

COMMITTEE TO ADVISE WITH THE MODERATOR

PURPOSE

The Committee to Advise with the Moderator provides advice and support for the Moderator of the General Assembly during her/his moderatorial year. The committee meets with the Moderator to assist in establishing the itinerary, listen to reports of her/his travels and activities, and to offer support and encouragement. This committee does not develop policy.

Members of presbyteries are eligible to cast a ballot for the Moderator-Elect. This committee counts the ballots and presents a recommendation for the Moderator of the General Assembly at the opening sederunt.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Moderator of the General Assembly annually travels throughout the church in Canada and has one international trip organized by International Ministries. The Rev. Peter Bush, along with his wife Debbie, travelled to Taiwan in July 2017. This report highlights Peter's travels within presbyteries, to congregations and ecumenical events, and at Indigenous people's gatherings. Peter shared with the church, through social media, prayers for current events and concerns that arose during his moderatorial year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Moderator of the 2017 General Assembly (p. 74–76)

The recommendations below express the thanks and appreciation of the General Assembly to: the Rev. Peter Bush for his moderatorial leadership; the congregation of Westwood, Winnipeg; the many congregations, presbyteries and other gatherings that hosted him; and to his family, Debbie and Nathan.

Recommendation No. 1

That the gratitude and appreciation of the Assembly be extended to the Rev. Peter Bush for his wise, courageous, prayerful and pastoral leadership as Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly.

Recommendation No. 2

That the gratitude of the Assembly be expressed to the congregation of Westwood Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, as they are to be commended for their faithful support, encouragement and care of the Rev. Peter Bush during his moderatorial year and that the appreciation of the Assembly be extended to the lay preachers who ably led worship at Westwood Church throughout the year.

Recommendation No. 3

That the thanks of the Assembly be extended to the congregations, individuals, presbyteries, synods, organizations, and international and ecumenical partners who warmly welcomed and graciously offered hospitality to the Rev. Peter Bush.

Recommendation No. 4

That the thanks of the Assembly be extended to the Rev. Peter Bush's family, his wife, Debbie and son Nathan for their understanding and prayerful support throughout this challenging year.

Nomination for Moderator of the 144th General Assembly (p. 76)

The following nomination for the Moderator is presented to the General Assembly during the first sederunt. This year, the Rev. Daniel Cho will be nominated.

In accordance with the procedure determined by the General Assembly, the Committee to Advise with the Moderator nominates the Rev. Daniel Cho as Moderator of the 144th General Assembly.

ASSEMBLY COUNCIL

PURPOSE

The Assembly Council is a servant of the church. In its role as both a coordinating body and a prophetic one, the Assembly Council is responsible for ensuring that the work of the church is carried out efficiently and effectively within the policies established by the General Assembly.

The Assembly Council coordinates the work of the national agencies of the church, having direct links with national staff and responsibility for the policies of the national office. It has final responsibility for financial matters under the authority of the General Assembly and recommends policy direction for the church to the Assembly. It is also called upon to present a vision for the mission of a church. It is also to affirm the work of the agencies of the church as they carry out a prophetic role for our denomination.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report is introduced with a report by the convener, Robert Smith, on the work of the Assembly Council through the past year. Much of the work of the Assembly Council is based on the strategic plan adopted in 2016. This is expected to increase in the future. Highlights of the work of each of the Assembly Council committees are given (Archives and Records, Benevolence, Church Architecture, Executive, Management Team and the Human Resources Committee). As is the case each year, this report also looks back at the financial results for The Presbyterian Church in Canada and looks forward to how we will carry on our mission through the 2019 budget.

Several matters were referred to the Assembly Council by past Assemblies. Responses for consideration can be found related to a fair stipend for summer students, arrangements for the General Assembly and ongoing work on housing benefits for lay ministry staff.

An update of our ongoing commitment to the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and our ecumenical work with Indigenous partner organizations and the Government of Canada is given.

The Assembly Council also has reports on exploring alternate decision-making processes based on building consensus in groups and how they might benefit the church.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consent Recommendations

That Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6 and 12 (identified by ►) be adopted by consent.

Microfilming/Digitizing Important Church Records (p. 80)

The Archives staff continue to encourage congregations to microfilm and/or digitize their session minutes and church registers. A focus for this year was approaching selected historic congregations across the county that have not yet copied their records in any format and asking them to do so.

► Recommendation No. 1

That all church courts be encouraged to have their official records (especially session minutes and church registers) copied to microfilm for security and preservation purposes, and also digitized if desired, by contacting the Archives.

Financial Results for 2017 (p. 84–86)

Thanks to the generous contributions to Presbyterians Sharing from congregations, individuals and groups across the church, the denomination is able to carry on mission and ministry throughout Canada and around the world. It is important that we acknowledge and give gratitude for their continued generosity and support.

The Finance Committee of the Assembly Council oversees the operating budget as well as the stewardship of Restricted Funds and Endowment Funds of the church. Each spring the Assembly Council reviews in detail, approves the audited financial statements and then presents them for information to the General Assembly.

Total revenue for 2017 was \$7.2 million, down by only \$100,000 when compared to 2016. Individuals giving to Presbyterians Sharing increased by \$16,500 over the previous year.

Total expenditures for 2017 were \$8,369,278, which was \$874,956 lower than budgeted and \$280,291 lower than last year's. The difference between revenue and expenditures is balanced through the careful and sustainable use of financial reserves held by the church.

The Pension Fund statements are also reviewed by the Assembly Council and favourable results were found to be well presented.

► **Recommendation No. 2**

That the financial statements for The Presbyterian Church in Canada at December 31, 2017, be received for information. (p. 410–27)

► **Recommendation No. 3**

That the financial statements for The Presbyterian Church in Canada Pension Fund at December 31, 2017, be received for information. (p. 428–50)

2019 Budget (p. 86–87)

The 2019 budget, compared to the 2018, reflects a decrease of 1.4% or \$126,751. Life and Mission Agency will reprioritize their spending. Support Services will require an increase of \$50,500 due to increases in insurance premiums and other fees. Careful spending and a transfer of monies from internally Restricted Funds of the church enable the budget to be balanced.

Recommendation No. 4

That the 2019 budget be approved. (p. 94)

Three Year Forecast 2020–2022 (p. 87)

Each year the Assembly Council also provides a three year financial forecast to the Assembly for information. The forecast shows revenues lined up with a level of expenditures and transfers from Restricted Funds that are sustainable over a three to five-year period.

Recommendation No. 5

That the 2020 to 2022 forecast be received for information.

Overture No. 8. 2017 re housing allowance benefit for non-ordained church workers (p. 88)

The Assembly Council discussed a draft response to an overture on this topic. Following those discussions it was agreed that more work is required and the matter was referred to the Human Resources Committee (previously Personnel Policy Committee) for further consideration.

► **Recommendation No. 6**

That permission be granted for report on Overture No. 8, 2017 to the 2019 General Assembly.

Overture No. 13, 2018 re summer students stipend and accommodation (p. 88–89)

The framers the overture on this subject rightly point out that the stipend for summer student appointments has not been adjusted since 2001. The rate of pay stands at \$405 per week, or \$305 per week if housing is included.

Separate from summer stipends, Canadian Ministries supports a Rural and Remote Ministry Grant program which is popular among candidates for ministry. Under the terms of the grant, congregations pay the student according to the stipend and allowance schedule adopted by the General Assembly. At the end of the summer a grant of \$5,000 is provided to the congregation by Canadian Ministries with the stipulation that the congregation pass the grant on to the student to put towards their tuition and other costs for the coming year.

The Assembly Council is committed to the principle of meeting or exceeding provincial employment standards and, therefore, the following adjustment to the stipend for students on summer appointment is recommended.

Recommendation No. 7

That the stipend for students on summer appointment meet or exceed the minimum wage requirements for the province in which the appointment takes place; housing costs may be shared with the student, at a rate not to exceed \$100 per week, plus travel, as applicable.

Recommendation No. 8

That the Assembly Council review the stipend for students on summer appointment at least every five years.

Recommendation No. 9

That the above be the answer to Overture No. 13, 2017 re summer students stipend and accommodation.

Petition Nos. 1 and 3, 2017 re guidance re denominational unity during sexuality discussions (p. 89–91)

Petitions from the two Han-Ca Presbyteries were received asking for “guidance as to how we can remain as one body in the denomination, remaining as your courts of presbyteries serving its constituent members” during the current sexuality discussions.

The Assembly Council engaged the services of a consultant and held a one-day workshop with representatives of both presbyteries and three agencies of the church.

Together the group that gathered agreed to commend the following proposals to the church:

That the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada commit to unity as a precondition to decisions related to the issues of human sexuality.

That the General Assembly apply the biblical and historical principles of forbearance to one another and, if necessary, that the Committee on Church Doctrine articulate these principles to the church.

That, if necessary to preserve the unity of the church, the possibilities of a local option be explored.

That, if necessary, the question of whether this issue is an “essential of the faith” be explored; this follows the principle of the Reformer, Rupertus Meldenius, to whom is attributed the phrase “In Essentials unity, in Non-Essentials liberty, in all things Charity.”

The Assembly Council endorsed the results of the workshop as an appropriate response to the consultation requested by the petitions and also expresses its hope that the positive experience listening to one another and working together even in the presence of widely divergent views can be encouraged broadly in the church and within the work of the General Assembly on issues of sexuality. To that end, the Assembly Council makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation No. 10

That we as a church seek unity in Christ in our dealings with one another, in the spirit of the experience of the workshop engaged in by representatives of the Han-Ca Presbyteries, the Committee on Church Doctrine, the Life and Mission Agency, the Assembly Council and the Clerks of Assembly.

Recommendation No. 11

That the above actions and report be the answer to Petition Nos. 1 and 3, 2017 re guidance re denominational unity during human sexuality discussions.

Overture No. 1, 2018 re General Assembly arrangements (p. 91)

An overture on this subject asks that the Assembly Council and the General Assembly Office ensure the provision of adequate breaks in the flow of the General Assembly for commissioners, the Clerks of Assembly and the Moderator. It also asks that consideration be given to ensure sleeping accommodations, meals and meetings can be in close proximity. This is in the context of a shorter General Assembly (Sunday through Wednesday) which tends to necessitate longer days of business. The Assembly Council has appointed a General Assembly Design Team to assist both the Council and the General Assembly Office in shaping all aspects of the General Assembly. The design team has reviewed this overture and is very much aware of the need to provide a balance of prayerful work, worship, breaks, fellowship and rest during the General Assembly. Some changes to this end are being introduced at this Assembly. In addition to this, the Assembly Council has agreed to add one day to the Assembly starting in 2019.

► Recommendation No. 12

That the prayer of Overture No. 1, 2018 re General Assembly arrangements be answered in terms of the above report.

ATLANTIC MISSION SOCIETY

PURPOSE

The Atlantic Mission Society (AMS) purpose is to provide support “through prayer, study and service” for mission endeavours of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Its motto is “The World for Church”. Membership is based in auxiliaries within local congregations with each auxiliary represented on the presbyterial executive. Since 1987, men have been welcomed into membership. The society holds an annual meeting each September to which every auxiliary may send a voting delegate. All AMS members are also invited to attend as non-voting participants. Thirteen officers and the presidents of the eight presbyterials comprise the executive which meets spring and fall and in conjunction with the annual meeting. Discovery Days, a weekend event, is held every two years. *The Presbyterian Message* is produced nine times a year, providing devotional and study materials as society news. Promoting and encouraging children and youth ministry is important to the AMS.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Atlantic Mission Society with God’s grace supports endeavours of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We continue to be blessed with members who are committed and dedicated to serve and support mission with love.

The membership of AMS is made up of 68 auxiliaries, 603 members and 145 associate members. While our membership is declining, the enthusiasm and support for mission remains and for this we give thanks.

In the past year, \$50,000 was donated to The Presbyterian Church in Canada; three bursaries were awarded to students studying for the ministry; we supported the three camps within our region and funds were provided for a Youth in Mission participant. We continue to support overseas projects in places such as Guatemala, India and Syria, as well as many projects here at home. We are blessed by the continued support to mission of our members.

This is a very special year for *The Presbyterian Message* as we celebrate our 125th anniversary of the publication. In this new digital world, the demise of many publications and the increasing cost of publishing, we continue to be open to new and creative ways to fund *The Message* so that it can continue for many more years.

The AMS is making use of the strategic plan of the church, incorporating the vision statement into our events. This year “Empowered by the Spirit” was the theme of Discovery Days and of Mission Awareness Sunday.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

PURPOSE

The Committee on Bills and Overtures is one of the committees proposed by the Committee on Business to be appointed during the Assembly's first sederunt. As a way of facilitating the work of this committee, it met by conference call prior to the Assembly. The committee is normally made up of the Clerks of Assembly and commissioners to that Assembly who are clerks of synods and presbyteries. Book of Forms section 308 describes the responsibilities of this committee. In short, it receives documents transmitted to the Assembly, such as unREFERRED overtures, petitions and appeals. It then prepares recommendations proposing how the Assembly might deal with them.

SUMMARY

The committee considered 13 unREFERRED overtures and one appeal. A referral is proposed in each case apart from Overture No. 18 (Recommendation No. 9) and Overture No. 21 (Recommendation No. 11). Please note that Overture Nos. 12 and 13, which are almost identical in content, are addressed together by Recommendation No. 4. The recommendation regarding the appeal includes guidance for the appointment of a special commission and the preparation of terms of reference for the commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consent Recommendations

There are no consent recommendations.

Granting Vote for Young Adult Representatives (p. 328)

The Assembly Council oversees the General Assembly Design Team that is considering the shape of the General Assembly and ways to help the Assembly more effectively achieve its purpose. The Clerks of Assembly advise on polity matters. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 1

That the prayer of Overture No. 9, 2018 (p. 328) re granting vote for young adult representatives be referred to the Assembly Council in consultation with the Clerks of Assembly.

Funding for the Native Ministries Endowment Fund (p. 328)

In 2017, the Assembly Council initiated the establishment of the Native Ministries Endowment Fund in consultation with Justice Ministries and Canadian Ministries. The committee believes further considerations would benefit from the input of these three bodies. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 2

That Overture No. 10, 2018 (p. 328) re funding for the Native Ministries Endowment Fund be referred to the Assembly Council in consultation with the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries and Canadian Ministries).

Support for Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action No. 57 (p. 328–29)

The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action have, primarily, been advocated through Justice Ministries. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 3

That Overture No. 11, 2018 (p. 328–29) re support for Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action No. 57 be referred to the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries).

“Where from Here”, suggested option D (p. 329–30)

In its report to the 2017 General Assembly, the Committee on Church Doctrine noted that the three options presented in the “Where from Here” document are not the only three available to the church. The Committee on Church Doctrine invited responses, such as alternative options, to be submitted directly to the committee for its consideration. Since this suggestion comes to the Assembly as an overture, the Committee on Bills and Overtures is of the opinion the response should include the Assembly Council as the body that would normally provide this type of direction. Consulting with the two bodies that have been providing leadership on responses to overtures related to sexuality would be logical. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 4

That Overture Nos. 12 (p. 329) and 13 (p. 329–30), 2018 re “Where from Here”, a suggested option D, be referred to the Assembly Council in consultation with the Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency.

Relocating the National Office within the Presbytery of Hamilton (p. 330)

The Assembly Council is currently engaged in conversations regarding the possible relocation of the national office. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 5

That Overture No. 14, 2018 (p. 330) re relocating the national office within the Presbytery of Hamilton be referred to the Assembly Council.

Workplace Harassment (p. 330–31)

The Life and Mission Agency is responsible for the policies of Leading with Care, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment, and Racial Harassment. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 6

That Overture No. 15, 2018 (p. 330–31) re workplace harassment be referred to the Life and Mission Agency.

Congregational Dollar Base Calculation (p. 331)

Assembly Council is the body that recommends changes to the dollar base calculation in consultation with the Life and Mission Agency (Stewardship and Planned Giving). Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 7

That Overture No. 16, 2018 (p. 331) re congregational dollar base calculation be referred to the Assembly Council in consultation with the Life and Mission Agency (Stewardship and Planned Giving).

Ministry and Mental Health (p. 331–32)

In 2011, the church adopted a Ministry and Church Vocations document entitled “Guidelines for Dealing with Mental Health Issues”. Overture No. 17, 2018, suggests building on that foundation. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 8

That Overture No. 17, 2018 (p. 331–32) re ministry and mental health be referred to the Life and Mission Agency (Ministry and Church Vocations).

Mandatory Interim Ministry during Vacancy (p. 332)

The committee is of the opinion that the matter raised in this overture is appropriately dealt with by the authority of each presbytery. The presbytery’s knowledge of the needs of the congregations within its bounds is central to the appointment of interim ministers. The committee anticipates there could be an insurmountable challenge of finding an interim minister for every vacancy. The committee believes the current process of appointing interim ministers is sufficient and that church should not invest resources studying this matter. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 9

That Overture No. 18, 2018 (p. 332) re mandatory interim ministry during vacancy be not received.

Statistical Report re “Missionary and Benevolent Purposes” (p. 332–34)

This subject of this overture is similar to that of Overture No. 16, 2018 above, therefore, the committee makes the same recommendation.

Recommendation No. 10

That Overture No. 19, 2018 (p. 332–34) re statistical report re “missionary and benevolent purposes” be referred to the Assembly Council in consultation with the Life and Mission Agency (Stewardship and Planned Giving).

Endorsing the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children (p. 334–35)

This overture contains a statement from the Truth and Reconciliation’s Calls to Action No. 6 that calls upon the Government of Canada to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada. Section 43 states that the use of force by way of correction toward a pupil or child can be justified. The committee believes this would be a subject for the consideration of Justice Ministries. The overture also relates to the church’s Leading with Care Policy which is part of the Canadian Ministries portfolio. Not wanting to necessarily restrict the Life and Mission Agency to responding through these two departments, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 11

That Overture No. 20 (p. 334–35) re endorsing the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth be referred to the Life and Mission Agency.

The Rev. Robert J. Calder and Presbytery Constituent Roll (p. 336)

Prior to the meeting of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, the Clerks of Assembly consulted with the clerk of the Presbytery of Edmonton-Lakeland concerning this overture to seek contextual information. The Clerks learned that Mr. Calder, a retired minister of our church, is serving Sherwood Park Church on a 40% time basis whereas the denomination’s legislation (Book of Form 176.1) requires 50% time in a pastoral charge before the presiding minister may be added to the constituent roll. To grant the prayer of this overture would be a significant departure from the law of the church. While the committee appreciates the commitment of retired ministers, like the Rev. Calder, to the work of the presbytery, it agrees the request of this overture lies outside the parameters and principles of our church’s law. It hopes the presbytery may find other ways of dealing with the concerns stated in the overture. The committee notes that the question of elder-minister imbalance at presbytery meetings is before the church by way of another overture. (See Clerks of Assembly report, p. 123–25). Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 12

That Overture No. 21 (p. 336) re the Rev. Robert J. Calder be not granted.

Appeal No. 1, 2018 re the Session of Mimico Church against the decision of the Presbytery of West Toronto (Not printed)

The committee agreed to recommend a special General Assembly commission be named to respond to this appeal and therefore makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 13

That Appeal No. 1, 2018 re the Session of Mimico Church, against the decision of the Presbytery of West Toronto, be referred to a special commission of the Assembly, consisting of five members plus the Clerks of Assembly as consultants, and that the commission’s terms of reference be prepared by the Assembly’s Committee on Terms of Reference.

COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS

PURPOSE

The Committee on Business is appointed for each General Assembly. Working with the Clerks of Assembly and the General Assembly Office, the committee arranges for the receipt of overtures, petitions and appeals, the preparation of the Assembly reports and agenda documentation, and recommends the members for the committees of a specific Assembly. At the Assembly, it monitors the flow of business and ensures that all items are completed before the Assembly concludes.

REPORT SUMMARY

The report of the Business Committee includes recommendations that relate to the functioning of the General Assembly such as the agenda, committee membership and participating in the Assembly. The agenda has been established so that each committee will present its entire report before moving onto the next report. There will be orders of the day at specific times. This year, the committee is recommending that a consensus-building decision-making process be used on Monday evening. Included in the report are references to the Nominations report (p. 271), the Special Committee re Pension Solvency and the Presbyterian Record Inc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consent Recommendations

That Recommendation Nos. 1 to 13 (identified by ►) be adopted by consent.

Attendance, Agenda and Schedule (p. 98–99)

The following recommendations deal with the attendance of commissioners and young adult and student representatives, the agenda and the meetings times.

► Recommendation No. 1

That with a view to having their attendance recorded, each commissioner, young adult and student representative be requested to register with the Assembly Office.

► Recommendation No. 2

That the remaining sederunts of the Assembly be held in the gym of the Athletic Complex of Wilfrid Laurier University on Monday from 8:30 am to approximately 12:00 noon, Monday from 2:00 pm to approximately 5:00 pm, Monday from 7:00 pm to approximately 9:30 pm, Tuesday from 8:30 am to approximately 12:00 noon, Tuesday from 2:00 pm to approximately 5:00 pm, Tuesday from 7:00 to approximately 9:30 pm, Wednesday 8:30 am until the completion of business of the Assembly.

► Recommendation No. 3

That the agenda for Sunday and Monday be approved as printed (p. 6–7).

► Recommendation No. 4

That the consensus-building decision-making process be used during the fourth sederunt on Monday evening.

► Recommendation No. 5

That all announcements be given in writing to the Business Committee no later than 20 minutes prior to the end of each sederunt.

► Recommendation No. 6

That in order for the Assembly Office to prepare reports for projection, commissioners who have knowledge that they will be presenting additional motions or amendments prepare them in a preceding sederunt for presentation to the Business Committee.

► **Recommendation No. 7**

That any request for permission to distribute handouts to the General Assembly be directed through the Business Committee.

Committees of this Assembly (p. 99)

Below is the list of committees and the membership proposed for this General Assembly.

► **Recommendation No. 8**

That the committees of Assembly be constituted as follows:

Committee on Bills and Overtures

Convener: the Rev. W. Alexander Bisset

Clerks of Assembly: the Rev. Stephen Kendall, the Rev. Donald G.A. Muir

Commissioners who are clerks of presbytery or synod: the Rev. Peter G. Bush, the Rev. Reid Chudley, the Rev. Kent E. Burdett, the Rev. Sean J. Foster, the Rev. Cherie A. Inksetter, the Rev. Seong-Keun (Richard) Kim, the Rev. Dr. P.A. (Sandy) McDonald, the Rev. George S. Malcolm

Committee on Business

Convener: the Rev. Mark R. McLennan

Members: Mr. Donald J. Bartlett, the Rev. Dr. Aubrey J. Botha, Ms. Grace-ann McIntyre, the Rev. Patricia L. Van Gelder

Committee to Confer with the Moderator

Convener: the Rev. Peter G. Bush

A Clerk of the General Assembly

Members: the Rev. Dr. Nicholas Athanasiadis, the Rev. Chuck (Sang Hyuk) Moon, Ms. D. Anne Phillips, Ms. Connie M. Wardle

Committee on Courtesies and Loyal Addresses

Convener: the Rev. Laurie Deacon

Members: the Rev. Sampson Afoakwah, the Rev. Janet Ryu-Chan, Ms. Carol Stymiest

Committee to Examine the Records

Convener: Mr. Verne Gilkes

Members: the Rev. George S. Malcolm, Ms. Mary Mikkelson the Rev. Joyce Yanishewski

Committee on Remits (note: this committee is not required this year)

Committee on Roll and Leave to Withdraw

Convener: the Rev. John R. Wilson

Members: Mr. Terry G. Hagen, Ms. Marlene M. Phillips, the Rev. Dr. Mona Scrivens

Committee on Terms of Reference

Convener: Ms. Cheryl E. Weeks

Members: the Rev. Bradford E. Blaikie, the Rev. Dr. J. Mark Lewis, Ms. Moira Robson

Participation in the General Assembly (p. 99–100)

► **Recommendation No. 9**

That the Committee to Nominate, the Assembly Council and the Life and Mission Agency's Ministry and Church Vocations' Committee on Education and Reception be granted leave to sit during the sederunts.

► **Recommendation No. 10**

That conveners and staff members of committees and agencies be given permission to speak during their reports.

► **Recommendation No. 11**

That the young adult representatives and student representatives be permitted to participate in the debates of this General Assembly and be granted an advisory vote in the terms above.

Nominations for Moderator of General Assembly and Positions (p. 101)

The report noting the submission of nominations submitted by presbyteries for the Moderator of the General Assembly or any position for which presbyteries submitted nominations is normally received for information. As of this year this report will be presented through the Business Committee. The Nominations report contains the submissions for the Moderator of the General Assembly (see p. 271)

► **Recommendation No. 12**

That the Nominations report be received for information.

Special Committee re Pension Solvency (p. 101)

In 2015, the General Assembly appointed the Special Committee re Pension Solvency to deal with the ongoing solvency funding requirement of The Presbyterian Church in Canada Pension Plan. (A&P 2015, p. 483–84, 21) It was appointed to a term from November 2015 to November 2017. In its final report there was not a recommendation to discharge the committee. Therefore a note of appreciation is offered for the work of the special committee in this report.

► **Recommendation No. 13**

That the Special Committee re Pension Solvency Funding be discharged with thanks.

Notices of Motion (p. 101–02)

The Business Committee presents notices of motion for any recommendations in the various standing committees report that request a change to documents such as terms of reference, the constitution of the Pension Fund, and by-laws of the colleges. This year there are four notices of motion presented.

I give notice that, at a future sederunt, I will move or cause to be moved that the terms of reference for the Special Committee re Listening (LGBTQI People) be reconsidered (Special Committee re Listening, Rec. Nos. 1 and 2, p. 296, 297).

I give notice that, at a future sederunt, I will move or cause to be moved that the terms of reference of the Committee to Nominate Standing Committees be reconsidered (Committee to Nominate Standing Committees, Rec. No. 3, p. 270).

I give notice that, at a future sederunt, I will move or cause to be moved that constitution of The Presbyterian Church in Canada Pension Plan be reconsidered (Pension and Benefits Board, Rec. No. 2, p. 274).

I give notice that, at a future sederunt, I will move or cause to be moved that bylaws of The Presbyterian College be reconsidered (Presbyterian College, Board of Governors, Rec. No. 2, p. 305).

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH DOCTRINE**PURPOSE**

The Committee on Church Doctrine considers and reports on all matters of faith and order which the General Assembly refers to it or issues that are important for the church to consider in its life and witness. The committee makes recommendations regarding our confessional position to the General Assembly for the furtherance of the church's continuing faithful witness.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Committee on Church Doctrine recommends that The Presbyterian Church in Canada affirms the teaching of marriage currently found within our subordinate standards. After consideration of a large number of responses to two study documents, prayer and thoughtful consideration, the articulation of marriage as between one man and one woman continues to hold true. This does not preclude the continued need to listen to the pain of those within the LGBTQI community and to repent of homophobia within the church. The committee recognizes that this recommendation will not meet with universal approval as articulated by the views of the minority included in the report. (See this section of the report in *Sexuality Overtures*, p. 280–88.) At this time when there is the potential for division, a focus on the unity of the church and how we understand it biblically, historically and theologically is important. The committee offers a report on the unity of the church for consideration. Finally, there are a number of ongoing issues, not least of which includes end-of-life issues and physician assisted suicide, which the Committee on Church Doctrine has worked on in the past year. There are no recommendations on physician assisted suicide for this year's General Assembly.

RECOMMENDATIONS**On the Question of Unity and Diversity** (p. 103–13)

Passing this recommendation, a document will be sent out regarding the unity of the church to various parts of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for study and report. The Committee on Church Doctrine is well aware that other parts of the church, such as the Clerks of Assembly, have made important contributions to ongoing conversations about how to understand conflict and unity within the church. This is a biblical, historical and theological analysis of the unity of the church that supplements and compliments other work of the church that may tend towards the legal.

Recommendation No. 1

That the document "On the Question of Unity and Diversity" be commended to the agencies, colleges, congregations, sessions, presbyteries, synods, committees and groups of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for study and response to the Committee on Church Doctrine through the General Assembly Office by January 31, 2018.

Overture No. 5, 2018 re freedom of conscience and action re matters concerning human sexuality (p. 114)

This overture revolves around how to respond to the questions posed in earlier overtures on human sexuality. The Committee on Church Doctrine has responded above and is asking for the opportunity to consider this overture again after the General Assembly has considered Recommendation Nos. 1 and 2.

Recommendation No. 2

That permission be granted to report on Overture No. 5, 2018 to the 2019 General Assembly.

Overture No. 8, 2018 re recreational use of marijuana (p. 114)

This overture called for an immediate response and then a longer consideration of its concerns at a future time. While recognizing the value of the overture, the Committee on Church Doctrine was not able to formulate an immediate response. This recommendation is to allow the committee the ability to respond in a more fulsome way at the next General Assembly.

Recommendation No. 3

That the above be an interim response to Overture No. 8, 2018 re recreational use of marijuana.

CLERKS OF ASSEMBLY

PURPOSE

The Clerks of the Assembly are appointed to serve and strengthen the courts of The Presbyterian Church in Canada through the preservation and promotion of the denomination's polity. Before each Assembly, the Clerks assist with the collection and distribution of reports to be considered by the Assembly. During the Assembly, they record minutes and advise the Moderator on procedure. After the Assembly, the Clerks complete the Acts and Proceedings and inform the lower courts of matters referred to them by the General Assembly. Throughout the year, they monitor responses from presbyteries to referrals, act as consultants to Assembly commissions and committees, and respond to queries from individuals and the courts of the church.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Clerks of Assembly report deals primarily with matters of church governance. One of the major pieces of this year's report is a response to overtures that request a means for congregations to leave The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The response explains laws governing church property, what it means for property to be held in trust and principles of church membership. It also proposes a way forward while honouring the gospel call for unity. It was prepared in consultation with five church bodies and legal counsel. Some of the other items that appear in this report include an acknowledgment of the service of the late, the Rev. Dr. Earle F. Roberts, a former Clerk of the Assembly; the question of adherents voting in the election of elders; the right of dissent; equalizing ministers at presbytery; a review of term service for elders; and revised censure definitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consent Recommendations

That Recommendation Nos. 2, 3, 12 and 13 (identified by ►) be adopted by consent.

Congregations considering leaving the denomination (p. 115–19)

In 2016, the General Assembly agreed that, while individual members may leave a congregation and individual ministers may leave the denomination, the church's polity does not include provision for a congregation to be dismissed as an entity from the denomination, with or without retaining real and personal property. Following that Assembly, new overtures and petitions were submitted by sessions and presbyteries asking the Clerks of Assembly to reconsider that General Assembly's decision. In consultation with the Assembly Council, the Committee on Church Doctrine, the Committee on Church History, the Pension and Benefits Board, the Trustee Board and legal counsel, the Clerks studied this subject again. With the backing of all five church bodies and legal counsel, the Clerks conclude that the 2016 decision is fair and justified. Respecting this previous decision, a process for leaving the church with property is outlined.

Recommendation No. 1

That this report be the response to the Special Committee of the 2017 General Assembly Overtures and Petitions re Congregations Considering Leaving the Denomination together with Overture Nos. 2, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29, 2017, and Petition Nos. 1, 2 and 3, 2017 (A&P 2017, p. 582, 586–605) regarding congregations wishing to leave the denomination and unity within the church.

Congregation retaining buildings independent of future General Assembly decision (p. 119)

Petition No. 2, 2017 asks for assurance that Knox, Thedford, Ontario, will maintain ownership of its building regardless of decisions made by the General Assembly. The Clerks reiterate that, as with other congregations, the property will continue to belong to the congregation as long as the congregation exists within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Only if the congregation is dissolved by the presbytery would the property vest with the Trustee Board.

► Recommendation No. 2

That the above be the response to Petition No. 2, 2017 re congregations retaining buildings independent of future General Assembly decisions.

Circulating response to Overtures (p. 119–20)

It is the prayer of Overture No. 16, 2017 that a response, offered by the Clerks of Assembly at the 2016 General Assembly related to overtures seeking a process for congregations to leave the denomination, be circulated to congregations for comment. The response (A&P 2016, p. 281–83, 23) has already been circulated to all sessions and presbyteries as part of the 2016 referrals after that General Assembly and remains available at presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2016/2016referrals. The overture also requests a distribution of verbal comments made by the Clerks at that Assembly. These comments were not adopted by the Assembly and, therefore, have no standing and should not be circulated to the courts of the church.

► Recommendation No. 3

That the above be the response to Overture No. 16, 2017 re circulating response to Overture No. 37, 2015, and Nos. 4, 5 and 7, 2016.

Adherents voting in elder elections (p. 120–21)

It is the prayer of Overture No. 21, 2017 that adherents be permitted to vote during the election of elders. Many congregations are blessed by adherents who give generously of their time, talent and treasure to the mission and ministry of the church. Nevertheless, the Clerks recommend that the vital task of discerning who in our midst is called by God to the office of elder belongs to those who have taken the step of becoming members.

Recommendation No. 4

That the prayer of Overture No. 21, 2017 re adherents voting in election of elders be not granted.

Right to dissent when absent from a court (p. 121–23)

It is the prayer of Overture No. 31, 2017, that the Assembly allow members of a court to dissent from actions taken when the member absence from the court in certain circumstances. This is deemed, by the Clerks, to be contrary to the church's primary dissent legislation, as found in Book of Forms section 91. In part, section 91 states the principle that a person must vote on a decision before being eligible to dissent from that decision. The Clerks of Assembly do not recommend granting this overture. Furthermore, the Clerks recommend that section 8.1 be amended because it also contradicts section 91.

Recommendation No. 5

That Book of Forms section 8.1 be amended as follows:

8.1 A session has standing leave to meet during the sittings of the General Assembly. ~~provided always that in the event of such a meeting, any member who was a commissioner to the Assembly shall have liberty, on his/her return, or when the minutes are confirmed, to dissent or dissent and complain (see sections 381, 382) from any decision taken during his/her absence while attending the Assembly.~~

Recommendation No. 6

That the prayer of Overture No. 31, 2017 re right to dissent when absent from a court, be answered in terms of this report.

Provision for “equalizing ministers” at presbytery (p. 123–25)

It is the prayer of Overture No. 4, 2017 that legislation be prepared to permit presbyteries, in which there are more ruling elders than ministers on the constituent roll, to appoint equalizing ministers. The 2017 General Assembly referred equalizing minister legislation to the church for its consideration. Responses were mostly in favour of the legislation. This report recommends that the legislation, slightly revised based on comments received from the church, be sent to presbyteries under the Barrier Act for approval or disapproval.

Recommendation No. 7

That new Book of Forms section 176.1.10 read as follows and be remitted to presbyteries under the Barrier Act.

176.1.10 Equalizing ministers: Where there are more elders than ministers on the constituent roll of a presbytery, the presbytery may, on an annual basis, add to the constituent roll ministers from the appendix to the roll, who are serving as interim moderators, to act as equalizing ministers.

Recommendation No. 8

That Overture No. 4, 2017 re provision for “equalizing ministers” at presbytery be granted in terms of this report.

Review length of term service for elders (p. 125–26)

It is the prayer of Overture No. 9, 2017 that Book of Forms section 108, which deals with term service for eldership, be revised so sessions would be permitted to establish their own term length. Valuable feedback was received through a church-wide survey on term-service and life-service models of eldership. While maintaining the current term service standard (six-year term, one-third of the session elected every two years), the Clerks propose amendments to two pieces of legislation that would enable local options.

Recommendation No. 9

That the proposed amendments to Book of Forms sections 108 and 108.2 regarding term service for elders be referred to sessions and presbyteries for study and report to the Clerks of Assembly by January 31, 2019.

Censure definitions (p. 126–28)

At the suggestion of a special commission, the Clerks of Assembly revised Book of Forms sections 252 and 373. Both sections deal with the censure of deposition but were somewhat in conflict with each other. As the Clerks prepared amendments to these sections, it became evident that other censure definitions would also benefit from amendment. Consequently, the Clerks proposed several other revisions to Book of Forms sections 365–375 in order to provide greater clarity and consistency of language. Supportive responses have been gratefully received from sessions and presbyteries and lead to the following recommendations.

Recommendation No. 10

That Book of Forms section 252 be amended as follows and remitted to presbyteries under the Barrier Act.

252. It belongs to the presbytery to depose ministers of Word and Sacraments from the ministry. (see sections 345–380, 441, Appendices A–64 and A–65, and the 2 Bk. Of Dis. VII, 16)

Recommendation No. 11

That Book of Forms sections 365–375 regarding censure be amended as follows and remitted to presbyteries under the Barrier Act.

Note: Revised sections 365–375 are included in the full report. (p. 127–28)

Elder Election – Ballot of Members (p. 128)

Evidently there has been some misunderstanding regarding the election process when a ballot of members is used. The Clerks hope a slight amendment to Book of Forms section 132.2.2, the underlined sentence, will eliminate this misunderstanding.

► Recommendation No. 12

That Book of Forms section 132.8 be amended as follows.

132.8 When a ballot of members is used, the session shall determine which candidates to approach about their willingness to serve as an elder based on their suitability for the eldership (see section 132), the number of votes each one receives and the number of additional elders required. The session will cease approaching candidates once the required number of elders is reached or the list of approved candidates to be approached is exhausted. The candidates will be deemed elected as elders upon confirming their willingness to serve.

Book of Forms Appendix A–29 (p. 129)

Some confusion has been expressed regarding what is included in “stipend” and “stipend and travel” in the call and guarantee of stipend template as it appears in Book of Forms Appendix A–29. It is hoped a minor adjustment to the formatting of the appendix will solve this problem. The same adjustment will be applied to Appendix A–30 for members of the Order of Diaconal Ministries.

► Recommendation No. 13

That the stipend portion of Book of Forms Appendices A–29 and A–30 be reconfigured as shown above.

Note: The revision is included in the full report. (p. 129)

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

The Presbyterian Church in Canada highly values the importance of our ecumenical work and partnerships. Ecumenism happens in many different contexts from local ecumenical gatherings to large international organizations. Many Canadian Presbyterians dedicate a significant amount of time and energy to the work of ecumenical bodies in local, national and international settings. In recent years, Presbyterians have been engaged with learning about other faith traditions and becoming more involved with local interfaith activities.

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee facilitates national and international relationships of the denomination. It provides information on and coordination for ecumenical matters; maintains and strengthens relationships with ecumenical councils; committees and consultations; and articulates the church's ecumenical vision. It is also involved nationally in various interfaith conversations.

REPORT SUMMARY

The report outlines the work of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee that includes the ongoing facilitation of relationships between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and various national and international ecumenical councils and interfaith groups. The committee, through the report, also encourages Presbyterians to participate in opportunities for ecumenical and interfaith sharing, prayer, dialogue and cooperation. The ministry and connections within these various councils and dialogues are visible expressions of unity in Christ.

The committee also reports how its work relates to the church's strategic plan with the encouragement for Presbyterians to build local ecumenical and interfaith connections and to participate in local events planned for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Interfaith Harmony Week, which are two international ecumenical and interfaith endeavours. Members of the church are also encouraged to learn more about Canadian Indigenous spirituality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ecumenical Leadership (p. 130)

The committee noted that Peter Bush, Moderator of the 2017 General Assembly, called the church to pray for one another and for our world. The committee wishes to express its appreciation for his ecumenical leadership during this past year.

Recommendation No. 1

That appreciation be expressed to the Rev. Peter Bush, Moderator of the 2017 General Assembly, for his ecumenical leadership through his prayers and writings.

Strategic Plan (p. 130–31)

As the committee seeks to relate to the church's strategic plan, it encourages congregations to build ecumenical and interfaith connections locally and, therefore, highlights two annual events that encourage such participation. The committee, being aware of our church's role in healing and reconciliation, is inviting congregations to learn more about Canadian Indigenous spirituality.

Recommendation No. 2

That congregations seek to build ecumenical and interfaith connections within their local communities.

Recommendation No. 3

That congregations be encouraged to participate in or initiate events and services related to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18–25, 2019) and Interfaith Harmony Week (February 1–7, 2019).

Recommendation No. 4

That Presbyterians and congregations seek to learn more about Canadian Indigenous spirituality.

HISTORY, COMMITTEE ON

PURPOSE

The Committee on History believes in the importance of preserving Presbyterian history right across the country and therefore it works to engender an interest in and awareness of our denomination's long and glorious history. It encourages congregations to care for their records by offering advice and promoting the preservation services such as microfilming of records. Our history is alive in the buildings in which we worship, in the beauty of our stained glass windows, in our books, records and other artefacts. Preserving them is another way in which we Presbyterians can be good stewards, standing behind our faith and ready to pass all of these things on to the generations who will follow us.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Committee on History is responsible for reporting on the National Presbyterian Museum and highlighting the work of the Archives. It meets twice a year and is fortunate to have members from across Canada who provide a balanced and insightful regional perspective. The committee has discussed our part in the strategic plan and documented it in the 2017 Act and Proceedings (p. 292).

One of our projects is the Oral and Visual History Project, an ongoing interviewing project of our church leaders. It ensures that views and experiences of individuals can be shared with future generations. The Archives has equipment for individuals to borrow who wish to help to interview ordained, lay and professional church workers.

We are indebted to Kim Arnold, Archivist, and Bob Anger, Assistant Archivist, who look after church documents and hope that congregations will consider having their church records microfilmed and digitally scanned. The Archives are located within the national office.

Thank you to the Rev. Peter Bush as editor for *Presbyterian History*. The publication is printed twice yearly and comes out in the PCPak and is available at presbyterian.ca/newsletters.

The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History holds its annual meeting on the last Saturday of September at Knox College where scholarly papers are presented relating to the history of our church. See cspk.ca/papers.html.

For the past 139 years (1879) the Committee on History has sought to fulfill its mandate to document and declare the history and heritage of The Presbyterian Church in Canada as part of the broader summons of the Holy Catholic Church to faithful witness to God and the life-changing message of the good news of Christ's redeeming love.

Further updates regarding the Committee on History are in the preambles to our five recommendations below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consent Recommendations

That Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (identified by ►) be adopted by consent.

Heritage Sunday (p. 138)

Many congregations have designated a "Heritage Sunday" to celebrate the vibrant and dynamic faith legacy that is ours within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

► Recommendation No. 1

That congregations be encouraged to celebrate Heritage Sunday on February 17, 2019, or on another Sunday, as a means of celebrating the unique faith journey and heritage we enjoy as Presbyterians.

History Prizes (p. 138–39)

Every year the committee awards history prizes in three categories: congregational histories, academic historiography and clergy memoirs. This year we have three submissions.

► **Recommendation No. 2**

That the 2018 winners of the history prizes be recognized:

- Congregational History: *200 Years of Grace: Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, 1817–2017*
- Memoirs: *My Journey* by the Rev. Dr. John Cameron, 2016.
- Academic: *The Regina Indian Industrial School (1891–1910): Historical Overview and Chronological Narrative* by Dr. Douglas Stewart, 2017.

Reformation@500 Anniversary Project (p. 139–40)

In response to overtures from the 2011 General Assembly (A&P 2011, p. 271–72), the Committee on History was entrusted with oversight of five events or *Solas* to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The following General Assembly approved the proposed dates and themes:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2013 <i>Sola Gratia</i> | Grace Alone |
| 2014 <i>Sola Fide</i> | Faith Alone |
| 2015 <i>Sola Scriptura</i> | Scripture Alone |
| 2016 <i>Solus Christus</i> | Christ Alone |
| 2017 <i>Soli Deo Gloria</i> | For God's Glory Alone |

The final Reformation@500 gathering, “*Soli Deo Gloria* – For God's Glory Alone”, was held on Saturday, October 28, 2017, at Knox College. The keynote speakers were the Rev. Dr. John Vissers (“Enjoy God”), Principal of Knox College, and the Rev. Dr. Christine O'Reilly (“John Calvin's Reminders”), minister at Knox Church, Thedford, Ontario. Panelists included Jinsook Khang (Vaughan Community Church), Barbara Leung-Lai (Tyndale Seminary), Ephraim Radner (Wycliffe College) and Karla Wübbenhorst (Westminster-St. Paul's Church, Guelph).

Study guides on all the *Sola* events are available at presbyterian.ca/history.

► **Recommendation No. 3**

That thanks be expressed to the Rev. Peter Bush for his role in planning the *Sola*, Reformation@500 events held each October over the past five years.

National Presbyterian Museum

Although it is the National Museum for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the museum receives no annual funding through the church. Its operating revenue is completely dependent upon the modest interest from the Dr. John Johnston Memorial Fund and donations from visitors to the museum. Securing an ongoing basis of financial support is absolutely vital if the museum is to continue. We are deeply thankful to those congregations that have supported the museum yearly.

► **Recommendation No. 4**

That congregations be encouraged to contribute to the National Presbyterian Museum on a yearly basis.

Recognition of Retiring Clergy (p. 140)

In thanks and celebration for those who have provided many years and often an entire career of faithful service to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, it is our hope and desire that future General Assemblies will continue this action.

► **Recommendation No. 5**

That with thanks to God and in celebration of the clergy and church workers who have retired in 2017, the 2018 General Assembly, on behalf of our entire denomination, includes a moment of recognition for these faithful representatives of Jesus Christ and diligent servants of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

The International Affairs Committee is mandated to draw the church's attention to international issues, particularly situations where there is poverty, conflict, persecution, systemic discrimination against a group of people or environmental degradation, that are barriers to the flourishing of God's beloved creation.

REPORT SUMMARY

The first section focuses on the vulnerability of women and girls to violence and the consequences of criminalizing therapeutic abortion in Nicaragua. The next section reports on the persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar. The third section considers Canada's overseas development assistance, followed by a section on Canadian peacekeeping efforts. The section on the Arms Trade Treaty includes information about the sale of Canadian-made military vehicles to Saudi Arabia. This is followed by a report on a newly adopted, though not yet ratified, United Nations treaty to ban nuclear weapons. There are updates on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the impact of climate change on the Global South and an update on the church's dialogue with Goldcorp regarding the Marlin gold mine in Guatemala. The report concludes with a response to Overture No. 3, 2018 re dialogue with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan on the Rights of Indigenous People.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Violence against Women and Girls in Nicaragua (p. 143–45)

Half of all Nicaraguan women and girls will experience violence, including sexual violence, in their lifetime. High levels of poverty increase their vulnerability. Nicaragua is one of only three countries in the world to ban therapeutic abortion. Therapeutic abortion refers to situations where the life or health of a pregnant woman or girl is threatened by the continuation of a pregnancy, if pregnancy was unviable or where pregnancy resulted from rape. Criminalizing therapeutic abortion does not decrease the number of abortions, but rather drives women and girls to seek clandestine medical procedures, or to not seek needed medical attention. The ban was set in 2006. In the year following, Nicaraguan women's organizations attributed the death of 82 women as a result of the ban.

Recommendation No. 1

That the Moderator write to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs requesting the Government of Canada to raise the matter of decriminalizing therapeutic abortion with the Government of Nicaragua.

Recommendation No. 2

That the Moderator writes to PWS&D partners in Nicaragua expressing support for their work with victims of violence.

A Stateless People – The Rohingya in Myanmar (p. 145–48)

The Rohingya are an ethnic group who have lived for centuries in the western coastal region of Myanmar in what is now Rakhine state. Myanmar considers Rohingya illegal foreigners who migrated from Bengal (present day Bangladesh) during British rule in the 1800s. While there are 135 minority groups in Myanmar, some of whom are persecuted, only the Rohingya are denied citizenship, and the rights and protections therein, by Myanmar. There are nearly one million Rohingya in the diaspora who have fled violence, persecution and killing, largely at the hands of the Myanmar state military.

Recommendation No. 3

That the Moderator write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs affirming Canada's humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya and inquire if the Government of Canada is planning to impose sanctions on other high-ranking Myanmar military officers and government officials complicit in the gross human rights violations against the Rohingya and, further, inquire if there are Canadian corporations operating in areas of Myanmar where there is conflict and human rights violations.

Overseas Development Assistance (Peacekeeping) (p. 148–49)

In his election campaign, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a commitment to re-engage in peacekeeping missions and pledged the deployment of 600 troops and 150 police officers. On March 19, 2018, the Government of Canada announced that it will send two to four armed 146 Griffons and up to six Chinook battlefield transport helicopters to Mali. The operation will involve between 200 and 250 soldiers, including air crews, medical crews, support staff and a small contingent of special forces to provide armed protection. The peacekeeping mission to Mali has considerable risks. As of the end of February 2018, 162 United Nations peacekeepers have been killed since the mission began in 2013.

Recommendation No. 4

That the Moderator write to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Defense affirming the government's commitment to participate in the Mali peacekeeping mission and acknowledging the risks to Canadian peacekeepers.

Recommendation No. 5

That congregations pray for the safety and wellbeing of all peacekeepers, and the people they protect.

Update on the Arms Trade Treaty (p. 149–50)

The Arms Trade Treaty is a multilateral treaty that is intended to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons, so they are not used to support terrorism, international organized crime, gender-based violence, human rights abuses, or violations of international humanitarian law. The treaty entered into force on December 24, 2014, when it was ratified by 50 states. In April 2017, the Government of Canada tabled Bill C-47 which is intended to harmonize Canada's laws with the treaty. Bill C-47 passed second reading and is currently before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. In reviewing Bill C-47, several organizations including Project Ploughshares and Amnesty International Canada (English Branch) released a briefing paper drawing attention to short comings in the proposed legislation. One of the key issues is that it does not include any controls of where the United States may or may not transfer arms or component parts purchased from Canada. Given that our arms trade value to the United States exceeds all other Canadian arms exports, this omission is a major gap in Bill C-47.

Recommendation No. 6

That the Moderator write to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Defense to communicate the church's concerns about the weaknesses in Bill C-47, and encourage the Government of Canada to include policies regarding arms exports to the United States that are consistent with the Arms Trade Treaty.

Canadian companies have billions of dollars in contracts to sell military equipment and vehicles to Saudi Arabia, a country with one of the worst human right records in the world. There have been allegations that Saudi Arabia has used Canada-made light armoured vehicles against civilians, violating international law. The Government of Canada investigated and reported that these allegations are unfounded. The investigation report was not made public.

Recommendation No. 7

That the Moderator write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs requesting that the report of the Government of Canada's investigation into allegations of Saudi use of Canadian-made vehicles against civilians in eastern Saudi Arabia be made public.

The Dream of a World without Nuclear Weapons (p. 150–52)

Today, there are over 17,000 nuclear weapons, 90% of which are held by Russia and the United States. China, France, the United Kingdom, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea all have some form of nuclear capabilities. Countries without nuclear weapons have criticized countries with nuclear weapons for their unsatisfactory pace and process toward nuclear disarmament. In 2017, the United Nations adopted (not ratified) a Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons (called the Ban Treaty). It was long championed by International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for this effort. Project Ploughshares, a project of the Canadian Council of Churches and an ecumenical partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, has supported this work. The threat of nuclear war is corrosive to any vision of a world at peace. Past General Assemblies have stated: "no nation, including our own, has the right before God, to resort to nuclear weapons, either offensively or defensively" (A&P 1983, p. 372–74) and advocated that the government seek global nuclear disarmament (A&P 1985, p. 33).

Recommendation No. 8

That the Moderator write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs urging the Government of Canada to adopt and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the Ban Treaty).

Recommendation No. 9

That the Moderator write to Project Ploughshares to convey the gratitude of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for Project Ploughshares' research and advocacy over many years for policies that promote nuclear disarmament and abolition.

Update on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (p. 152–56)

2018 represents the 51st year of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the 11th year of Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip. A June 2017 open letter to the World Council of Churches and the global ecumenical movement from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine concluded by stating: "We stand facing the impossible but we have not lost hope, since as followers of the Risen One, we are the people of hope. However, we need you and we need you more than ever. We need your costly solidarity."

The Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) signed in 1997 includes Israel, the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the area ruled by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank as one customs area. The CIFTA includes goods produced in the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. The Presbyterian Church in Canada opposes general boycott of Israeli products and of sanctions against Israel. (A&P 2008, p. 18) In 2009, the Moderator of the General Assembly wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs recommending that Canada introduce a certification of origin so that products made in the settlements are excluded from the benefits of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement. The products would continue to enter Canada but would not benefit from either low or no tariffs. This was not a policy the government of the day supported.

Recommendation No. 10

That the Moderator write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs encouraging the Government of Canada to exclude products made in the Jewish settlements in the West Bank from the benefits of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement.

Overture No. 3, 2018 re dialog with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan on the Rights of Indigenous People (p. 158–59)

The overture requested that various agencies and committees in The Presbyterian Church in Canada enter into dialogue with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan regarding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The response recommends that the initiative in this dialogue should continue to come from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

Recommendation No. 11

That the above be the response to Overture No. 3, 2018 re dialogue with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan on the rights of Indigenous people.

LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

The church has mandated that the Life and Mission Agency strive, under the power of the Holy Spirit, to help enable the church to serve the world as a sign of the reign of God, to be faithful to the mission statement of the church, and to affirm the vision and desire of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to be a church integrating discipleship, evangelism, social action and justice. The agency is to respond flexibly, creatively and effectively to the needs of congregations and the courts of the church as they respond to the call of Jesus Christ in mission. The church asks the agency to give priority to doing what must be done at the national level and facilitating tasks that can be done more appropriately at another level of the church, or ecumenically.

The Life and Mission Agency fulfils this mandate by providing resources to the congregations and courts of the church as we work together to envision and create new and innovative models for ministries, responding to humanitarian needs and life-giving long-term development projects, communicating the good news of the gospel, working alongside Indigenous people, gathering youth from around the world and encouraging them to follow the way of Christ in whatever path they are called, studying issues of faith and justice, offering guidance for people and courts discerning vocations for ordained ministry, sharing gifts and resources, and connecting with partners from across the world in order to encounter the diversity and the challenges of the followers of Christ's way.

PROGRAM SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The report opens with an introduction to the broad work of the Life and Mission Agency, names the member of the Life and Mission Agency Committee, and notes staff changes over the last year. Additionally, there are reports on Canada Youth 2018 and the Leading with Care Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consent Recommendation

That Recommendation No. 1 (identified by ►) be adopted by consent.

There are three recommendations in the introduction to the Life and Mission Agency report.

Leading with Care (p. 163–64)

The General Assembly referred an overture about expectations in Leading with Care in regard to police record checks. Since more study is needed to adequately respond to this overture the following recommendation is proposed.

► **Recommendation No. 1**

That permission be granted to respond to Overture No. 4, 2018 to a future General Assembly.

Minutes of Appreciation (p. 165–67)

Two associate secretaries are completing their work in service to the denomination this year. There are minutes of appreciation and the following recommendations thanking Mr. Stephen Allen (Justice Ministries) and the Rev. Susan Shaffer (Ministry and Church Vocations) for their ministry.

Recommendation No. 2

That sincere thanks and appreciation be expressed to Stephen Allen for his years of service to Christ in The Presbyterian Church in Canada and that the above minute of appreciation be adopted.

Recommendation No. 3

That sincere thanks and appreciation be expressed to the Rev. Susan Shaffer for her years of service to Christ in The Presbyterian Church in Canada and that the above minute of appreciation be adopted.

CANADIAN MINISTRIES

REPORT SUMMARY

Canadian Ministries helps to strengthen and equip congregations and presbyteries to seek God's will, embrace Christ's teachings and participate in God's redemptive work in the world by providing resources that are relevant, contextual and transformative. The department provides online, printed and financial resources, and also relational support in the form of networking and mentorship opportunities, collaborative partnerships, one-on-one consultations, educational workshops and leadership conferences.

The report of Canadian Ministries is presented in the following sections:

Equipping Opportunities

This section reviews the services and accompaniment offered through Canadian Ministries in the areas of evangelism, renewal, Christian education and new church development. Highlights this year include two accompaniment programs (renewal and evangelism) designed to revitalize congregations and help them reach out to their communities.

Resources

This section reviews resources designed to help congregations and ministries strengthen their practices in the areas of worship, Christian education, evangelism and community life. New resources this year include webinars on leadership and renewal and a children's resource under development.

Grants and Funds

This section lists the 2017 grant recipients. Reports from grant recipients are published in the final form of the Acts and Proceedings.

Administration

This section lists appointments made by the Life and Mission Agency, properties and/or buildings, and formalized Ecumenical Shared Ministries.

Advisory Committees

This section describes the Canadian Ministries Advisory Committee and the National Native Ministries Ministry Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

COMMUNICATIONS

REPORT SUMMARY

The Communications Office supports church leaders, congregations, courts, groups, committees and agencies of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to share their mission and ministry through a diverse and effective range of communications channels, materials and methods. The Communications Office facilitates all communication for and through the national office of The Presbyterian Church, and equips the church with resources and communications that are dynamic, timely and effective. The goal is to produce and promote useful, relevant resources, both in print and electronically, and to improve access to church information through print and digital channels. The Communications Office strives to lead the church in communication techniques and best practices, elevating the church's message within the denomination and to society at large.

Some highlights from the report include details about the denomination's website and how it is a valuable tool that provides access to key resources and information; the new website chat feature; PCCWeb free web hosting for congregations and groups of The Presbyterian Church in Canada; resource distribution; the PCPak mailing of resources to congregations; the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper; communications workshops and webinars.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

REPORT SUMMARY

Participating in God's mission as it unfolds worldwide, brings surprise and joy. International Ministries believes we must be in relationship with those who are on the frontlines, witnessing the signs of the Holy Spirit giving life and creating hope. People, the living links, are key to meaningful partnerships, engaging in conversations about faith and urgent global issues.

The Rev. Dr. Blair Bertrand was appointed to Blantyre Synod, Malawi, working in theological education and youth work. Ms. Vivian Bertrand is working with Churches Action for Relief and Development (CARD). This couple open doors to experience the deep and joyful faith of Malawians, in spite of significant challenges.

Stories written by Dr. Nicholas and Ms. Rebecca Bauman, serving with the United Mission to Nepal, gave us food for thought. Trusting in God, their newborn baby Dorothy (Dot) was born in Tansen mission hospital, a place where the drama of birth and death unfolds daily. Nicholas Bauman works as a surgeon in Tansen. We also learn about Christianity as it unfolds in Nepal, the fastest growing church in the world.

Appointed to the Korean Christian Church in Japan, Mr. David McIntosh exposes the evil of racism in his role as the co-director of the Centre for Minority Issues and Mission, and calls us to stand with them.

Ms. Amy Zavitz, a former young adult intern in Malawi, volunteered with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine/Israel (EAPPI), based in the Jordan Valley. Having been called to costly solidarity by Palestinian Christians in 2017, Amy's presence is one small act of peaceful solidarity.

Accompanying partners, through the people mentioned above, is appreciated, so too are leadership development and project grants that enhance the capacities of partners in their mission and ministry.

RECOMMENDATION

Dr. Dávid Pándy-Szekeres (p. 183–84)

After 18 years of service as a mission staff in Ukraine, Dr. Dávid Pándy-Szekeres will complete his appointment on July 31, 2018.

Recommendation No. 4

That sincere thanks and appreciation be expressed to Dr. Dávid Pándy-Szekeres for his years of service to Christ in The Presbyterian Church in Canada and that the above minute of appreciation be adopted.

JUSTICE MINISTRIES

REPORT SUMMARY

Justice Ministries collaborates with and assists congregations and courts of the church to respond faithfully to the justice imperatives of the gospel. The department does this by, among other things, encouraging theological reflection on justice issues; supporting and facilitating social justice initiatives and workshops in the church and with its courts and members; responding to questions about the church's policies on justice issues; engaging in research and writing to help the church speak prophetically on social justice issues and engage with elected officials and decision-makers; and assisting the church in contributing to healing and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and in building new, strong and healthy relationships.

The Justice Ministries report is divided into 10 sections.

- Healing and Reconciliation
- Overtures re Human Sexuality (This can be found in Sexuality Overtures report, p. 288–94.)

- Opioid Crisis
- Ecology and Creation Care
- Genetics
- Protocol on Forced Labour
- Poverty Reduction in Canada
- Ecumenical Partnerships
- Public Witness and outreach
- Advisory Committees

Opioids Crisis (p. 193–201)

There are an unprecedented number of deaths due to fentanyl and other opioid-class drugs in Canada. Establishing safe or supervised drug injection sites (SIS) for those who use illicit drugs reduces the number of fatalities and reduces the health care costs used to care for people who overdose.

Recommendation No. 5

That the Moderator write to the federal and provincial Ministers of Health affirming the decisions to approve safe consumption/injection sites as a life-saving measure in the opioid crisis in Canada.

Recommendation No. 6

That the Moderator write to provincial Ministers of Health inquiring about their plans to improve access to and funding for addiction treatment services.

These recommendations focus on ways the Government of Canada might strengthen regulations about marketing drugs with habit-forming properties and labeling packaging.

Recommendation No. 7

That the Moderator write to the federal Minister of Health asking that Health Canada to 1) set stronger print marketing regulations for drugs with habit forming properties that have a high level of potential for abuse; and 2) provide procedures for medical professionals to register complaints with Health Canada about prescription drug print ads.

Recommendation No. 8

That the Moderator write to the federal Minister of Health asking that Health Canada develop and require that all drugs with habit-forming properties that have a high level of potential for abuse be marked with a symbol indicating this risk.

There is no national body with the mandate to regulate the interactions between physicians and the pharmaceutical industry. These recommendations ask for information about how these bodies assess the impact of their guidelines for physicians on interactions with the pharmaceutical industry.

Recommendation No. 9

That the Moderator write to the Canadian Medical Association inquiring how the association assesses the impact of its voluntary “Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry”.

Recommendation No. 10

That the Moderator write to provincial and territorial medical regulatory authorities (Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons) inquiring how they assess the impact of their policies and guidelines for physicians’ interactions with the pharmaceutical industry.

Justice Ministries consulted individuals in congregations and ministries across Canada about the impact of the opioid crisis in their communities. Some stressed that having a naloxone kit (emergency treatment for fentanyl overdose) within the church, and having people trained in its use, can save lives.

Recommendation No. 11

That congregations assess the need to keep a naloxone kit on church property, ensuring that staff and/or volunteers are properly trained in its administration (if a kit is procured) as a life-saving, harm reduction measure.

Recommendation No. 12

That congregations assess the need for safe disposal sites on church property, as a harm reduction measure.

Recommendation No. 13

That congregations wishing to learn more about responses to the opioid crisis in their community are encouraged to contact their local Medical Officer of Health, Public Health Office or their community health centre.

Recommendation No. 14

That the above report and recommendations be the response to Overture No. 2, 2018 re resources to assist in responding to the opioid crisis.

Ecology and Care of the Earth (p. 201–04)

A carbon tax monetizes greenhouse gas emissions. This report provides a rationale for the General Assembly to establish a creation care levy in recognition of the ecological costs of meeting, and the church's contribution to climate change.

Recommendation No. 15

That a creation care levy of \$20 per metric ton based on the carbon emissions of ground and air travel for the General Assembly participants be established to take effect at the 2019 General Assembly.

Recommendation No. 16

That the levy be averaged (per General Assembly participant) and that presbyteries cover the cost of their commissioners, and Presbyterians Sharing covers the cost of staff and resource people through the budget of the committee or agency that sends them to General Assembly.

People in the Global South contribute least to climate change and face the harshest impacts. Many of these countries are least able to generate the necessary funds to adapt to climate change. This recommendation identifies the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's Climate Fund as the recipient of the funds generated by the levy.

Recommendation No. 17

That the creation care levy be pledged to support the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's Climate Fund.

Genetics (p. 204–08)

This report focuses on synthetic biology, a rapidly emerging phase in genetics. Synthetic biology brings together biology, engineering and computer science.

Recommendation No. 18

That the Moderator write to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change requesting information on the policies and procedures the government has in place to monitor and assess the impact of the unintended release of synthetic biology organisms, components and products outside of a target area/ecosystem, in particular those designed to create a gene drive.

Overture No. 6, 2018 re adopting protocol of 2014 re Forced Labour Convention 1930 (p. 209–10)

Justice Ministries received an overture on an international protocol called P029 that is intended to strengthen protection of and restitution for victims of forced labour. The response to this overture explains what the protocol is and the processes involved in the Government of Canada ratifying it.

Recommendation No. 19

That the Moderator write to the Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada affirming the Government of Canada's commitment to ratify P029.

Recommendation No. 20

That individuals in the church be invited to write to their Members of Parliament affirming the church's support for the Government of Canada's commitment to ratify P029; and that courts of the church may wish to write to Members of Parliament in their communities.

Recommendation No. 21

That the above be the response to Overture No. 6, 2018 re adopting protocol of 2014 re Forced Labour Convention 1930.

Poverty Reduction in Canada (p. 210–11)

This recommendation outlines how the church can engage with the Government of Canada about policies and programs intended to reduce poverty in Canada.

Recommendation No. 22

That the Moderator write to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development encouraging the government to include in the Poverty Reduction Strategy specific targets, measures and reporting timelines to reduce the levels of poverty in Canada-at-large as well as among specific groups identified as being at greatest risk of poverty (Indigenous people; racialized minorities; those living with a disability/differently abled; newcomers to Canada).

The following recommendations suggest ways members of the church can engage in advocacy in support of poverty reduction in Canada.

Recommendation No. 23

That members of the church be invited to meet with or write to their Members of Parliament, calling on the Government of Canada to establish measurable targets and reporting timelines to reduce levels of poverty in Canada-at-large and among specific groups identified as being at greatest risk of poverty as part of a national poverty reduction strategy.

Recommendation No. 24

That congregations be invited to use resources for prayers and thematic reflections (such as the Moderator's reflection on poverty) on a Sunday near October 17, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

Recommendation No. 25

That individuals and courts of the church be invited to express their support by signing on to "Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty-Free Canada" and to receive periodic updates concerning efforts to reduce poverty in Canada.

MINISTRY AND CHURCH VOCATIONS

REPORT SUMMARY

The report opens with discussion of the ways Ministry and Church Vocations helps the church to discern, prepare and support ministerial leaders so that they can fulfill their calling. The programs, resources and research of Ministry and Church Vocations are directed towards achievement of the first goal in the denomination's strategic plan – the provision of visionary leadership.

Preparation for ministry is the focus of the next section, which provides an update on the past year's participation by certified candidates in guidance conferences and psychological testing.

The report continues with support initiatives managed or sponsored by Ministry and Church Vocations. These include the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Fund, the Employee Assistance Program, grants for new colleague covenant groups, the "Starting Well: Context and Role in Ministry" program for newly ordained ministers, grants for continuing education and the profile referral service. A brief reminder is offered to presbyteries, colleges and ministers of their responsibilities for training and police records checks as stipulated in the church's policies for Leading with Care and Dealing with Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment.

The next section focuses on the Policy for the Dissolution of Pastoral Ties, which provides direction to the church in situations where the pastoral tie between a minister and a congregation is dissolved and the congregation's responsibility for continuing financial support of the minister must be determined. The terms of the transition allowance have been revised for compliance with the church's contract with Sun Life, the group insurance benefits provider. In brief, there is continuation of health and dental insurance coverage, with the exception of out-of-country emergency travel assistance, but insurance for life, dependent life and long-term disability is maintained only of the first two months.

Finally, reports are presented on two forms of specialized ministry: the Order of Diaconal Ministries and Canadian Military Chaplaincy.

A supplementary report from the Committee on Education and Reception will be circulated prior to the Assembly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT SUMMARY

Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) is the agency of the church mandated to carry out sustainable development, disaster response and support to refugees. Inspired by God's promise of abundant life, PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world. In 2017, PWS&D contributed to just over \$7 million to development and relief programs where most needed around the world – \$3.49 million in development projects and \$3.67 million in emergency relief programming.

This was done due to the overwhelming generosity of Presbyterians who contributed a total of \$2.7 million in donations to PWS&D (including \$232,923 to our account at Canadian Foodgrains Bank) and \$558,692 in legacy funds and gifts of securities to PWS&D's Loaves and Fishes Fund. We are grateful for the multiplication of our resources made possible with the support of the Government of Canada directly and through Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

In 2017, PWS&D partners led projects valued at \$2,017,264 through Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB). This was done with the generous support of the Government of Canada, the United Church of Canada and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). PWS&D also contributed \$554,662 to projects led by other CFGB members which were multiplied for a total value of \$2,633,648. This included support for those affected by ongoing conflict in Syria, the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh and famine in Africa. PWS&D is grateful to the 17 growing projects in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Prince Edward Island that have helped make our work at CFGB possible through the growing and sale of crops.

PWS&D supports churches and presbyteries seeking to sponsor refugees to provide a community, a safe home and a new start. At year-end, over 161 sponsorships (covering 446 people) were active under The Presbyterian Church in Canada's sponsorship agreements with the federal and Quebec governments. PWS&D remains grateful to the congregations, presbyteries and groups who developed applications, awaited arrival and assisted with the first year of resettlement in Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Concern about Low Refugee Quotas (p. 242)

In response to the limitations on refugee sponsorship under the quota system, in 2017, many organizations lobbied the government for quotas in line with Canadians' desire to sponsor refugees, while also pressing for faster processing times once a sponsorship application is filed. In recent years, sponsorship applications at some visa offices could take up to six years to process. The government's announcement of its commitment to bring processing times down to 12 months by the end of 2019 was welcomed, as was the first-ever multi-year immigration levels announcement. The government has indicated that it will increase the number of spots available to organizations with sponsorship agreements with the government by 1,000 (from 7,500 to 8,500) for 2018 and 2019, while concentrating on completing applications of refugees waiting overseas, and then increase the quota to 14,500 in 2020.

Recommendation No. 26

That the Moderator write to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to express appreciation for the government's intention to reduce the processing time of privately sponsored refugee applications and to increase significantly the number of refugees that can be sponsored by private sponsors.

Recommendation No. 27

That the Moderator write to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to remind the government of the importance of robust refugee resettlement targets for government assisted refugees and that private refugee sponsorship should be in addition to refugees sponsored by the government.

Canada's Lagging Overseas Development Assistance (p. 246)

Canadian official Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) has been declining since 2011–2012. Canada now ranks number 15 with respect to its contribution of ODA as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI). With a target of contributing 0.7 per cent of GNI, Canada currently stands at 0.26 per cent with no clear plan for how to reach the target. The recent increase to development assistance announced as part of the 2018 budget is welcome but not sufficient to get Canada on track to meeting this target. Working with other like-minded organizations in Canada, PWS&D is requesting that the government propose a ten-year plan to get closer to meeting the 0.7 per cent target.

Recommendation No. 28

That the Moderator write to the Minister of Finance and to the Prime Minister requesting that the government announce a ten-year timetable of predictable increases to the International Assistance Envelope, with the target of meeting the long-established, internationally-agreed target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income going to Overseas Development Assistance.

Generous Response to Emergency Appeals (p. 248–49)

In 2017, Presbyterians across Canada responded generously to emergency appeals issued by PWS&D. The spring appeal focused on the needs of the Syria crisis. In Syria, 2017 marked the sixth year of conflict. Presbyterian support remains consistent, with \$54,476 contributed in response to the crisis. In June, the Government of Canada announced matching funds in response to famines emerging in Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Yemen. Presbyterian congregations and individuals contributed \$177,753 for the Africa famine appeal. These funds were contributed to projects through Canadian Foodgrains Bank and ACT Alliance.

Recommendation No. 29

That individuals, congregations and presbyteries be commended for their responses to PWS&D's appeals for the Syria crisis and the Africa famine.

Loaves and Fishes Fund (p. 249)

PWS&D has a special fund to receive legacy gifts and gifts of securities. The fund is invested and grows, but is also used in support of PWS&D's work in development, relief and refugee support. Every year, one seventh of the Loaves and Fishes Fund is transferred to PWS&D's operational budget in support of its mission. The fund is increasingly a popular option for legacy gifts and other large gifts to PWS&D. In 2017, PWS&D received \$558,692 in bequests and legacy gifts. Interest and market revaluation, and fund transfers generated \$163,229. One seventh of the Loaves and Fishes Fund, \$405,268, was transferred into PWS&D's operating budget in support of its programs and operations. PWS&D encourages its supporters to consider planning a legacy gift to its Loaves and Fishes Fund.

Recommendation No. 30

That individuals, congregations and presbyteries be commended for their support of PWS&D's Loaves and Fishes Fund, which receives legacy gifts and other large gifts which are invested and spent over a period of seven years, noting that in 2017, the fund generated \$163,229 in interest and market valuation, and closed at \$2.6 million.

STEWARDSHIP AND PLANNED GIVING**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report outlines how, over the past year, the Stewardship and Planned Giving department has helped people use God's gifts – time, skills, resources – to do God's mission and ministry at local, national and international levels.

It highlights a wide variety of coaching, mentoring and supportive opportunities that helped inspire and equip the church's visionary leaders – within congregations, presbyteries, specialized ministries, committees and departments across the denomination – in their ongoing fundraising and stewardship ministry. Opportunities included monthly webinars, the Stewards by Design conference, a generosity assessment pilot project, consultations, workshops and seminars. Empowering resources were developed, including new legacy/planned giving resources and an electronic workbook congregations can use to create planned gift policies. Mission trips helped Presbyterians in Canada embrace a missional culture that nurtured ministry initiatives at local, national and international levels.

The department encouraged participation in the denomination's common ministry by encouraging annual and legacy gifts to Presbyterians Sharing and other national ministries. Congregations continued to provide key foundational support for Presbyterians Sharing through the allocations recommended by the General Assembly (10% of a congregation's dollar base) and a detailed report of these gifts in 2017 is included. Resources produced to promote Presbyterians Sharing include a brochure, video, general bulletin insert, "Stories of Mission" book, poster and weekly "Mission Moments" (with PWS&D). The bulletin insert is also available in French and Korean.

The department facilitated planned and legacy gifts – publicly traded securities, bequests, gift annuities and life insurance – to all areas of The Presbyterian Church in Canada's ministry, including congregations. Details are included on the types of gifts and the magnitude of giving in The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Presbyterians Sharing supports the dreams and vision approved by the General Assembly by funding its mission and ministry. This report recommends that General Assembly thank those who faithfully supported Presbyterians Sharing in 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Presbyterians Sharing Appreciation (p. 257–60)

Presbyterians Sharing supports the mission and ministry that the General Assembly deems important and approves in its budget. Appreciation should be expressed to the people who give generously to allow this important work to happen.

Recommendation No. 31

That appreciation be expressed to the congregations and individuals who faithfully supported Presbyterians Sharing in 2017.

MACLEAN ESTATE COMMITTEE**PURPOSE**

Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre is managed by the Maclean Estate Committee. The committee is responsible for the overall focus of the 250 acre property. There are a variety of buildings and many outdoor areas that welcome individuals, groups and congregations to gather for meetings, programs and retreats. The property and programs are cared for by the staff under the direction of the Managing Director and following the policies established by the Maclean Estate Committee.

REPORT SUMMARY

As we continue to live out the vision of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and our mandate at Crieff Hills, you are invited to enjoy the many facets that you can experience at Crieff Hills.

The Maclean Estate Committee with the Managing Director and staff work towards a goal that provides high quality programs, food and hospitality. The quality of Crieff Hills is due to the leadership that everyone experiences when they come to our conference center. Unfortunately, our Managing Director is retiring this year and although we continue to look forward in our vision and mission to the church and community, we will miss the excellent work of Lawrence Pentelow.

The Crieff Hills Community staff and committee invite you to join with us for a day or more to experience God's presence in a beautiful setting as you walk the trails, have a meeting or just relax.

RECOMMENDATIONS**Minute of Appreciation – Lawrence Pentelow (p. 262–63)**

Lawrence Pentelow combines so many facets that make up an excellent Managing Director. Over the past 15 years, these attributes have been demonstrated to the staff, the Maclean Estate Committee and the thousands of visitors who came to Crieff Hills. Lawrence's leadership was demonstrated in many ways. He was a team player leading by example and showing equal treatment to everyone. Communication, compassion and vision are different, but important, qualities that he brought each day to Crieff Hills. Lawrence will be missed by all who know him in the Crieff community. The report contains the full minute of appreciation.

Recommendation No. 1

That the above minute of appreciation for Mr. Lawrence Pentelow be adopted.

NOMINATE, COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE STANDING COMMITTEES**PURPOSE**

The Committee to Nominates Standing Committees receives nominations from sessions, presbyteries, synods and other standing committees in order to recommend a slate of names for membership on each standing committee of the General Assembly.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Committee to Nominate Standing Committees again presents a recommendation for the membership of the standing committees of the General Assembly, which is its primary function. It received nominations from sessions, presbyteries, synods and standing committees. The committee also approached individuals to allow their names. There is one minor revision regarding the date of meeting that the committee is recommending.

RECOMMENDATIONS**Nominations to Standing Committees of the General Assembly – 2018** (p. 264–70)

The list of the standing committees membership is presented to the General Assembly for its consideration and approval. New member are listed in bold and those who are eligible for reappointment are in bold and identified with two asterisks.

Recommendation No. 1

That the above be the membership of the standing committees of the 2018 General Assembly.

Appreciation (p. 270)

Each year the standing committees have members whose terms end with the General Assembly and the recommendation below expresses appreciation for their service on the various committees.

Recommendation No. 2

That thanks be expressed to those members of a standing committee whose service concludes with this General Assembly.

Guidelines for Membership and Nomination Process (p. 270)

A minor revision relating to the meeting in the terms of reference to the Committee to Nominate Standing Committees be changed to read “spring” instead of “March”. Depending on scheduling and, more often, the date of Easter has seen the committee meeting in early April.

Recommendation No. 3

That the terms of reference for the Committee to Nominate Standing Committees be revised to read as:

5. The committee, at its spring meeting, prepares the slate of names for nomination. Following this meeting it will inform those individuals being nominated

PENSION AND BENEFITS BOARD

PURPOSE

The Pension and Benefits Board administers the pension plan of the church and the group benefits plan for the servants of the church. In its administration of the pension plan, the board recommends changes to the constitution, changes to contribution rates, monitors the solvency of the pension fund, files documents with the pension regulatory authorities, and receives and files actuarial reports as required. The staff of the Pension and Benefits Office provides support to the board and is responsible for the administration of the pension and benefits plans. The staff also assists members of the church with inquiries relating to the pension plan and other benefits including health, dental, long-term disability and life insurance.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Pension and Benefits Board report includes information regarding changes in plan members' pension status throughout the year, pension plan funding and financial updates, group benefits and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) review updates, and amendments to the Constitution of the Pension Plan.

A formal actuarial valuation was filed as at March 31, 2017. A summary of the results are included in the Pension and Benefits Board report found on page 463–84.

The board elected to take advantage of the new solvency funding measures released by the Ontario government to sponsors of defined benefit pension plans. Namely, consolidating existing solvency special payments into a 5-year payment schedule starting March 31, 2017; and deferring by 24 months the start of the new solvency special payments established at March 31, 2017.

There is one pension plan amendment resulting from a recommendation adopted by the Assembly Council to reduce the employer funding for pensionable service for doctoral students from five years to two years.

The board offers a response to the Life and Mission Agency request that the administration and funding for the Employee Assistance Program be transferred to the Pension and Benefits Office effective September 1, 2018.

A response in support of the 2014 General Assembly's decision regarding the shared congregational support of the pension plan is offered as the answer to an overture requesting that the pension plan return to a former practice of waiving contributions for congregations who have been vacant for more than four years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consent Recommendation

That Recommendation No. 1 be adopted by consent.

Changes in Pension Plan Membership Status (p. 272–73)

Each year, the Pension and Benefits Board administers changes in pension status for plan members who apply to receive their pension. The board also administers changes in pension status when plan members die. A complete list of pension plan members with changes in pension status is listed in the report.

► Recommendation No. 1

That the action of the Pension and Benefits Board in the administration of pension benefits be sustained.

Pension Plan Constitution Amendment for Doctoral Students (p. 274)

Historically, the pension plan has permitted the continuation of pensionable service for a period of up to five years for active ministers and diaconal ministers of the pension plan who enroll in full-time doctoral studies. This requires both employee and employer contributions. The employer contributions are funded by the Assembly Council. In December 2016, the Assembly Council adopted a recommendation that the employer funding for pensionable service for doctoral students be reduced from five years to two years. In order to accommodate the Assembly

Council's recommendation, a change to section 18.10 of the Constitution of the Pension Plan is required. The amendment is included in the report.

Recommendation No. 2

That section 18.10 of the Constitution of The Presbyterian Church in Canada Pension Plan be amended as defined above effective June 30, 2018.

Employee Assistance Program (p. 273)

As reported to the 2017 General Assembly, the Life and Mission Agency requested that the Pension and Benefits Board take over the administration and funding of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Over the past year, a thorough review of the feasibility of the Pension and Benefits Office assuming this responsibility was conducted. Requests for quotes were made to three EAP providers (including the existing provider) and the proposals were reviewed in detail, complete with cost and benefit comparisons. The review determined that there would be significant cost savings by making a change to the EAP service provider. The Pension and Benefits Board recognizes the importance of this benefit program and the success of the pilot program has shown positive outcomes and steady increases in utilization. The board, therefore, agrees to support the continuation of this program with a change in service provider to reduce and stabilize costs.

Recommendation No. 3

That the Pension and Benefits Board, in response to the request received from the Life and Mission Agency in the fall of 2016, agree to assume the financial and administrative responsibility for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, effective September 1, 2018, and that the cost become a component of the overall health and dental benefit plan of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Overture No. 7, 2018 re vacant congregations' contributions to the pension plan (p. 276)

An overture requesting that the church return to the former practice of allowing pension plan assessments to be waived for congregations that have been vacant for more than four years was referred to the Pension and Benefits Board. In 2014, the General Assembly agreed to remove the four-year vacancy exemption, in support of establishing the principle that all congregations throughout their entire life have an ongoing obligation to the pension fund. The removal of the vacancy exemption became effective on January 1, 2015, with the proviso that congregations who were exempt prior to the effective date would begin making contributions to the pension fund effective January 1, 2017. The two-year grace period provided time for those congregations to prepare for the change. The decision of the 2014 General Assembly affirms the practice of the collegial and shared apportioning of the congregational support of the pension plan to all congregations.

Recommendation No. 4

That the above be the response to Overture No. 7, 2018 re vacant congregations' contributions to the pension plan.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BUILDING CORPORATION**PURPOSE**

In 1968, the General Assembly created the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation as a separate registered corporate charity, currently governed by the Not-For-Profit (NFP) Act. Its exclusive purpose is to assist congregations and associated entities of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the performance of their charitable activities by providing guarantees for loans for church building projects. In addition, it also assists with housing for retired servants of the church. There are 21 directors of the corporation from all synods and the General Manager carries out the daily functions of the corporation.

REPORT SUMMARY

This year represents the 50th anniversary of the commencement of the corporation. During this time it has fulfilled its mission of Christian charitable activities by providing assistance to a total of 233 church building and renovation projects for an aggregate of over \$54,000,000 in approved loans. In 2017, three loans were approved and three congregations retired their loans. The corporation currently supports 15 congregations with approved loans of over \$5,200,000 and assists with housing for ten retired servants of the church.

The corporation continues to meet with congregations to assist with decisions on improvements/repairs to buildings, visit congregations across Canada and have numerous telephone conversations to discuss potential projects, and to find ways that financing can be structured to provide funding needed to complete them.

The General Manager of the corporation manages and administers the business and affairs of the corporation and also serves as coordinator, Lending Services for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. During this year, 8 new loans were approved under the Lending Fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

SEXUALITY OVERTURES

PURPOSE

The Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency Committee have conferred about overtures regarding sexual orientation since the spring of 2015. The two bodies submitted a joint report to the 2015 General Assembly (A&P 2015, p. 541–45) offering a program of meaningful listening and discussion marked by respect and trust to be used at the General Assembly in Vancouver. At the request of the 2015 General Assembly, the two bodies again cooperated to create the study document published in October 2015 entitled *Body, Mind and Soul: Thinking together about human sexuality and sexual orientation in the Presbyterian in Canada*.

Throughout 2016 and 2017 the two bodies met together occasionally and exchanged working documents of reports. It was agreed during the process of consultation that the Life and Mission Agency and the Committee on Church Doctrine would submit, in addition to their own reports, a joint report to the General Assembly, which sought to address the mutual concern of the need for the church to confess of its homophobia. (A&P 2017, p. 474–78)

REPORT SUMMARY

While the two bodies, the Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency Committee, communicated during this past year there is no shared report to the General Assembly. The following two reports have been extracted from the reports submitted by the Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency Committee for ease of reference and use by the commissioners. While the two reports address similar overtures, the approach and recommendations are different.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH DOCTRINE

Overtures re Full Inclusion of All Persons Regardless of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (p. 281–85)

This recommendation is to deny the overtures requesting a change in our understanding of marriage. To pass this recommendation would mean that those seeking a more “inclusive” understanding of marriage would be denied that change. It does “not” imply that the process of listening and confession that began in 2016 would end or change. It does imply that the Committee on Church Doctrine would continue to consider other aspects of the overtures such as the unity of the church, the relationship of church and state, and the identity of transgendered people. The Committee on Church Doctrine is not recommending any kind of action as a result of this decision. It is our belief that this is a foundational decision required before thinking through all of the implications.

The Committee on Church Doctrine is aware that many of these overtures were referred both to itself and to the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries). Over the years since these overtures were referred, the Committee on Church Doctrine has worked consultatively with the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries). At times that consultation has produced common recommendations such as initiating the process of listening to the LGBTQI community. At other times we have had divergent responses to the overtures. For example, in 2017, the Committee on Church Doctrine introduced two biblical rationales and the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries) introduced one. In considering the doctrinal implications of the overtures, the Committee on Church Doctrine believes that it has acted within its mandate to bring forward recommendations regarding jointly referred overtures, even if those recommendations might contradict the implicit or explicit intent of the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries).

Recommendation No. 1

That in the light of the above report and summary, the prayers of Overture Nos. 5, 23, 24, 30 and 35, 2015, Overture No. 21, 2016 and Overture No. 19, 2017 be not granted.

Overtures re Listening, Dialogue, Study and Timelines for Study re Human Sexuality (p. 281–85, 288)

In essence this recommendation builds on Recommendation No. 1. The overtures named here have slightly different intents than full inclusion. Mostly these overtures focus on a process for discernment. As the Committee on Church Doctrine is recommending that we have discerned that there is not sufficient cause for change, so too we are recommending that we consider that phase of the discernment complete.

Neither of these recommendations are a positive affirmation of the current subordinate standard of marriage. The committee assumes, at this time, that clarity can be found in defining what marriage is not. The Committee on Church Doctrine does not believe that these recommendations foreclose further conversation or theological work on the nature of marriage. While we do not believe there is warrant to change to an “inclusive” understanding, that is not to say we are not open to considering ways in which our current practice or understanding of marriage may need to change. For instance, it is not clear that The Presbyterian Church in Canada has an adequate theological understanding of cohabitation and singleness, two issues facing by a great number of Canadians. These recommendations seek clarity on one aspect of marriage, which does not mean all aspects of marriage are no longer pertinent.

Recommendation No. 2

That the prayers of Overture Nos. 15, 16 and 29, 2015 and Overture Nos. 13 and 15, 2016 on listening, dialogue, study and timelines for study be answered by this report, by reports of the Committee on Church Doctrine to the previous two General Assemblies, and by the process of listening and confession initiated by the 2017 General Assembly.

LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY COMMITTEE

In addition to a review of action taken by previous General Assemblies, the feedback received from the church about the Life and Mission Agency Committee’s report on sexuality that was sent for study and report and a full legal opinion about whether religious officials could be compelled to perform marriage ceremonies that contravene their religious beliefs are contained in this report, there is one recommendation associated with this report.

Response to overtures referred to the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries) (p. 290)

Recommendation No. 3 asks that the General Assembly grant the Life and Mission Agency Committee permission to respond to the overtures about sexuality referred to it at a future Assembly. This will allow the agency to consider new overtures it has received, work with the Committee on Church Doctrine on overlapping concerns and give the church the time to study and discuss the matter of sexuality that it requested.

Recommendation No. 3

That permission be granted to the Life and Mission Agency to submit a response to Overtures Nos. 4, 5, 15, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 35, 2015; Nos. 13 and 21, 2016; No. 19, 2017; and No. 5, 2018 to a future General Assembly.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE RE LISTENING (LGBTQI PEOPLE)**PURPOSE**

The General Assembly in 2018 established the Special Committee re Listening (LGBTQI People) upon the recommendation arising from the work of the Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency Committee in preparing to respond to the overtures regarding sexuality.

The special committee, over the next few years, is to create a safe and respectful environment in which confidentiality is assured in order to encourage LGBTQI people to tell their stories of harm done to them and to share their stories of God's grace experienced by them. Each year the committee is to report to the General Assembly with a final report being presented by 2020.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Special Committee re Listening (LGBTQI People) through a time of discernment selected a name that would be welcoming and to reflect its mandate and purpose. It chose "Rainbow Communion". This year the committee has met to plan its work and to prepare the Listening Process. It is recommending revisions to two sections of its terms of reference. It is making arrangements to hear people who wish to share these experiences of harm from May 2018–June 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS**Terms of Reference** (p. 295–97)

There are two revisions to the special committee's terms of reference that are being proposed. The first change notes that relatives, friends, co-workers, members of congregation, ecumenical colleagues and others may also have stories to share with the committee. The second recommendation is asking that the issues of hypocrisy, heterosexism and transphobia be added along with the issue of homophobia as the special committee prepares a response on these issues for the church.

Recommendation No. 1

That the terms of reference of the Special Committee re LGBTQI People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada be modified to read as:

1. The Special Committee shall create a safe and respectful environment in which confidentiality is assured, in order to encourage LGBTQI people and others:
 - a. to tell their stories of harm done to LGBTQI people and others within and by the church; and
 - b. to share their stories of God's grace experienced by and Christian ministry performed by LGBTQI people and others, even in the midst of the challenges they have faced.

Recommendation No. 2

That the terms of reference of the Special Committee re LGBTQI People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada be modified to read as:

4. The Special Committee shall provide an appropriate response to the issues of homophobia, hypocrisy, heterosexism and transphobia within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Understanding Fear and the Threat of Censure (p. 297)

For the LGBTQI members of the committee, their acceptance of the invitation to serve, and to ensure that the committee's demographic requirements were met, meant that they put themselves at risk of censure as they self-identify. The climate in the church to date has been one of "don't ask – don't tell", but with the establishment of this special committee it is now asking LGBTQI people to tell their story and an opportunity is provided to reveal their identity. For this reason, the Rainbow Communion is recommending that for those who serve on the committee and those who come to tell their stories, censure and discipline with respect to The Presbyterian Church in Canada's stance on homosexuality would be suspended indefinitely.

Recommendation No. 3

That those who are subject to the discipline of The Presbyterian Church in Canada who accepted the invitation to serve on the Special Committee re Listening (LGBTQI People) or who accept the invitation to tell their stories of harm done or grace experienced, even in the midst the challenges they have faced because of homophobia, hypocrisy, heterosexism or transphobia in the church, would have potential censure with respect to The Presbyterian Church in Canada's stance on same-sex relationships suspended indefinitely in order to allow them to participate freely and honestly in the work of the special committee.

Listening Process (p. 298–99)

The Rainbow Communion has developed a listening process whereby those who graciously offer to speak with the Rainbow Communion will be able to do so by whatever means is best for the storyteller. A safe and respectful environment will be created whereby the stories are received through face-to-face meetings, written submissions (letter or email), video conference or by phone. Stories that are recorded and kept will be done only with the express consent of the individual. The storyteller(s) will determine the method of recording such as video recording, audio recording or note-taking by the listeners. There may be those who do not wish to have a record of their story kept, but simply need a space to be heard. Where consent for the keeping of records is provided, the Rainbow Communion will maintain a secure and confidential database of the number of storytellers, demographic data (age range and province) and the content of the stories. The location for the listening space will be determined in consultation with the storytellers according to what they would consider to be a safe, welcoming and respectful space.

The Rainbow Communion will be collecting stories from May 15, 2018 to June 15, 2019.

Recommendation No. 4

That individuals and groups be encouraged to tell their stories of harm done by homophobia, hypocrisy, heterosexism and transphobia, and to share stories of grace received in the midst of challenges in The Presbyterian Church in Canada through the listening process developed by the Rainbow Communion until June 15, 2019.

Robert Faris and Sue Senior
Co-Conveners

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, MONTREAL

PURPOSE

The Board of Governors is the legislative body of The Presbyterian College responsible for the government, management and control of the business, affairs, property and revenues of the college in all matters, save and except in respect of those matters which may from time to time be expressly assigned or reserved to the General Assembly by statute of the National Assembly of Quebec or by the General Assembly.

REPORT SUMMARY

The report of The Presbyterian College, Montreal, summarizes the main activities of the college during 2017. There are several highlights to the report. While recruitment remains an issue for most theological colleges, we are glad to report that our student body has grown. One of the goals of the board was to establish a global place of learning and we now have students from around the world studying at the college. A second highlight has been the success of our capital campaign. Our initial goal was \$1.75 million and we have exceeded that goal within the first three years of the program. We have, therefore, set a new goal of an additional \$500,000. We have hired a new Director of the Leadership Centre, the Rev. Tim Keener, who has a strong background in congregational vitality within Canada, the United States and Europe. We are continuing to work on integrating congregational renewal and new church development into the Master of Divinity curriculum. We are adding new online courses each year and hope to have a course on worship and a course on congregational leadership ready by the fall of 2018. We have been able to reduce our deficit significantly and hope to reduce it further in 2018 to \$69,000 with the goal of eliminating the deficit entirely within the next three years.

One challenge before the college is that it does not have a Designated Learning Institute number. This number is required for international students. While our students can use the McGill University number for the first two years of study, they cannot technically use it for the third year. We are now in discussions with the Quebec government to secure a Designated Learning Institute number.

We will have three students graduating this year with the Master of Divinity: Marcus Arseneault (Presbyterian), Katie MacIntosh-Hubely (Presbyterian) and Sandra Scarlett (non-Presbyterian). The college will confer the degree Doctor of Divinity (*honoris causa*) on Dr. Richard Mouw for his work in theological education and scholarship.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries (p. 303)

The Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries was appointed by the General Assembly in 2015 as the Director of Pastoral Studies of The Presbyterian College for a three-year term. His term will be completed as of this General Assembly. The board did a thorough review of Dr. De Vries' work as Director of Pastoral Studies and has noted the excellent contribution he has made to the mission of the college. Based on the review, the board recommends:

Recommendation No. 1

That the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries be reappointed as the Director of Pastoral Studies at The Presbyterian College, Montreal, for a five-year period at the rank of Associate Professor.

The Presbyterian College, By-Laws (p. 304–05)

The present by-laws of The Presbyterian College, Montreal, make reference to the Committee on Theological Education that is no longer a committee of the General Assembly. Therefore, all references to the Committee on Theological Education should be removed from the by-laws.

Recommendation No. 2

That the above changes to the by-laws of The Presbyterian College be approved.

GOVERNING BOARD OF KNOX COLLEGE**PURPOSE**

Knox College is one of three theological schools owned and operated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is a member of the Toronto School of Theology and affiliated with the University of Toronto. Knox College exists to serve congregations and presbyteries by educating Presbyterians for ordained and lay ministries. The college is governed by a board appointed annually by the General Assembly. As per the General Assembly approved by-laws, the board governs, manages, controls or supervises the government, management, and control of the business, affairs, property and revenues of the college. The board does fiduciary, generative and strategic work. The principal reports to and is accountable to the board. The board establishes, within the fundamental articulation of the college as determined by the General Assembly, the mission, goals and strategic directions of the college, and ensures the implementation and evaluation thereof. The college currently has 120 students in 8 degree programs and 9 core faculty. The convener of the board is Dr. Peter Ross and the Principal is Rev. Dr. John A. Vissers. The Board of Governors meets three times per year.

REPORT SUMMARY

Knox College exists to serve the congregations and presbyteries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada by educating, equipping and empowering followers of Jesus in the Reformed tradition for visionary Christ-centred leadership that is faithful and prophetic. That is the core mandate. Knox College does this through its teaching, mentoring, researching and global partnerships. The Rev. Dr. John A. Vissers was appointed as the thirteenth Principal of Knox College by the 143rd General Assembly and began his appointment on July 1, 2017. In 2017 Knox College welcomed three new faculty members: the Rev. Dr. Esther Acolatse as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Intercultural Studies, Dr. Angela Schmidt as Director of Experiential and Innovative Learning and Assistant Professor of Leadership, and the Rev. Dr. Dong-Ha Kim as Interim Director of Academic Programs and Director of Asian-Canadian Centre for Theology and Ministry. Dr. Stuart Macdonald, Professor of Church and Society, serves as Vice-Principal. In 2017 there were 120 students in regular programs at Knox College, 75 in basic degrees and 45 in graduate academic and professional degrees. Knox offers eight degree programs. 32 persons were recognized receiving degrees, diplomas and certificates at the 174th Convocation on May 9, 2018. The Knox “Re:forming Tomorrow” Campaign has raised \$7 million to date. The Board of Governors met three times in regular session and once for a special meeting to engage in strategic planning. Knox intends to submit a supplementary report with a recommendation concerning tenure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

THE BOARD OF ST. ANDREW'S HALL**PURPOSE**

St. Andrew's Hall is a college of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, located at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Established in 1955, St. Andrew's Hall exercises its provincial charter to teach theology through its primary partnership with the Vancouver School of Theology, and through an agreement with Regent College. The college is governed by a Board of Management comprised of individuals appointed by the General Assembly, with ex-officio members representing the Vancouver School of Theology. The Board of Management utilizes a shared governance approach, which recognizes that multiple groups within the institution participate in decision-making, such as faculty and staff for instance. Specific groups are responsible for primary decision-making in clearly defined areas. In this context, the board has delegated day to day operations of the institution to the dean and executive staff. The board functions primarily at the policy level to provide vision and oversight to the management staff, to assure that the terms of the college's partnership agreements are fulfilled, and exercises legal fiduciary responsibility for the financial and real assets of the college.

REPORT SUMMARY

St. Andrew's Hall continues to fulfill its mission of educating and forming quality leaders for The Presbyterian Church in Canada in partnership with the Vancouver School of Theology, where Presbyterians represent eighteen percent of the student body and constitute one-third of the regular faculty. St. Andrew's Hall focuses especially on missional theology and leadership, offering a variety of programs for students and the wider church through the Centre for Missional Leadership. Ministries of witness and outreach are conducted on campus in relation to university students. An operating surplus was realized in 2017. Thanks to the efficient management of the St. Andrew's Hall residential facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**PURPOSE**

The Board of Governors of the Vancouver School of Theology consists of Chancellor, Principal and not fewer than 12 appointed members. Anglican and United Churches, participating denominations, may appoint up to 4 board members; Presbyterians, associated denominations, may appoint up to 2 members. The board appoints any additional members to insure sufficient numbers, requisite skills and diversity. The board is the active link between the organization and the ownership. The board will create, review and monitor the implementation of policies that, at the broadest level, address each category of organizational decision. The board produces assurance of the Principal's performance through regular, rigorous monitoring according to an established schedule. The board governs with an emphasis on outward vision, encouragement of diversity, strategic leadership, clear distinction between board and management, an orientation toward the future and proactivity.

REPORT SUMMARY

Vancouver School of Theology is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders for the church and the world. We are in respective conversation with Indigenous neighbours and people of other faith traditions. Principal Richard Topping, Dean Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Prof. Robert Paul and Prof. Ross Lockhart are our Presbyterian professors. The President and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, Mr. Iain Black, is our new Chancellor. VST partners with a growing number of institutions nationally and internationally to deliver an excellent theological education and to inspire wise practice of ministry. VST won two large grants for our innovation in administrative excellence (\$47,000 USD from the Association of Theological Colleges) and ministry with Indigenous people (\$400,000 USD from the Luce Foundation). We now give awards in preaching and writing from the Frederick Buechner Centre. Academic enrollment in the fall of 2017 was slightly down but increased in the spring of 2018. VST has initiate new online and onsite programs to increase enrollment. We have the most applications for the fall of 2018 in 10 years. VST welcomed Prof. William Willimon, Prof. Janet Soskice and Prof. Stanley Hauerwas as special lecturers in 2017–2018. VST holds it summer school program (July 9–20, 2018), training, educating and inspiring, faithful and relevant ministry. Prof. David Wilkinson, Principal, St. John's College, Durham, United Kingdom, is our convocation speaker and workshop leader (May 7–8). 25 students graduate this year. Honorary doctorates will be awarded to Dr. Marie Wilson and the Rev. Dr. James Scott.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

TRUSTEE BOARD

PURPOSE

The Trustee Board, under authority of the Parliament of Canada and the legislatures of all 10 provinces, the Trustee Board has responsibility to administer the Acts of the Federal Government in each of 10 provinces and manage the assets and sign contracts for the church. It acquires and manages properties, enters into contracts, oversees investment of funds, issues annuities, establishes pension plans and executes documents.

REPORT SUMMARY

The Investment Advisory Committee (IAC) assists the Trustee Board by receiving fund manager reports, meeting with fund managers and making recommendations to the board.

Returns for the past 4 and 7 years rolling have been positive. The actual returns for each portfolio were: Pension Plan 9.3% and 8.1%; Consolidated Portfolio 8.8 % and 7.6%.

Leith Wheeler was added to the roster of money managers this past year. Rigorous reviews of the results of both the Pension Plan and the Consolidated Portfolios continue to be the main stalwart of the committee.

We want to thank Ms. Drusilla Bryan and Mr. Gordon Marshall for their contributions and service to the Trustee Board. Rejoining the board was Dr. Margaret Ogilvie.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY**PURPOSE**

The Women's Missionary Society is a society of Presbyterians whose main objective is to support the mission of the church. Its statement reads,

The WMS is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service and fellowship.

The members cover the country from Quebec to British Columbia; they are divided into seven regions. Its structure runs parallel to The Presbyterian Church in Canada; Council is parallel to the General Assembly.

The WMS functions autonomously within The Presbyterian Church in Canada, but it reports to the General Assembly and is under its jurisdiction.

REPORT SUMMARY

This past year, the main highlight was the third National Presbyterian Women's Gathering. Over 500 women (and a few men) gathered at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill, Ontario, during the Victoria Day long weekend, for a time filled with worship, renewal and fellowship. There were 14 guests from our partner churches as well as the President of the United Church Women. The keynote speakers were: Jean Chamberlain, Cindy Blackstock and leaders from Tumekutana (African Presbyterian Women's Conference). They gave inspiring speeches about the work in Africa and the church women's situations. The worship times were uplifting as the guest preachers (Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Mona Scriven, Linda Ashfield and Karen Horst) preached powerfully each day. The workshops and forums were educational and covered many topics, both scripturally and globally. The "Being in Community" part of the program was an opportunity to learn about the various mission works of the church, locally and globally. It was an interactive time of learning and sharing about the mission work that the denomination is involved in. The next national gathering will be at the Sheraton Hotel, during the Victoria Day long weekend, in 2020! Plans are already underway to prepare for another exciting and enjoyable gathering!

At the November 2016 meeting, Council Executive approved that a regional gathering be organized. The vision behind the regional gathering is to encourage Presbyterian women within a region to come together to worship, learn and have fellowship while being strengthened as Christian women. The first regional gathering will be in Vancouver at the Sheraton Guildford Hotel (Surrey, British Columbia) from March 29–30, 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

