

## Canadian Council of Churches

### Role of a Member of the Faith and Witness Commission

1. **Work of the Commission:** The Commission on Faith and Witness engages the churches in theological study to foster greater understanding of the faith we hold in common and to provide an ecumenical witness to the mission of Christ in the world. Through representatives of member churches, the Commission wrestles with key issues of faith, including: baptism, discipleship, suffering and hope, theological anthropology, marriage, and biotechnology. The Commission produces resources such as an “Ecumenical Statement on Euthanasia” and “Religious Ceremonies Involving More than One Faith Tradition.” It coordinates the preparation for Canadian material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity each year, and coordinates the National Advisory Group on Emergency Planning. The Commission facilitates churches’ participation in interfaith dialogue, especially through its Interfaith Liaison Committee, and through work with national interfaith bodies.
2. **Qualifications for a Member of the Commission:** The member should have a thorough grasp of his/her theological tradition; an ability to communicate and interpret that church’s theology and methods of decision-making (polity); an ecumenical spirit that listens deeply to the understanding of other traditions; and a willingness to participate in the forum method of the Canadian Council of Churches in building ecumenical consensus to the degree possible.
3. **Work of a Member of the Commission:** Each member contributes to the overall work of the Commission through regular attendance at meetings; participation in particular projects by reading and research and offering papers; articulating the perspectives of his/her own tradition; commenting on the work of the other members of the Commission; leading Bible study and/or prayer; on occasion representing the Commission on or to other bodies; giving an account of the work of the Commission to his/her own church, and promoting the use of resources produced by the Commission within the church.
4. **Meetings:** The Commission normally meets two times a year, usually in rotation among Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa. Meetings usually take place in a 48 hour period, from Sunday evening to Tuesday noon. Meetings function bilingually, in that each person may speak in either French or English, without translation provided. Subcommittees of the Commission meet with varying degrees of frequency, in person and by conference call.
5. **Appointment and Term of Office:** It is up to each member church to appoint up to 3 representatives to the Commission. While the Commission reviews membership every 3 years, member churches make their own determination about

term. A frequent pattern is for members to serve 2 terms. In addition to church representatives, the Commission includes one Vice-President of the Canadian Council of Churches and one youth member of the Governing Board.

6. **Communication:** Regular communication between the member and the appointing church is critical for the work of the Commission to be known in the churches, and for the work to represent accurately the theology, policies and polity of the member churches. Each member needs to discuss the appropriate way of maintaining contact with his/her church.

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