

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



***We envision a church growing
in membership, faith
and service in God's world***

**Sunday, November 15, 2009
Queen of Apostles, Mississauga, Ont.**

COGS members met first in their Bible study groups then gathered for business at 9:45.

**Missionary Society of the Church in
Canada (MSCC)**

After reviewing the orders of the day, COGS adjourned and reconvened as the MSCC Board of Management.

Treasurer Michèle George gave a history of the MSCC. She said it originally carried the missionary work of General Synod—including residential schools. When General Synod was restructured in 1969, MSCC was maintained as a separately incorporated charity, because it still received bequests. (Some of these funds are loaned to northern clergy for purchasing cars).

Ms. George reviewed the financial statements of the MSCC. This led to a discussion about whether the MSCC could be amalgamated into General Synod.

***Resolution**

The MSCC board approved the financial statements of the MSCC for the year ended December 31, 2008 and agreed that any two officers be authorized to sign the statements on the board's behalf.

***Resolution**

As the statements of General Synod incorporate the operations of the Missionary Society and are audited by Ernst and Young, the MSCC board waived the requirement for a separate audit of the MSCC.

***Resolution**

COGS directed officers of General Synod to review the MSCC and report to the meeting in March with suggestions for the future continuance of the Missionary Society under the not-for-profit corporations act.

Planning and Agenda Team (PAT)

The group adjourned as the MSCC and reconvened as COGS. Suzanne Lawson presented a resolution recommending that PAT's terms of reference be updated.

The resolution recommended that the number of PAT members be reduced and fewer people be elected to PAT (and more appointed) because of the need for specific skill sets. It also recommended that PAT's responsibilities be updated.

COGS members discussed this resolution and many felt that aspects of it needed to be clarified.

***Resolution**

COGS asked PAT to reconsider their resolution on updating their terms of reference.

**General Synod Planning Committee
(GSPC)**

Barbara Burrows, chair of GSPC, updated COGS on plans for General Synod 2010, to be held June 3 to 11 in Halifax, N.S. Since the theme is nautical ("Feeling the winds of God – Charting a New Course") several General Synod elements have been renamed, for example, home groups are called "galley groups."

Ms. Burrows shared several other details of General Synod 2010: two half-day sessions would be spent on community building, Lutheran partners would offer pastoral care, and daily worship (at morning, evening and noon) would follow the Marks of Mission.

COGS members asked Ms. Burrows questions ranging from "will there be enough electrical outlets in the plenary hall for all our laptops" (no), and "Are the conference facilities accessible for elders?" (more so than in previous years).

Partners reflections:

Dorothy Davies-Flindall reported on her experience as COGS's representative to the

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Episcopal Church (TEC)'s executive council. She noted, among other things, that at their October meeting the Marks of Mission and the Millennium Development Goals emerged as clear priorities for TEC.

Martha Gardner, TEC's partner to COGS, briefly described the structure of TEC. She noted that TEC has nine provinces and includes churches in 18 countries (many in Central America). This was her first visit to COGS and she said she appreciated members' punctuality and the presence of a chaplain.

Archbishop Colin Johnson reported on his work as COGS's representative on the national church council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). He gave a brief history of ELCIC cooperation with the Anglican Church of Canada and noted that the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission is working on topics relating to the diaconate, joint parishes, a common national office, and other matters.

The Rev. Doug Reble, ELCIC's new representative on COGS, updated members on the ELCIC's June national convention. He noted that this convention did not address resolutions relating to human sexuality, although these will arise at the 2011 Saskatoon convention. He also offered reflections on new, different, and "downright weird" elements of the Anglican Church of Canada, including the absence of membership lists. He also responded to the Vision 2019 strategic planning work and noted that the church's vision is already present in the Marks of Mission.

***Resolution**

COGS passed a resolution to communicate its solidarity with and prayers for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America after its recent budget cuts and staff reductions.

COGS members took a lunch break from 12:00 to 1:00. The Primate and General Secretary surprised Archbishop Caleb Lawrence with a cake to celebrate his retirement after 30 years as bishop of Moosonee.

Consensus Decision Making

Suzanne Lawson led COGS members to reflect on their experiment this triennium with

consensus decision making instead of parliamentary procedure.

COGS members offered a range of critical feedback. Some said that the consensus process made it difficult to express disagreement without blocking a resolution entirely. Others said that the consensus model should be used for the most important issues, not the least important.

KAIROS

Henriette Thompson, director of Partnerships, and Cheryl Curtis, executive director of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund gave a report on KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. The Anglican Church is a member of KAIROS and has two spaces on the board.

Ms. Thompson and Ms. Curtis presented highlights from KAIROS's history, including its campaigns around jubilee, bottled water, and energy justice initiatives. Currently KAIROS is working through a strategic planning process.

Ms. Thompson and Bishop Tom Morgan gave a brief update on KAIROS's work with Alberta's oil sands. The two took a road trip to Alberta in April to meet with those touched by the oil industry, from Indigenous Peoples to Syncrude employees. "The learning curve was very steep," said Bishop Morgan. He said he realized his "own complicity in depleting fossil fuels."

Key messages

Members named key messages from the meeting, including:

- We experienced the historical significance of COGS recommending that General Synod enact a canon on Indigenous Ministry.
- We appreciated the overall quality of the Governance Working Group report
- We welcomed our new partners
- We grounded ourselves in prayer and Bible study.
- We experienced difficulty and discomfort with the decisions that needed to be made on the budget.

At 2:00, the fall 2009 meeting of COGS closed with a celebration of the Eucharist at which the Primate preached and presided.