

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

April 3, 2011

Today was the third 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.

At 8:45, COGS members met for Bible study. At 9:30 they gathered for business.

COGS engagement in priority decision-making

COGS returned to address a subject raised yesterday: how COGS and standing committees set budget priorities. Many COGS members felt unclear about COGS's role not only in determining budget priorities but also interpreting how these priorities shape work and spending in standing committees.

After some discussion, COGS decided that the General Secretary will work on a way to clarify COGS's governance position. A possible solution is for standing committees to report to COGS how they plan to prioritize the work assigned to them from General Synod. COGS members would then have the opportunity to provide feedback.

Reports from partners

Martha Gardner, partner from the Episcopal Church, said it was once again a "delight" to meet with COGS, this time alongside the NCC. She said that after this meeting she was inspired to learn more about Anglican-Lutheran relations in the US. She also was reminded of the importance of small group discussions and the presence of youth members.

Ms. Gardner challenged COGS to find ways to incorporate people of other races and ethnicities in their decision-making. She also wondered how the

church's linguistic diversity could be reflected in worship at COGS.

David Pritchard, partner from the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), also shared reflections. He noted, among other things, that COGS members are conciliatory in expressing concerns and helpfully use humour to push through difficult conversations. He also said that the PWRDF board could learn from COGS's use of consensus decision-making and their process of voting by email.

Vision 2019

After a short coffee break, COGS members considered how Vision 2019 is functioning as a guiding document in their communities. In small groups they considered two questions: Are you aware of V2019 impacting the work in your province at this time? Have you personally taken any steps to raise awareness about Vision 2019 in your province?

Members provided a range of feedback. Some noted that Vision 2019 was developed out of input from parishes and is now returning to these same areas of the church. Others noted that Vision 2019 may not generate new work, but instead provide a lens through which to understand current work.

COGS members spent time writing their evaluations of the meeting as well as their key messages. They will share this input with COGS's Planning and Agenda Team.

Sharing results of COGS and NCC meetings

Members of COGS and the NCC gathered to hear results from the other's meeting.

ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson gave an overview of NCC meetings. She provided updates

on decisions arising from their Structural Renewal Task Force and their Human Sexuality Task Force, as well as other matters. A letter from the NCC to the ELCIC is [available online](#).

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, ACC Primate, noted that while the NCC is ramping up for their national convention in July, COGS is sorting through tasks assigned to it at General Synod 2010. The Primate covered highlights from the COGS meeting, ranging from tracking the implementation of General Synod resolutions to an evening spent considering the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Primate celebrated again the occasion of the first joint COGS-NCC meeting. "This is going to be a watershed moment in the life of our churches together," he said.

From 12:00 to 1:30, COGS and NCC members took a lunch break.

Eucharist and tree planting

COGS and NCC members joined together for a final Eucharist, celebrated by Archbishop Fred Hiltz. Archbishop Hiltz and Bishop Johnson provided a joint homily.

After the service, members processed behind a bagpiper to the front yard of the Queen of the Apostles Renewal Centre. A Green Mountain Sugar Maple tree had been planted to symbolize the churches' work of "growing together." Archbishop Hiltz and Bishop Johnson placed fresh soil around the tree, then COGS and NCC members poured water, which they had brought from their home communities, on the newly planted tree. The maple, donated by Sheridan Nurseries, is expected to grow to 80 feet. ACC and ELCIC leaders hope the tree will stand as a visible sign of church unity.

With business and worship completed, COGS and NCC members returned to their home communities.