

Review of Proposed Resolutions to Canadian Unitarian Council

Annual General Meeting 2015

by William Fulton, CUC Parliamentarian

I have reviewed the four motions being proposed, using the context of the following ruling from *Roberts Rules of Order*, 11th edition, p.104:

Motions to "reaffirm" a position previously taken by adopting a motion or resolution are not in order. Such a motion serves no useful purpose since the original motion is still in effect...

What this means is that every resolution that has been passed by the CUC since 1963 is still in effect. Consequently, actions can be taken by groups within the CUC without going to the process of approving a new resolution.

I. Proposed 2015 resolution on Abortion Rights:

For example, the position on Abortion Rights has the implicit approval of the CUC from the resolution of 1980; another resolution isn't needed. Permission to act is already there. The 1980 resolution reads as follows, with the proposed 2015 motion beside it:

1980 Approved Resolution	Proposed 2015 Motion
<p>Each delegate is requested to urge his/her society to become involved and agree on a strategy to further this issue. Suggested ways of involvement could include the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. To support the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL).b. To disseminate information on "freedom of choice on abortion" in your community.c. To encourage societies to write politicians and interested citizens to seek individual support.d. To form a coalition of like-minded religious groups.e. To promote joint efforts with other groups to lobby local, provincial and federal politician through personal action, written briefs, marches, demonstrations and public meetings.f. To advocate, at the same time, that birth control information be available and	<p>The CUC urge our governments (provincial, federal, territorial as needed) to ensure that abortions are fully accessible, and are fully funded by provincial health plans no matter where performed in Canada;</p>

free to all who seek it.	
The Canadian Unitarian Council affiliates with CARAL. (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League)	The CUC reaffirm a woman's right to have the procedure in a supportive and safe environment such as that provided by private clinics, and that such clinics operate on a full time financially sustainable basis, and be fully funded by provincial health care plans.
	The CUC urge governments to assume all costs, including travel costs, for women who have to travel to access abortion services; urge governments to remove abortion as an exclusion under reciprocal billing between provinces, so that women do not have pay for out of province services from their own funds.
	<p>The CUC urge members to support and promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizations that support reproductive rights and choice; • organizations that provide education, counselling or support in making reproductive choices; • organizations that provide comprehensive sexuality education, and; • organizations that provide accurate, evidence based and non-judgmental sources of information, especially as it relates to abortion.

II. Proposed 2015 resolution on Truth and Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Canadians:

The current action plan proposed in the Truth and Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Canadians is permitted under the resolution of 1995, which includes the following, with the proposed 2015 motion beside it:

1995 Approved Resolution	Proposed 2015 Motion
Establish contact with First Nations communities with a view to learning more about the richness of their spirituality, traditional teachings, languages, cultures, and the problems they face, and	The Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) with its member congregations endorse and act upon the Expression of Truth and Reconciliation , as presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on March 29, 2014.
Work with other groups and First Nations communities to advance the struggle for justice including respect for First Nations religious and spiritual teachings, languages, cultures, and a just and fair settlement of land claims and self government; and	<p>The CUC will encourage its Board of Trustees, staff, and member congregations to take these specific steps to advance the journey towards truth, healing and reconciliation between Canadian Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people within our congregations and in society at large:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide educational opportunities regarding the history and impact of the Indian Residential School system. b. Provide educational opportunities about racial equity and intercultural competency. c. Provide opportunities to learn more about the richness of Aboriginal spirituality and cultures, working hand-in-hand with Aboriginal people to advance the struggle towards justice and reconciliation.
Supports indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world, in their struggle for justice, and notes the positive standards set, in this respect, by the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 1993, and	
Urges Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists	

to provide programs and curricula about issues facing indigenous, including First Nations, peoples; and	
Directs the Board of Trustees to create an ongoing national working group mandated to keep this issue before Canadian Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist societies; and to serve as a clearing house for educational resources concerning these issues; in consultation with the Board, prepare briefs, letters or press releases or other material for public release when circumstances warrant; and investigate and recommend joining appropriate coalitions.	

III. Proposed 2015 resolutions by Environment Monitoring Group:

- a. Fossil Fuel Divestment
- b. Right to Clean Air, Water and Soil

The action plans related to the two proposed motions from the CUC Environment Monitoring Group (Right to Clean Air and Water and Fossil Fuel Divestment) are supported by the resolutions of 1999, 2009 and 2013:

1999 Approved Resolution includes:	Proposed 2015 Motion
Collaborate with other religious groups and interfaith organizations to promote environmental awareness, and work with such groups when specific environmental issues arise.	The CUC continue a policy of not purchasing securities of CT200 (latest edition) companies as investments;
Collaborate with environmental labour, business, community and other organizations where appropriate for the promotion of values expressed in our Environmental Principles.	The CUC continue to invest an appropriate investment share in securities that will support a swift transition to a clean energy economy, such as renewable energy and energy-efficiency-related securities.
Make representations to federal, provincial and local governments emphasizing the priority required by environmental issues, and pressing for action where needed.	Notwithstanding any provision above, the CUC may acquire and retain investments in CT200 companies, provided it engages in shareholder activism that seeks environmental justice or transition to clean and renewable energy.

<p>2009 Approved Resolution includes:</p>	<p>Notwithstanding any provision above, the CUC shall not take any action inconsistent with its fiduciary duty or that is incompatible with the principles of sound investment</p>
<p>Affirm the ethics implicit in the document Environmental Principles and Values of Canadian Unitarian Universalists. We call upon the CUC and its members to provide leadership through collective and individual actions, and to be a strong voice and presence, in confronting environmental issues</p>	<p>The Treasurer of the CUC shall report to each CUC Annual General Meeting from 2016 through 2020 on CUC progress on the above resolutions.</p>
<p>2013 Approved Resolution includes:</p>	<p>The CUC encourage member congregations and Unitarian Universalists generally, to review their congregational and personal investments with a view to taking action to end climate change, such as public divestment of their holdings in fossil fuel companies, supporting shareholder activism designed to end use of fossil fuels, and investment in renewable energy and conservation.</p>
<p>Sponsor educational opportunities for members and others to become better informed about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the causes of climate change included but not limited to burning of fossil fuels, b) alternatives for reducing harmful carbon emissions, c) sustainable energy alternatives to fossil fuels, d) economic policy alternatives that support sustainable levels of carbon emissions, e) policies, plans and actions necessary to mitigate climate change and adapt to the negative impacts of climate change should preventive measures prove to be insufficient or untimely; and 	<p>Large Congregations (Congregations with over 150 members) be requested to report annually to the Treasurer of the CUC for inclusion in the CUC annual accounting, the percentage of the total value CT200 securities held that are divested or engaged in shareholder activism, and the dollar value retained until such time as they report 100% divested or engaged in shareholder activism.</p>

f) personal responsibility for individual carbon footprint reduction;	
Identify advocacy groups with which individual members can work peacefully to reduce factors contributing to climate change and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change that are likely to occur should preventive measures prove to be insufficient or untimely; and	The CUC recognize that clean air, water, and soil are basic human rights.
Encourage individual members to become involved in advocacy groups committed to peaceful action for reducing greenhouse gas emissions	The CUC urge member congregations to engage locally with others to persuade first municipal and subsequently provincial governments to recognize a clean environment as a basic right; and to enact resolutions, by-laws and/or legislation as appropriate to protect the right of citizens to clean air, water, and soil within their jurisdictions; and to report to the CUC whether they are engaged, have engagement planned, or have no engagement planned.
	When 7 provinces with 50% of the Canadian population have recognized these rights, that member congregations and the CUC join others to have the right to clean air, water and soil enshrined in the Federal Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Also, the action items related to the Environment Resolution of 2009 advocates for the implementation of an Environmental Bill of Rights. This would include the right to clean air, water and soil.

Parliamentarian’s Suggestions for Proceeding:

As explained above, proposing new resolutions in the areas of Abortion Rights, Truth and Reconciliation and the Environment is neither necessary nor in order because of the previously approved resolutions. According to Roberts Rules of Order, 11th Edition there are two ways to proceed:

1. Propose Action Steps as Items of Business on Agenda of Annual General Meeting
To support revised actions relating to previously approved resolutions, a group makes a request to the Chair of the Annual Meeting to place their intention and action as a business item on the Annual Meeting agenda. To gain support of the AGM

for new actions related to past resolutions, a group may propose action items related to the fulfilment of the relevant resolution i.e. the [Environment Resolution of 2009](#) or the [Truth and Reconciliation resolution of 1995](#) or the [Abortion Rights Resolution of 1980](#). The proposal and action items could then be voted on by the delegates. This would fulfil the mandate of past resolutions. New resolutions are not necessary or in order.

OR

2. Propose A Motion to Amend a Previously Approved Resolution

A motion to amend a previously approved resolution is used to make a change to a motion by either making a simple change or two, or by substituting something else in its place.

We hope this ruling will encourage current and future proposers to attend to the important work they are called to do, knowing that they don't always have to complete the resolution process or wait for the AGM. The CUC has resolutions allowing for actions and continued education for most social justice related issues.

All past CUC resolutions can be found on the CUC website at [Governance – CUC Resolutions – Past Resolutions](#). If there is no past resolution that is related to a need for action, then it is appropriate to develop a new one.

Questions? Comments? Would you like to have further conversation about this?

A series of web conversations will be held to discuss this ruling, and to discuss Canada Revenue Agency requirements and our social justice work. The first call will take place on **Tuesday, February 24 at 7pm EST**. Please contact april@cuc.ca if you would like to participate in this meeting. Dates for future conversations will be announced via the CUC [leaders](#), [presidents](#) and [ministers](#) email groups, and on [FaceBook](#).