

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

May 26, 2012

Council members began the second full day of their spring 2012 meeting with a Gospel-Based Discipleship Bible study in a Sacred Circle. This style of study is often used in Indigenous Ministries meetings.

The Primate gave a brief update on the Ven. Dr. Michael Pollesel, former General Secretary. In December, Mr. Pollesel was elected co-adjutor bishop of the Diocese of Uruguay but at their recent meeting, the bishops of the Province of the Southern Cone did not ratify his election. The Primate asked members to pray for Mr. Pollesel.

COGS members voted for the second delegate to the 2013 World Council of Churches assembly in Busan, Korea.

Financial Management

Treasurer Michèle George presented a review of financial results for the year ended December 31, 2011.

She reviewed results for the Resolution Corporation (established to hold and administer funds set up under the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement), the Consolidated Trust Fund (which holds and manages an investment portfolio for General Synod and other bodies) and the General Synod.

The 2011 General Synod budget of \$12 million anticipated a surplus of \$18,000. However, General Synod underperformed by \$83,000 so ended the year with a deficit of \$65,000.

Overall, General Synod did well in managing core expenditures, with the help of special purpose funding sources: the Ministry Investment Fund and the officers' contingency fund. One-time funding was also provided for the Together in Mission fundraising initiative.

The General Synod deficit is due to a decline in revenues: a loss on investments, declining proportional giving from dioceses and a decline in income from annual appeals. In total, revenues were \$808,000 less than budgeted for.

Most of this loss was absorbed by using General Synod reserves and an approved portion of an undesignated legacy. However, the \$65,000 deficit remains.

Resolutions

In three separate resolutions, council approved the financial statements of General Synod, the Consolidated Trust Fund, and the Resolution Corporation (all ended December 31, 2011).

Resolution

Council approved Ernst & Young as auditors of General Synod.

Resolution

Council ratified the audit committee's acceptance of the auditors' recommendation to adopt the accounting principles for not-for-profit organizations (in Part 111 of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants Handbook), effective in the 2012 fiscal year.

Resolution

COGS resolved to delegate its responsibility to the officers of General Synod to forward the three draft financial statements for 2012 to the General Synod of 2013 for approval.

Resolution

Council ratified grants approved by the Ministry Investment Fund committee in Dec. 2011, totaling \$120,000 for 2012 and \$30,000 for 2013.

Council adjourned and reassembled as the board of the Missionary Society of the Anglican Church of Canada. The missionary society is a historic, affiliated corporation that still administers some trust funds.



Resolutions

The MSCC board of managers approved the financial statements. In the same resolution, they agreed that any two officers be authorized to sign statements on the board's behalf. They also approved Ernst & Young as auditors.

The board adjourned and reconvened as the Council of General Synod. The members celebrated the rediscovery of their identity with a 15-minute coffee break.

Anglican Healing Fund

Esther Wesley, coordinator of the Anglican Healing Fund, introduced the Legacy of Hope's new educational resource on residential schools, 100 Years of Loss. This extensive package helps schools teach the history of residential schools and is designed for intermediate and senior students. Curriculum can be purchased online through www.legacyofhope.ca and a donation of \$250 is recommended.

Ms. Wesley also presented the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's interim report.

The Primate thanked Esther Wesley and General Synod Archivist Nancy Hurn for their work at Truth and Reconciliation events. He noted that the public narrative around residential schools needs to include the church's response.

Governance Working Group

David Phillip Jones Q.C., chair of the Governance Working Group, asked COGS to consider some changes to the process of elections at General Synod 2013 because there is less time than at previous national meetings.

These changes include the following: all proposed nominations for prolocutor, deputy prolocutor, and COGS members must be received by a specified deadline before General Synod and there will be no nominations from the floor, except for members of standing committees.

Mr. Jones explained that members' input would be shared with the Governance Working Group, which would draft guidelines for review at the November 2012 COGS meeting.

A discussion followed and members raised several concerns about the process of election. Some wondered about the difference between electing someone based on a majority of votes versus the highest number of

votes.

COGS decided to delay this vote until Sunday.

Mr. Jones then introduced another resolution that would remove the need for a two-term limit for COGS members. This matter was first raised at General Synod 2010. COGS members discussed the resolution.

Members took a lunch break from 12:00 to 1:30.

Vision 2019 Implementation Team

The Ven. P.J. Hobbs, chair of the Vision 2019 Implementation Team, emphasized that Vision 2019 continues to guide and shape the work of General Synod and gave examples of how this works at Church House.

Mr. Hobbs noted that the team is working to discern how it relates to other bodies and struggles with an efficient way of tracking the achievement of priorities and practices from Vision 2019.

Resolution

Council resolved to direct all committees, councils, and boards, when reporting to COGS or General Synod, to frame reports in terms of the priorities and practices of Vision 2019 and to respond to the following question: "Do you have further observations regarding Vision 2019 as it relates to your work?"

WCC Assembly

The Primate announced that the Rev. Canon John Alfred Steele had been elected as the second delegate to the 2013 World Council of Churches assembly. He will join Melissa Green, who was elected yesterday.

2013 Joint Assembly Planning

The Very Rev. Peter Wall, chair of the General Synod Planning Committee, gave an update on plans for the 2013 joint assembly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, July 3 to 7 at the Ottawa Convention Centre. This is the first time that 800 to 900 Anglicans and Lutherans will gather together for national business, meeting in joint sessions as often as possible. The theme is "Together for the Love of the World."

Mr. Wall explained that the assembly will be shorter than the usual General Synods (seven or eight days) but longer than ELCIC's three-day meetings. To shorten the meeting, presentations have been streamlined and all worship will be on site (among other changes).

Members asked questions about how these decisions were made. Some expressed concern that all voices will not be heard on the floor.

Dianne Izzard, assistant to the General Secretary, updated COGS on some specific joint Anglican-Lutheran policies for the meeting—on sponsorship, displays from outside parties, and sexual misconduct.

Members asked questions about corporate sponsorship of national meetings. Mr. Wall noted that past sponsors have included insurance and financial service companies that often work with churches.

Resolution

Council resolved to approve these three policies for the 2013 Joint Assembly.

Pensions

Members heard a presentation from Bob Boecker of the Pensions Committee and Judy Robinson, executive director of Pensions.

Resolution

COGS approved amendments to the Long-Term Disability Plan. (This is to bring it in line with a decision made several years ago to link membership in the Long-Term Disability Plan with the General Synod Pension Plan and Lay Retirement Plan.)

Mr. Boecker reviewed the actuarial valuation of the pensions plan. He explained that the plan faces some challenges, including the declining number of active members and a recent low rate of return. However, the 10-year rate of return is on track for with actuarial valuations.

Judy Robinson said that trustees have recently made a couple of amendments to the Pensions plan that COGS will be asked to vote on by email.

Resources for Mission

Vianney (Sam) Carriere, director of Resources for Mission and director of Communications and Information Resources, invited questions about the written Resources for Mission report. He noted that the nation-wide Together in Mission fundraising initiative, which builds partnerships between the General Synod and dioceses, is proceeding according to the planned timeline.

Mr. Carriere then introduced a covenant that had been formed among ministries of the Anglican Church of Canada, agreeing to work together on strategic gifts initiatives. The covenanting bodies are General Synod; Indigenous Ministries, on behalf of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples; the Anglican Foundation; The Anglican Journal; the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund; and the Pension Office Corporation. They will work together in approaching potential donors.

Resolution

Council adopted the document entitled "Covenant among the ministries of the Anglican Church of Canada regarding strategic, major, and planned gifts in support of God's mission."

Communications and Information Resources

Sue Winn, member of the Communications and Information Resources Committee, and Mr. Carriere introduced two resolutions from the committee.

Resolution

Council agreed to seek two revisions to the handbook: a change to the CIRC membership that would remove references to the Anglican Journal Board of Directors that no longer exists and a change to include the ELCIC national communications director as an ex-officio member on CIRC with voice and vote.

Resolution

COGS agreed to encourage the development of a communications strategy for General Synod based on the CIRC departmental communications strategy and the Marks of Mission.

The Anglican Covenant

The Primate spoke about the work that has been done thus far on the proposed Anglican Covenant. He noted that all provinces of the Anglican Communion must provide an update on their covenant progress at the fall 2012 Anglican Consultative Council meeting (ACC-15) in New Zealand.

The Primate reminded COGS that General Synod 2010 passed a multi-part resolution on the Anglican Covenant. Most of the mandated work has been achieved. The Anglican Communion Working Group has



prepared covenant study materials and distributed them, the Governance Working Group has provided their report, and the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee is currently working on their response.

COGS members are now responsible for two pieces: preparing a resolution to take to the 2013 Joint Assembly and preparing a response for the Anglican Consultative Council. The Primate asked members to discuss in their table groups what they would like to pass on to ACC-15. Their responses will form a written report, to be prepared by the Anglican Covenant Working Group and later re-circulated to COGS for approval.

Before members moved into discussion, Martha Gardner, partner from the Episcopal Church, asked if she could read the gospel of the day (John 21:20-25). Gospel-Based Discipleship, a Bible study format the members used this morning, invites participants to read the Gospel of the Day at key points in their meetings.

After discussion members shared feedback, including these comments:

“There should be an honest effort so the bonds of affection that bind us can be reaffirmed.”

“The vast majority of Anglicans are not engaged in this process.”

“We recognize that we live with diversity and we can be an example to the rest of the Communion.”

“We need to remind the ACC that we took this matter seriously and did assemble a study document.”

“There’s not much interest in discussing it this far. We’re not sure why there’s not a lot of energy for this.”

The Primate announced that at the fall COGS meeting a writing team will begin to prepare a document to take to the 2013 Joint Assembly.

Partner reflections

The Rev. Doug Reble, ELCIC member, commended the World Café process that COGS used yesterday. He encouraged the council to use this format again, perhaps early next triennium. He also encouraged members to continually examine the church’s role in society and investigate why society no longer looks to the church to meet spiritual needs.

Mr. Reble also noted that many congregations have chosen to leave the ELCIC, in reaction to the new

national positions in favour of same-sex blessings (as decided at last summer’s National Convention). In one ELCIC synod (equivalent to an Anglican diocese) more than 30 congregations have left. Mr. Reble said responses to these departures have been mixed.

Finally, Mr. Reble described work the ELCIC has done to streamline structures. Some of the recommendations from the national office have not been accepted at the local level.

Members had a dinner break from 5:30 to 7:00.

The Community

The Rev. Jesse Dymond, online community coordinator, introduced the Community (thecommunity.anglican.ca), an online space where Canadian Anglicans can talk about life as church. He noted that this is an answer to the call for a “platform for knowledge exchange” in Vision 2019.

Mr. Dymond highlighted key elements of the Community. He showed members the online lectionary and the eight blogs maintained by leaders across Canada on topics ranging from children’s ministry to liturgy.

All Council of General Synod members are already members of the Community and have used it in yesterday’s discussions.

Members had questions and comments for Mr. Dymond. Some are already participating in and enjoying the Community. Others said they feel that time and tech know-how are barriers to joining.

Mr. Dymond suggested that the Community could be a flexible, alternative means for Canadian Anglicans to meet. He also answered various questions from members, including how the privacy functions worked.

The Primate led COGS members in a celebration of new ministry for the Community. Pentecost themes were woven throughout and at the high point of the service, the Primate passed Jesse’s tablet computer back to him—a symbol of his new ministry.

Primate’s Reflections

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate, began his reflections by noting that he’s been in this ministry for almost five years. He said it’s been hectic but he values the opportunities he has had to retreat, often at the Society for the Saint John the Evangelist in Cambridge, Mass. He said that often when he retreats, and as he gets older, he loves delving into the farewell discourse of John 13

to 17.

The Primate observed, on this eve of Pentecost, that “the Johannine Pentecost is more so than the wind and fire. It’s about the breath of Jesus breathing in me. I need both experiences of Pentecost.”

As always in these reflections, the Primate rejoiced in his visits to the church across Canada. He has visited all dioceses but two and has especially appreciated visiting members of the Anglican Military Ordinariate.

He said that more and more he is appreciating how he is the servant of everyone. “All I have is given to me,” he said.

Archbishop Hiltz emphasized that he is pleased to see the Marks of Mission become “household language” across the church. He reminded COGS that it was not Vision 2019, but the Marks of Mission, that were supposed to catch on across the church.

The Primate then moved through the Marks of Mission, describing how he is seeing each lived out across the church—and how he is grateful for these gifts.

For “teaching and baptizing new believers” he celebrated the youth work of the Canadian-Anglican Youth (CLAY) Gathering and for “Transforming the unjust structures of society,” he named the work of the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, which he says enjoys a “beautiful” relationship with General Synod.

Finally the Primate closed by requesting prayers for the next Archbishop of Canterbury and for the whole Anglican Communion. The Primate said that after he heard the announcement about Rowan Williams’s retirement he wrote to him to thank him for working hard to “keep the bond of peace.”

“Five years into this ministry and I remain ever grateful for the kind of church that God is calling us to be,” said the Primate in conclusion.

Members responded by saying a simple “Thank you” back to the Primate.

At 9:00 PM the Ven. Sid Black closed in prayer and council adjourned.

