



General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada
Wednesday, June 7, 2017

Wednesday morning began with moving worship, led by the local host team. Scripture was read by Beth Forester of St. Paul's, Amherst Island. The Rev. Dr. Bob Paul of Vancouver School of Theology reflected on what God is doing through the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about the salvation of the world—a “great project launched by Jesus Christ.” He commended, “We have a solution to what the world needs. Let us not neglect what we have to share: a treasurer beyond value.”

SEDERUNT 8

Ecumenical Guest - The Rev. André Lavergne

The Rev. Amanda Currie, convener of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, welcomed and introduced The Rev. André Lavergne of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The Rev. Lavergne talked about the enduring bond between Lutherans and Presbyterians—from the Reformation 500 years ago, to present collaboration in the World Council of Churches, KAIROS, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and other alliances. In celebration of our shared theological history and the unity of Christ's church, he said, “There is more that unites us in all our diversity than divides us. We can lift each other up.”

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee Report

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee report highlighted the denomination's involvement with the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches, as well as initiatives that nurture dialogue among a diversity of churches and encourage congregations to join together in worship and fellowship. These initiatives include a joint worship service produced with the



Christian Reformed Church in North America on the theme “The Five Solas” to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. An upcoming interfaith event, the Parliament of World Religions, will be coming to Toronto in November 2018.

Reformation @ 500 Worship Service

The Moderator led the Assembly in a service commemorating 500 years of reformation in the church. Following prayer by the Rev. Amanda Currie, the Five Solas were emphasized by the reading of scripture and short reflections.



Grace Alone Ephesians 2:1–10 Reflection: The Rev. Frances Savill
 “God saved you by his grace when you believed. You can’t take credit for this. It is a gift from God.”

Faith Alone Philippians 3:4b–12 Reflection: The Rev. Peter Bush
 “The reformers declared loudly salvation cannot be earned by works. In the end all there is, is God’s gift of faith.”

Scripture Alone 2 Timothy 3:14–17 Reflection: The Rev. Sybil Mosley
 “There is no circumstance in life today that God’s word cannot speak to. There is no experience like when the Word of God grips us: we cannot get away...like Jacob we declare: I will not let you go!”

Christ Alone Colossians 1:11–20 Reflection: The Rev. Germaine Lovelace
 “Christ is the invisible image of the invisible God. He is first in everything. How will we live together? Through the power of Christ, the only reconciler.”

To God Alone be Glory 1 Corinthians 10:23–33 Reflection: The Rev. Karla Wübbenhorst
 “Not to us, O Lord, to your name, give glory! How can I live so that God can use me?”

The Assembly then joined in the singing of *Joyful, Joyful We Adore You*.

Student Representative Reports

Prudence Neba, the representative from The Presbyterian College, comes from the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. “I think my church will be proud and happy to see me speak at the Assembly. I bring greetings from them. We serve one God. We can be one another’s keeper.” She

spoke of the importance of working and enhancing youth ministry so that “we are certain that tomorrow’s church will be strong, if today’s youth are strong.”

Trish Heidebrecht Archibald, representing Knox College shared how she had been cynical about General Assembly but she was astounded by how hard commissioners and staff work at GA and was “heartened to see the great diversity of our church representatives here, in language, culture and in opinion.” She was impressed by the overall civility of the process that she witnessed—even when decisions were not to one’s conviction —and hopes to serve in the courts of the church with as much patience and compassion as she had seen during the week.

Andrea Perrett, representing Vancouver School of Theology, recognized that it had been a difficult Assembly, one where “one might even question one’s faith.” But she also said that “Faith is a gift of God and is not contingent on enjoying every moment of General Assembly. God’s grace has been with us this entire time.” She saw it in small actions of caring and people with opposing views sitting and enjoying laughter together.

Presbyterian College

Minutes of appreciation were expressed for Dr. Joseph C. McLelland’s contributions to congregational and theological life of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for over 65 years, and the Rev. Dr. William J. Klempa who served as principal of the college from 1978–1998.

The report highlighted how Presbyterian College is encouraging mentoring, cultivating ecumenical networks, strengthening connections with Indigenous people and attracting global students.

Young Adult Representatives

Young Adult Representatives reflected on some of the matters that were most important to them, including: clean water for Indigenous communities, remaining united, connecting with the world beyond the walls of the church, striving for world peace which begins with peace among world religions. They urged continued work on issues important to Indigenous people and the LGBTQI community.



Terms of Reference for the Special Committee re LGBTQI people

The Assembly adopted terms of reference for the special committee to listen to the stories of LGBTQI people and the church. The committee will create a safe and respectful environment, where confidentiality is assured and where people can share stories of harm and experiences of God’s grace and Christian ministry, even in the midst of challenges. Stories can be shared orally or in writing and will be included in the report, with permission. The committee will prepare an appropriate response to the issue of homophobia within the PCC, with concrete actions for implementation. The members of the special committee were them named.

Commissioner’s Overture

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria is one of the oldest Christian communities in the world. Coptic Christians have endured persecution for centuries. The moderator will write to Coptic Pope Tawadros II and the Reformed churches in Egypt and North Africa assuring them

that their churches and their people are in our prayers. Churches were encouraged to engage with the work of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee and the International Affairs Committee in order to constructively work towards peaceful coexistence throughout the world and in our own neighbourhoods.

Additional Motions

In response to the address by Dr. Blackstock, who spoke about the inequalities First Nations children face in Canada, the Assembly instructed the Moderator to write to the Prime Minister of Canada urging the Government of Canada to comply with the Order of the Canadian Rights Tribunal regarding discrimination against Indigenous children by the government.

An additional motion was also adopted to have the Moderator write to the LGBTQI community in order to apologize for homophobia in the church.

Courtesies and Loyal Addresses

Commissioners gave thanks to God for being with them as they worshipped, listened, debated, made new friends, renewed friendships and remembered that God is “with us yesterday, today and forever.” Sincere thanks was extended to the Anishinaabe and Haudensosaunee, on whose traditional lands the Assembly met, the Presbytery of Kingston, St. Andrew’s and those on the local host committee, the Moderator, the YAR and Student Representatives, the ecumenical, international and inter-faith visitors, Dr. Cindy Blackstock, the GAO staff, the technical people and the commissioners. Loyal Addresses were made to the Queen, Governor General of Canada, Prime Minister of Canada, Premier of Ontario and Mayor of Kingston.

Jon Wyminga helped close the Assembly by praying in Dakelh.

