

## **ACCESSIBILITY OF CHURCH DECISION-MAKING**

### **1. Exclusion from the decision-making process**

We believe in a conciliar church rather than a hierarchical church. The decisions entrusted to the executives are at the behest of the courts they serve, and not as independent authoritative bodies.

We believe God calls the whole church, lay and ordered, to respond to the call, and to be informed regarding decision-making within church courts.

We believe that the decision-makers are accountable to the triune God and the entire church.

- a. At present, the church courts and certain of their executives hold closed-door meetings, leaving the church community unaware of discussions and the arguments (supporting and counter) to decisions that are made. This lack of transparency not only hinders church members' ability to stay informed but also undermines the decision-makers' accountability to the church.
- b. Without the public accessibility of minutes of these meetings, congregational leaders and other members of the church are unable to assess the decision-making processes and engage in meaningful conversation within the communities

of faith, and in the ecumenical and interfaith collectives where they participate.

**2. This proposal helps us to live into our church's commitment to equity by**

- a. Removing the barriers of the church to those who are outside the various court executives.
- b. Communicating reasons for and processes in decision-making.
- c. Ensuring those most affected by decisions are aware of the complete rationale for those decisions.

**3. The General Council could:**

- a. Rescind the decision to hold all GCE meetings behind closed doors.
- b. Encourage all other church courts to have their executives meet behind closed doors only when necessary.
- c. Restrict all meetings behind closed doors to those that are strictly necessary, such as personnel issues in which individuals are named and contractual negotiations with suppliers and other religious communities.

d. Ensure minutes state the reason for the executive going *in camera*