

(the proposals in this theme were not dealt with before the end of the meeting)

Theme: ADMINISTRATION OF SACRAMENTS

GENERAL COMMENTS

What We Heard:

- Groups have concern for communities of faith who are not able to participate in sacramental life and the church needs to provide the sacraments to them.
- We need contextualized understanding of local ministry needs: there is a shortage of ordained ministers and that is changing the nature of diaconal ministry. Active and retired diaconal ministers are treated differently.
- A group identified sacraments as at the core of congregational life, and we need to administer the sacraments with proper training.

- Several groups felt this is theme is coming to us because the One Order of Ministry Remit (6) failed.
- Some groups suggested reviewing previous studies (e.g. the report that went to GC41) or engaging in a new study on this issue.
- There is pastoral concern for diaconal ministers, some of whom feel devalued by not being able to administer sacraments.
- We allow sacrament elders, but do not always allow diaconal ministers to administer sacraments.
- These proposals have implications for our relationships with global and ecumenical partners.

GCE 20 - SACRAMENTAL LICENCE FOR DIACONAL MINISTERS

What We Heard:

- General affirmation for the proposal from most groups.
- One group would be in favour of affirming this proposal because proposal ANW 04 would take time because it requires a remit.
- Is this a polity question or a policy issue?
- What about our global/ecumenical partners?
- Why is there no national policy already?
- Support for a larger conversation.
- Some groups needed clarification.
- Agreement because it would only be given when a diaconal minister was in a covenanted call or appointment (as opposed to ANW 04 where it would be at commissioning)
- Favours a study and remit.
- One group divided and uncomfortable.

- One group thought this was the compromise for the church.

Suggested Way Forward:

1) That the 43rd General Council affirm proposal GCE 20 – Sacramental Licence for Diaconal Ministers and directs the General Secretary to implement.

Moved:

Seconded:

NOT DONE

Brought to the Business Table, but this motion did not come back to have this amendment brought forward.

with the addition of “Diaconal Ministers retained on the roll”.

Amendment:

Moved: C. Paradela

Seconded: M. Gibson

ANW 4 - THE GRANTING OF THE RIGHT TO ADMINISTER SACRAMENTS TO ALL DIACONAL MINISTERS AT THE TIME OF THEIR COMMISSIONING

What We Heard:

- Groups were mixed in response to this proposal. Some supported, some did not.
- Sometimes orders of ministry want to be different, sometimes want to be the same. They are not the same – different training, different processes.
- We have a need to serve communities who don't have access to the sacraments, but don't see a national policy or strategy to make that happen.
- Need for consistency across the country.

- Administration of sacraments is a calling, not a task, and has implications for our relationship with global and ecumenical partners.
- People in the pews often don't make a distinction between orders of ministry – if their minister is ordained or diaconal.
- Conferences give the license because of the need; There are times when licensing is necessary.
- Several groups asked for a study on this issue.
- Several groups noted we are trying to fix a big problem with a band-aid.

ANW 10 – SACRAMENT ELDERS POLICY

What We Heard:

- Some groups were in favour, some were not.

- The creation of sacrament elder was specific to a certain need and time-bound.
- Questions from groups included:
 - If there is already ministry personnel, why the need for a sacrament elder?
 - Why is this needed?
 - How frequently would this be needed and what other options are available?
- Would be helpful for busy ministers and for small/rural communities of faith.

MNWO 03 – SACRAMENTAL LICENCE FOR RETIRED DIACONAL MINISTERS

What We Heard:

- One group suggested the court consider using this wording in ANW 04.
- Need further education about the different streams of ministry.
- One group suggested this should be also extended to diaconal ministers retained on the roll.
- Many groups felt their comments were addressed in response to other proposals.
- Not prepared to give a license to retired diaconal ministers when we might not give license to active diaconal ministers.
- While some groups affirmed this proposal, there was a large degree of uncertainty and a wide spectrum of opinion.

Suggested Way Forward:

That the 43rd General Council direct the General Secretary to conduct a comprehensive study on these issues (including all issues raised in proposals MNWO 01 and MNWO 02 on rural and small church ministry) and develop a strategy for meeting the ministry needs of all communities of faith, including access to the sacraments; and

That the 43rd General Council take no further action on proposals ANW 04, ANW 10, and MNWO 03.

Moved:

Seconded: