

# **Theme: INTERCULTURAL AND DOMINANT PRIVILEGE LENSES**

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

### **What We Heard:**

- We need to reflect on our responsibility and the role we play, and the ways we live this theme out.
- Appreciate understanding the past the present and plan for our future of our being; some in the church are still not clear on the distinction between multicultural and intercultural.
- It's not about the small percentages but affects all of us.
- These lenses are important because they are an opportunity for the privileged to raise this issue.

- One group questioned how do we raise these issues at the pastoral charge? Some congregations might not have capacity to add additional committees.
- Regions need time to organize themselves; we should not be imposing new structures on the regions.
- We need to walk the talk; this is the work of Christ's ministry.
- The Affirm United/S'Affirmer Ensemble process asks us to do this – to transform your community into one that is radically hospitable to everyone.

# **ANW 09 - Racism, Racial Discrimination, Racial Justice and White Privilege**

## **What We Heard:**

- All groups affirmed the need to respond to this important issue. However while groups appreciated the intent, they had a variety of opinions on the details of the proposal.
- Some congregations are not very diverse (and can be self-focused), making it difficult to undertake this work at the congregational level.
- Every community has racism. In addition, groups noted we need to approach interculturalism with respect to classism, ableism, and linguistic diversity.
- Some people reacted to the title and it made them defensive at the outset.

- It can be helpful to have extra support for ethnic and migrant leaders who may be alone in ministry in rural contexts; this training could be provided for members of ministry & personnel committees.
- This is important work in the church. We need to make resources available for use. Mandating the work feels unreasonable, should be optional.
- The church needs to continue this work, and one group felt this proposal was an important nudge not to let this work fall off the table while we adjust to the new structure.
- This proposal may not actually work to dismantle the systems that have created and supported racism.
- This needs an educational component for individuals who come from dominant culture/privilege. This is not an isolated situation – it exists and persists in the church. The

church needs to own its commitment to becoming intercultural so that we can dismantle systems of oppression, not just talk about it.

- Some groups remarked that the proposal is a way forward but did not feel it is the right way forward. Some felt the timing is premature while acknowledging that we can't ignore the issue. Will support guidelines and principles but not mandated committees.
- “Not now” is not a good thing to be saying to marginalized communities who are suffering; could explore alternatives like a 12-step guide – similar to Holy Manners.

### **Suggested Way Forward:**

That the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council refer proposal ANW 09 to the General Secretary.

Moved: A. Maben

Seconded: H. Baker-Graf

CARRIED.

## **BQ 3 – EQUITY MONITOR**

### **What We Heard:**

- Mixed support from some groups, many groups affirmed the proposal.
- It was unclear to some people which courts the proposal referred to.
- One group asked should the General Council add to demands on staff.
- Some individuals felt it should be a paid position. A few groups noted it doesn't require a paid staff position – volunteers can make sure that there are a range of accommodations to ensure that spaces are accessible, and needs are met. A set of guidelines could support volunteers taking on this role.
- All groups affirmed the idea of a handbook.

- The language of equity can be confused with other areas of equality in the church – why not use the language of accessibility?
- There is tremendous cost to make things truly accessible.
- It's not the expectation that all needs will be accommodated, but the conversations need to happen.
- It might need to be a team so that all needs and concerns can be met. There are existing systems in many places in the church that are already doing this well.

### **Suggested Way Forward:**

That the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council affirm proposal BQ03 – Equity Monitor and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Moved: J. Evenden

Seconded: B. Sheaves  
CARRIED.

## **BQ 04 – DESCRIPTIVE VIDEO**

### **What We Heard:**

- Groups had generally supportive conversations and strongly supported this proposal.
- End products should be vetted by end users.
- One group suggested consulting with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.
- One group mentioned the church made a previous commitment to descriptive video in 2009.

### **Suggested Way Forward:**

That the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council affirm proposal BQ04 – Descriptive Video and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Moved: J. Canning

Seconded: P. Culverson

CARRIED.

## **BQ 05 – INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY / EQUITABLE STANDARDS**

### **What We Heard:**

- The majority of groups were in favour of this proposal.
- There are legal standards for accessibility (with Ontario leading the country on this) and existing resources that need to be shared with all in the church, not just staff.
- Some were concerned about overloading ministry personnel, some were concerned about overwhelming volunteers; but agreement the church needs to act.
- One group noted it could be difficult if this was mandatory, but also helpful in meeting provincial and federal standards and generally supported the proposal.

- There are variations from province to province. More than one group mentioned the church can lead on this by meeting and exceeding standards.
- The church needs to consult with people with disabilities in the church, not just those recognized by existing statutes to ensure our policies are as inclusive as possible.

### **Suggested Way Forward:**

That the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council affirm proposal BQ 05 – Integrated Accessibility – Equitable Standards and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Moved: R. Goss

Seconded: K. Shantz

**CARRIED.**

## **BQ 8 – UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA TO WORK WITH UNESCO'S CANADIAN COALITION OF MUNICIPALITIES AGAINST RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION**

### **What We Heard:**

- There was strong support for the proposal; some were very excited about it.
- The church will need more information about the named UNESCO program in order to implement.
- Several groups suggested communities of faith collaborate with their own municipalities.
- Two groups suggested this could be added to proposal ANW 09, clarifies some of the ambiguities there – could it be a starting point or an implementation strategy on that proposal?

- One group noted that our new partner denomination The Disciples of Christ is involved in this UNESCO program.

### **Suggested Way Forward:**

That the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council affirm proposal BQ 08 and Direct the General Secretary to implement.

Moved: L. Shepherd

Seconded: S. Roberts

CARRIED.

# **GCE 16 - MIGRANT CHURCH: MIGRATION**

## **What We Heard:**

- There was strong support for this proposal from most groups, although some were not able to come to a consensus position.
- One group suggested the General Secretary combine points A & B on implementation because there are many organizations who should be consulted and with which we could partner.
- One group suggested we need to find out what work is already happening on this with global partners; need to connect with migrant communities.
- The appendix was helpful information – the church needs resources to better understand the plight of migrant workers. One group noted they were sure there are

already many great resources available, especially from partners.

- One group suggested including the homeless, adopting the Berlin statement, and developing resources to share.
- One group expressed that this was a timely/urgent issue they would like to see addressed as quickly as possible.

### **Suggested Way Forward:**

That the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council affirm proposal GCE 16 – Migrant Church: Migration (PMM 16) and direct the General Secretary to implement.

Mover: G. Goin

Seconder: R. Addison

**CARRIED.**

## **SK 5 – LIVING INTO TRANSFORMATION: CONTINUING THE JOURNEY AS AN INTERCULTURAL CHURCH**

### **What We Heard:**

- All groups affirmed the intent of the proposal; some groups affirmed the proposal as is.
- Groups felt that using the language of “encouraging” the Regions was more appropriate than “requiring” the Regions.
- One group said it seems tokenistic to collect names of people who identified as racialized; other groups were concerned about keeping such a list.
- One group named support for the idea of including at least one person who identified as racialized on the admissions board, but commented that the number needs to be high enough to achieve collective impact.

- Newcomer events can be difficult geographically in some regions.
- Several groups noted it would be good to broaden the language to racialized/marginalized.
- More than one group suggested this proposal should interface in some way with ANW 09.
- One group noted that the first and third parts of the proposal were already being addressed in the newly revised admissions process.

### **Suggested Way Forward:**

That the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council refer proposal SK 05 Living Into Transformation to the General Secretary.

Moved: A. Playfair

Seconded: M. C. Manga  
CARRIED.