



The Canadian
Church Press

Annual General Meeting
Laval University, Quebec City, Quebec
Thursday, June 22, 2017 – 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Room 3344

Present: Angela Reitsma-Bick (*Christian Courier*), Bill Fledderus (*Faith Today*), Brad Wassink (*Catalyst – CPJ*), Fr Thomas Rosica (Salt + Light/Sel et Lumiere), Giselle Randall (*The Salvationist*), Ian Adnams (associate member), James Sweeney (Anglican Editors association), Karla Braun (*MB Herald*), Michael Hostetler (*Canadian Mennonite*), Mike Swan (*Catholic Register*), Mirko Petricevic (associate member), Preveen (S+L), Virginia Hostetler (*Canadian Mennonite*).

1. Opening Prayer: Michael Swan read from Colossians 1 in English, Bill Fledderus in French

2. Member sign-in/introductions

3. Approval of Agenda: Bill suggested discussion of increased online presence, and advocacy on Canadian Heritage Fund, to be addressed under new business. Moved as amended/seconded: Bill/Brad

4. Approval of minutes from AGM - April 29, 2016 (Ramada Hotel in Toronto):
Moved/Seconded: Bill/Angela

a. Business Arising

i. Research project (Ian Adnams) This project was intended to explore the faith life of journalists (what are their qualifications for reporting on religious matters) with the outcome that CCP respond with resources to help media understand what religious people in Canada are about. We lack the research to back up our assertion that there is an obvious lack of understanding of religious communities in the media. CCP earmarked \$5,000 with goal to find other sponsors and had a working agreement with Waterloo Lutheran University to do research. Ian was not able to find any other funding sources in various faith communities (including Jewish, Sikh, Muslim); however, CCP is still committed to helping journalists know who religious Canadians are. Michael established a relationship with Canadian Association of Journalists whom CCP may send them information. Bill contacted the now-defunct Centre for Faith and Media re revising and republishing their materials on religious communities on our CCP's website. Fr Rosica emphasized importance of this project, especially from an ecumenical coalition; he has become a resource for editors and producers who know nothing about religions. Michael noted that beginning with a complaint won't get much response; instead, make the case that what people believe about meaning in their lives (and the traditions they follow to that end) is news. It is important to how both subjects and readers understand the world, whether terrorist bombings or simple local compassion ministries. Mirko said we don't have quantitative analysis, but we do have anecdotal qualitative evidence. Rapport with journalists is the most important: the greatest resource for journalists to understand religion is religious experts to be available to the media when they need it. Perhaps training should be targeted toward religious community (how to speak well with the media), not journalists. Michael agreed that as a journalist, he

doesn't want to get a church journalist's voice on a church issue, he wants someone with authority – people who often avoid speaking to journalists. Fr Rosica suggested that rather than focus on doctrinal differences, faith groups must stand together to give a common witness on issues like environment, persecution, practice of the faith. For example, he recently convened a panel of an RC cardinal, leading rabbi, leading Islamic leader addressing MAID. QUESTION for CCP: as an association with limited resources, how do we also equip journalists with religion resources? Ian suggested that as issues arise that member publications have done stories on, we can highlight our own coverage. Mirko observed that with newsrooms shrinking, publications are doing more op eds; could CCP come up with one op ed a month to circulate (e.g., *The Record* in Kitchener runs a lot of stuff from Cardus)? Bill – example, RNS sends email to journalists on an issue with list of experts – could CCP offer something similar, compile into database? Michael – we want to do the opposite by offering religious experts on leading headlines. Ian – partnership with Canadian Christian News Service. Michael H – mindset – think beyond ourselves and our own pubs and denoms. This is our call as Christians. Fr R -- What are we trying to communicate, why are we trying to communicate it. Identify 5 areas on which to highlight what we write. Michael H gave example of Canadian Mennonite 10 things to know about Mennonites in response to Pure. Michael -- Person to grab a subject, aggregate stuff we've produced, share contact info of key people in story, send out on social media. Fr R -- *on 8 platforms* would ask graduate intern (this has ecumenical, publishing dimension. St. Joseph Media prints S+L, they have some church rates. Video - Function in – Eng, Fr, Italian, mandarin, Cantonese. Suggest CCP exec tour S+L

Motion: Michael Swan will maintain contact with Fr Rosica on behalf of CCP to further develop these possibilities before our next executive meeting. Moved/seconded: Bill/Ian.

5. President's Report: Michael Swan: Our task: Writing stories, taking pictures, presenting them in intelligible form on paper or screen. Our readers: old, forgotten, angry, bewildered who read because there is language they have experienced – words from the gospel, from church – as concrete realities. Our best work uncovers fundamental humanness and reveals truly divine. We are guideposts. Current: 62 members/publications and Anglicans (22 members). We learn that our publications are a tradition that reflects and reinforces larger tradition of churches – the goal is not to produce a product but to maintain a tradition. This year we lost *Presbyterian Record*, *Western Catholic Reporter* and next year will lose *Prairie Messenger*. Each can speak of diminishment, but this doesn't define us. After 60 years, this association will change. We have already changed. How can we better embody who we have become? Bill notes exciting opp of Anglican editors coming on board.

6. Membership report: Sue Newbery (in lieu of Ken Ramstead)

Total membership: 62 publications, 1 website, 3 associate members.

BC Catholic, *WordAlive*, *The Messenger* will not renew for 2017/2018.

Presbyterian Record ceased publication in 2016 but renewed to submit awards.

Scarborough Mission will cease publication at end of 2017.

Indian Life has funding to the end of 2017, but future is uncertain beyond that.

CCP welcomed Cardus (*Convivium*) and Anglican editors this year. As of meeting, *Salt + Light* (Fr. Rosica) will become member.

Possible members to approach: CCN, new Presbyterian publication, Baptist publications, *Mosaic* (used to be members), *Thrive* (Evangelical Baptist).

We may want to devote more organizational energy than Ken's to recruiting (see #8).

A spreadsheet – listing current members, future members, last time they have been approached, reasons given -- would be a useful feedback and reporting mechanism to track members and understand what they value and/or want from CCP.

ACTION: Sue to identify the editor of the new Presbyterian publication.

ACTION: Sue to create spreadsheet to track members.

7. Financial Report: Brad Wassink

Convention expenses don't go through our books this year because we are not running it ourselves. Further confusing because this convention is in June which is laready in next fiscal year, so two conventions in one fiscal year and none in the previous

Revenue comes in during previous year but expense land in current

2016/2017 actual June to may, 5351.93 – this is surplus at end of year

-5524.00 projected deficit for next year matched by surplus of this year

Thanks to brad for doing the complicate numbers

Awards – number of submitters slightly down

Moved/seconded: Brad/Angela

8. Executive Elections:

a. Call for nominations:

- i. President: Bill Fledderus
- ii. Vice-President: John Longhurst
- iii. Secretary: Karla Braun
- iv. Member-at-Large: Jim Uttley
- v. Member-at-Large: Angela Bick
- vi. Past president: Michael Swan

b. Approval of slate

Moved/seconded: Ian/Ginny

Note: demise of *Indian Life* puts greater onus on the rest of us to put reconciliation on our editorial agendas.

9. New Business:

a. Revisiting CCP Mission and Structure

Bill wrote reflection paper and possible changes for future, circulated by email

ACTION: Sue to send to Father Tom

To ensure vitality of org moving forward 3 options

1. More energy into recruiting members
2. Alter membership criteria (to include comm profls, not just publications): formal change in who can be member, OR informal change by intentionally connecting with all mag staff, not just head editor/point person
3. Look at new partnerships with related organizations, like similar Christian groups in Canada and US, and secular orgs top options: associated church press (us&Cda – next convention is April in Chicago), Magazines Canada (mainstream periodicals) set up ad hoc committee that does work on which options are most viable and what are possibilities going forward

Discussed possibility of special meeting in Toronto in September to have better attended discussion on this. Two years ago Michael was vigorous opponent of widening to comm profls, but qu is who we ultimately serve whether editors/journalists or comm/PR people, but we all serve our readers, which makes us like a comm org – we serve the public Heritage Canada is reshaping cultural policy for whole country and we aren't part of that convo;; even contact once a year with relevant ministries would keep our readerships from being forgotten in the halls of power. We could lose our subsidy not because they hate us but because they don't notice

Bill: comments sent in response to report one enthusiastically in favour of including marketing, comm and fundraising people. One suggestion to change name of org to reflect new reality (Cdn Church communicators)

Others pointed out website and information on this conference were lacking, social media has been dormant. One suggested local chapters

Michael H – PR/marketing vs journalism – understandings of each discipline aren't always clear; a statement of ethics/guiding principles of each may be a helpful piece to welcome and appreciate role of both in life of church

Public doc talking about vision for story telling, fundraising, etc. Ginny – special meeting is very important – most effective if we all do homework and think beforehand about what we need/envision group to do for us. Exec should give pubs homework: what are questions to give staff and boards

Bill – create a survey

Thanks to Bill for creating report

b. Convention 2018

ACP Chicago?? We need to focus on our own restricting and make it easy for people to be there – Toronto is best. Do we save money by doing a joint convention hat could be used to help people travel? (ACP conventions have contractual agreement about cost sharing that disadvantage Canadians when the dollar is weak).

10. Other Business: There was no time left for other business.

11. Adjournment