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## SHOTGUN WEDDING OR MISSION OPPORTUNITY?

The most common criticism that we hear about the planned structural renewal for our church is that synods are being forced into it against their will, somewhat akin to a shotgun wedding. It is not like that, nor is it a hostile takeover. The officers of the synods and the National Church met in a consultation, February 2009, and agreed there need to be major changes to the organizational structure of the church. This understanding is based on the analysis of current finances along with projected demographic trends. Officers expressed a willingness to keep “everything on the table” as the discussions moved forward and noted the need to increase work in the areas of evangelism, outreach and stewardship as we live out our call to be a church *In Mission for Others*.

National Church Council formed a task force with representatives from all synods to look at questions of structure as they relate to mission and brought forward a report to National Convention last summer, which was adopted in principle. Now specific recommendations will be proposed and voted on at Synod Conventions this spring and summer. Synod members are being provided with the proposed motions so they can be prepared at Synod Conventions to make a choice about how best to move forward.

In the BC and ABT synods, and SK and MNO synods, the choice being presented is to merge into a larger synod—a synod that will be flexible, affordable and sustainable. We are thinking of it as “better together”. The new larger synods will have more resources and sustainability as they support congregations and areas in their mission. There will be cost savings through a reduction in the governance and structures that will occur (fewer offices, fewer committees, etc...). Those savings will be reinvested back into the system in order to support ministry and mission at the local level. This is in keeping with the vision of the synod officers three years ago.

More information about how we will be “better together” will be coming in the near future!

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For further information on the ELCIC’s structural renewal process,  
visit [elcic.ca/structural-renewal](http://elcic.ca/structural-renewal).

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