

# COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

March 15, 2013

*At 8:45, COGS members began the second day of their spring meeting with Bible study and prayer. At 9:30 they met for business.*

## Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples

The Ven. Sid Black, ACIP co-chair, updated COGS on ACIP's recent meeting in Calgary. Among other work, ACIP members screened the new Sacred Circle documentary and heard updates from the youth council.

David Phillip Jones, chancellor and chair of the Governance Working Group, introduced proposed changes to Canon 22 on national Indigenous ministry. In 2009 the Governance Working Group asked ACIP to decide on processes for how to select future members of ACIP and Sacred Circle as well as how to select future National Indigenous Anglican Bishops. ACIP has worked on this task over the triennium and the revised canon now includes the council's suggestions.

### Resolution

COGS resolved to send this amending motion to Canon 22 on to General Synod.

## Joint Assembly

The Very Rev. Peter Wall, co-chair of the Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission and chair of the General Synod Planning Committee, updated COGS on work toward the event. Mr. Wall, who has experience in planning other General Synod events, said "The planning cycle for this has not only been the most challenging but the most delightful and the most grace filled." Mr. Wall thanked the Primate and National Bishop Susan Johnson (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) for how they have championed this event.

Mr. Wall provided several updates on the planning process, including these highlights: online registration is working well, the Joint Local Arrangements Committee is running smoothly, and work is underway for a powerful public witness event on Parliament Hill.

At Joint Assembly, Anglican and Lutheran members will

make joint statements on issues such as resource extraction. The council discussed how these statements, made in joint plenary sessions, can then be legally ratified by the separate entities of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The chancellor assured council that a proper process will be established so these statements can become legally valid.

COGS adopted several resolutions relating to new procedures and guidelines for General Synod 2013:

### Resolutions

COGS adopted the Nominating and Election Procedure for use at General Synod 2013.

COGS adopted the Guidelines for the Resolutions Committee, for use at the 2013 General Synod.

COGS adopted the No Debate List procedure for use at the 2013 General Synod.

COGS appointed members to sessional committees for General Synod 2013, with authority for the Prolocutor in consultation with the General Secretary to fill any vacancies that may occur.

*COGS members took a coffee break from 10:00 to 10:30.*

## Anglican Covenant

Archdeacon Harry Huskins, member of the Anglican Communion Working Group, provided a brief history of the Anglican Communion Covenant. He reminded council that the idea for a covenant arose in the early 2000s during a time of major tension in the Communion. The covenant was written, in several drafts, between 2006 and 2009, and Mr. Huskins noted that the Anglican Church of Canada had been faithful in considering and commenting on drafts. The working group has also produced a study guide for the church, available on [anglican.ca](http://anglican.ca).

Council members discussed what resolution about the Covenant should be brought to General Synod. Some



noted that there has been little interest in the Covenant at the local level. Others wondered who would oversee further study and work on the Covenant.

Council members agreed to table the resolution and set up a smaller group to decide on new wording at this meeting.

*COGS members took a lunch break from noon until 1:00.*

### **Conversations about structures: part three**

Janet Marshall, facilitator of the structures consultation, and Archbishop Colin Johnson, member of the ongoing structures working group, shared results from the feedback COGS members submitted yesterday—their affirmations, questions, concerns, and significant reservations.

Ms. Marshall reported that many people affirmed the idea of moving to smaller committees, fewer meetings, and more resources for ministry rather than governance.

There was less agreement, however, on the questions, concerns, and reservations. Archbishop Johnson shared one of many contradictions in the responses. For example, one comment said the proposal was as “a move to decentralization” and another saw the same thing as “a move to centralization.”

Ms. Marshall also said she sensed a theme of lament in the feedback. Members expressed that some things will be lost as this work continues.

The structures working group set up workshops based on the main concerns from the feedback. COGS members rotated through these three:

1. General Secretary the Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson and Chancellor David Phillip Jones led a conversation on leadership that explored how a number of groups such as the Officers of General Synod, the Planning and Agenda Team, and the Management Team could support and serve the Council of General Synod.

2. Archbishop Colin Johnson and Cynthia Haines-Turner led a conversation on relationships and participation. They discussed, among other things, the differences between electronic and face-to-face meetings.

3. Janet Marshall and Melissa Green led a conversation on “The way that we work.” They covered the questions “How can we ensure that work over next triennium holds to values?” and “How can all these parts stay coordinated?”

*Members met in workshops until 3:35 and took a short break. They returned to plenary at 4:00.*

### **Faith, Worship, and Ministry**

Members from the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee presented the wide variety of work they have accomplished over the triennium. The Ven. Dr. Lynne McNaughton introduced the work that they hope will continue into the next triennium. Dr. Lela Zimmer showed how FWMC manages many relationships with bodies inside and outside of General Synod. She stated a need for communication with Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners. The Very Rev. Peter Wall provided an update on the work of the Liturgy Task Force.

The Rev. Canon Andrew Asbil, FWMC chair, reflected on a full triennium. He said the committee believes that a standing committee is important to maintain, but it welcomes the work of the structures consultation and the opportunity to organize in new ways.

Mr. Asbil asked COGS to reflect on two questions: First, “Is there a highlight for you in the work that FWM has done over last triennium?” (Responses included “youth initiatives,” and “Competencies for Theological Education for Ordination to the Priesthood.”)

Second, “What are some of the emerging issues we need to face that are missing from our report?” (Members noted “a continuing discussion of open table,” and “Anglican identity,” among other points.)

FWMC has presented a variety of resolutions to COGS, but after a brief discussion, council agreed to only address two now. The rest will be considered after final structures decisions at this meeting.

### **Resolutions**

Council of General Synod recommended the following motions to General Synod:

That General Synod receive the Jerusalem Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (To Love and Serve the Lord), and refer it to the Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission to coordinate a process of study and response.

That the General Synod receive the Final Report of the Primate’s Commission on Theological Education and Formation for Presbyteral Ministry and adopt Competencies for Theological Education for Ordination to the Priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada and commend this document to the dioceses for

implementation. (This resolution also contained specific recommendations for how General Synod could mobilize this document at all levels of the church.)

*Council members took a dinner break from 5:30 until 7:00.*

### **Racial Justice in our Church**

Esther Wesley, Anglican Healing Fund coordinator, spoke about the reality of racism today. She said that some people experience it on a daily basis but some will never completely understand the reality.

Henriette Thompson, public witness coordinator for social justice, introduced the Hon. Justice Frank Iacobucci's report on First Nations representation on Ontario juries. The report found that First Nations people are overrepresented in prisons and underrepresented on juries and in roles that administer justice. Ms. Thompson said this was just one recent example of institutionalized racism.

Each COGS member received a copy of *Cracking Open White Identity towards Transformation*, produced by the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network, of which the Anglican Church of Canada is a member. Council members spent time in table groups discussing one of the book's reflections.

### **Primate's World Relief and Development Fund**

The Rev. David Pritchard, vice-president of the PWRDF board, and Adele Finney, executive director of PWRDF, updated the council on recent work.

Ms. Finney noted that PWRDF has been hard at work rewriting its bylaws in accordance with Imagine Canada regulations. They were helped in this work by former chancellor Ron Stevenson and current chancellor David Phillip Jones.

Ms. Finney also noted that like General Synod, PWRDF is also working to improve its structures. They have reduced the number of board members and use task forces for their work.

As PWRDF moves through a time of transformation, said Ms. Finney, she asks staff to consider "How does what we propose to do support vulnerable people to become agents of transformation in their own lives and in their communities?" Ms. Finney believes this is a Biblical perspective, as God calls people to participate in restoration.

Ms. Finney turned to describe three new, key PWRDF projects. First, PWRDF and Indigenous Ministries are

exploring a partnership around water. Second, PWRDF is partnering with Episcopal Relief and Development to develop an office of integrated development in the Episcopal Church of Cuba, which has a longstanding relationship with General Synod. This new office will provide community development training to 25 community leaders per year.

Finally, Ms. Finney described a recent visit to a model village in Haiti supported by PWRDF. This and other Haitian projects were accomplished through much collaboration with other faith-based NGOs.

### **Anglican Communion Covenant**

COGS returned to address the earlier matter of the Anglican Communion Covenant:

#### **Resolution**

COGS passed the following resolutions to General Synod:

Request the conversations in the Anglican Church of Canada about the proposed Covenant for the Anglican Communion continue during the next triennium, and

Request the ACWG to monitor continued developments about the proposed Covenant for the Anglican Communion and report to the spring 2016 meeting of COGS and

Direct COGS to bring a recommendation regarding the adoption of the Covenant to General Synod 2016.

The council then discussed how the Anglican Covenant conversation should be handled on the floor of General Synod. Some wondered if it should be a time for committee of the whole so that people could share their views on this important topic. Others wondered if there would be enough time for conversation in a tight Joint Assembly agenda.

The Joint Assembly Planning Committee will now consider this input in shaping the agenda.

*At 8:45, council members ended the day with Holden Evening Prayer, sung in the chapel.*

