

COGS Highlights

Council of General Synod

April 2, 2011

Today was the second day of joint meetings between the executive councils of the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). The Council of General Synod (COGS) is the ACC's executive council and the National Church Council (NCC) is the ELCIC's executive council.

Dwelling in the Word

At 8:45, members gathered for an NCC tradition called "Dwelling in the Word" where an ELCIC member describes how a certain piece of scripture is personally significant. NCC secretary Don Storch shared how he has been influenced by Joshua 24:15 "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

"Tilling New Ground"

In small groups, Anglicans and Lutherans considered two topics: the upcoming joint national gathering in 2013, and future work to be shared by Anglicans and Lutherans. They discussed these topics from 9:00 to 10:50.

Groups reported back in plenary. Members of the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission sat together as a "listening panel" to receive and record their feedback.

Members provided a wide range of input. On the subject of the 2013 meeting, some members suggested that the Anglicans and Lutherans could produce a joint piece of liturgy. Others offered a vision of how they would like to see the joint meeting portrayed in the media.

On the subject of future shared work, some members shared concerns about a proposed joint national office. Others suggested that international Anglican and Lutheran partners in places like Jerusalem could work more closely together.

COGS and NCC members spent time reflecting on and recording their personal answers to the question "What am I going to do differently based on this experience together?"

From 12:00 to 1:30, COGS and NCC members gathered for a lunch break. The afternoon and evening business sessions were separate.

Chair of General Synod Planning Committee

The Primate announced that the Very Rev. Peter Wall will serve as chair of the General Synod 2013 Planning Committee.

PWRDF

Adele Finney, executive director of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) led a presentation on several aspects of PWRDF's recent work.

She began by celebrating the fact that PWRDF's 50 refugees program will reach their goal of sponsoring 50 refugee families. She read a moving letter of thanks from an Iraqi man whose family was welcomed by Anglicans in Saskatoon.

Ms. Finney updated COGS on some recent PWRDF initiatives. She said a new confirmation resource, spearheaded by the youth council, will soon be available online. PWRDF has also prepared a brief series of statements for Anglicans to ask their local candidates in the upcoming federal election.

Finally, Ms. Finney reported on PWRDF's recent work around strategic planning and governance. Its new vision is "a truly just, healthy, and peaceful world. Its mission is "As an instrument of faith PWRDF connects Anglicans in Canada to communities around the world in dynamic partnerships to advance development, respond to

emergencies, assist refugees and act for positive change.”

Ms. Finney asked COGS members to consider two questions: Who do you say PWRDF is within the ministry of General Synod? What might be the implications for PWRDF in the life of COGS?

After some small group discussion, COGS members provided a range of feedback. Some described PWRDF as “our face to the world.” Others wondered if there was still overlap between PWRDF and current General Synod work. Some wondered whether the question of de-incorporating PWRDF should be reexamined.

Financial statements and resolutions

Michèle George, General Synod treasurer, presented the audited financial statements for the Anglican Church of Canada’s resolution corporation, consolidated trust fund, and General Synod.

“We have come in essentially on budget for 2010,” said the treasurer.

In 2010, General Synod ran a deficit of \$490,000. It had budgeted for a deficit of \$492,000 as part of a gradual movement away from deficit budgeting. General Synod plans to have a balanced budget in 2011 and 2012. This depends, however, on improved revenues from dioceses and Philanthropy (now Resources for Mission).

Ms. George described some changes between the 2009 and 2010 fiscal years. Her points included the following: diocesan contributions decreased as expected. It was a normal year for investment income, especially compared to 2009, which was a recovery year after the economic downturn of 2008. General Synod expenses were down in 2010 by \$500,000 because of reductions in global grants, reductions in staffing, contained travel costs, and other factors.

***Resolution**

COGS approved financial statements for General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada for 2010.

***Resolution**

COGS approved financial statements for the consolidated trust fund and the ACC resolution corporation for 2010.

***Resolution**

COGS approved Ernst and Young as auditors for General Synod.

Council of the North

Bishop Michael Hawkins presented a proposal for new funding levels for the Council of the North. Currently the 10 northern dioceses of the council are supported by grants from the national church. General Synod committed to keep current funding levels consistent from 2007 until the end of 2011.

The council’s bishops collaborated with the Financial Management and Development Committee to propose an “orderly reduction” in grants beginning in 2012.

***Resolution**

COGS approved a proposal for council funding over the next five years at a reduced rate of 5% per year (based on the prior year’s grant), to be reviewed by COGS in 3 years’ time, be given consideration as part of the budget 2012 process.

Resolutions

COGS passed the following resolutions without debate and by consensus:

***Resolution**

COGS resolved to ask the General Secretary to write to all dioceses, before the Common Ground [ecumenical youth ministry] conference in June, encouraging them to consider hosting a Justice Camp and to encourage any dioceses who come forward to send representatives to the Toronto 2012 Justice Camp and to the planning sessions related to it.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved to ask the General Secretary to request of all national standing committees and councils to complete anti-racism training before the end of this triennium.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved to ask the Primate to exercise prophetic voice in a pastoral letter to all Anglicans at the time of this 2011 federal election: to encourage them to raise questions with candidates in their respective ridings and at all-candidates meeting, with respect to issues of poverty and homelessness (General Synod resolution A178), climate change (A180 R1), Indigenous rights (A176 R1), healing and reconciliation (A179 R2) and other issues of peace and justice.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved to adopt the Guidelines for Anglican and Lutheran Clergy/Rostered Ministers Serving Appointments in Each Other's Churches.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved that it will send a letter to the members and staff of the Consultation of Bishops in Dialogue expressing the gratitude of the Anglican Church of Canada for the witness of *A Testimony of Grace*.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved to enact a resolution that

a) places before the next session of General Synod a motion changing the name of the department to the 'Resources for Mission Department' and the name of the committee to the 'Resources for Mission Committee', and,

b) until this matter is taken up for debate and decision by the next session of General Synod, temporarily makes these name changes for all of our working purposes except in those instances in which the use of the present names of the Department and the Committee are canonically or legally required.

After moving through these items on the No Debate list, COGS turned to consider other resolutions.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved to gratefully accept the invitation of the Diocese of Toronto to host the 2016 General Synod in that diocese.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved that when votes are required between in-person meetings of COGS, these shall be done by email. The request for such a vote shall:

1. Indicate in the subject line that it is a request from COGS for an email vote, and
2. Specify a deadline by which the email vote must be received by the General Secretary.

The outcome of the vote shall be determined by a majority of the votes received by the deadline (provided that votes have been received from a majority of the members of COGS and all Orders are represented as required by Section 35 a) of the Constitution).

All members of COGS are expected to vote. A member of COGS who does not have email may be notified by mail that the vote will occur and may vote by mail.

Pensions resolution

Judy Robinson, director of the Pensions Office Corporation, introduced a resolution that would allow for General Synod's Continuing Education Program to be registered as a charity. The Pensions Office Corporation has been seeking this status with the Canada Revenue Agency for several years. COGS passed this resolution.

Missionary Society

COGS adjourned and reassembled as the board of directors for the Missionary Society of the Anglican Church of Canada (MSCC)

Founded in 1903, the MSCC carried out the missionary work of General Synod, including running residential schools. The MSCC stopped its work in 1969 but continued as a corporation. It still receives some bequests and currently has a value of \$2.75 million. Current uses of this fund include giving car loans to clergy in northern dioceses.

***Resolution**

COGS approved the MSCC financial statements for 2009 and waived requirement for separate audit,

since the statements of General Synod incorporate the operations of the MSCC.

The MSCC board of directors adjourned and reassembled as COGS.

Budget principles

Suzanne Lawson, chair of the Planning and Agenda Team, led COGS to reconsider the budgeting principles they had developed last year. These principles guide the Management Team as they develop a budget. Ms. Lawson noted that these principles should be reconsidered now that Vision 2019 has become a guiding plan for General Synod.

COGS began to revise the principles and decided to return to this work tomorrow.

5:30 to 7:00 COGS and NCC members ate dinner together.

Solemnization of marriage

Dr. Lela Zimmer and the Rev. Dr. Lynne McNaughton, members of the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee (FWMC) asked COGS to clarify a resolution regarding the solemnization of marriage that had been adopted at General Synod 2010 and then referred to their committee.

In their table groups, COGS members considered the wording of the resolution, then reported back. Some members suggested that the resolution placed too much work on an already busy committee. Others felt that the ACC needed to better understand the issues that surround the blessings and marriages the church performs.

COGS agreed that FWMC work a revised version of the resolution. They should produce a study "of the canonical, theological, liturgical implications as well as the potential effects on the mission and witness of the ACC of the cessation of the solemnization of matrimony by the clergy of the ACC."

Supplemental hymnbook

COGS considered a resolution that would mandate FWMC to begin a working group on a supplemental hymnbook to *Common Praise*.

Because the resolution had funding implications it was ruled out of order and after some discussion, another resolution was approved.

***Resolution**

COGS recognizes the desirability of FWM developing a supplemental hymnbook to *Common Praise* as work emerging out of the Principles for Liturgical Revision and in response to the call of Vision 2019 for the renewal and enlivening of our worship and as a means of fulfilling the first and second Marks of Mission.

Liturgy Task Force

COGS considered another FWMC resolution related to the funding of the Liturgy Task Force, which was mandated by General Synod. This motion was also withdrawn because it had budget implications.

Nominating Committee

The Ven. Harry Huskins reported on behalf of COGS's Nominating Committee. He announced that the Rev. Chris Harper had been chosen as the COGS member of the General Synod Planning Committee.

COGS adjourned and reconvened as member of the Anglican Journal Board. They approved a slate of directors to oversee the Anglican Journal Corporation as it transitions away from being a separately incorporated body apart from General Synod. The directors will be

- Bishop George Elliott
- The Rev. Canon Robert Towler
- The Rev. Canon Peter Davison
- Robert Dickson

COGS adjourned as member of the Anglican Journal Board and reconvened as COGS.

PWRDF and Partnerships

Henriette Thompson, coordinator of ecumenical, interfaith, and government relations, and Adele Finney, executive director of PWRDF, shared how they are seeking new ways to work together. Ms. Thompson is in General Synod's Relationships Department and PWRDF is separately incorporated. Ms. Thompson and Ms. Finney said a

discernment group has been formed with Relationships staff, PWRDF board members, PWRDF staff, and the Primate.

At 9:00, COGS met with the NCC for night prayers.