



20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHURCH'S CONFESSION TO ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The Rev. Dr. George Vais welcomed Phil Fontaine, one of the longest-serving National Chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations and Order of Canada recipient. Mr. Fontaine addressed the Assembly as part of the 20th anniversary of the PCC's confession to Aboriginal peoples. "This is a vital and an important moment in the life of this assembly and the life of the church," said the Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris.

Mr. Fontaine acknowledged the confession as a "special moment between the PCC and indigenous peoples" and as setting the stage for a journey that we embark on together. "Much has transpired since the confession," he said as he spoke about the ongoing disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Canada and the challenges we face for the next 20 years. "In my view, poverty in Aboriginal communities is the single largest challenge facing Canada." He listed sobering statistics about the state of Aboriginal communities including concerns around access to education, clean water and housing. And yet he also shared reasons for optimism.





“We are at a point in our collective history where we can make a real difference, where we can establish and create the kinds of changes that are absolutely necessary and that will speak clearly and loudly to fairness and justice for all peoples.”

Mr. Fontaine spoke about opportunities for Aboriginal communities related to resource production and pointed out that more students are being educated and becoming professionals. While there is still much work to do, accomplishments have been realized and attitudes are changing. Differences are no longer barriers to relationships but opportunities to connect with one another. “On this journey we have to walk together,” he said. “We no longer live in an isolated world apart from one another; we are very much together... We each have to walk the journey. We each have to make an effort.”

The PCC’s 1994 Confession has been translated into French, Korean, Dakota, Plains Cree and Ojibwe. The

collection of translations was offered to Mr. Fontaine by Dr. Farris as a symbol of our commitment toward healing and reconciliation. Ms. Betty Siverns of the WMS thanked Mr. Fontaine for his presentation and the Rev. Stewart Folster, director of Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, offered tobacco and gave a prayer. “I believe we will do wonderful things in the future for this church and for Aboriginal people,” he said.

To view Phil Fontaine’s full address, click the live stream link at presbyterian.ca/ga2014



Listening to #Chief-PhilFontaine at #ga140 – inspiring!
— Rev. Dave

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

E.H. JOHNSON AWARD LUNCHEON

This year’s E.H. Johnson award recipient is Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies working together to end global hunger. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a member of the Foodgrains Bank through Presbyterian World Service & Development. Executive Director Jim Cornelius gave the keynote address.

Mr. Cornelius spoke about impressive growing projects in rural Canada where communities work together to raise funds through growing crops. “Some are small projects and others are hundreds of acres.” Individual farmers also support the Foodgrains Bank by donating a portion of the sale of their crops. “Many congregations are also involved, raising money through events such as concerts, offerings, community meals and special

appeals.” Last year, the member churches and agencies of the Foodgrains Bank were able to support 1.3 million people in 42 countries.

Mr. Cornelius shared stories of people he’s met including Syrian refugees in Lebanon where the Foodgrains Bank is supporting a feeding program and drought victims in Niger are benefitting from a food relief program. “I have no doubt about the value and significance of the work that we do together as a Canadian church,” he said. “We understand how important it is to situate our understanding of our mission of ending hunger as not really ‘our’ mission but as part of ‘God’s’ mission.”

Learn more about Canadian Foodgrains Bank at foodgrainsbank.ca



ECUMENICAL VISITOR - THE REV. MWAWI CHILONGOZI

The Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams of International Ministries introduced the Rev. Mwawi Chilongozi from Malawi who spoke about her work as director of the Women’s Guild in the Synod of Livingstonia, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP).

The Women’s Guild is an active part of congregations in Malawi. Guild members visit and care for the elderly, assist those who are ill, preach, provide leadership and strive to mitigate the spread of HIV and AIDS. Ms. Chilongozi also coordinates a program to assist widows through small income-generating activities. “We trust in God in all things,” she said.

Ms. Chilongozi thanked the PCC for its partnership over the years and sent greetings from the synod. “Our partnership has been there for many years,” she said, recognizing the contributions of PCC mission staff and program grants provided by International Ministries, PWS&D and the WMS.



PENSION AND BENEFITS BOARD

The Rev. Peter Bush gave a presentation on the current state of the PCC pension plan, some of the challenges it is facing and projections into the future. The Pension and Benefits Board continues to find ways to ensure adequate retirement income for ministers while allowing the continuation of the church’s mission and ministry. A recent sustainability study looking at a 15-year forecast showed that the pension plan is quite healthy—surprising even the actuaries. The steps that have been taken to address the solvency deficit should resolve it around 2017. “The move to 5% of dollar base for congregations has been hard, we know that,” Mr. Bush said. “But we see the light at the end of the tunnel.”

The General Assembly passed increases in pension contributions from “other PCC employers” (e.g., 50



Wynford Dr., theological colleges, Crieff) and eliminated the four-year vacancy exemption for congregational contributions starting January 1, 2015, except for congregations currently exempt, who would start January 1, 2017.



ECUMENICAL GUEST - DR. SUBHASHINI DUTTA AND DR. SONLATA WILSON



Dr. Subhashini Dutta from Hatpipliya Hospital and Dr. Sonlata Wilson from Jobat Hospital brought greetings from the Church of North India churches, hospitals and schools in the Vindhya Satpura region. Dr. Wilson reminded the Assembly that the Jobat hospital was started by Dr. John and Dr. Mary Buchanan, and she gave thanks for the many international mission staff who have followed. Both expressed thanks to the WMS and PWS&D for ongoing support of their work. “Thank you for your solidarity through your actions,” said Dr. Dutta as she encouraged the PCC to continue to walk beside them.



ADDITIONAL NOTES

- The Moderator of the 139th General Assembly recounted highlights during his term as moderator, including attending the Truth and Reconciliation Commission national events, a trip to PCC-supported projects in India, the national Women’s Gathering, plus the dozens of speaking events across the country. “It was a wonderful opportunity to gain a perspective of the church at large. It was a honour to represent you.”
- William Collier was appointed General Manager of the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation, given the retirement of James Seidler. Mr. Seidler was thanked for the leadership he has provided since April 1, 2000. Also leaving, Administrative Assistant Deborah Motton was recognized for the “faithful and notable contributions” she has provided to the church in her thirty years of service.
- The Presbyterian Record completed the mandatory transition to the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and has established the framework for creating a major gifts program.
- The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee recommended two documents from the World Council of Churches for the church to study and report, and requested that worship resources be prepared for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in partnership with the Christian Reformed Church.
- The Planned Giving department of the Life and Mission Agency presented the many benefits of planned giving. A moment was taken to acknowledge those who have remembered the PCC in their bequests in 2013. “We thank God for the generosity and foresight of all of these people, and are grateful for the legacy of faith and hope they have bequeathed to The Presbyterian Church in Canada,” said the Rev. Herb Gale, Associate Secretary of Planned Giving. “They are truly God’s ‘ProVisionaries,’ who continue to give to the church and its ministries even in and through death.”
- The Rev. Dr. Dale Woods was appointed Principal of The Presbyterian College in Montreal and the Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon was re-appointed for an additional five-year term as Principal of Knox College in Toronto. Professor Pam McCarroll was granted tenure at Knox College.