



TOWARDS A VITAL SPIRITUALITY - THE REV. DR. DALE WOODS



The Rev. Dale Woods gave an insightful and enjoyable presentation on change and leadership in the church, exploring different ways in which people engage with God. He talked about how the change many of us are seeking in our congregations begins with new knowledge and with people's behaviour. If enough individuals change, organizations can change. "But the goal is not so much to help the system change, as to learn," he said. "We don't get to choose change. Change just happens. The only choice we have is whether or not to be intentional about how we deal with change."

Many congregations feel they face a long list of problems, however potential opportunities are not always seen. Mr. Woods challenged commissioners to consider how each of us is contributing to the problems that we have. "We need to ask, 'Am I contributing to the problems I'm trying to solve? Am I a part of it?' Everybody in the system is involved in the problem." He urged us to ask ourselves, "When I think about change, what is the transformation in me that is required?" To be empowered, we need to look at the behaviours in ourselves that need to change because that is all we truly have control over.



If change is internal, not just external, then it's important to know how the spiritual life relates to change. How does our engagement with God lead us to change and how does it deepen our relationship to God? "The spiritual life flows out of gratitude to God," he said.

He spoke about four different kinds of Christian spirituality that all play an important part in experiencing faith and explained that individuals associate with each area to varying degrees. "People worship differently, people experience differently," he said. The four types can be generally grouped into:

- Quadrant 1 the emphasis is on intellect
- Quadrant 2 the emphasis is on personal renewal and inward change
- Quadrant 3 the emphasis is on an inner life of contemplation
- Quadrant 4 the emphasis is on an interest in social regeneration

"Worship styles of individual ministers might be different from the congregation's overall view," Mr. Woods explained. Commissioners took part in an interactive demonstration to see how, individually, we may be in any one of the various quadrants, but the congregation we attend may be in another. When asked what spiritual style their churches had, almost all commissioners indicated the speculative/mind quadrant.

With the assistance of the Rev. Glen Soderholm, commissioners were given examples of what that music might accompany each style. "All spiritual types are important and valuable," Mr. Woods said, while also pointing out their potential pitfalls. He challenged commissioners to think how they could broaden their experience of spirituality, as an individual and as a congregation. He asked why we would stick to just one area and miss reaching people who experience spirituality through the other quadrants.

"The Spirit of God is active today," he concluded. "Be inspired to carry on in your work. As you wonder about what the future holds, who knows, except this—one day we shall overcome. It will be as God wants it to be."

Watch the Rev. Dale Woods full presentation by clicking the live stream link at presbyterian.ca/ga2014 (fifth sederunt).



Amazing teaching from Dale Woods. His wisdom and leadership is a true gift to the church. #ga140 — Matt Brough

Visit presbyterian.ca/ga2014 for the reports, overtures and recommendations

INTERFAITH VISITORS – DR. RACHAD ANTONIUS AND DR. WALID EL KHACHAB

Dr. Rachad Antonius, professor at University of Quebec at Montreal and Dr. Walid El Khachab, professor at York University shared perspectives on the current situation in Egypt. The Assembly heard that it was the actions of the Muslim Brotherhood that forced the military to oust them from power on July 3, 2013. Both hoped for an Egypt where all people could live in peace.

Mr. Antonius urged that concern for the persecution and discrimination of Christians in Egypt be addressed by encouraging everyone to work for an Egyptian

society that would protect and defend the rights of all citizens, whether Christian, Muslim, minority or women. Mr. El Khachab hoped for Egypt to be a secular state, not as one that is anti-religious, but as a place where all faiths, or lack thereof, are accepted. He asked the General Assembly not to confuse the practices of the far right Muslim Brotherhood with the majority of Muslims, and shared examples of Muslims in Egypt praying outside church as a way of expressing solidarity and protection² from far right organizations.



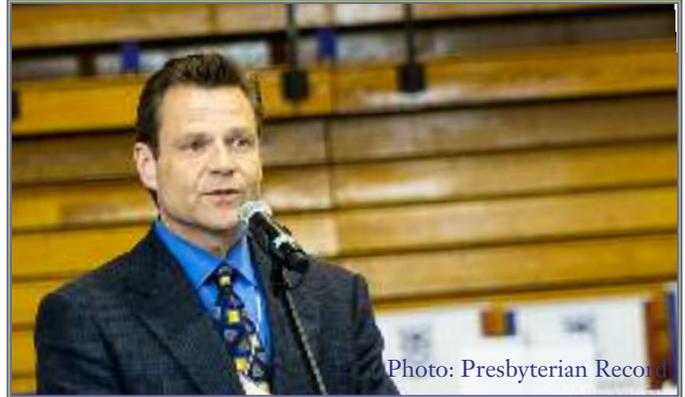


ADDITIONAL NOTES

- The Assembly debated a recommendation from the Committee on Church Doctrine about allowing elders to administer the sacraments when a minister of Word and Sacraments is unavailable. While some spoke strongly against the recommendation, others expressed concern that some people, especially in remote communities, are underserved by not having a minister of Word and Sacraments easily available to administer the sacraments, such as baptism. The YARs gave an advisory vote in favour of the motion and the recommendation was passed.
- The Committee on Church Doctrine also passed a recommendation that the Korean translation of Living Faith be adopted as a subordinate standard of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- The Assembly approved the History Committee's recommendation that the image of the burning bush and the phrase "nec tamen consumebatur" be authorized as an official symbol and motto of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- The Young Adult Representatives played a video highlighting their experiences at General Assembly and how they will carry the light back to their congregations.
- The Assembly Council report accepted the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Richard Fee, General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, at the end of 2015. Dr. Fee was thanked for his service. The LMA Committee will now ask presbyteries for nominations for the position of General Secretary.
- The Life and Mission Agency expressed thanks to Anne Phillips, LMA Senior Administrator, who will be retiring at the end of 2014. She has been with the Life and Mission Agency for 22 years. Her husband, David Phillips, Healing and Reconciliation Animator and Leading with Care facilitator, will also retire this year after almost 10 years working for the church.

ADDITIONAL NOTES (CONTINUED)

- Student representatives from each of the colleges addressed the Assembly. “As students we are being formed,” said Janik Livera, representing Vancouver School of Theology. “We are being fed to go out into the world so that we may feed others. The lights that we carry within are being kindled so that we can continue to shine out into the world and carry and continue the mission of God in our particular way.”
- Presbyterian World Service & Development thanked the many congregations and individuals for the \$2.8 million given to help development and relief programs around the world. They encouraged congregations and presbyteries to reflect why we may be more generous in times of natural disaster but less so for disasters related to conflict.
- Sincere appreciation was expressed to the individuals and congregations who faithfully supported Presbyterians Sharing in 2013 and encouragement for congregations to strive for or exceed the 10% allocation for 2014.
- The WMS report highlighted the 100th anniversary of the WMS, Woman of Faith Award recipients and the successful national women’s gathering held in May. Closure of the Book Room will take place as of June 2015.
- Two recommendations were passed as a result of a Commissioner’s Overture related to problems faced in Nigeria. Commissioners are asked to join with their presbyteries and congregations to pray for the kidnapped girls in Chibok and for the nation of Nigeria during this time of terrorist destabilization. The moderator will write to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and assure him we are praying for a peaceful and successful outcome of the kidnapping dilemma.





ASSEMBLY COUNCIL

The Assembly grappled at length with a recommendation from Assembly Council that proposed a revised **vision statement** for the PCC. The debate centred on whether or not the new statement accurately captured the heart of the PCC and our congregations, and how it would impact what we do together. After significant discussion and nine proposed amendments, the recommendation was defeated. The PCC's vision and mission statement remains, as passed by the 121st General Assembly in 1995:

Disciples of Christ
Empowered by the Spirit
Glorifying God
and
Rejoicing in Service!

Read more about the mission statement at presbyterian.ca/mission-statement.

The Assembly Council recommendation that **biennial General Assemblies** be held on a trial basis for 6 years (3 cycles) generated lengthy and passionate debate throughout the weekend. The recommendation included an ongoing review process to reflect upon and evaluate how this change is affecting the church, however many commissioners spoke about the vital need for connection that is offered during each Assembly. When the question was finally presented to the Assembly, the recommendation was defeated. General Assembly will continue to take place every year.

View additional photos at presbyterian.ca/ga2014 and presbyterianrecord.ca



#ga140 I have truly enjoyed my experience at G.A. It is my first, and I'm inspired by the spirit, passion, & dedication of everyone!
— Jennifer Sokolowsky



NEXT YEAR'S ASSEMBLY

The 141st General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada will convene next year in Vancouver, BC, from Thursday, June 4 to Monday, June 8, 2015.

ADDITIONAL MOTION

An additional motion put to the floor of Assembly requesting that the church remember, reaffirm and carry forward the strong statement made by the 138th General Assembly regarding the importance of local congregations (A&P 2012, pp. 44-46) was passed. It directed:

1. That we declare that a clear and critical priority as a denomination is to renew, equip and inspire local congregations and missions to fulfil the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Mark 12:29-31) to the glory of the triune God;
2. That this priority be incorporated into the mandates and/or job descriptions of all agencies, national committees, and national staff;
3. That this priority be used by all agencies, national committees, and national staff as a regular and critical element of ongoing self-evaluation and the evaluation of any staff members, committees and/or agencies under their oversight;
4. And that all agencies and national committees be directed to regularly include an appropriately thorough written summary of the insights and results of these ongoing evaluations at future General Assemblies;
5. That the Assembly Council present a strategic plan at the next General Assembly.