



GENERAL COUNCIL NEWS

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MARDI TINDAL ELECTED AS MODERATOR

by Derek Carlisle

Mardi Tindal, from Hamilton Conference, has been elected as the next Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

Tindal was chosen on the fifth ballot at the 40th General Council in Kelowna, British Columbia. The Rev. Maya Landell, from London Conference, was the other nominee on the final ballot. Landell moved for a unanimous adoption of the election results, seconded by Jim Angus, from British Columbia Conference, who was also a candidate for Moderator.

In her remarks to commissioners, Tindal first expressed thanks to the other seven candidates. “I expect that each of you, like me, has had your faith deepened this week by the witness of all the other moderatorial nominees. I have been inspired by each of you,” said Tindal. Calling on all the nominees by name, she encouraged them to continue to walk with her. She added that the candidates had formed a particularly special relationship throughout the week.

Tindal, 56, also thanked her family, including her mother, her husband, Doug, and their two sons, Chris and Alex. She drew the attention of the Council to the power of prayer in her own family.

“Mom, I know you’re praying for me in this moment, as you have in every moment since I was born,” she said. “I hope you know how grateful I am for that.”



The United Church of Canada

Mardi Tindal

An adult educator, author, and video producer who has served in several roles at all levels of the church, Tindal is currently Executive Director of Five Oaks Centre, one of the United Church’s education centres. Her home congregation is Sydenham United Church in Brantford, Ontario, where Tindal lives. She also previously served as co-host of the former United Church television program *Spirit Connection*.

Tindal told the Council that the lectionary readings from Ephesians 4:25–5:2 this week had particularly moved her as she contemplated the rules that she and the church will share for the sake of their abundant life together in Christ.

The passage spoke of putting aside malice and bitterness. Tindal said that these two traits were not

completely unknown to the church and that the words in Ephesians provided good advice.

“As the writer of Ephesians has said, let us ‘live in love as Christ loved us.’ As Jim Angus said to some of us this afternoon, we will walk together,” she said. “Let us do so in order that we may love God, creation, and one another with all our heart and all our soul.”

Looking ahead at the next three years, Tindal spoke of entering into a covenant with the church “as we live into ministry together.” Tindal concluded her remarks by suggesting a spontaneous hymn from *More Voices*, “We Will Take What You Offer.” As the band members were moving to the stage, Tindal started with an a cappella version.

The outgoing Moderator, the Rt. Rev. David Guiliano, later told the Council that many years ago Tindal had been one of his camp directors and that he had a crush on her at that time.

In addition to Tindal, Landell, and Angus, the other Moderator candidates were the Rev. Dr. Ross Bartlett, from Maritime Conference, the Rev. Dr. James Christie from the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, the Rev. Richard Hollingsworth from the Bay of Quinte Conference, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Mabee, from Toronto Conference, and the Rev. John Thompson, from the All Native Circle Conference.

Tindal is the fourth layperson to be elected to the position of Moderator. The last lay Moderator was Dr. Marion Best, who was elected in 1994.

Tindal will be installed during a service at the General Council on August 15.



CHURCH COMMITS ITSELF TO OPPOSING DISCRIMINATION IN CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

by Derek Carlisle

United Church congregations will be encouraged over the next three years to commit themselves to a journey where there will be no discrimination in any aspect of church life.

Following deliberations over two days, commissioners at the 40th General Council in Kelowna, British Columbia, voted to declare their opposition to discrimination in matters respecting worship, membership, and governance.

Commissioners adopted an alternate motion after defeating a proposal that sought to ensure equal access to worship services of the church, such as baptism, communion, marriage, and funerals. Proposed wording in the original motion specified that congregations not discriminate against allowing these services for any group of persons on the basis of several factors, including ethnic origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, and marital status. As the original proposal suggested a change impacting on the church’s Basis of Union, it would have required a voting remit for congregations.

The alternate motion was proposed by an ad-hoc writing team following the first day of deliberations and presented to commissioners when they reconvened two days later on August 13.

Several commissioners said they agreed with the intent of the original proposal, but pointed out that decisions relating to worship elements, such as permitting same-gender marriages, are made at the congregation level.

The Rev. Heather Leffler, from Hamilton Conference, spoke of the realities she faces in her



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Brian Cornelius

two-point pastoral charge. “The only official notice I have received as a minister from the charge was that no minister of theirs would perform same-sex marriages.”

Leffler added that this notice was later withdrawn and that she now

can perform marriages according to her conscience. She requested that commissioners not rush other pastoral charges like hers.

The Rev. Brian Cornelius, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference, spoke to the original proposal from the perspective of an openly gay minister. Cornelius referenced the advances in the church since the 1988 decision to ordain gay and lesbian clergy. He attributed these gains to the conciliar system of church governance whereby local churches are responsible for local decisions such as the oversight of public worship services.

“For me, the conciliar system is not negotiable,” said Cornelius. “While I vehemently support the intent behind it [the original proposal]...I am not prepared to spend the next three years fighting this remit.”

The Rev. Meredith Fraser, from Maritime Conference, said the intent to perform same-sex marriages was not revealed in the original proposal. She added that while her congregation does permit her to conduct same-sex marriages, she stands by the policy to let congregations decide.

Other commissioners spoke of other forms of discrimination, such as ageism and insensitivities towards persons with disabilities. These speakers said the United Church needed to send a message of inclusiveness to all Canadians seeking worship options.

Jason Kuracina, of London Conference, said he had come to the United Church because of its stand against discrimination. He added that the call he has felt in the past towards ministry was weakened by the move away from adopting the original proposal.

Todd Joyes, from Saskatchewan Conference, said the defeat of the original proposal would send out a signal that the church can practise discrimination. Joyes’ remarks on potentially opening the door to discrimination were later addressed by Jayne Little, from Hamilton Conference.

“I know the criticisms we get because we cannot definitely state we do not discriminate,” she said. “Yet I know the process followed by congregations. I would much rather work to figure out how not to be discriminatory [in congregations].”

The Rev. Leslie Robinson, from Maritime Conference, spoke in favour of the original proposal and mentioned his own dilemma of not being able to offer marriage services to same-sex couples in his

congregation. “Four times I have found myself having to utter words of rejection. I am not ready to do it again,” said Robinson. “The next time I will not do it myself. It will come from the session.”

The alternate proposal was favoured by the Rev. Pegi Ridout, from Hamilton Conference. “I would love it if we were ready, but I don’t think we are,” she said. “Issuing a remit invites angry dissent. I think the alternative is a bridge to get where we want to go.”

The Rev. Peggy Jensen, from British Columbia Conference, pointed out many challenges that congregations sharing church space with other denominations would face if the original proposal had been adopted. She specifically referenced several United Church congregations in her home province that share space with Catholic and Anglican parishes.

The adopted alternate motion also asks the United Church to develop educational resources that will assist Conferences, presbyteries, and congregations in identifying potential forms of discrimination. A process will be designed for presentation to the 41st General Council in 2012 in order to assess what else is needed to become a church where everyone can have a place at the table. Between now and 2012, presbyteries will work with congregations to help them carry out these commitments when they conduct their triennial visits to pastoral charges.



UN CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL ÉCOLOGIQUE

par David Fines

Dès le début de leurs rencontres, il y a trois ans, l'Équipe d'organisation et de planification voulait faire de ce 40e Conseil général de l'Église Unie du Canada le plus vert de l'histoire, le plus respectueux de l'environnement. Il est indéniable qu'une assemblée d'une semaine de près de 700 personnes venant des quatre coins d'un pays aussi vaste que le Canada (et en n'ignorant pas que la population canadienne est la plus énergivore du monde *per capita* !) ne peut être sans impacts écologiques.

Que ce soit à cause du transport aérien, du transport terrestre, de l'utilisation d'électricité, du chauffage, de l'air climatisé, de la nourriture, du logement, du volet administratif... ce rassemblement ne peut pas être sans conséquence importante sur l'environnement ; ainsi même la plus petite réduction aura un impact certain.

Et les idées n'ont pas manqué. Bien sûr, la motivation première à cet objectif était d'écouter l'ordonnance de Dieu de « vivre avec respect dans la Création » (Genèse 2,15 repris dans la Confession de foi de l'Église unie), renforcée par l'ambition d'intégrer les valeurs écologiques dans toutes les facettes du travail et de la vie de l'Église tout autant que le désir de sauvegarder la planète, une planète

que nous empruntons à nos enfants après tout.

Servir d'exemple à toute l'Église est également une importante motivation. Aussi l'équipe d'organisation espère-t-elle que chaque délégué-e revienne dans sa paroisse, son consistoire et dans son synode inspiré-e de toutes ces idées sur la protection de l'environnement ; tous et toutes sont invitées à se les approprier.

Ainsi avant même que ne débute le Conseil général, invitation avait été lancée à chaque délégué-e de réduire son empreinte carbonique en utilisant, pour se rendre à Kelowna, le moyen de transport dépensant le moins possible de carburants fossiles, comme covoiturage, le train ou un autre transport public, ou sinon de faire un don à un groupe environnementaliste. Il faut dire que l'Église unie fait déjà un don de ce genre d'un montant de 15 000 \$ par année afin de couvrir les coûts environnementaux estimés pour le transport aérien de son personnel.

Ajoutons aussi que des Fonds sont disponibles à travers le *Vision Fund* de l'Équipe nationale des ministères auprès des jeunes pour des projets présentés par des groupes jeunes qui contribuent directement à diminuer la production de carbone dans l'atmosphère, comme des panneaux solaires, des moyens de transports alternatifs, des éco-jardins ou des activités de recyclage.

On avait aussi demandé aux délégué-es et autres participant-es à ce Conseil de venir avec leur propre tasse à café, ainsi que leur propre bouteille d'eau. Tasses et bouteilles au logo du potier (thème du Conseil général) sont en vente à la librairie. Il est prévu qu'aucune vaisselle jetable ne sera utilisée (en tout cas, le moins possible) durant le Conseil général.

Et puisqu'il est question des repas, on veillera à manger moins de viande, car la production de viande et son transport est, selon les chiffres des Nations-Unies, la cause de 18% des émissions des gaz à effets de serre (le transport : 13%). En plus de proposer qu'il y ait au moins deux repas sans « viande » durant la semaine, l'équipe d'organisation a intentionnellement demandé que soient utilisés le plus possible des produits locaux (c'est d'ailleurs pour cela que nous avons toujours à portée des plats débordant de cerises rouges et juteuses, saison de récolte oblige !). De plus, les repas du midi ont été distribués dans les sacs en tissu réutilisables.



L'Église Unie du Canada

La présentation du Forum des jeunes.

L'utilisation du papier, elle, sera réduite au maximum. Premièrement les instructions en ligne pour s'inscrire ont considérablement réduit le nombre de formulaires imprimés. Il a été décidé qu'il n'y aurait plus de bulletin quotidien imprimé, mais que toutes les nouvelles se retrouveraient sur le site GC40. Il n'y aura qu'une seule copie de ce bulletin par table que les délégués pourront consulter à tour de rôle. Les annonces de rencontres informelles et autres activités sont faites oralement ou sur les écrans. En plus, un panneau d'affichage où l'on peut mettre des publicités est visible à l'entrée principale. Et lorsqu'il faut vraiment imprimer quelque chose, on le fait sur papier recyclé ou imprimé sur les deux cotés (ce qui n'est pas toujours le cas dans la salle de presse !)

Enfin, n'oublions pas la contribution des jeunes qui ont invité les délégués à participer à L'Héritage du 40°. Leur but est de ramasser 30 000\$ pour un projet vert qui effacera l'empreinte écologique causée par le transport de 700 personnes au Conseil général, somme qui permettra de construire un système de chauffage à l'énergie solaire sur le toit du Centre de formation Naramata en Colombie Britannique ; pour arriver à ce total chaque délégué-es peut contribuer 50 dollars. En présentant leur projet, le premier jour du Conseil général, les jeunes ont précisé que les déplacements jusqu'à Kelowna seulement avait coûté 1,9 million de livres de carbone.

Nous apprenons... à vivre vert !



RESTRUCTURER LES MINISTÈRES EN FRANÇAIS

par David Fines

Afin de pouvoir passer au travers des quelques 173 propositions abordant une multitude de sujets et de questions et reçues à travers tous les Synodes, l'Assemblée du Conseil général de l'Église unie se divise en trois Commissions.

Les trois Commissions ont reçu cette année des

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Pierre Goldberger

noms d'océan : Pacifique, Atlantique et Arctique ; peut-être est-ce pour illustrer, avec une petite touche d'humour, l'immensité du travail qu'elles doivent abattre.

La Commission Pacifique a reçu le mandat de discuter et de disposer des propositions traitant l'exercice de divers ministères de l'Église : différents types de ministères, titres et fonctions, aménagements administratifs pour les couples de pasteurs, régime de retraite, dépenses de déplacement, relations pastorales, programmes de formation, ministère auprès des jeunes, processus d'admission au ministère, supervision pastorale, l'importance du culte, etc.

Deux propositions provenant du Synode Montréal et Ottawa portaient sur la restructuration des ministères en français au sein de l'administration de l'Église unie.

Il faut savoir que lors de sa dernière réunion en mars de cette année, les membres de l'Exécutif du Conseil général ont accepté une proposition de la secrétaire-générale, Nora Sanders, d'effectuer des changements majeurs dans la structure administrative de l'Église unie. L'un de ces changements prévoyait la fusion de trois Unités de travail existantes : l'Unité des ministères pastoraux, de présence et de formation, l'Unité des Ministères et communautés culturellement diverses et l'Unité des ministères en français, avec la nomination d'un unique responsable d'unité. Des négociations en ce sens sont déjà en cours.

Pour les membres des paroisses du Consistoire Laurentien, auprès desquelles l'équipe de l'Unité des ministères en français (UMiF) accomplit une importante part de son travail, cette restructuration signifierait, ont-ils dit lors de leur Assemblée plénière annuelle en avril dernier, purement et simplement la disparition - quelques années seulement après la création - après des décennies d'efforts - d'une instance décisionnelle, autonome, indépendante et reconnue aux plus hauts niveaux de la structure de l'Église sur tout ce qui touche les ministères en français.

C'est ainsi que les membres du Consistoire Laurentien ont voté une proposition demandant

au Conseil général de reconsidérer cette décision. La proposition se lisait ainsi :

Nous appelons l'Église Unie du Canada, par son Exécutif et son Conseil Général, à reconsidérer sa décision d'abolir l'Unité des ministères en Français et d'encourager plutôt la création d'un partenariat étroit tripartite ce qui rejoindrait les objectifs de synergie, de partage et de vision commune sans faire disparaître l'Unité des ministères en français.

Non seulement cette proposition a reçu l'appui du Synode Montréal et Ottawa lors de son Assemblée générale annuelle un mois plus tard, mais le Groupe de travail sur les ministères en français du synode a aussi expédié au Conseil général une proposition en appui à celle de Consistoire Laurentien ajoutant une requête demandant « que cette unité soit encadrée par un-e responsable francophone d'expérience bien au fait de la réalité sociale du Canada francophone. »

Les membres de la Commission Pacifique se sont penchés sur ces deux propositions rassemblées en une seule résolution, jeudi le 13 août. Nora Sanders, la secrétaire-générale de l'Exécutif du Conseil général et Pierre Goldberger, ministre-exécutif actuel de l'UMiF étaient présents pour répondre aux questions et pour apporter des précisions au besoin. Après un peu plus d'une heure de discussion où sont intervenus les francophones présents pour plaider la cause des ministères en français, les membres de la Commission oscillaient entre deux orientations : l'option de considérer davantage ce qui favoriserait la visibilité et l'identité des ministères en français et celle de miser sur une encore plus étroite collaboration et un travail en commun avec les ministères interculturels et les ministères pastoraux, de présence et de formation.

Lorsque le vote a été pris, c'est par une très faible majorité que la résolution de reconsidérer la décision de fusionner les trois unités a été battue.

L'UMiF va donc disparaître sous sa forme actuelle avant la fin de l'année, fusionnée dans une nouvelle équipe de travail. Le personnel de l'Unité demeurera inchangé et se retrouvera membre d'une « section » d'une nouvelle unité.

« Je suis déçue, s'est exprimée Anne-Marie Carmoy de Québec devant ce vote. Le plus grave, c'est qu'il n'y aura plus personne maintenant dans l'équipe de leadership de l'Église pouvant parler français ; et si c'était l'inverse ? »

FRENCH MINISTRIES MERGED, NOT SEPARATE

by Jeff Cook

Commissioners to the United Church's 40th General Council decided not to ask the Executive of the General Council to reconsider its decision to incorporate the Ministries in French Unit/Unité des Ministères en Français into a larger unit structure within the General Council Office.

Commissioners voted against the motion, even though most people who spoke to the motion favoured the proposal to retain the unit as a separate structure.

The decision of the Executive in March 2009 combined the Ministries in French Unit with two other units: Congregational, Education, and Community Ministries; and Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry.

The Rev. Darla Sloan, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference, said French ministries would have more priority as a distinct unit. "I don't think this will help its visibility," she said of the new structure.



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Pix Butt

The Rev. Pix Butt, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference, said maintaining an individual unit could help "encourage dying English churches outside Montreal to enter into bilingual ministries."

The Rev. Thierry Delay, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference, said he found it easier to know where to direct concerns and questions when French Ministries was a distinct unit.

The Rev. Pierre Goldberger, Executive Minister of the Ministries in French Unit, told commissioners they had to decide what would best serve The United Church of Canada "in terms of identity, visibility, and witness."

Nora Sanders, General Secretary, said that after the restructuring, there are "still the same number of people in French ministries" at the General Council Office as before the Executive decision.

MOM, DAD, AND KIDS ALL ATTEND COUNCIL

by Jim Taylor

It's time for your family vacation. You want to go somewhere, all together. Would you choose to attend a church meeting?

At least three families did. They came from far across the country to attend General Council, in various ways.

The Bartletts came from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Ross and Erin were commissioners; Laura was a Youth Forum delegate. Somewhat to his own surprise, Ross was nominated as a last-minute candidate for Moderator, nominated from the floor of Council.

The Reed family travelled from Bay of Quinte Conference. The father, Paul Reed, was a member of the Agenda and Planning Committee. Both he and son Daniel were commissioners. The twins, Jonathan and Sarah, were leaders for the Children in Council program. The mother, Eleanor, volunteered as a steward, carrying messages from the newsroom to commissioners in their table groups.

"I want to support my family and share their excitement as Council unfolds," Eleanor commented. She had similarly served as a steward at the last General Council in Thunder Bay, Ontario. "It's a great opportunity if you really want to pay attention to the issues."

The Laforet family came from Saskatchewan. Deb Laforet, a diaconal minister, came as a commissioner; her husband, Jeff, was a Youth Forum leader; children Evan and Joshua attended Children in Council.

But why? Why sit in meetings when you could sit on a beach somewhere? Why listen to debates over church policies when you could listen to bird songs on a mountain hike?

"We just thought it would be a great thing to do," Deb Laforet explained. "It was out of province, and we've never been to B.C. before."

"I guess we're all kind of 'church geeks,'" shrugged Daniel Reed.

To balance that view, nine-year-old Evan Laforet commented about the first day's plenary debates, "I'm bored."

Of course, at that point, the Children in Council program had barely started. Later on, the children interviewed the eight Moderator candidates, developed video presentations introducing the candidates to Council, and went on picnics.

The Reeds made it an extended family trip, travelling as far south as Yellowstone National Park and as far west as Vancouver Island.

All the families specifically commented on the energy that a mixture of people of all ages added to the daily experiences of worship and prayer.



REPORT DETAILS TENSIONS AMONG MINISTRY STREAMS

by Jim Cairney

The United Church's 40th General Council voted to rename, alter, and then adopt a somewhat controversial report on ministry in the church.

The "Statement on Ministry" in the United Church became the "Statement on Paid Accountable Ministry" in the United Church, detailing some of the complexities and tensions around what has become two streams of ministry: designated lay ministry and ordered ministry (with ordained and diaconal ministry the two paths within the ordered stream).

Some significant tensions currently exist among the various streams, said Jim Blanchard in the first presentation to the Council from the "Report of the Meaning of Ministry Task Group." "It's creating a great deal of problems," he admitted.

Ordained ministers feel that their education is not valued. Diaconal ministers feel their role is not understood and valued. And designated lay ministers feel their commitment and contribution is less valued, said Blanchard. "Everyone needs to feel their contribution is valued, and their education and service recognized," he said.

"If we don't resolve this issue it will create many more tensions," pleaded Blanchard, a lay member of the task group from Kensington, Prince Edward Island.

After considerable debate, the Council sought to resolve two of the controversies resulting from the direction of the report:

- its understanding of designated lay ministry
- whether a designated lay minister will remain a presbytery member after an appointment is over or in retirement. (Ordered ministers have a lifelong membership in presbytery, while currently designated lay ministers are members only during the term of their appointment.)

The new definition of designated lay ministry in the statement says it is “flexible, responsive to local need, and responsive to the gifts of the Spirit.” And instead of designated lay ministry being limited in duration and location, at the end of an appointment the presbytery and the designated lay minister will discuss together the questions of ongoing ministry and presbytery membership.

“Are we backing into creating a third order of ministry? Do we want to create a third order, or not?” asked the Rev. Mark Ferrier of Mount Forest, Ontario.

Designated lay ministers, who are increasingly common in the church, are trained on a part-time basis through the church’s lay training centres while engaging in ministry. Ordered ministers are trained through theological colleges.

The task group was developed following the 39th General Council in 2006, which asked for a process to “engage the whole church in a time of discernment concerning the meaning of ministry in The United Church of Canada,” with particular attention to a theology of call and vocation, ordered ministry, lay pastoral ministry, lay ministry, and ecumenical implications.

The report voices Blanchard’s warning: “The church needs to find greater clarity between the different expressions of ministry, in particular the relationship between ordered and designated lay ministry.”

Says the report, “The lack of distinction has resulted in discontent. While many of the expectations and functions in pastoral/congregational ministry are the same for designated lay, diaconal, or ordained leaders, the preparation and compensation are different.”

The task group worked from an awareness of an overriding issue: In this “third generation” of

the United Church, what forms of leadership will best suit our time and our calling as we participate in God’s mission?

“The task group believes that the most pressing issue facing the church in relation to ministry leadership is the need to prepare and enable new expressions and forms of ministry in a rapidly changing social context,” says its report.

It suggests that this context “requires presbytery to be open to many new forms of ministry and mission, including the nurturing of emerging networks seeking to live faithfully in community.”

Linda Parsons from Newmarket, Ontario, told the Council she was “offended” for a colleague who is a designated lay minister who faces the prospect that when his appointment is finished, there is “no room for him in the presbytery.” She noted that designated lay ministers are not allowed to continue in presbytery in their retirement.

Ann Harbridge, a designated lay minister from Rosemont, Ontario, said, “There is nothing limited about it!” She noted that she is “called” and she serves in a congregation, presbytery, Conference, and now in the wider church.

“There’s a move afoot to reduce the role of designated lay ministry, and to have our call not legitimized,” said Harbridge.



Visit the **BOOK ROOM**

2nd level of gym—behind curtain
(elevator in main foyer)

TODAY’S FEATURE:

The Spirituality of Sex

by Michael Schwartztruber

COUNCIL AFFIRMS IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP

by Jeff Cook

The United Church's 40th General Council has affirmed the importance of worship and the need for resources in various languages.

Commissioners approved a motion calling on the church to recognize "that worship is a priority in the life of pastoral charges and community ministries" and directed General Council staff units to continue developing resources in many languages in print and for the website, and a data bank containing worship services and sermons prepared from a United Church perspective.

Noting that there are "fewer and fewer people" in many rural congregations, Marilyn Thomas, from Alberta Northwest Conference, said, "We need to look at newer and innovative ways at getting to them."

The Rev. James Farrell, from Alberta Northwest Conference, said "a resource bank is a great idea."

"I would speak highly in favour of having more website resources," said the Rev. Kathy Brett from Newfoundland and Labrador Conference. "I'm always looking for resources."

Some commissioners raised concerns of balancing the commitment to worship with other concerns in the church.

"I'm certainly not against recognizing worship as a priority," said the Rev. Darla Sloan, from Montreal and Ottawa Conference, "but I wonder how others with other priorities, such as social justice, might feel."

Scott Clarke, from London Conference, said that perhaps the money used for producing worship resources might better be used "on outreach programs."

SURVIVOR BENEFITS

In other matters, the Council also directed the General Secretary "to ensure that the financial benefit at the time of the death of a ministry personnel be extended to include group insurance benefits, as well as employee assistance plan coverage for a surviving spouse and/or dependent children for the coverage period of up to six months."

In making this decision, commissioners acknowledged it would result in an increase in annual premium payments of over \$1,600. They also noted that there is usually only a short time period between the death of a ministry personnel and the cessation of these benefits for the surviving spouse.

"It's complete chaos when that happens," said the Rev. Steve Berube from Maritime Conference.



SUMMARY OF DECISIONS ON ENVIRONMENT, JUSTICE, CHURCH

by Jim Cairney

Global warming is unequivocal, and threatens the world as we know it, said the United Church's General Council meeting in Kelowna, British Columbia.

The Council also stated that global warming "is largely and increasingly caused by human agency, requires a paradigm change, and must be tackled on a priority basis, with special attention to the poor and most vulnerable everywhere."

Meeting in one of three decision-making commissions, the Council also handled a large volume of business and made a number of decisions including:

- encouraging its congregations to significantly reduce their environmental footprint
- supporting the substitution of nuclear power with more benign, less polluting forms of energy
- requesting that the federal government subsidize alternative and environmentally friendly forms of energy, rather than continuing to subsidize the uranium/nuclear industry
- urging the federal government to greater investment in wind and other forms of renewable energy

- saying “no!” to the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (Bill C-23) currently under negotiation, and asked that all free trade negotiations with Colombia stop until widespread human rights abuses are addressed
- calling on federal, provincial, and territorial governments to make health the primary determinant for setting air quality standards and asking that adequate resources be put in place to monitor and enforce these standards
- writing to the Prime Minister of Canada asking for the return of Omar Khadr to Canada and its justice system
- voting to renew the Refugee Sponsorship Agreement with the federal government
- continuing to support private refugee sponsorships
- asking the federal Department of Agriculture and Agri-food to carefully examine the proposals in Bill C-33 by conducting a comprehensive study of bio-fuel production
- renewing approval of a policy that Conferences meet at least every third year (this will require a remit to presbyteries)
- asking the federal Transport Canada for emergency landing lights for the Bella Bella Hospital, in Bella Bella, British Columbia
- calling on the federal government to fully support the complete abolition of nuclear weapons
- reviewing current policies of the church related to toxins and the environment
- pressuring the federal government toward compliance with the Kyoto Protocol
- urging the federal government to immediately increase its official development assistance
- reducing the number of commissioners to subsequent General Councils
- directing the Executive of the General Council and the General Secretary to examine a number of governance issues around the meeting and work of the General Council, its committees, and task groups



MARDI TINDAL ÉLUE MODÉRATRICE DE L'ÉGLISE UNIE

par David Fines

Cela aura pris cinq tours de scrutin, mais finalement les délégué-es au 40^e Conseil général de l'Église Unie du Canada, réunis à Kelowna en Colombie-Britannique, ont choisi madame Mardi Tindal comme nouvelle modératrice. Elle présidera donc aux destinées de l'Église unie pour les trois prochaines années jusqu'au prochain Conseil général

Au départ, ils étaient huit candidats, six hommes et deux femmes, de différents coins de l'Église : quatre de l'Ontario, deux du Manitoba, un de la Colombie-Britannique et un de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Six d'entre eux avaient annoncé leur candidature dûment appuyés par un ou des consistoires ou synodes auxquels se sont ajoutés deux candidats de dernière heure nommés par l'Assemblée. À noter que les deux candidates Mardi Tindal et la pasteure Maya Landell sont restées sur les bulletins de vote jusqu'à la fin du scrutin,

Mardi Tindal est une laïque, la troisième femme laïque à devenir modératrice de l'Église unie après Anne Squire élue en 1986 et Marion Best en 1994. Elle est une éducatrice professionnelle et est actuellement la directrice du Centre de formation Five Oaks de l'Église unie dans la petite ville de Paris en Ontario. Elle a aussi travaillé pour le synode de Hamilton et aussi comme consultante sur les questions de leadership et de développement de programmes au niveau du Conseil général. Et bien sûr plusieurs membres de l'Église la connaissent du fait qu'elle a animé une dizaine d'années l'émission « Spirit Connection », émission de télévision hebdomadaire qui était produite par l'Église unie.

C'est chaudement applaudie par l'Assemblée qu'elle en montée sur l'estrade, après l'annonce du résultat et elle a immédiatement remercié les autres candidats de même que sa mère, son mari Douglas et ses deux fils. Elle a terminé son court discours en lisant un passage de l'Épître aux Éphésiens (4,25-5,2).

Mardi apportera à l'Église son sens de l'organisation et le soin qu'elle apporte dans ses relations avec les autres. Elle est aussi une écologiste

convaincue, c'est ce qu'elle a rappelé en conférence de presse peu de temps après son élection. En plus de « poursuivre l'énorme travail qui a été accompli par tant de leaders de qualité », elle s'est engagée à œuvrer au rétablissement « des relations justes avec la Création et avec les autres ».

« On a voulu le Conseil général le plus vert de l'histoire. Nous sommes appelés à protéger la Création. Toutes les actions petites et grandes sont importantes, a-t-elle précisé. »

Elle a aussi ajouté qu'elle porterait une attention particulière au leadership des jeunes.

Mardi Tindal est unilingue anglophone, mais à une question d'un journaliste sur l'importance pour l'Église unie de rejoindre la population francophone, elle s'est engagée à s'inscrire à un programme d'immersion le plus tôt possible.



TRAVAILLER EN COMMISSION AU CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL

par Stéphane Vermette

Tous les trois ans, le Conseil général de l'Église Unie du Canada se réunit ; les délégué-es y reçoivent des nombreux rapports, participent à des ateliers sur différents sujets et doivent débattre et voter les propositions reçues de tous les synodes de l'Église. Les propositions qui affectent l'ensemble de l'Église, d'un point de vue théologique ou ecclésiologique, sont débattues ou votées en plénière par tous les délégués. Les autres propositions, la plus grande partie, sont dirigées vers les commissions de travail.

Les délégués du Conseil Général sont répartis en trois groupes qui forment les « Commissions ». À ce 40^e Conseil général, les commissions ont été nommées selon les trois océans qui bordent le Canada : Arctique, Atlantique, Pacifique. Une équipe de tra-

vail avait préalablement regroupé les propositions reçues selon quelques grands thèmes.

Personnellement, j'ai passé la plus grande partie de la journée de mardi et de jeudi à co-présider la commission Pacifique. L'un des grands enjeux de notre commission était une pétition sur le maintien de l'Unité des ministères en français comme unité indépendante au sein de la structure administrative de l'Église Unie du Canada. Cette proposition a été défaite par une très faible majorité.

Nous avons aussi étudié des pétitions reliées à des questions touchant les ministères désignés en paroisse et les ministères laïcs certifiés. Essentiellement, nous avons confirmé le travail déjà entrepris par notre Église et nous avons demandé plusieurs clarifications pour le futur.

Présider une commission n'est pas chose aisée. Il faut s'assurer que chaque personne peut partager ses idées et sa sagesse, particulièrement les gens qui ne se sentent pas à l'aise de s'exprimer dans ce genre de forum. Il faut être attentif aux commentaires qui pourraient être désobligeants ou blessants, surtout pendant des débats passionnés sur des sujets plus chauds. Il faut « motiver les troupes » lorsque les délégués ont l'impression d'être embourbés dans des détails de procédure. Il faut constamment expliquer le processus de nos discussions et de nos prises de décision, quelque chose qui n'est pas toujours bien connu par tous et toutes... Somme toute, l'expérience a été très excitante pour moi.

Les membres de la commission Pacifique ont travaillé très fort et je crois que nous avons fait avancé l'Église unie dans la bonne direction.



COUNCIL PROPOSES ADDING FAITH STATEMENTS TO 20 ARTICLES OF FAITH

by Jeff Cook

Commissioners to the 40th General Council decided they would rather add than subtract from the doctrine section of the United Church's Basis of Union.

A proposal calling for the removal of the 20 Articles of Faith from the Basis of Union prompted passionate discussion.

In presenting background to the proposal, the Rev. Linsell Hurd, from Saskatchewan Conference, asked how the church could be open to "new possibilities" if its basic theology "was developed by a European culture over a century ago in Canada."

Removing the articles would be "a rejection of who we are as a church," said the Rev. Sandy Ferguson, from British Columbia Conference.

The Rev. Krista Vandersar, from London Conference, said it was ironic that the United Church embraces "our First Nations brothers and sisters who want to celebrate past tradition" while "we want to shelve it."

She said, "I hope that in this diverse United Church we can hold what was, what is, and what is to be simultaneously in our hands."

The Rev. John Young, from Bay of Quinte Conference, presented an alternate proposal that the doctrine of the United Church would consist of a number of "subordinate standards."

Young said the term "subordinate standard" comes from the Reformed tradition. A subordinate standard is a statement of faith that is considered important in the life and history of the church. It is subordinate to scripture, which is considered the primary authority for theology in the United Church and for any statement of faith that the church would adopt.

Commissioners favoured including the 20 articles, the 1940 "A Statement of Faith," "A New Creed," and "A Song of Faith" in the doctrine section of the Basis of Union.

The Rev. Alan Richards, from Alberta and Northwest Conference, said he agreed with putting

the 20 articles on "an equal footing with the newer statements."

The Rev. Armand Houle, from Alberta and Northwest Conference, said he favoured expanding the church's understanding of statements of faith, and suggested that candidates for the order of ministry might be asked if they were in essential agreement "with all of them or only the most current."

Jason Kuracina, from London Conference, said it was important to keep the original articles even while embracing change. "As much as we need to move forward," he said, "we need to know our past."

The Rev. Shannon Mang, from Alberta and Northwest Conference, said she experienced a "crisis of conscience" when she had to declare essential agreement to the 20 articles at the time of her ordination. "This is a huge relief," she said, "and will continue to be a relief to candidates seeking ordination and commissioning."

"A New Creed" and "A Song of Faith" have been valuable documents when discussing faith with new members to the United Church or with younger members, said the Rev. Orville James, from Hamilton Conference. He said these statements help people to "study and talk and grow."

Hurd said Saskatchewan Conference knew that removing the 20 articles might "offend" some people, so would welcome the alternative of raising up the other statements. "While one is always reticent in speaking for Saskatchewan Conference," he said, referring to the reworded proposal, "I think Saskatchewan would love what is happening."

The next General Council will make a final decision based on the results of a remit that will be sent to presbyteries/districts and pastoral charges during the next three years.



Welcome To *General Council News*

General Council News is being posted daily on The United Church of Canada's 40th General Council website gc40.united-church.ca, and sent as an e-newsletter to individuals, congregations, and news media that have requested it.

Each day a single printed copy will also be delivered to all table groups for commissioners to share. The final edition of *General Council News* will be available online within 24 hours of the closing of General Council on Saturday, August 15.

General Council News reporters will be covering the highlights and significant happenings of the 40th General Council, rather than recording everything that happens each day. All *General Council News* stories may be reproduced freely.

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