

Our Words of Faith

The United Church of Canada



Remit 6

Declaration of Church Doctrine

Come Learn More About
This Important Topic
@ Emmanuel Cafe
7 pm - March 4th

Our Words of Faith

Les mots de notre foi

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada



Remit 6

Declaration of Church Doctrine

Presented by Rev. Angelika Pichè at
Ottawa Presbytery January 2012



Our Words of Faith

Remit 6 in simple terms:

Should we add newer expressions of faith
as relevant doctrinal statements to the Basis of Union ?

Suggested are:

- The 1940 Statement of Faith
- A new Creed (1968)
- A Song of Faith (2006)



Our Words of Faith

HOW THIS SUGGESTION CAME ABOUT:

- Across the Church there has been a sense that the theological language used in the 20 Articles does not longer express our faith for our time. (one reason why *A Song of Faith* was written)
- SK conference brought a proposal to GC 40 to remove the Twenty Articles altogether.



SK 6 – Proposal to GC 40

That the General Council 2009

- Declare that The Twenty Articles of Faith in the Basis of Union are an historic doctrine; and
- Direct the Executive of the General Council to arrange a suitable celebration honouring the significant achievement of that document in uniting several denominations
- Authorise a remit to remove the Twenty Articles from the Basis of Union; and
- Request the Theology and InterChurch InterFaith Committee to determine what other expressions of Faith might be included with those listed above; and
- Authorize the Manual Committee to make the necessary changes in the manual.



General Council 40

In August 2009, meeting in Kelowna, British Columbia, the 40th General Council adopted the following proposal:

That the 40th General Council 2009

1. In the area of Doctrine, The United Church of Canada recognizes the primacy of Scripture, with the “Doctrine Section of the Basis of Union”, “1940 Statement of Faith”, “A New Creed,” and “A Song of Faith” each being recognized as a ‘subordinate standard’ of the United Church as contemplated by Declaration 3(b) of The United Church of Canada Act.



General Council 40

2. Declare that “Doctrine” of the United Church for all purposes in the Basis of Union, By-Laws, and Appendices of The Manual be those subordinate standards, subordinate to Scripture, that are so approved by the United Church in accordance with the conditions contained within The United Church of Canada Act; and
3. Authorize a remit to Presbyteries and to Pastoral Charges to test the will of the United Church with respect to these declarations and recognition.



Our Words of Faith

Essential terms:

The Supremacy of Scripture

Section 2.0

“...We affirm our belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life.”

Subordinate standards:

a statement of faith, one that is “in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures” but subordinate to Scripture.



Our Words of Faith

What is at stake?

- Can we in the UCC stand on a common expression of faith ?
Is a common doctrinal statement helpful
for our search of identity ?
- Do we see our statements as part of a “living tradition”
that seeks new language for traditional beliefs?
- We set a precedent, if we accept new subordinate standards,
would we be open to affirm others in the future ?
- If we acknowledge more than one subordinate standard
as binding, all the standards would be seen to be “in
dialogue” with each other – what does that mean?



Remit 6 – the process

This is a level 3 remit:

- GC 40 has voted on it
- All presbyteries and all pastoral charges need to vote
(Session or equivalent)
- If an instance does not vote it counts as a negative vote!
- If a majority of the Church is in favour of the proposal GC 41 has to vote again



Our Words of Faith

This remit is a great opportunity for our Church and our congregations

- at a time of uncertainty about faith language
- at a time of identity search for our whole Church



Our Words of Faith

Remit 6 gives us a great opportunity:

- ✧ to speak about faith language with our congregations
- ✧ to think about how we name our *common ground of belief* as a community of faith (“doctrine”?)



Our Questions for tonight:

1. What place do we give to *doctrinal statements* in the UCC and should we adapt them over time in the sense of a “living tradition”?
2. How can we take this remit as an opportunity for our congregations to talk about the expressions of our faith
(motivation and process for congregations?)





Remit 6 Question 6A “1940 Statement of Faith”

Does the Presbytery agree that, in the area of doctrine, the United Church recognize the primacy of scripture, with:

- sections 2.0 through 2.20 of the Basis of Union, constituting the doctrine section of the Basis of Union and including 20 articles; and
- the statement of faith generally approved and commended by the 9th General Council (1940);
- each being recognized as a subordinate standard of the United Church as contemplated by subsection 3(b) of *The United Church of Canada Act*;



Remit 6 Question 6A “1940 Statement of Faith”

- and that the doctrine of the United Church be those standards subordinate to scripture that are approved by the United Church in accordance with the conditions set out in *The United Church of Canada Act*.
- and that the Basis of Union shall be amended to reflect this policy, as follows:



Remit 6 Question 6A “1940 Statement of Faith”

DOCTRINE

2.1 The United Church recognizes the primacy of scripture.

2.2 The United Church recognizes as doctrine the following standards subordinate to scripture:

2.2.1 the 20 articles of doctrine, set out in sections 2.3.0 through 2.3.20; and

2.2.2 “A Statement of Faith, 1940,” set out in sections 2.4.0 through 2.4.12.

