

*The Mandate for the White Privilege Working Group is expressed in the following proposal from the Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry that was approved by the Executive of the General Council in May, 2017:*

**PMM 7 WHITE PRIVILEGE Origin: Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry  
The Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry proposes:**

*That The Executive of the General Council as part of its response to **the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action**, and its commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal Peoples, and in light of previous commitments to **racial justice and anti-black racism, name work on identifying and understanding white privilege** as important for the church and direct the General Secretary, General Council to appoint a task group to create an education program around white privilege for the church.*

*The initial mandate was to provide resources to be used by congregations and others to address these realities. The full membership of the committee was not named until late 2017 and we have been meeting via conference call throughout 2018. This mandate and timeline is proposed to be extended as seen in Appendix A*

*Our initial task was to better equip ourselves on this topic. To this end, Kate Rodd, Paul Walfall & Alydia Smith and I were invited to the ACT Conference in Washington DC and introduced to the concepts of AWAKEN, CONFRONT & TRANSFORM. In May, a number of us attended the Whited Privilege Conference Workshops that were held at Ryerson College.*

*During our meetings, we have discussed our learnings and experiences thus far and begun to put together a biography of resources, audio, video & print, to be recommended to the Denominational Council. We have received excellent support from GCO staff members Beth Baskin and Catherine Rodd.*

*We are grateful for the excellent resources that have come out of the United Church of Christ, specifically **White Privilege, Let's Talk** (A Resource for Transformational Dialogue) and **Cracking Open White Identity Towards Transformation**, produced by the Canadian Council of Churches. There have also been a number of extremely helpful podcasts through the CBC. Other books and resources will be made available in our biography.*

*We have identified many helpful resources coming out of the United States and dating back to Peggy McIntosh's **Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack** (1988). While there is much to be said for these materials, many of them are dated and present an American context. While racism unfortunately is global, we feel that we also need to make available materials that speak to our time and cultural reality. I speak of this specifically as it relates to our indigenous community and the TRC's calls to action.*

*The Friday afternoon of GC43 drove home for many of us within the church that racism and privilege are realities within our denomination and congregations as we heard stories of discrimination and the sometimes-subtle realities of White Privilege which reduced 'non-whites' to the category of other! Theologically, we were challenged to look at our own assumptions and understanding of what it means that **'all** are made in the image of the Creator' and how 'whiteness' can and does create privilege, by accepting the phenomenon that social systems award preference based on the assumption of 'white' as 'norm'.*

*This fall, I had the privilege, along with Sara Stratton, Adelle Halliday and Peter Notebloom (Canadian Council of Churches) to address the 'New Staff Leaders and Regional Staff' and was able to make a presentation to the incoming Denominational Council executive.*

*We realize that we have yet to even scratch the surface of this insidious, sometimes even invisible form of racism and are thankful for an extended mandate and timeline to complete our work. We will have our first 'face to face' meeting November 26-27 and are looking forward to hearing from other task groups working in this area of racism, interculturalism, right relations and white privilege.*

*Respectfully Submitted*

*(Rev. Dr.) Bill Smith  
Chair*

## **APPENDIX A**

### GS 105 WHITE PRIVILEGE WORKING GROUP EXTENSION

Origin: General Secretary The General Secretary, General Council proposes: That the Executive of the General Council extend the mandate of the White Privilege Working Group to continue through to the end of 2019, so that it may:

- a) Create or identify educational resources on White Privilege for the United Church of Canada by: i) Identifying a “bibliography” of resources, whether paper or online ii) working with other ecumenical and civil society organizations, including the Canadian Ecumenical Anti Racism Network (CEARN); the White Privilege Conference; the United Church of Christ;, and the Learning Partnership of the Canadian Council of Churches
- b) Provide opportunities for transformation by deepening engagement with issues of privilege, race and power
- c) Partner with the coordinating staff and facilitators of the mandatory racial justice training programme
- d) Liaise with the full communion working group on the UN Decade of Peoples of African Descent
- e) Liaise with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Task Group as well as with the Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools
- f) Serve in an advisory capacity to the General Secretary, including in relation to directions given by the 43rd General Council Background

This working group was established as a result of direction given by the General Council Executive to the General Secretary in May of 2017. They have made a good start with the work – a briefing will be provided to the Executive at the November 2018 meeting – but, especially having in mind the issues raised during the discussion just before the conclusion of General Council last July – it needs to continue. Expanding the mandate for one year does not suggest that the work will be complete at that time, but it will provide the opportunity for the work to continue and to consider whether it needs to be reshaped or refocused at that time.