

EIGHTH SEDERUNT

ASSEMBLY CONSTITUTED

At St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia on Wednesday, June 7, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., the Assembly met pursuant to adjournment. The Moderator constituted the Assembly with prayer.

COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS (cont'd from p. XXX)

Roll and Leave to Withdraw

J.I.F. Barrett provided a third report on the Roll and Leave to Withdraw.

Sederunt 8 – C. MacPherson – Presbytery of Pictou

Agenda Amended

J.I.F. Barrett noted that the agenda of the eighth sederunt would begin with the continuation of the report of the Assembly Council and the Committee on Church Doctrine, followed by the Special Committee re Listening, Confession and Association, the Committee to Nominate Standing Committees, continue with the Clerks of Assembly report, then follow the report schedule indicated by the original report of the Committee on Business.

(cont'd from p. XXX)

ASSEMBLY COUNCIL (cont'd from p. XXX)

Discussion Resumed

Discussion resumed regarding **Recommendation ASC-005**.

Immediate Vote

R. Royal, duly seconded, that the Assembly take an immediate vote on Recommendation ASC-005. Adopted.

Recommendation ASC-005 was adopted.

Recommendation ASC-006 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Additional Motion

That the audited financial statements for The Presbyterian Church in Canada for the year ended December 31, 2022 be received for information. Adopted.

Additional Motion

That the audited financial statements for The Presbyterian Church in Canada Pension Fund for the year ended December 31, 2022 be posted on PC-Biz for information upon final approval by the Assembly Council. Adopted.

Recommendation ASC-007 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Minute of Appreciation: Mr. Oliver Ng, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

C.A. Inksetter (Assembly Council), P. Kinch (Finance Committee) and V. Kim (national office Management Team) expressed gratitude to Mr. Ng for his seven years of faithful service as Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer for The Presbyterian Church in Canada and for his commitment to the work of the national office Management Team, especially around the impending move from 50 Wynford Drive to 300 Bloor St. West.

Oliver replied saying, "It was an honour and a privilege to serve the church for the last seven years. I thank God and the General Assembly for giving me this opportunity. I enjoyed working with my colleagues, the Management Team, various committees, the Pension and Benefits Board, the Trustee Board and the Assembly Council. We have been through many challenges during the last few years, including the Pension funding deficit, the transformer fire, and of course the COVID-19 pandemic. By the grace of God, these are all behind us and God will carry us through new challenges. The time has come for me to say goodbye. I wish all of you good health, peace and blessings."

C.A. Inksetter announced that the search for a new Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer is ongoing. Meanwhile, James Waddle, who is a Presbyterian elder, a Chartered Professional Accountant and a recently retired member of the TMX Group Limited in Toronto, has been hired to fill the position on an interim basis.

Recommendation ASC-008 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Report as a Whole

G.M. Lovelace, moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH DOCTRINE (cont'd from p. XXX)

Additional Motion to Amend the Report was adopted as follows:

J. Bellsmith moved, duly seconded, that the report be amended by striking everything from “The documents which address the topic...” to “The Historic Argument Concerning Human Sexuality” by the Committee on Church Doctrine (A&P 2017, p. 480–504)” and replacing it with:

1985 – The Church and Homosexuality Committee on Church Doctrine (A&P 1985, p. 241, adopted p. 31)

That the prayer of Overture No. 14, 1984 be granted in terms of the above statement.

1994 – Human Sexuality Committee on Church Doctrine (A&P 1994, adopted as amended, p. 56)

That the 120th General Assembly adopt the foregoing statement on human sexuality and that it be discussed by sessions, synods and presbyteries and that this input be included in the continuing report of the Church Doctrine Committee and that this be the response of the General Assembly to the prayers of Overture No. 22, 1987 and Overture No. 9, 1989.

1998 – Human Sexuality Committee on Church Doctrine (report as a whole adopted, p. 48)

This report was short and procedural. No substantive material re gender or sexuality.

1999 – Human Sexuality Committee on Church Doctrine (report as a whole adopted, p. 31)

This report was short and procedural. No substantive material re gender or sexuality.

2000 – Human Sexuality Committee on Church Doctrine (A&P 2000, p. 49)

Report as a whole was adopted.

2001 – Human Sexuality Committee on Church Doctrine (A&P 2001, p. 534–35)

This interim report was short and primarily provided an update on the committee’s progress. It indicated a plan to present a final report in 2003.

2002 – Human Sexuality Committee on Church Doctrine (A&P 2002, p. 470) (report as a whole adopted, p. 31)

This interim report responded to an overture that the Special Committee use the 1994 Church Doctrine report on human sexuality as the basis for its work. The committee’s response to the overture was adopted.

2003 – Final Report Special Committee re Sexual Orientation (A&P 2003, p. 545, adopted, p. 44)

That the above be the responses to Overture No. 15, 1997, Overture No. 34, 1998 and Overture No. 22, 1998”.

Note: most of the Special Committee’s other recommendations were adopted, except one which recommended that congregations and sessions be encouraged to use a study guide created by the committee called “Listening...”. Report as a whole adopted on p. 45.

2015 – Body, Mind and Soul – study guide on human sexuality (Life and Mission Agency and Committee on Church Doctrine)

In response to recommendations adopted by the General Assembly (A&P 2015, p. 539–41, 46), the Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries) prepared a joint study guide called “Body, Mind and Soul” on the topics of human sexuality, sexual orientation and other related matters raised in the overture. The study guide was posted on the church’s website by the end of October 2015 and congregations, sessions, presbyteries and synods were invited to share the result of their conversations with both the Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries) prior to March 31, 2016.

2017 – The Church and People who are Transgender or Intersex (Life and Mission Agency, Justice Ministries, A&P 2017, p. 374–79)

Justice Ministries was directed by the 2016 General Assembly to prepare a report regarding the spiritual needs of transgender and intersex people (A&P 2016, p. 28, 265). A narrative report, which included information from confidential interviews with transgender members of the church and members of their families, was prepared and adopted by the 2017 General Assembly. The General Assembly adopted a recommendation that congregations, ministers, chaplains, elders and youth leaders be encouraged to study the report “The Church and People who are Transgender or Intersex” (A&P 2017, p. 36).

2017 – The Historic Argument Concerning Human Sexuality (Committee on Church Doctrine A&P 2017, p. 480–504)

That the documents “The Historic Argument Concerning Human Sexuality” and “What the Bible teaches on Covenanted Monogamous Same-sex Relationships” 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”. (A&P 2017 p. 539, adopted p. 28)

2017 – What the Bible teaches on Covenanted Monogamous Same-Sex Relationships – Committee on Church Doctrine (A&P 2017, p. 505–36)

2017 – Biblical Reflection re Human Sexuality (Life and Mission Agency, Justice Ministries A&P 2017, p. 542–49)

Additional Motion: J.R Lackie moved, duly seconded, that the biblical reflection presented in the report of the Life and Mission Agency Committee concerning the responses to the various overtures on human sexuality be sent to sessions, presbyteries, synods and colleges for study, reflection and report by January 31, 2018. Adopted. (A&P 2017, p. 38)

2021 – Final Report Rainbow Communion Special Committee re LGBTQI Listening (A&P 2021, p. 670, adopted p. 22)

That this report and its recommendations, together with the supporting resources, be commended to congregations, the Life and Mission Agency and the courts of the church to assist in the process of reconciliation.

Motion to Lift from the Table

J. Bellsmith moved, duly seconded that the Assembly lift Recommendation CDC-001 from the table. Adopted.

Recommendation CDC-001 (p. XXX) was moved by J. Bellsmith, duly seconded. Adopted.

Additional Motion

N. Renaud moved, duly seconded, that The Presbyterian Church in Canada call upon the Government of Canada to value the inherent dignity and worth of disabled persons in Canada and to defend the poor and the marginalized in its ongoing consideration of Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying framework.

Amendment

D.P. Allen-Macartney moved, duly seconded, that “worth and the right to life” be inserted into the addition motion after the word “dignity”. Adopted.

Additional Motion was adopted as amended as follows:

N. Renaud moved, duly seconded, that The Presbyterian Church in Canada call upon the Government of Canada to value the inherent dignity, worth and the right to life and worth of disabled persons in Canada and to defend the poor and the marginalized in its ongoing consideration of Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying framework.

Report as a Whole

J. Bellsmith moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE RE LISTENING, CONFESSION AND ASSOCIATIONS

The Assembly called for the report of the Special Committee re Listening, Confession and Associations which, as printed on p. XXX, was presented by P.G. Bush and S. Kwan, co-conveners.

P. Bush read the confession regarding the ways in which The Presbyterian Church in Canada has silenced, mistreated and slandered the “ethnic contingent” of the church to the Assembly. S. Kwan read it in Korean.

Recommendation SCL-001 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-002 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-003 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-004 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded.

Amendment

That the words “and other ethnic communities” be inserted after the word “congregations”. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-004 was adopted as amended as follows:

That geographically defined presbyteries (that is, not Han-Ca Presbyteries) reach out to the congregations of Han-Ca Presbyteries and other ethnic communities within their bounds to build connections, listen, and find contexts to express understanding and compassion.

Recommendation SCL-005 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded.

Amendment

J. Read moved, duly seconded, that the words “and other ethnic communities” be added to Recommendation SCL-005. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-005 was adopted as amended as follows:

That congregations and ministers that are not part of the Han-Ca Presbyteries develop friendships with neighbouring congregations that are part of Han-Ca Presbyteries and other ethnic communities through a variety of activities, including but not limited to meals shared, joint mission trips and shared worship services. And that congregations be creative in telling the stories of the connections made.

Recommendation SCL-006 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-007 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-008 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-009 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Recommendation SCL-010 (p. XXX) was moved by G.M. Lovelace, duly seconded. Adopted.

Additional Motion

D.R. Kendall moved, duly seconded, that the Life and Mission Agency provide resources to accompany the Confession to deepen our understanding of the concept of race and the role we share in the important work of anti-racism. Adopted.

Additional Motion

B. Sargent moved, duly seconded, that at all future General Assemblies, simultaneous translation to Korean be made available.

Amendment

L. Nicol moved, duly seconded, that “and all languages used in the lower courts of our denomination” replace the word “Korean” and that “as needed” be added to the end of the additional motion.

Motion to Refer

That the Additional Motion and Amendment be referred to the Assembly Council for its consideration and report to the 2024 General Assembly.

Immediate Vote

A.J. Cluney moved, duly seconded, that the Assembly take as immediate on the Motion to Refer and Amendment. Adopted.

Motion to Refer Defeated

The motion to refer the Motion to Refer and Amendment to the Assembly Council was defeated.

Amendment to Amendment

C. Clarke moved, duly seconded, that the words “subject to funding being made available by the Assembly Council” be added to the amendment. Adopted.

Amendment as Amended

That at all future General Assemblies, simultaneous translation to all languages used in the lower courts of the church be made available as needed, subject to funding being made available by the Assembly Council.

(cont'd on p. XXX)

ADJOURNMENT

Announcements having been made, the Moderator adjourned the Assembly with prayer to meet at St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia on Wednesday, June 7, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., of which public intimation was given.