REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE
BY LIBBY TIGNER
GENERAL SYNOD 33, JULY 11, 2021

The committee is comprised of 10 delegates, and our job is to monitor the composition of the Conference Delegations to the General Synod, for compliance with the diversity requirements set forth in the UCC Bylaws, specifically, bylaw 195 which calls for a delegation that is 20% youth and young adults, at least 50% persons who identify as female, at least 50% lay persons, and as a whole is reflective of the UCC’s commitment to racial and ethnic diversity.

It’s important to note that this bylaw is not rigid. It was written in a way that reflects our aspirational goals of diversity and inclusion, and provides grace for the times that we don’t quite reach the desired numbers. The bylaw does not require “exact compliance” but rather “substantial” compliance, and in challenging years such as this one, we rely on that grace while remaining committed to always doing better.

From our experiences with our own Conference delegations, and from conversations with colleagues around the UCC, we realized that there was an unusually high amount of attrition of delegates this year, and recruiting new delegates to replace them was more difficult than expected.

This was particularly true when trying to hold onto or recruit new delegates under the age of 30. We suspect that COVID-related computer and Zoom fatigue is driving this reality, but I also think that the relative freedom and availability of summertime opportunities this year after a year of lockdown has made recruiting youth and young adults even more challenging.

Our committee first met via Zoom on June 16, and reviewed the delegation data that was available at that time. Because the registration for this General Synod took place a little later in the year, at that point only 461 of a potential 679 conference delegates had registered, so
our evaluation at that point was really quite preliminary. We did note that there opportunities
for the delegation-as-a-whole to more fully reflect the diversity requirements of the bylaws.

Letters for each Conference Minister were prepared by the Office of General Counsel
and signed by me, which encouraged each conference to strive for closer adherence to the
bylaws as they recruited their final delegates and got them registered. Several Conference
Ministers responded to the letters and further emphasized the challenges of recruiting full and
fully compliant delegations in this COVID year, despite their good-faith efforts to do so.

Nevertheless, when our committee met again last week, we noted that there was
improvement in the overall diversity of the conference delegation-as-a-whole. The committee
unanimously agreed that the delegation-as-a-whole is in substantial compliance with bylaw 195.

The final numbers, as reported on July 8, reveal that the delegation-as-a-whole is just
under 13% youth and young adult, 57% persons who identify as female, 46% lay persons, and
significantly reflective of the UCC commitment to racial and ethnic diversity.

Therefore, the Credentials Committee has found, and it is my pleasure to report, that the
Delegation-As-A-Whole is in compliance with our bylaws for this General Synod 33.