



**Report of the 16th Biennial ELCIC National Convention
Held in Winnipeg, July 6-8, 2017
From delegates of the Saskatchewan Synod.**

Lenore Ostlund, lay delegate from Melville
Bishop Susan Johnson's Report

Today is the Anniversary of her baptism; a picture of her parents holding her was projected on the screen. just a point of interest, and I hope I have it correct.

Bishop Susan acknowledged that we are meeting on Treaty One Territory and gave thanks for that privilege.

"Our new way of holding our National Convention is a sign of our church being responsive to the landscape in which we live and our willingness to be "flexible and adaptive".

Bishop Susan spoke about the theme adopted for the 150 Anniversary Commemoration of Reformation "Liberated by God's Grace" with 3 sub themes:

- Salvation --NOT FOR SALE
- Human Beings --NOT FOR SALE
- Creation--NOT FOR SALE!

To lift up this theme we welcomed Rev. Dr. Munib Younan, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and President of Lutheran World Federation.

Bishop Susan encouraged all to wear black on Thursday in support of Thursdays in Black, Started by the World Council of Churches in the 1980's as a peaceful protest against rape and violence. This also lifts up our concerns for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW).

Bishop Susan welcomed several ecumenical guests who spoke about the Reformation Commemoration. Friday night we gathered with Ecumenical Guests at St. Gianna Baretta Molla Roman Catholic Church for a National Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of Lutheran Reformation.

Saturday we had a presentation from the National Centre on Truth and Reconciliation. In this way we continue to live out our commitment to reconciliation between non-indigenous and Indigenous peoples.

One important challenge is for us to continue to work on deepening our discipleship.

The Call to Spiritual Renewal - to pray, read, worship, study, serve, give and tell. Bishop Susan looked forward to the times we gathered together in worship, prayer, and in study of scripture so that we might grow together in wisdom and faith.

One of Bishop Susan's main responsibilities as National Bishop is nurturing and maintaining the many partnerships we are blessed with through our mission and ministry. She looked forward to welcoming a number of our partners to the National Convention this year; including, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and Dr. Kathryn Johnson, Director of Ecumenical and Inter-religious relations, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America who will join us for convention and bring greetings. We heard from our partners in Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Group Services Inc., Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute and Luther College. We also had guests from Presbyterian Church of Canada, United Church of Canada, Mennonite Church Canada, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and Canadian Council of Churches.. It was a blessing to have all these guests honor us by their presence at convention.

Bishop Susan highlighted agenda items and motions: A proposed ELCIC Statement to Muslims in Canada; and A motion on Encountering People of Other Faiths -Interfaith Guidelines.

Another way to mark the 500th Anniversary is to begin to recognize the contributions ELCIC members are making in the wider church community. This included a presentation of the first ELCIC In Mission for Others Leadership award.

By honouring the work of one, we honor the work of all!

Bishop Susan feels it to be an honor to be called to serve as National Bishop. She loves our church and is proud of the ministry we do!

Quote " Through your faithfulness, witness, creativity, and hopefulness, I have learned that hope does not disappoint. We are Liberated By God's Grace and we are blessed with a Hope in Jesus Christ that will not disappoint us".

* * * * *

Sean Bell, rostered delegate from Regina Corporation Reports

The Schools of the ELCIC (Luther College, Regina SK and Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute, Outlook SK) both submitted comprehensive reports. Bishop Susan Johnson gave thanks for the diligent work of the boards of both of our schools and gave thanks for their work. We can see the excellent work that is going on by visiting the web pages of either school.

Al Scholz, lay delegate from Dundurn

The Corporate Annual General Meetings of Luther College and LCBI

Both schools presented reports and rationale for making legal changes to their organizational structure. The convention approved both proposals:

- **LCBI:** Changes to the Bylaws and institutional mandate to broaden the stakeholder base from ELCIC congregations to include other Lutheran congregations such as Lutheran Church Canada, Lutheran Brethren, Free Lutheran, Association of Lutheran Congregations and others. The rationale is to broaden the base to attract the required number of grade 10-11-12 students to sustain the school into the future. In addition, there will be a Grade 9 class added for day students. The proposed changes were approved at the ELCIC convention.
- **Luther College:** There will be changes (amendments) to the Saskatchewan provincial legislation that decrees Luther College as one of the five historic high schools in Saskatchewan. The rationale for the amendments is to secure Luther College as an independent entity operationally, through the ability to hold Annual General Meetings each year, and not have to wait until the ELCIC national conventions, which will soon change to every three years. The rationale is to allow Luther College to function more effectively through holding AGM's every year and appropriate AGM functions such as elections, bylaw changes, etc. The proposed changes were approved at the ELCIC convention.

Corporate Reports – General Comments

1. ELCIC Schools:

It appeared that convention participants appreciated the opportunity to receive general update to both Luther College and LCBI programming and new initiatives. This helped provide some perspective prior to the business meeting.

2. ELCIC Seminaries:

My table agreed with a couple of comments at the microphones about reports from the ELCIC seminaries. The response from the podium is that the seminaries do not belong to the national church. Nevertheless, there is a strong feeling that the seminaries are the future of the ELCIC church leadership. There has to be a better way to have a dialogue, within the national context, of the future of the seminaries. A lost opportunity to advance the dialogue

3. Statement to Muslims:

Agreement at my table that this was a timely declaration and a good declaration from Lutherans to Muslims. Given the interest in “Encountering People of Other Faiths”, AND that there were opening prayers from a Treaty One leader . . . are we to expect future ELCIC conventions to have Jew and Muslim leaders to offer prayers? Hindu's. What the position of the ELCIC church with Seventh Day Advents, Jehovah's Witness and Mormons? Assuming the answer is “No”, why not?

4. Lost Opportunity:

The most meaningful dialogue at my table was in relation to the 500 years of Lutheran innovation – when we were asked to think about the “next 500 years”. There was exceptional dialogue and discussion at my table. There should have been more time allowed for this discussion and some way to capture the thoughts and insights. This was a lost opportunity for the ELCIC church to hear from the 150 delegates about the future of the church.

5. General Comments:

Even though there was advance notice of reports, declarations, AGM’s motions, etc. I was surprised that there was not more opportunity for the business part of the convention. From a national business perspective, we were essentially rubber-stamping prepared statements. This was a surprise. However, I will be more prepared in the event that I have the opportunity to attend the next ELCIC Annual Convention.

**Karen Harilstad, lay delegate, Saskatoon; and Doug Schmirler, rostered delegate, Melville
Report on Elections**

Thursday afternoon saw the first ballot held for National Church Council Vice-Chairperson. By constitution it was to be an ecclesiastical ballot and conducted by paper ballot. For someone to be elected on the first ballot they would require 75% of ballots cast. Incumbent Vice-Chairperson Sheila Hamilton was re-elected, needing 102 votes to be elected and receiving 108.

This would be the only election of the convention using paper ballots. All other elections would be for members of National Church Council and church committees and would use the electronic or “clicker” method of choosing elected delegates.

These votes were held throughout Friday and the results were as follows:

Elected to NCC as the lay delegate for the BC synod – Mr. Curt Satre

Elected to NCC as the rostered delegate for Alberta/Territories synod – Rev. James Hendricksen (by acclamation)

Elected to NCC as the rostered delegate for Saskatchewan synod – Rev. Iris Kristjansdottir

Elected to NCC as the rostered delegate for Manitoba/N. Ont. synod – Rev. Chris Bishopp

Elected to NCC as the lay delegate for the Eastern synod – Mr. Bruce Cook

An election was also held for a lay representative to the National Church Court of Appeal and the chosen person was Mr. David Schulze.

All members for the 2019 nominating committee were elected by acclamation and are, as follows: Cheryl Bauer-Hyde (SK); Marlys Moen (BC); Douglas Reble (East); Patricia Schmermund (ABT); Jason Zinko (MNO)

Henrik Cherland, rostered delegate from Yorkton
Keynote address: Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

Bishop Dr. Munib Younan, a small framed figure, gave a formidable, clear and fervent message to all present at the Convention. In speaking to our chosen national focus, '*Liberated by God's Grace*', he noted it was a theme we share with the Lutheran World Federation, which in May 10-16, 2017, held its 12th worldwide church Assembly in Namibia. Bishop Younan highlighted the core biblical basis of our proclamation in this theme and its role during God's historic call to the church in the Reformation.

Pointing out the destructive forces of social division and greed erupting these days in all societies, Dr. Younan underscored how the church, Christ's body here and now, is called to proclaim that the well-being of our world occurs only when humans are '*Liberated by God's Grace*'. We do this by living, working and upholding that, **creation, human beings** and **salvation** are fully gifts of God. In no way are any of these basic gifts meant to be treated as commodities and put up 'for sale', as those individuals seeking to accumulate wealth and power are doing.

Bishop Younan affirmed that the decades of dialog taking place between many Christian communities increasingly displays the workings of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's presence was for him profoundly present at the Eucharist Table as he with Pope Francis and many others worshiped together last October at the start of this 500th commemoration year. His hope and prayer was that all people taking part in the many other parish, diocese or larger community events these months may also discover God's activity and living presence. Perhaps, he also hoped, the conflicting groups of religious communities, e.g. Sunni and Shia, might also see, become inspired and open to reconciliation in their search for much needed peace. In that context, the proclamation that all are '*Liberated by God's Grace*', may strengthen us and all others to truly welcome the stranger, work for the freedom of our neighbour and be in loving relationship to God.

Joel Nostbakken, lay delegate from Saskatoon
Address by Bishop Munib Younan

Bishop Younan began by reminding us that we need to be walking with one another in mutuality and respect, like the disciples in the way to Emmaus. Our Lord will always show us the way as long as we are open to the challenge. God's grace is given freely. Our church stands and falls on this doctrine. It comes from the Holy Spirit. Humans are saved through the work of God not through our own works. We are liberated by God's grace.

Three of his key points were as follows:

1. Salvation is not for sale. Prosperity shepherds are false prophets. Much of Latin America is full of prosperity preachers. Most of the extremists' leaders are not truly religious leaders. Extremism is the antithesis of God's love. The adultery of mammon has hijacked religion. All too often we find similar theology in our own churches and church communities. The only Saviour is our Lord Jesus Christ. There is only one mediator between God and man.

2. Human beings not for sale. Child labor, soldiers are all too often found. Slavery contributes to our western society. Undocumented domestic help is financial slavery. Some see refugees as political commodities or financial liabilities. There are nearly 7 million refugees in Jordan with no complaints and 800,000 in Europe with too many complaints. How many times did western powers benefit from these conflicts? There is also a similarity to the treatment of the Palestinian people and Canada's First Nations.
3. Creation is not for sale. The earth is the responsibility of all of us. Creation is a free gift to all. It is time for the church to work with climate change. 80 percent of the resources are used by 20 percent of the people. The crisis of climate change gives us the chance to work with the scientific community. We need to discuss the interlocking relationships that use so much of the goods. Economic growth with climate change will change the economy. In just 13 years food security will get worse. The north will have greater security and the south will have less security. One of the best things we can do is to join all nations to say creation is not for sale.

Are you ready to be missionaries off god's love? Are you ready to do what God asks? Are we open to the challenge?

Victoria Mwamasika, rostered delegate from Neudorf
Address by Bishop Munib Younan

I was blessed to be a delegate to the 16th Biennial National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. The convention was full of joy as we gathered to witness the power of ecumenical church. Under the leadership of Bishop Susan Johnson we were able to listen to greetings given by leaders from Anglican, ELCA, Mennonite, United Church, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic church.

Our keynote speaker Bishop Dr. Munib A Younan, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Holy Land was inspirational and empowering. He connected his address with the theme of the Convention "We are Liberated by God's Grace." He said "God's grace is given to us as a free and unconditional gift." He went further explaining that because we received freely God's grace, thus we are called in the next 500 yrs to be the light of grace. To shine for the sake of our neighbours. He insisted that we live in a world of wealth, and we have much to offer to the Broken world.

As people liberated by God's Grace we are called to thrive for justice and peace of the world. We are responsible for our neighbours, we are defenders of human rights. He said our relationship with God and our neighbours are not built on our merits but on liberation by God's Grace through Faith. He challenged us to live and work for the dignity of human beings. As those who are liberated by God's grace, the delegates were reminded by Bishop Dr. Munib Younan to preserve God's gift given to us the beautiful garden, the earth. We cannot look the other way; our calling is to serve and protect God's creation. He said Human Beings - Not for sale, Creation - Not for sale. By God's Grace we should be transformed, molded, and be a prophetic voice to the broken World.

Sean Bell, rostered delegate from Regina
ELCIC Statement to Muslims in Canada

The statement was received with overwhelming support. Many stories of positive experiences with Muslim neighbors. We also heard stories of how people are frustrated with the misrepresentation of Islam in the media. The hope and unity of the room was felt as we pledged this church be in relationship with the growing diversity of all our neighbours.

Kris Olson, lay delegate from Assiniboia
ELCIC Statement to Muslims in Canada

The ELCIC statement to Muslims in Canada was the report in which I was most looking forward too. Millions of Muslims around the world have to flee their homes and look to new places as refugees. We as a Lutheran family need too open our arms and hearts to welcome these people. As Christians and better yet as Lutherans we have had a checkered past with Muslims but in this day and age we need to change that for the good. With showing our support we can hope to start to repair our relationship. People in this day and age shouldn't be afraid to go to their place of worship no matter their religion. There has been a 60% jump in reported hate crimes against the Muslim community in the last few years. The motion was put forward to vote: in favour 143, opposed 1. The Statement passed.

As a personal note I had a strong pull to this statement from the church. I had the opportunity in 2008 as a member of the Canadian military to spend six months in Afghanistan. I had to go to a Muslim country to find my Christian faith. Being welcomed into their homes to share in tea even though we had nothing in common but because their religion calls for them to do so was very humbling. I hope to have the opportunity within the church to be able to take part in some Lutheran/Muslim relations in the future.

Adeline Steinley, lay delegate from Swift Current
ELCIC Statement to Muslims in Canada

Motion 1. That the 2017 National Convention adopt the following ELCIC Statement to Muslims in Canada was passed at the 2017 ELCIC National Convention. Martin Luther's meaning for the eighth commandment was used as the preamble for this statement.

We do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.

There is a growing Muslim community in Canada and many of the delegate's communities are sponsors of Muslim families. The people who spoke for this motion, mentioned meeting Muslims in their community, felt that a statement from the church was important. No one spoke against this motion.

Important to this statement as well are the recent hateful, prejudiced and violent actions towards Muslims in Canada. The ELCIC wants to state publicly and unequivocally its rejection of theological justification or support for biased attitudes towards people of other faith communities.

The background to this statement includes the 2015 ELCIC Endorsement of the document *Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations of Faith Leaders*, and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Lutheran World Federation and Islamic Relief Worldwide.

The ELCIC challenges us to develop respectful and meaningful relationships with Muslims. To this end congregations are encouraged to use the 2017 resource: *Encountering People of Other Faiths: Interfaith Guidelines*. Interfaith dialogue can lead us to a deeper understanding of our own faith. As we move forward, it is important to affirm our respect for people of the Muslim faith and Islam and make this known to Muslims, Interfaith Leaders and the congregations of this church.

* * * * *

Eldon Danielson, rostered delegate from Birch Hills
Encountering People of Other faiths—Interfaith Guidelines

The church resolution was passed without any amendments. There is recognition that the Canadian landscape has changed as a church in mission we have also need to change as a factor of living out the love of Christ. As the motion was placed before the convention there were many who spoke in favor of the motion.

In the 1990 over 80% of Canadians called themselves Christian. 13% acknowledged no religious affiliation. About 4% of Canadians were from other faiths. By 2011 67% saw themselves as Christian. 24% had no affiliation. Other faith groups made up 8%. So, it is realistic as Christians that we open our hearts to the needs of our neighbor.

The motion is directed at more than faith leaders. The welcoming THE Stranger Guidelines become an important tool for us to engage with our neighbor. The motion has four workable suggestions.

Learn:

There are directions to help us learn about our neighbor. Suggestions how to learn about who the neighbors - everything from reading books about the cultures, about watching videos. A visit to a mosque, temple or synagogue. Organize learning circles are also helpful.

Connect:

The motion has us connect with our neighbor. Pastors and church leaders should step out and take initiative to meet the stranger in the place of worship. We can dialogue with Imans, rabbis, or other leaders. When new people move to your area you might invite them to share their stories through coffee or tea encounters. Your Lutheran Community can seek out to help the new comer. Play grounds and social events allow for interactions.

Pray:

People are encouraged to pray, read, worship, study, serve, give, and tell. We are encouraged to offer our prayers for the people of the world and for the peoples who are now our neighbors.

Act:

The act section has us to go beyond ourselves in service. Service can be in many ways: Habitat for Humanity projects, community clean-up projects, community garden projects, foodbank initiatives. There are other things to do to help those who are suffering discrimination. Initiative toward helping to curb violence and discrimination. A list of resources was submitted.

In summary then the motion outlined was very well received by the Delegates. A separate motion was made to encourage local churches to make their constitutions more open to allow others to use their buildings for service to the community. The motion was carried. I outlined only a small part of the motion but the motion allows for us as members of the ELCIC to be a church in Mission serving the others in Christ's love.

Carol Maurer, lay delegate from Neudorf Who are my neighbours?

I've grown up in a small rural farming Saskatchewan area and still continue to live in the same vicinity, and I look around as I write this report and I think of my neighbours. They are all familiar to me and as well are all Christians. We don't have any interfaith issues here and as well don't have much of an opportunity to get to know people of other faiths. But then again all I need to do is turn on my radio, television, pick up the weekly newspaper and hear all about people coming or seeking to come to Canada. We are encouraged as every Christian to witness to the love of Jesus - but at times encountering others of another faith our actions speak louder than our words. "How are you?" "What can I do to help?" To welcome people "our neighbors" of other faiths we are to "learn, connect, pray and act." Learn - know how to greet interfaith neighbors. Connect - introduce yourself to your new neighbour. Pray - ask them what they pray for and tell them you and your community would love to join them in their concerns and prayer. Act - openly invite (sharing community involvement).

Karen Harilstad, lay deligate from Saskatoon Interfaith Guidelines

The National Church Council proposed the motion: That the 2017 National Convention adopt the new resource *Encountering People of Other faiths—Interfaith Guidelines*.

Let our actions speak at least as loudly as our words and, in the main, we might allow them to speak first. We were given four guidelines concerning how we might cultivate an inviting disposition within ourselves and a climate of welcome in our communities: learn, connect, pray, and act. These were created to offer a word of encouragement and some examples for congregations to follow.

There were resources identified to help as well. 1) "Meeting our Neighbor" Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmation for Faith Leaders was created by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees was one identified. 2) Interfaith Dialogue resources were noted on the Scarboro Missions website and the ELCA talking points for interfaith dialogue.

This motion was passed unanimously by those present at the convention with the hope that congregations in the ELCIC will engage in this important ministry.

* * * * *

Bryce Mc Ewen, youth delegate from Saskatoon, Patti Gatzke, lay delegate from Swift Current, Doug Schmirler, rostered delegate from Melville
Opening & Closing Worship Report

The times of worship at the 16th Biennial ELCIC National Convention matched the beauty of the Campus of the University of Manitoba on Treat 1 land, of which we were privileged to experience, were filled with spirit, joy, communion, and celebration! The music was vibrant, being lead by both choir and musicians, and powerfully supported by the voices from across Canada coming together in worship.

The convention theme this year was "Liberated by God's Grace", and the worship services reverently honoured this theme. We were honoured by the presence of Mr. Willard Metzger, Executive Director of Mennonite Church Canada, who shared a message with us during the opening worship on Thursday. Mr. Willard spoke on how the convention theme was relevant to our world today and needs to be shared, and applauded the ELCIC's efforts in doing so. He also spoke of ecumenism and reconciliation, which was another common theme throughout the convention. He valued his personal friendship with our Bishop Susan Johnson, and the support they have been to each other in ministry. He spoke with hope for our churches pursuing together our mission in spreading the good news of being liberated by grace through faith.

During the closing worship time on Saturday, we had the chance to hear from Rev. Jordan Cantwell, Moderator of the United Church of Canada. She took the time to share with us stories of her life and lessons she has learned. Rev. Jordan lifted up the truth that it is a gift from God that the church is being pushed to the margins of society, since it is those margins of society to which we are called to serve. Her passionate message of seeking liberation for others was both inspiring and challenging for those in attendance.

Celebration of Holy Communion was also shared at both services and only cemented the spirit of ecumenism we share with our partners in the faith.

One could not help but leave the worship renewed and invigorated for the convention sessions that awaited us. A huge thank you goes out to the entire convention worship committee for their gift of leadership.

* * * * *

**Donna Lovberg, lay delegate from Canwood
500th Anniversary Reformation Service**

If I had only three words to describe the 500th Anniversary Reformation Service, they would be; “Oh My God”.

The whole conference was very informative and a true blessing to me with this service being the highlight. The building itself was absolutely amazing. I was able to talk to Father Darrin Gurr about the church before the service and also heard about, and visited the first Columbarium in a Catholic church in Canada they have in the basement of the church.

The service opened with a gathering of the Bishops and Ecumenical Guests around the Baptismal Font with the Thanksgiving for Baptism. Bishop Susan is so personable and capably led the service. I was very impressed by the participation in the service, of the Ecumenical Guests. I was sorry that Bishop Munib Younan was unable to stay for the service but our prayers are with him and his family. To have people from Lutheran, Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, United, Mennonite and Canadian Council of Churches worshipping God together in one building was truly a dream come true for me. I have always thought about why there are so many “religions” when we all believe in the same God! I think we need to realize how fortunate we are to have the freedom of worship we do. Scott Weidler, the music director for the service and the conference did an amazing job.

The best part of the service for me was the music and how everyone sounded like a choir of angels. The Hymn of the Day “To Be Your Presence” deeply touched me. Truly the presence of the Holy Spirit was in this place and we can truly feel Liberated by God’s Grace!!

**Carol Maurer, lay delegate from Neudorf
500th Anniversary Reformation Service**

Friday evening at 6:10 p.m. the delegates, youth, rostered delegates, visitors all in attendance at our 16th Biennial National Convention of the ELCIC board boarded our bus transportation to take us to our place of worship for the evening. The St. Gianna Beretta Molla Catholic Church was our setting and what a beautiful location for this assembly to conclude our day with prayer, the word, sacrament of Holy Communion, song and fellowship. St. Gianna greeted us with warmth, openness and compassion. I was taken in complete “Awe” of this whole experience. We truly are an “inclusive church”. Worshipping with all denominations; the surroundings were absolutely beautiful; very moving and powerful service and above all to have our National Bishop Susan Johnson preside in a Catholic Church. We are to be Liberated by God’s Grace- share what we have with all the world.

Mark Hedlin, rostered delegate from Saskatoon
500th Anniversary Reformation Service

At the 2017 National Convention, delegates joyously gathered in worship under the theme “*Liberated by God’s Grace*”. The Friday evening celebration of Holy Communion took place at the beautiful St. Gianna Beretta Molla Catholic Church in Winnipeg.

The music and singing was full and moving. The Scripture readings for the worship were taken from the Reformation Sunday texts (Jer. 31:31-34; Romans 3:19-28; John 8:31-36). National Bishop Susan Johnson preached and presided at the table with Synodical Bishops served distributing the meal.

Representatives of other denominations (who also comprised the Panel on the Significance of the 2017 Reformation Commemoration earlier in the day) brought the readings and took part in leading various components of the worship as well.

After the worship, with the walls and ceiling still ringing with the sending hymn, everyone gathered for a reception of delightful treats served beside a stunning baptismal pool in the entrance area. This pool can be fully entered by way of steps leading down into the water. It is ringed by lights and has a glass bottom. Many delegates ventured into the church basement to the columbarium. The stunning effect of the baptismal pool is best appreciated there as it extends down from the ceiling into the columbarium and creates a remarkable vision of our baptismal hope that we move from death to life by being joined with Christ’s dying and rising through our baptism. Words don’t do justice and if you like you can see more at www.livingwaterswpg.ca.

* * * * *

Arlene Tangjerd, lay delegate from Yorkton
National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

I felt that Kayla Johnston provided an excellent and detailed overview of the history and the legacy that was covered by the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She gave a clear statement that the results of these attempts at assimilation were in fact cultural genocide. She talked of the ways that parents and communities did put up some resistance to the residential school system and she acknowledged that there were some aspects of the schools that helped to some extent in the survival of the students – mainly the areas of arts and sports but that these were chronically underfunded. She explained the settlement agreement in 2006 that resulted in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the NCTR in addition to financial compensation.

I was impressed by the amount of detail in the archives available on the NCTR website pertaining to the dates and locations of the schools, the names of those who attended, etc. in addition to the documents obtained and the statements taken by the TRC. There are also resources to be used for education and for research. The 94 calls to action produced by the TRC are also on the website.

The framework for reconciliation is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples. It will be an ongoing process going forward. Ms. Johnston pointed out one example of a change that is important to advocate for, that being to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada which continues to allow some forms of corporal punishment of children. This is an example of a foreign concept to aboriginal peoples historically as their culture dealt with raising children and with learning in a very different way than the ways that were imposed by the residential schools. She gave other specific suggestions on actions we can take to work towards the achievement of the calls to action. These included learning about the issues and understanding them, teaching others about them and choosing a particular call to action to focus on.

I would recommend that everyone read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report in its entirety to more fully understand the depth and urgency of the issues it describes.

**Kim Sherwin, rostered delegate from Melville
National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation**

Kayla Johnston had a very concise, and thorough power point presentation. She began by reviewing the history of the residential school system, and identifying who was impacted by this form of cultural genocide. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation was built to hold the over 7,000 hours of collected audio video interview of survivors of residential school and their descendants. The NCTR's collection is available on line and holds in addition to the interviews: historic records of the residential schools, some burial records and many of the collected pictures from the schools.

Kayla reminded us that the TRC made 94 recommendations for action to the people of Canada following the hearings in 2008. She suggested that Canadians pick one Call to Action and use it to learn, understand, and explore our relationships with indigenous peoples.

My interest in her presentation was very personal as my first mother-in-law attended a residential school in Lebret. She did not speak a great deal of her time there except to say that she learned to read music and play guitar, and that was something she was able to pass on to her children.

**Trinity Fusick, youth delegate from Shellbrook
National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation**

I was very excited when I saw that we would have a presentation at the convention regarding Truth and Reconciliation with our First Nations people as it is an area I feel very strongly about pursuing. And let me say, our presenter did not disappoint! It was great to learn what reconciliation really is, not just a destination but a process. I am also looking forward to going online after she informed us that almost all of the TRC's documents are available online. The only downside of the presentation was that it was only a couple hours, not a whole day! I am so glad I was able to come to this national convention. It's always really nice to get out of your comfort zone, worship with new people, and discover and be a part of what's happening in

the church on a larger-than-congregational-level. The University campus was absolutely phenomenal, travel was very comfortable and I can't even begin to describe the quality of the dorms! Overall it was wonderful and if I could change one thing I'd make it a full three days to allow for more socializing!

* * * * *

**Mark Hedlin, rostered delegate from Saskatoon, Lynn Cavanagh, lay delegate from Regina, and Janet Kostyna, rostered delegate from Inglis
Panel for the Significance of the 2017 Reformation Commemoration**

At the 2017 National Convention, delegates were treated to a panel of ecumenical partners and friends who brought their perspectives on what is the current significance of the 2017 Commemoration and what implications might there be for the future of the church.

The participants were:

The Most Rev. Richard Gagnon, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg (RC)
The Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell, Moderator of the United Church of Canada (UCC)
The Rev. Canon Allyson Barnett-Cowan, President of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC)
Dr. Katherine Johnson, Director of Ecumenical Relations for the ELCA (ELCA)
The Rev. Dr. Peter Busch, Moderator of Presbyterian Church of Canada (PCC)
The Rev. Dr. Willard Metzger, Executive Director of Mennonite Church Canada (MCC)
The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, Primate of Anglican Church of Canada (ACC)

The speakers gave eloquent and insightful thoughts on such themes as the context of 16th century reformation; the enduring importance of the *5 Solas*, *the priesthood of all believers*, *that the church must always be reforming* and *to proclaim the Gospel in all its fullness*.

There was a lifting up and celebration of ecumenical work & movements that have brought fruitful relationships between many denominations in many different ways. Humility, listening, repentance and prayer have been essential to "successes". There is a recognition that, as the church moves to the future, there are many groups and peoples that have not been well included or invited to the conversations. We must maintain the same spiritual postures listed above so that we can all be open to sisters & brothers through whom the Spirit desires to lead us all in faith. Indigenous populations from previously colonial lands (Africa, Asia, North & South America) who bring forward and will continue to bring forward new forms and expressions of the Christian faith. Conversations with Evangelical denominations encourage us to be open to the differences between us and to find ways to learn from each other.

The panel forum was a wonderful and engaging expression of the work of the Holy Spirit, courage, vision and hope for all who took it in. A brief report of this kind can only scrape the surface of what our panel guests offered to us. I hope that you may have been able to watch the live-streaming or find a delegate from the Convention and get them to tell you more!

* * * * *

Deb Roberts, lay delegate from Regina, Bev Tastad, lay delegate from Regina, and Ron Belke, lay delegate from Saskatoon
Reference And Counsel

The Reference and Counsel Committee managed the first day of convention well, with only one resolution submitted. The Committee deliberated over it, getting to know each other and learning the job of Reference and Counsel. It is the Committee's responsibility to first help the people submitting the resolution to ensure it means what they want it to mean, and can't be misinterpreted by the Convention assembly. Once that is determined it is up to the Committee to make recommendations to the assembly as to the best way to handle the resolution. Reference and Counsel Committee can recommend adoption, where the assembly votes on the motion; a substitute motion, which then gets voted on; defeat, where the assembly also votes on the motion, but must have delegates move and second it; referral to a particular group or committee for further research or deliberation; or recommend that the motion is out of order (meaning against the parliamentary rules that we follow), so the Chair rules on the motion.

Following Bishop Susan Johnson's announcement that the deadline for resolutions submitted to Reference and Counsel was upcoming on the second day, we fielded seven more resolutions. It was very interesting trying to do the work of the Committee, while still trying to be present and listen to the presentations and discussions during the business sessions. I believe all the Reference and Counsel Committee members handled it very well, and treated each resolution with our full attention and respect in our considerations.

In total eight items were submitted to the Reference & Counsel Committee. Of these, five were referred to National Church Council (NCC). Topics included here related to the development of a learning plan to help local congregations explore materials contained in *Welcoming the Stranger* and *Encountering People of Other Faiths*, and suggestions for national convention preparation & planning, as well as for nomination processes for NCC. It was also approved that any unfinished business from convention be referred to NCC, however there was no unfinished business.

The three submissions adopted included:

- To support the Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) through letter writing;
- To review & update the model constitution Article VI Section 7 given the approvals of motions – Statement to Muslims and Guidelines for Interfaith Relationships;
- To formally seek lessons learned from ELCJHL related to interactions with Muslims and other faith groups.

The Reference and Counsel Committee submitted a final resolution themselves, that the many people involved in the Convention be thanked, which the assembly did with resounding applause.

It was a pleasure and honor to serve on this Committee, assisting in doing the work of our National Church.

* * * * *