

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



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

**Saturday, November 15, 2008
Valhalla Inn, Toronto, Ont.**

COGS members began the day at 9:00 with a Eucharist, then spent time with their Bible study groups.

10:30-10:45 Break

Resolutions Review

Council considered the meeting's resolutions for possible inclusion on a "no debate" list. They agreed to discuss three resolutions in more detail later.

Budget Session II

COGS members had an opportunity to discuss the 2009 consolidated budget and recovery plan that were presented yesterday.

Monica Patten, chair of the Financial Management and Development Committee (FMDC) noted that members' questions (submitted by paper) fell into two categories: needing more detailed information from the treasurer, Peter Blachford, and discussing the process by which COGS will approve (or not approve) the budget.

Treasurer Peter Blachford gave a more detailed outline of the church's current and future financial position. He addressed, among other things, the questions around the church's overdraft. He said that General Synod has a \$2 million line of overdraft on the national office building, and that we used this line of credit in

January and February. The cost for accessing this credit was \$50,000.

Mr. Blachford stated that General Synod has run a total of \$2.3 million deficit since 2003. These deficits occurred because of problems with the Anglican Book Centre, and decreasing diocesan contributions.

Monica Patten then reviewed several of the submitted questions. Here are some summarized samples:

Q: How did FMDC consult with other standing committees of General Synod in the creation of this budget?

A: We do need to consult more effectively. This has not been done at this point, and may be a governance issue that needs to be addressed.

Q: Can COGS canonically approve a broad, consolidated budget without more details?

A: We have confirmed in the canons that it's COGS's responsibility to confirm the budget. As mentioned yesterday, it is Management Team's responsibility to work out the line-by-line details.

The floor was then opened for questions, and members raised several concerns. Among other things, they asked where exactly cuts will be made, and why only one budget paradigm was being presented.

Suzanne Lawson then asked COGS members to consider a proposed set of criteria for budget reduction within their table groups

After fifteen minutes of discussion, each table presented one significant reflection on the criteria. These included criticism that the criteria were too general, and that the budget relied too heavily on philanthropy to raise money for the future.

12:30-1:30 Council broke for midday prayers, then lunch.

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Governance Session I

The prolocutor introduced David Jones, chair of the Governance Working Group (GWG) and chancellor of the Diocese of Edmonton.

Mr. Jones explained that the group has decided to take on four files:

1. General Synod resolutions A022 and A021 (about several changes to the Declaration of Principles and the Constitution)
2. General Synod resolution A188, about possible structural reform to enhance the mission of the church
3. Structure for national Indigenous ministry
4. The composition of the Church and COGS

Dr. Randall Fairey spoke specifically about the third file. He reviewed some important documents that articulated the church's relationship with Aboriginals.

Dr. Fairey noted that the priority for Indigenous ministry was to allow Aboriginals to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He then described a proposal for a new ecclesiastical Indigenous province, which would include all of Canada. This province would have similar structure and canons to other provinces, but the names may be different, depending on what the Indigenous members decide.

Mr. Jones then discussed the other three files. Among other comments, he mentioned that the GWG is considering reworking the formula by which diocesan representatives are elected to COGS. Three principles would be upheld in this new formulation:

1. All of the 30 dioceses should have significant voice at General Synod regardless of size.
2. The number of members from each diocese should be proportional to the number of Anglicans in the diocese.
3. General Synod should not have so many members that it cannot function

effectively as a forum for the exchange of views, the advocacy of positions, and the formulation of policy.

Currently there are 32 elected diocesan members of COGS, but with the new proposal there would be 18.

Financial Management

Monica Patten introduced Dr. Holland Hendrix, the new director of philanthropy.

Dr. Hendrix reviewed his report, "Achieving Financial Equilibrium: A Development Plan Forward for the Anglican Church of Canada." He says he is working on developing a theology of philanthropy, intensifying gift planning efforts, preparing for national fundraising initiative, and setting up a professional and effective fundraising department at Church House.

He highlighted the need for a permanent investment fund to be established.

Dr. Hendrix finally asked COGS members to do some homework: to read his report and mark it with a red pen where they see themselves fitting in. He wanted to hear their feedback by email or phone.

COGS members then asked Dr. Hendrix several questions. They raised concerns about the fundraising language in the report not being appropriate for a church, which should use the lens of stewardship. As well, the members heard enthusiasm from FMDC about Dr. Hendrix's work.

3:00-3:30 Coffee break**Covenant Response and Preparation for the Anglican Consultative Council**

Bishop Colin Johnson reviewed the history of the Anglican Covenant, which, if accepted, will define the relationships between the different provinces of the Anglican Communion. He described how Canadians were providing input on this process.

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Bishop Johnson described how at the Lambeth Conference, bishops gave their responses to the covenant on a written questionnaire. These responses were collated by the Covenant Design Group.

Bishop Johnson then presented the most recent response of the Canadian Anglican Communion Working Group (ACWG), which met this fall. He presented some of the ACWG's concerns, including the content and tone of the covenant's appendix, which is more juridical, and less relational.

***Resolution**

COGS agreed to give approval in principle to the covenant process without committing to any specifics of text.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved that the ACWG report be forwarded to the Covenant Design Group as a further response from the Anglican Church of Canada.

Youth Initiatives Task Force

Judy Steers, national youth initiatives coordinator, spoke about Generation 2008, the national meeting of youth ministry leaders in London, Ont. last June. She said it provided opportunities for networking and professional development for youth leaders, and for some, it was the first time they had met professional colleagues in ministry.

Ms. Steers then showed a video that captured the energy of Generation 2008.

Stephanie DeForest, who attended Generation 2008, read the statement issued by the conference.

Dean Peter Wall spoke on behalf of the Youth Initiatives Task Force (YITF), which was established a year ago by COGS. The task force has met three times.

Dean Wall said there has been a damaging model of denying youth ministry stable funding. There has been no long-term planning. However, he said, there is a

burgeoning youth ministry movement in Canada right now that we should build on.

YITF presented specific recommendations for youth ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada:

- continue the part-time staff position at national church
- restructure the national youth website
- extend the part-time contract of youth staff writers (for website)
- establish the youth initiatives task force as a working group
- plan and support an opportunity for gathering diocesan youth ministry coordinators in 2009 for networking, support, training, and professional development
- make a commitment to hosting another national youth ministry forum, Generation 2011

A discussion followed, where members affirmed the value of youth ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada. Programs like Ask and Imagine and justice camps were highlighted. Several members commented on the creativity of Canadian youth ministry.

“We are not looking for church to invent a new band-aid,” said Dean Wall. “We must do what we can with what’s available, and we need to see a long-term vision.”

COGS considered a resolution on supporting these recommendations, but decided to wait until after the final budget discussion tomorrow.

Governance Session II

After a brief stretch break, COGS reconvened to discuss the four governance files presented that morning. Members asked questions about the challenge of a Canada-wide Indigenous ministries province, but also expressed excitement about this new structure. Several members asked questions about the proposed decrease in the size of COGS, and several said they felt that having a representative from each diocese was important.

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***Resolution**

COGS commended GWG for its work to date and approved the general direction the proposals the group is developing.

6:00 After announcements, COGS adjourned for the evening. Council members concluded their day with a dinner celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund.