

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

November 20, 2010

Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre, Mississauga, Ont.

From 9:00 to 10:00, members met in their Bible study groups. They met for business at 10:00.

Response to anti-racism training

Each member signed a statement that acknowledged their commitment to the council's Charter for Racial Justice. This is a direct application of the anti-racism work from yesterday's workshop.

How COGS makes decisions

Dr. Lela Zimmer led a presentation and discussion on how the council will make decisions in the next triennium. She noted that COGS has used a blended model, where consensus decision-making is the default mode, but COGS moves into parliamentary procedure for some subjects, including finances.

Members spoke about the strengths and weaknesses of each model. One member noted that both models contain assumptions of how COGS functions as a community. Another member noted that the parliamentary procedure was more time-efficient.

Dr. Zimmer gave an introduction to consensus decision-making. She noted that this model is based on dialogue and mutual respect. The process ideally goes as follows: the issue is introduced, a proposal emerges, agreement is tested, and consensus emerges.

COGS took a break from 10:30 to 10:45. They returned to sing "Silent Night" as part of the Silent Night Project. All Canadian Anglicans are encouraged to sing the hymn on Nov. 28 and to donate a toonie to support the work of Anglican military chaplains. Members donated \$140.

Budget

Michèle George, treasurer, transitioned the discussion to a consideration of the 2011 budget.

A wide-ranging discussion followed. Some members praised the work of the Management Team in producing a no-deficit budget. Others discussed the

reduction of Partnerships grants to overseas partners and wondered how dioceses and parishes could continue this work.

Members discussed the budget in table groups. When they shared their responses in plenary, the discussion turned to whether members needed to hear other presentations from Financial Management and the Department of Philanthropy before approving the budget. After testing the consensus of the house, the Primate said that COGS would address the subject after lunch.

At 12:00, COGS took a lunch break and reconvened at 1:30.

Financial Management Committee

Bishop James Cowan gave a presentation on the work of the Financial Management Committee. He explained the committee's responsibilities, which include overseeing the policies and procedures that govern General Synod's finances.

This was the first of several presentations that COGS heard today from the standing committees that govern the work of General Synod's departments.

Nationwide, diocesan-centred fundraising initiative

COGS heard a presentation about a proposed fundraising initiative from the Department of Philanthropy. The presentation was introduced by the Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson, member of the Philanthropy Committee, and Sam Carriere, interim director of Philanthropy. The bulk of the presentation was given by Suzanne Lawson in her capacity as consultant to the Department of Philanthropy.

During the last triennium, COGS had heard a presentation about a national fundraising initiative but reactions were mixed. Archdeacon Thompson emphasized that this was a new proposal from a new committee and that it aimed to "source new water" instead of "diverting water from an old watershed."

Suzanne Lawson explained that the Philanthropy Committee envisioned this work as a number of campaigns in dioceses that would be collaboratively held together by a centralized staff at General Synod. The initiative would raise funds for parishes, dioceses, and General Synod. It would be focused on mission priorities and would roll out in three stages or "waves" over the next five to six years.

Ms. Lawson proposed that the initiative be done together as a church, with cooperation across national, diocesan, and parish structures. She noted that now was a good time for this initiative, as the church was clarifying its identity through the Marks of Mission and Vision 2019.

After asking some questions for clarification, COGS members spent time in small groups discussing this proposal. In plenary they identified strengths, opportunities, hopes, results, and concerns. The matter was then set aside to be addressed in the evening.

Budget resolution

Resolution

COGS voted and approved the 2011 budget.

Council took a coffee break at 3:00 and reconvened at 3:15.

Presentations from Standing Committees, Councils, and Boards

- Pensions

Laura Solomonian from the Pensions Committee presented the committee's report.

- Faith, Worship, and Ministry (FWM)

COGS heard an update on the work of the FWM Committee from committee members Dr. Lela Zimmer and the Rev. Lynne McNaughton, along with the Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully, interim director of the FWM Department. They explained that they had divided their General Synod-mandated work into four working groups: Ethics and Public Life; Congregational Life and Leadership; Anglican, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations; and Worship. The committee members also noted that the FWM department needed more staff to work on these many assignments.

- Communications and Information Resources

Sam Carriere, director of Communications and Information Resources, noted that COGS needed to approve the amendment of CIRC's terms of reference.

He also said that CIR is examining new ways of providing library services now that the librarian has been given notice of lay off.

- Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP)
National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald outlined ACIP's main areas of work. These include innovating models of community for urban areas, working on issues of non-stipendiary Indigenous ministry, and addressing ongoing governance issues regarding the national Sacred Circle gathering, ACIP, etc. He noted that Indigenous Ministries understands itself as a spiritual movement that is "blessed by a merciful God."

- Partnerships and Ecojustice (PMEJ)

Cynthia Haines-Turner reported on the PMEJ committee meeting, which discussed, among many other things, the need for a shift from a "church-shaped mission" to a "mission-shaped church." She also noted that the PMEJ report was written before major changes in the department, i.e. the laying off of four of nine staff members.

Henriette Thompson, former director of Partnerships and current coordinator for ecumenical, interfaith, and government relations, described the staff persons who have been laid off in the recent restructuring. She noted that the staff who were leaving had served a total of 73 years at General Synod. She said they were people who had "put their heart and soul into the work."

- Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF)

Bishop Tom Morgan, PWRDF board member, and Adele Finney, executive director of PWRDF, gave an update on the work. Ms. Finney described PWRDF's four strategic themes: weaving a culture of peace and justice, building a moral economy, accompanying communities in crisis, and sharing together in the healing of the earth.

Ms. Finney also updated the council on PWRDF's work to ensure continued funding from the Canadian International Development Agency, and noted that an Anglican development alliance is cohering at the Anglican Communion level.

Honouring Margaret Shawyer

COGS decided to make Margaret Shawyer an honorary life member of the council, in recognition of her exemplary service at over 50 council meetings. Members then sang a grace that praised God for Margaret Shawyer, who was never "snoring" when business got "boring."

At 4:45 council adjourned for a social time and dinner. Council reconvened at 7:00.

Standing committee presentations, continued

- Philanthropy Committee

Archdeacon Thompson presented an update on the new Philanthropy committee. Its responsibilities include developing and updating a theology of philanthropy for the church and ensuring that there is a broad presence of fundraising techniques in the church.

Resolution

COGS approved, by consensus, the Department of Philanthropy's terms of reference.

Archdeacon Thompson introduced a resolution that would clarify the purpose of the Anglican Appeal, General Synod's annual appeal.

Resolutions

COGS approved, by consensus, to designate proceeds of the Anglican Appeal as available for all General Synod ministries in furtherance of the Marks of Mission.

Nationwide fundraising initiative, continued

Suzanne Lawson, again speaking as a consultant to the department of Philanthropy, responded to members' questions about a nation-wide fundraising initiative.

Resolutions

COGS approved, by consensus, the following resolutions:

1. That the Philanthropy Department be authorized to initiate and facilitate a nation-wide, diocesan-centred fundraising initiative to benefit parishes, dioceses, and General Synod.
2. That dioceses not currently involved in a similar campaign be encouraged to engage in this initiative, with the understanding that the "case for support"

will include aspects of the case for General Synod.

3. That a feasibility study for this initiative be conducted in up to ten dioceses that are willing and prepared, with the results of the assessment to come to the participating dioceses and the Council of General Synod.
4. That the Council of General Synod approve \$200,000 to be internally restricted from the unrestricted funds in 2011 to invest in the Nationwide Fundraising Initiative being undertaken by the Philanthropy Department.

Digital document meeting

Bishop James Cowan introduced a resolution to reduce paper consumption at COGS.

Resolution

COGS resolved to begin to move towards implementation of digital document meetings of the council during this triennium. They also resolved that the Planning and Agenda Team be requested to develop policy for the implementation of this measure.

Vision 2019

Suzanne Lawson described the need for a group to implement the priorities and practices of Vision 2019, General Synod's strategic plan.

Resolution

COGS resolved, by consensus, that an implementation team be established for the implementation of Vision 2019 and that the nominating committee bring forward the necessary nominations for election by COGS.

Sue Winn shared results of the feedback that members had given yesterday on Vision 2019 practices and priorities. She noted that each member would go home with an assignment related to one of the priorities or practices.

Anglican Fund for Healing and Reconciliation

Resolution

COGS approved the appointment of Mary Lysecki (Rupert's Land) to the board of the Anglican Fund for Healing and Reconciliation.

At 8:00, the Ven. Sidney Black led COGS in night prayer. Council adjourned for the evening.