

Annual Report from the Canadian Council of Churches Representative

I continue to represent the CABF as a member of the Governing Council of the Canadian Council of Churches. As a member church of the CCC we have seat on the Governing Board along with other member churches. Other churches and Christian organizations attend the twice-yearly meetings as observers and affiliates, but we are a full member of the CCC and have a voice and vote on the Governing Board. This past year (2023) I attended the November meeting in person in Mississauga and the May meeting was held on-line by prior agreement, as a cost saving measure. These semi-annual meetings run over three days and provide opportunities to get to know fellow board members, become familiar with their churches and faith traditions, as well as gaining a better understanding of the breadth of the work of the various commissions, committees and working groups of the CCC, from the Sexual Exploitation Working Group to the Reference Group on Faith and Life Sciences.

Since I began to represent the CABF at the CCC in 2022, another organization has been welcomed back into the structure of the CCC. The Church Council on Justice and Corrections, which was spun off by the CCC fifty years ago, has returned under the umbrella of the larger body. A number of years ago I represented the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec on the board of the Church Council so I was in a unique place as a new member of the CCC Board and a previous board member of the CCJC to speak to their return. Over the past year I have been working with others on the Governing Board to support the work the of the CCJC as they transition to become the Working Group on Justice and Corrections within the CCC. Next week we will celebrate the 50 year history of this organization which has always "punched above its weight" in the field of justice and corrections, as for example, in the significant role it played in the 1980s in the elimination of the death penalty in Canada. With others on the CCC Board, I look forward to seeing what the future of this work will look like within the structure of the Canadian Council of Churches.

At the May meeting we elected a new President and executive for the next "triennium" or three years. Rev. Dr. Das Sydney, known to some of us as a fellow Baptist and previous pastor at Wolfville Baptist Church in Nova Scotia, is now the past president of the CCC, and Rev. Amanda Currie, a Presbyterian pastor from Regina has stepped into the role of President. It was both interesting and quite moving to have Amanda installed in her new role in a service on Zoom. The new President and Executive will have the honour of leading the CCC for the 80th anniversary celebration of the founding of the organization on September 26th. Among the events planned during the anniversary year of the CCC is a visit from the President of the World Council of Churches, Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay, a theologian and Reformed pastor from South Africa. He will visit Canada in early December. The CCC has also launched an Anniversary fund raising campaign to work towards the sustainability of the work of the Council.

It is a privilege to serve as a member of the CCC Governing Board on behalf of the CABF and I hope to find others who may be interested in representing us in the various working groups of the CCC in the coming year. Our beloved friend and past CABF President, John Boyd, had been a member of the team working on the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. I know that

there are lots of other opportunities in the many facets of the CCC for CABF members to find similar ways to engage in this important ecumenical work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hugh Kirkegaard