

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Nov. 18, 2012

Council began the last day of its fall meetings with Eucharist at 9:00 a.m. The Primate presided and preached about how our baptism should be a reminder of our new life in Christ.

Pensions Committee

A representative from the Pensions Committee introduced several resolutions, which COGS passed:

Resolution (about General Synod Pension Plan regulations)

COGS approved the Pension Committee's recommendation that the Regulations of Canon VIII be restated, effective Jan. 1, 2013.

Resolution (about General Synod Pension Plan regulations)

COGS approved the Pension Committee's recommendation that the 0.4% contribution to the long-term disability plan pre-2005 be continued until Dec. 31, 2012: effective Jan. 1, 2013, the employees' contribution to the General Synod Pension Plan be increased by 0.4% and approve amendments to Regulation 3.2 (Contributions) of Canon VIII effective Jan. 1, 2013 to implement this change.

Resolution

The Pension Contributions required from the Member in Active Service shall be 4.8% of salary [from 4.4%]

Resolution

COGS approved the Pension Committee's recommendation that the General Synod Pension Plan provide the legally required minimum death benefit to the surviving partner of beneficiary of the plan member, which is the commuted value of benefits accrued after 2012 and approve amendments to Regulation 7 to implement this change.

Resolution

COGS approved amendments to sections A.25, B.6, and C.4.3 of the Long-Term Disability Plan, effective September 26, 2012

Judy Robinson, Director of the Pension Office Corporation gave a brief presentation about the office's work and services. She said that the staff of ten in Toronto works on plan administration, accounting, and governance.

Ms. Robinson reminded COGS that her office offers retirement planning seminars, communications to plan members, and various liaising services with actuaries, asset managers, and investment consultants.

The Pension Office continues to work with The Episcopal Church to establish and administer pensions for Cuban Episcopal clergy.

Governance Working Group

David Phillip Jones of the Governance Working Group outlined major areas of work, including

-Preparing a draft amendment of Canon 22 for National Indigenous Ministry, according to input from the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and Sacred Circle.

-Preparing a draft canon on elections of Bishops Ordinary of the Canadian Forces.

-Working on a memo for bishops about the need to clarify that revocation of licence terminates any office or employment held by a member of the clergy.

-Working with the General Secretary and Resources for Mission staff to improve statistical information from parishes. This is essential because General Synod 2010 voted to revise the formula for representation to General Synod. Representation now depends on average attendance, which GWG is proposing be measured over two years on the Sundays of Easter, Pentecost, the second Sunday of September, and



Christmas. This proposal will come to the COGS March, 2013, meeting.

-Revising the current consecutive two-term limit for COGS members. Mr. Jones noted that this limit is unconstitutional and should be removed from the Handbook. In a straw poll, members agreed it was a good direction to remove this limit (which applies to consecutive terms, and does not apply to committees).

Structures consultation

Janet Marshall, the consultant who will facilitate the Primate's January consultation on restructuring, reminded COGS about questions they formulated and selected earlier in the meeting. Ms. Marshall had clustered the questions together and asked members to gather according to which clusters interested them.

For 20 minutes, members discussed how to articulate what their questions are, who to direct the question to, and to predict what must go well for these questions to be addressed. Council members who will be at the consultation are now charged with carrying these insights forward to January.

Emerging comments included the following: "We need to know specifically what kind of work is getting funded at Church House." "We need to develop an elevator speech to summarize the work of General Synod." "We need to look at our work with new eyes and challenge what we've done in the past."

After a hymn and a prayer, members took a lunch break from 12:00 to 1:00.

Reflection from Episcopal partner

Martha Gardner, partner from The Episcopal Church, said she was thrilled to be re-elected as TEC's partner on COGS. She reviewed the structures of TEC's governing bodies and made some corresponding suggestions for the Canadian church.

Among other comments, Ms. Gardner noted there might be strength in more intentional membership overlap between COGS and standing committees, and that regular reports from General Synod staff might be useful and welcome.

Ms. Gardner applauded the work of COGS's Planning and Agenda Team and the progress towards the Joint Anglican-Lutheran assembly.

Finally, Ms. Gardner wished COGS well as it undertakes restructuring work. She noted that TEC has been through similar challenges and said she would hold

COGS in her prayers.

Reflection from ELCIC partner

The Rev. Doug Reble, partner from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, also noted that his church has gone through major restructuring work. He noted that the proposed synod-level changes for structural renewal were rejected at all ELCIC synods and will now only include changes to the national church bodies.

Mr. Reble noted that because of this process the ELCIC will now include a new category of church membership: "synodically recognized ministries," which could mean very new missions or historic congregations that now meet without a building.

Indigenous Ministries greatly influenced Mr. Reble's time at COGS. He appreciated the Gospel-Based Discipleship Bible studies and the reflections from the Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor, Archdeacon Sid Black, and Peter Kitchekeesik. "The Anglican Church of Canada is a healing place," he said.

Finally, Mr. Reble also wished COGS well in its work of restructuring, which he said was a time to discern what to "stop, start, and continue."

Reflection from PWRDF

The Rev. David Pritchard, representative from the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, first spoke about his 20-year friendship with the Rev. Ellinah Ntombi Wamukova, the first female bishop in Africa.

Mr. Pritchard encouraged COGS to include more opportunities for small group discussions. He also encouraged COGS to be prophetic, quoting words from the movie *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "Sometimes a brave man has to do something that other men are not prepared to do."

"I'm intensely proud of all of you," Mr. Pritchard said in conclusion. "Our church is blessed to have this group of people in leadership roles at this time in the life of the church."

Faith, Worship, and Ministry conversation

Members returned to consider questions that Dr. Lela Zimmer introduced Saturday on behalf of the Faith, Worship, and Ministry. Members spent ten minutes discussing these questions:

-How important to the mission and identity of the Anglican Church of Canada is the work of the FWMC?

-If FWMC were to be reconceived or restructured, what might replace it? What would it look like?

Members reported back from their table groups, bringing comments including: "The committee is important to our mission and identity." "The committee could be more representative racially, theologically, and geographically." "Because FWMC has such a large mandate, its work should be prioritized and perhaps not arise spontaneously from the floor of synod."

COGS members turned to address the meeting's remaining resolutions:

FWM resolutions

Resolution

COGS received the FWM committee report on the Theological and Ecclesiological Implications of the Adoption or non-Adoption of the Anglican Communion Covenant.

Resolution

COGS resolved to express its support of the Primate's letter to Minister Toews, and express its deep concern over the removal of part-time chaplaincies from prison services, recognizing that this move will have a disproportionately negative effect on the provision of much-needed chaplaincy services to non-Christian inmates.

Resources for Mission resolution

Resolution

That the first item under terms of reference for the Resources for Mission Committee be changed to read "Develop and continue to update a theology of stewardship for the church." [It previously read "theology of philanthropy."]

Members' concerns

Council members raised and discussed assorted concerns. Some had problems using facility wifi accessing COGS materials on The Community, the church's online conversation space. Dean Peter Elliott, Planning and Agenda Team chair, said that organizers were aware of the problem and will work to address it.

Another member raised concerns with the Truth and

Reconciliation process for document collection. The TRC had a mandate to review material in Anglican national and diocesan archives, but this work has stalled for budget reasons. General Secretary the Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson noted that General Synod is carrying this work and it will be addressed at an upcoming meeting of parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Key messages

In table groups, members brainstormed two headlines from the meeting, one positive and one negative thought, and their plans for reporting back.

Headlines included the following:

- COGS tackles essential questions on structures in order to reduce deficit
- Plunge of solidarity: COGS challenged to rethink ministry of whole church
- COGS rejoices at accomplishments of Sacred Circle
- COGS caught with its spirits up and cash down
- Missiologist brings inspirational messages

At 3:00, COGS finished its meeting by reciting the doxology from the Book of Alternative Services.

