. Now this magnificent structure has welcomed more than 100,000 admirers, becoming a significant tourist hub in Montreal. However, maintenance issues are still a reality and threaten the church's existence. For example, the church needs to invest \$1,5million to repair its roof.

As a National Historic Site, St. James needs federal investment and commitment. A National Strategy for the protection of churches in Canada is needed, explains Minister Bonnar. At the time of St. James National designation, the church invested \$25,000 to apply for a grant to the federal government, which included the costs of studies and reports. They were promised \$1million towards the roof renovations. Instead, the church administration now has to withstand a deficit of \$25,000.

“What can we do to create change in all of our provinces as these places all belong to us?” notes Minister Bonnar.

AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE – THE EXAMPLE OF THE UK

Ian Wainwright, Group Chief Surveyor, [Ecclesiastical Insurance](#), United Kingdom: Wainwright begins by comparing the Canadian situation to Australia's due to the geography and the age of the church stock. Stepping into the UK context, 80% of the issues outlined during the Roundtable meeting have been experienced in the UK about 40 years ago and are still very much present today.

In terms of scale, there are 50,000 places of worship in the UK, predominantly of the Christian Faith – Anglican, Catholic, Non-Conformists, Synagogues, etc. 16,200 are Anglican and 13,000 are listed as heritage buildings. There are 500,000 listed heritage buildings in the UK and 4-6 million buildings were constructed before 1901. Most of the 13,000 listed heritage churches pre-date the 1700s. As in Canada, the importance of the church was instrumental at the foundation of a community. It is interesting to note that before the 19th and 20th centuries, churches were mostly used as community meeting spaces before becoming entirely faith oriented.

In the UK, every parish has a democratic power over its administration – giving it power to decide the faith of its own parish. They also need to find the means to keep the churches alive locally.

As the UK is predominantly Anglican, the Church of England and State are inextricably linked. The Pastoral Measure is the law governing churches. Legislation related to transforming the use of a church dates back to 1969 and has established a process which requires a church to go through an order before making the decision of abandoning it. This process forces a “thinking period” for the parish in order to explore the heritage value of the church, its possible new uses and transformations.

- Since 1969, 1,750 churches have been closed – predominantly in the 1970s.
- 29 were closed in 2007 and 21 in 2006.
- 265 are in the process of closure, of which 41 with have restricted covenants – these covenants prevents demolition, change of use or profits from the sale.
- Since 1969, 365 churches have been demolished and 341 have been placed under the care of the [Church Conservation Trust](#)

The process of closure is not a rapid one: 2 ½ years is the quickest time to go through the steps. The process involves:

- A report on the condition and significance of the heritage resource: What do we have? Is it worth demolishing?
- Finding alternative uses
- How are the assets disposed of?

Founded in 1969, the Church Conservation is a great way to find reuse examples and ways to finance projects. It was created to respond when an alternative use wasn't able to be found for an architectural gem and the solution was to demolish it - the Nation needed to step in. The churches are kept alive with 70% of the resources coming from the State and 30% coming from the church. CCT's annual budget amounts to \$4 million. When they acquire a building, an higher initial investment is made and then maintenance costs are covered.

In comparison, English Heritage provides educational assistance and service and does not provide funding. The UK government makes available about \$20 million for the 13,000 heritage churches. This amount clearly supersedes the demand. However, local communities have discovered that going to governments is not the only solution.

The first solution is to engage with the wider community by converting some parts of the building for other community uses – meeting space, café, day-care centre, etc. Thus, going back to Britain's medieval roots, where the church was a public space to sell cattle, sheep, or to undertake any activity.

The second solution is related to commerce and engaging the business community. Wainwright gives the example in the city of Birmingham of a church situated in a commercial district. The vicar went to a developer and presented him with the idea of the church as a great focal point in the city and an excellent opportunity for development. The convinced developer went on to subsidise the project with \$20 million. The total costs of the refurbishment project equalled to \$250 million and it was offset by tax credits. The developer's contribution was important to the project. An amphitheatre was added and a café opened in the church.

The third is insurance. Solutions for these problems exist. Ecclesiastical Insurance (EI) is interested in keeping churches alive as vandalism, vacant buildings, fire, theft, etc are major insurance liability problems. From EI's experience, a used and loved church is actually a safer church – claim statistics prove this.

Discussion – Finding National Solutions

What are the major challenges that face faith buildings?

Moorhouse:

- Continuing to meet and bringing groups together is an important national strategy. OHT is offering to help host a meeting next fall during HCF's annual conference in Toronto.
- Ongoing training sessions throughout the year. Bringing local advocates to meet provincial and national heritage peers could help people find solutions more effectively – offering direct results.

- The idea of an electronic manual or workbook on religious properties – related to adaptive reuse strategies – is important to share and to keep on adding information.
- An interactive website to post information and share ideas daily, weekly or whenever the need arises. Organizations and people from the Roundtable would commit to providing best practices, case studies, conservation success stories, publications articles, websites, fundraising information and statistics. HCF could manage this website by initiating this website.
- Define principles for adaptive reuse
- Guidelines on researching and standards for recording places of worship
- Federal funding is necessary
- Engaging with Faith groups as potential champions

Bonnar:

- “It’s the squeaky wheel that gets the oil” Actively going to events with politicians and writing letters will help in campaigning
- We have to work with our diversity and commonalities to get the federal government to listen
- Bonnar invites the group to meet again in St. James in the Spring

Noppen:

- Reacting to some of the proposals, Noppen cautions the group about developing national standards – our sensibilities in different regions can differ a great deal. In Quebec, you would never see a church becoming a bar or a discothèque. Common guidelines are difficult.
- A report of the meeting and proper follow-up is an essential to get these action items resolved.
- Getting involved with First Nations people would be a great way to start activities of the Roundtable.
- A publication or book on the current situation of places of faith in Canada – involving people from BC and Northwest Territories: this could be done from April to September of 2009
- A clearinghouse role should be given to HCF – make available positive solutions, not just the negative issues, by sharing successes. The federal government and politicians are interested in solutions and good news – not bad press.
- National training or distance-learning courses given by a university like UQAM – with university accreditation
- National Competition: “I like my church” – highlighting a church which will never be destroyed as it will be featured in this competition

Natalie Bull:

- HCF is working to build networks which link and work together – such as this Endangered Places of Faith initiative could work with the Educators

Roundtable to link with Educators and students in heritage from across the country.

- A list-serve, like [Agora-1](#), could be developed by HCF for the initiative to help the group to interactively exchange information
- HCF can offer human resources to help build the group and facilitate the progress of identified action items.
- We need to grow our knowledge of adaptive-reuse appropriateness – Ethical standards

Girard-Ruel:

- “Churches Flying Squad” – a group of selected experts - would help local communities faced with issues of church closure, adaptive-reuse, designation, design, revitalization and fundraising.

Chénier:

- Création d’une convention ou une charte pour la protection des églises : L’échange d’information et les appuis sont des initiatives importantes, mais il faut concrétiser le niveau d’engagement en soumettant les décideurs à signer une charte, les mobilisant à agir.
- The creation of an agreement or charter which would submit signatory parties to a high standard in the protection of churches in Canada : Accreditation and commitment to respect and act according to a common vision, developed by faith groups, politicians, organizations, heritage advocates and professionals.

Toweqishig:

- Longlac’s Chief strongly supports the proposal by Luc Noppen that Longlac’s church becomes a pilot initiative of the group.

Moorhouse:

- OHT & ACO proposed to work with the Longlac community and start to find solutions. OHT does not have any funding, but can provide expertise.
- The St. James event in the Spring needs a champion to help this initiative move forward.

Comment from the room:

- More emphasis should be placed on engaging with faith groups. A whole stakeholder group seems to be missing.

Robert Shipley (Professor at the University of Waterloo):

- A major problem in Canada is that the church property is owned by the Diocese – or the church structure. As many congregations are financially stressed, they are looking at liquidating their assets for profit. This is the pressure point. It is critical for a National organization to commit to talking to these owners.

Natalie Bull:

- HCF will commit to engaging with faith groups. The goal would be to have them involved in Toronto.

Robert Shipley:

- Dioceses and church structures are reluctant to get involved with heritage organizations. They were strong opponents of the amendments of the Ontario Heritage Trust – there was massive protest against imposing restrictions on demolition by church authorities.
- A priority to consider: For 200 years churches have been tax free to support their religious function and when authorities decide to liquidate, a legal issue arises. What does the church owe to the community since it has been supported for a number of years? Shipley proposes that churches can liquidate when they pay the back taxes. Is this something we should be looking at?

Noppen:

- This was done 3 years ago in Quebec which instigated a battle with the Catholic diocese. Noppen went to Parliament to enquire about preventing the sale of churches in relation to taxes, but this endeavour failed.
- Launching a National Endowment fund will take years. Bringing together church authorities and representatives of heritage organizations will be a difficult task as church groups are part of the problem, not the solution.
- Noppen predicts that in 20 years no Catholic parishes will be left as we know them today.
- The French organized last June a national religious heritage conference. The five first presenters were bishops and the conclusion was that there is no problem.
- Quebec City will see many of its churches close and demolished.

Kathy Dunster (Biologist and Landscape architect, Unfolding Landscapes):

- From the Land Trust side and in reference to the Churches Swat team idea, often biodiversity squads go on missions to identify values and raise awareness.

Meeting adjourned.

3. Action items for the Endangered Places of Faith Roundtable:

Action Items	Leads / Champions
Biannual Religious Heritage Forum: St. James Church, Montreal, a One-day event in March or April (Date TBD).	Organized by Minister Bonnar, Luc Noppen, Camille Girard-Ruel and ICOMOS?
Biannual Religious Heritage Forum: Heritage Canada Foundation conference in Toronto (September 24-26 2009)	Organized in collaboration with the Ontario Heritage Trust

Website	Administered by the Heritage Canada Foundation – A website plan has been developed and the group is encouraged to contact Camille to get involved Information given by the group (preferably by email)
Publication / Book project	Luc Noppen Marilyn Williams HCF Others?
List-serve or online discussion forum on religious heritage	HCF Others?
National Competition « I like my church! »	Luc Noppen David-John Fournier?
Training sessions – Long-distance learning	
Ethical practice	
TOOL KIT - Best practices sharing (Website materials, publications)	HCF to prepare a proposal to be sent around
Special Endowment National Fund for Faith Buildings	
Engaging faith and multi-faith groups and engaging all provinces	HCF will continue to engage the National faith stakeholders Representatives of the initiative are encouraged to engage local faith groups and build coalitions – and reporting back to HCF
National Principles / Agreement signed by dioceses, developers, municipalities, manufacturers, activists	
National Accreditation for Good Practice	
Creative Partnerships	
Heritage Churches Swat Team	

Note: If you are interested in getting involved in one of these items, please mark your name in the appropriate box and send a reply email to Camille cgirardruel@heritagecanada.org.