



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

Official Minutes of Business Meeting Thursday, April 11, 2019

Call to Order

The 2019 World Conference convened its fourth legislative meeting at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, April 11, 2019, in the Conference Chamber of the Auditorium, Independence, Missouri. President Stephen M. Veazey was in the chair.

Opening Hymn and Prayer

The assembly sang "Amazing Grace," led by Diane E. Riffie on the organ. Edna G. Waje from Germany in the Western Europe Mission Centre offered the invocation.

Announcements and Demographics Survey

The chair called on World Conference Co-Director Susan K. Naylor for several announcements and a demographic survey. The survey results:

Which one of these best describes your primary language?

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Nederlands	1.11%	23
English	75.42%	1,559
Français	14.61%	302
Deutsch	0.39%	8
한국어	0.53%	11
ଓଡ଼ିଆ	1.02%	21
Português	0.10%	2
Русский	0.44%	9
Español	4.02%	83
Reo Tahiti	2.37%	49
Totals	100%	2,067

Carla C. Castorina, Gulf States USA Mission Center, rose for a point of order, and asked that all languages presented in the survey also include sign language. The chair said this would be included in the future.

A-4 Priesthood Release for Cause

The chair drew attention to Item A-4 Priesthood Release for Cause in the *Legislation* section beginning in English, French, and Spanish on page 3. Without objection, the chair did not read the resolution.

The chair recognized Warwick T. Sarre, who moved approval of Item A-4. There was a second.

Maria Olsen-Hiatt, Inland West USA Mission Center, moved the following amendment. There was a second.

Amend by inserting the phrase “and for making all such policies and procedures freely accessible to members and friends of Community of Christ on the church website” into the final *resolved* clause after “in harmony with this resolution.”

The chair ruled the amendment out of order because it conflicted with Article III, Section 6, of the Bylaws of Community of Christ, which state “No legislative body can rightfully take to itself administrative or judicial functions.” Deciding what is or is not placed on the World Church website is an administrative function.

Georgia R. Seagraves, Graceland University Congregation, moved to close debate. There was a second. The vote was taken by raised hand, and the motion carried by the required two-thirds majority.

The chair called for the vote on Item A-4.

The chair then called on President Stassi D. Cramm to direct the electronic vote by sections of the Conference Chamber.

Theodore L. Tinsman, South Central States USA Mission Center, rose for a point of order, stating that the voting options did not include an option to abstain.

The chair read the following statement:

STATEMENT ON ABSTENTIONS

The First Presidency wishes to offer the following statement to the Conference about abstentions from voting on any question to come before the assembly.

By definition, to abstain means not to vote. There are really two reasons for abstaining from voting.

First, a delegate might abstain because he or she does not have a strong feeling about the motion before the assembly or because he or she is undecided. In such situations, a delegate abstains by simply not voting, and the vote to abstain is not considered in determining the majority for or against the motion. This type of abstention is not noted by the assembly and is not recorded in the minutes.

Second, a whole delegation might abstain because even the fact of its participation in voting on the motion could do harm to them or others when they returned home. In this situation, there would need to be consultation in advance between the delegation leader and the First

Presidency about the reason for the delegation to abstain. In such a case, the chair would note that a particular delegation had abstained because to participate could cause them or others harm when they returned home. This type of abstention would be noted in the minutes.

The First Presidency offers this guidance to the assembly to answer questions that come up from time to time. We hope this explanation is helpful to the assembly.

The chair stated it was intentional to leave the option for abstention out of the polling since it is not included in the count.

The vote was taken on Item A-4 with the polling devices. The results were 1,802 in favor and 221 opposed. The chair declared the motion adopted.

Moment of Blessing

Katie L. Harmon-McLaughlin and Joseph S. Williams led the assembly in a moment of blessing.

Recess

The assembly sang “O Lord, Hear My Prayer,” led by Diane E. Riffie on the organ. After the hymn, the assembly stood in recess at 11:59 a.m.

Reconvene

President K. Scott Murphy called the assembly back to order at 2:03 p.m. and announced the singing of the hymn, “Ubi Caritas et Amor,” led by Dale G. Rider on the organ.

Announcements

The chair called on World Conference Co-Director Tammy Lindle Lewis for several announcements.

D-1 Presiding Bishopric Report

The chair drew attention to Item D-1 Presiding Bishopric Report in the *Finances* section beginning in English, French, and Spanish on page 2. The chair said that reporting on D-1 was a continuation of the Presiding Bishopric’s Report begun on Monday.

The chair recognized Presiding Bishop Stassi D. Cramm, who led the presentation of the report with her counselors, Steven E. Graffeo and Jeffrey A. Naylor. The presentation was a continuation of the Monday report on Item D-1. It focused on the church’s improved financial strength since 2016 and on Mission Tithes. The presentation also included information on Worldwide Mission Budget projections.

D-2 World Ministries Budget Projections

The chair drew attention to Item D-2 World Ministries Budget Projections in the *Finances* section in English, French, and Spanish on page 32. The chair read the resolved:

Resolved, That the 2019 World Conference approve \$17.3 million (USD) as the budget projection for the 2020, 2021, and 2022 annual Worldwide Mission Budgets.

The chair recognized Bishop Steven E. Graffeo, who moved approval of Item D-2. There was a second.

Following discussion, the vote was taken by raised hand on Item D-2, and the motion was approved.

Afternoon Recess

The assembly stood in recess at 2:47 p.m.

Reconvene

President Cramm called the assembly back to order at 3:10 p.m.

Announcements

The chair recognized World Conference Co-Director Susan K. Naylor for an announcement.

The chair announced instructions for voting on the World Church Finance Board nominees through the voting app.

The chair then indicated the assembly now would move into the Committee of the Whole. The First Presidency left the presiding station.

Committee of the Whole: Surveying the Assembly on Item G-I Nonviolence

At the request of the First Presidency, Sandee R. Gamet and Kelly A. Phipps served as presiders of the Committee of the Whole.

The chair called the Committee of the Whole to order. Sue Ann Allen was also on the rostrum, listening to the discussion and advising the presiders as needed. Also on the rostrum was Katie L. Harmon-McLaughlin, who led the Moments of Blessing.

The committee then began considering the first *resolved* of Item G-I Nonviolence found in the Saturday/Sunday *Bulletin* in English, French, and Spanish on page 19.

The chair explained the process that would be used and reminded the assembly that parliamentary rules were suspended to allow the assembly to survey and listen together with more flexibility.

A series of questions by use of the polling devices gathered input from the delegates. The surveys taken were to help each delegate better understand how other delegates saw the issue of nonviolence. The chair said decisions were not being made during the session, but important insights shared would inform decision-making when the Conference would begin the next day to formally consider Item G-I.

The survey questions were in the Wednesday *Bulletin* in English, French, and Spanish on page 9.

Moment of Blessing

Katie L. Harmon-McLaughlin led the assembly in a moment of blessing.

Common-consent Survey

The chair then conducted several surveys on the first *resolved* of Item G-1.

Resolved, That Community of Christ reject all forms of violence, including acts of terrorism, war, and financing wars, and act upon Christ’s invitation to practice nonviolence and (confront and resist) injustice.

Following each survey the assembly members discussed the results with those sitting near them. The survey results:

Question 1: Which of these perspectives do you hold?	
Perspectives	Responses
1. “Resistance sometimes requires force”	857
2. “Concern for members in the military”	560
3. “Violence is never the solution”	751
4. “Concerns about taxes and financing war”	256
5. “This resolution is unnecessary or unhelpful”	349
6. “What do these terms mean?”	142
7. “What about self-defense?”	633
8. “Violence is more than terrorism or war”	624
9. “This is consistent with the church’s mission”	735
10. “Nonviolence is the way of Jesus”	849

Question 2: What is your current level of support for this resolved?	
Level of Support	Percentage
1. “No support”	13.55%
2. “Little support”	11.18%
3. “Tentative support”	19.11%
4. “Significant support”	22.51%
5. “Full support”	25.37%
6. “Undecided”	8.28%

Question 3a: If your level of support was 1 or 2, which of these perspectives is the primary reason for your level of support?

Perspectives	Percentage
1. "Resistance sometimes requires force"	44.22%
2. "Concern for members in the military"	6.11%
3. "Violence is never the solution"	5.13%
4. "Concerns about taxes and financing war"	0.59%
5. "This resolution is unnecessary or unhelpful"	16.96%
6. "What do these terms mean?"	0.79%
7. "What about self-defense?"	5.52%
8. "Violence is more than terrorism or war"	5.72%
9. "This is consistent with the church's mission"	1.58%
10. "Nonviolence is the way of Jesus"	16.37%

Question 3b: If your level of support was 3, which of these perspectives is the primary reason for your level of support?

Perspectives	Percentage
1. "Resistance sometimes requires force"	32.68%
2. "Concern for members in the military"	5.28%
3. "Violence is never the solution"	18.20%
4. "Concerns about taxes and financing war"	1.76%
5. "This resolution is unnecessary or unhelpful"	3.91%
6. "What do these terms mean?"	0.98%
7. "What about self-defense?"	6.26%
8. "Violence is more than terrorism or war"	5.87%
9. "This is consistent with the church's mission"	7.44%
10. "Nonviolence is the way of Jesus"	17.61%

Question 3c: If your level of support was 4 or 5, which of these perspectives is the primary reason for your level of support?	
Perspectives	Percentage
1. "Resistance sometimes requires force"	3.25%
2. "Concern for members in the military"	1.18%
3. "Violence is never the solution"	24.56%
4. "Concerns about taxes and financing war"	1.63%
5. "This resolution is unnecessary or unhelpful"	3.70%
6. "What do these terms mean?"	0.74%
7. "What about self-defense?"	2.07%
8. "Violence is more than terrorism or war"	4.29%
9. "This is consistent with the church's mission"	19.53%
10. "Nonviolence is the way of Jesus"	39.05%

The chair acknowledged that for those who were undecided on their level of support, there was not a place for them to respond in the survey. The committee was interested in knowing about those reasons. Index cards were available for persons willing to share their reason for being undecided. Once completed, the cards were turned in to the committee for further work on the topic following World Conference.

The chair said this was the last Committee of the Whole focused on the common-consent process at this Conference. It was hoped the time spent listening to one another and understanding the perspectives would be informative to the delegates as the assembly considers the substitute resolution for G-1 in the legislative process.

The results from the surveys will be published in the *Friday Bulletin*.

Moment of Blessing

Katie L. Harmon-McLaughlin led the assembly in a moment of blessing.

The chair then stated the Committee of the Whole would rise.

The First Presidency returned to the presider's table, with President Cramm in the chair. The chair thanked the team for its work in preparing for the Committee of the Whole experiences.

The assembly responded with applause.

Closing Hymn, Prayer, and Adjournment

The assembly sang the closing hymn, “Santo, Santo, Santo,” after which Caitlin D’Esterre from the Canada East Mission Centre offered the benediction. The assembly adjourned for the day at 4:18 p.m. to meet again at 8:30 a.m., Friday, April 12, 2019.

Susan D. Sloan
World Church secretary