

**Report to the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches
Commission on Justice and Peace
November 13, 2014**

Introduction

This will be a brief report this time. Too much going on with the Assembly itself!

The Commission on Justice and Peace Priority Topics, in order (last 6 months of activity)

1. Climate Justice

In September the Commission contributed to and circulated materials to animate faith communities paying attention to the climate justice demonstrations in New York and around the world on the occasion of the UN General Secretary's climate summit. Geared to the important international COP21 negotiations in Paris in 2015, the new Climate Justice Working Group of the Commission on Justice and Peace has been developing *Framing Principles for Witness and Action on Climate Justice, Energy and the Economy*, still on draft 7. These may form the basis for proposed initiatives regarding an ecumenical letter or statement in Spring 2015, a proposed Arctic Religious Leaders Summit in April 2015, and inviting and preparing a delegation of church leaders to go to the Paris climate summit. Who will we invite to represent Canadian churches in Paris? Might you wish to suggest that your church leader keep his or her schedule free for that period: 30 November – 11 December 2015?

2. Poverty in Canada (with Refugees and Public Health Care as a related topic)

The Canadian Council of Churches endorsed the *Dignity for All* campaign several years ago. A new Poverty in Canada Working Group is putting legs on a CJP engagement with their new substantial policy report that documents research and consultation efforts with academic, community and faith leaders. The report will be released in January 2015. The CJP engagement proposes a policy focus, a Federal election focus, and a vision focus on Canada @ 150.

3. Indigenous Peoples Rights

The Indigenous Equity in Education Initiative that we have discussed on different occasions continues to develop. A solid principles for reconciliation in education text is a living document but now near a final version. An impact plan has been developed and is currently being revised. In due course, The Canadian Council of Churches will likely be invited to endorse this initiative.

4. Religion and Public Discourse – Religious Freedom – Religious Minorities – Quebec Charter

The Quebec Charter has now disappeared from view with the defeat of the Parti Quebecois. A follow-up conference to Bridging the Secular Divide is now taking shape for British Columbia in 2015: *Our Whole Society*. The Concept Paper, Save the Date, and Conference Flyers are all available and will be circulated.

5. Peace and Disarmament

Project Ploughshares is currently leading a consultation process on what churches in Canada might contribute to the debate regarding Canada's recent military engagement in Iraq. It is likely that a text will come forward that will be seeking endorsement and consensus.

6. Intercultural Ministry Leadership Development

The Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministry is proposing a new relationship with The

Canadian Council of Churches that holds the promise of strengthening our connections and capacity in this area. Stay tuned for further details during the business meeting of the Governing Board on Friday! Commission staff have played an active role in developing and reviewing the proposal.

7. Human Trafficking in Canada

As a continuation of its engagement with the Minister of Justice and the preparation of a Backgrounder on proposed legislation, The Human Trafficking in Canada Working group prepared a submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights during the review of Bill C-36 *The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* dated July 2014. The text of the submission can be found here: <http://www.councilofchurches.ca/cccs-human-trafficking-working-group-presents-recommendations-on-bill-c-36-to-parliament-committee-on-justice-and-human-rights/>.

8. Undoing Racism in Canadian Churches

The Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network (CEARN) is proposing to host a conversation on the Doctrine of Discovery, a foundational tenet of life in North America. Several churches have active reviews of the Doctrine in process, and this would provide an opportunity for learning across communities and denominations.

9. Faith and Genetics and other Related Issues

Please see the report from the CCC's Biotechnology Reference Group.

10. UN Accreditation

Cesar Jaramillo, Program Officer at Project Ploughshares working on the Space Security and Nuclear Disarmament programs, attended the meetings of the First Committee at the United Nations in New York for his work on nuclear non-proliferation. The Canadian Council of Churches holds Consultative Status with ECOSOC at the United Nations, a valuable designation that permits the CCC to send delegates to important United Nations conferences.

11. Other – Refugees and Immigrants

As you know, the Canadian Council of Churches is a Founding Partner in a research project led by Rich Janzen at the Centre for Community Based Research on the role of churches in immigrant settlement and immigration: <http://www.communitybasedresearch.ca/Page/View/PDG.html>. Many of you facilitated the completion of a thorough survey and interview process. The initial findings from that research project are now available and have been circulated. The project is now moving into a knowledge mobilization phase.

This report has been prepared by Peter Noteboom, Deputy General Secretary.