

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



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

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**Sunday, November 16, 2008  
Valhalla Inn, Toronto, Ont.**

Council members began their day with Bible study at 8:30. They reconvened for business at 9:15.

**Resolutions**

Council first addressed resolutions relating to the budget.

**\*Resolution**

COGS recommended to General Synod 2010 that there be no deficit budgets for the work of General Synod after the year 2012.

Council then went in camera so Management Team could share in broad strokes how they were planning on cutting \$1.3 million from the 2009 budget.

After Management Team spoke, COGS members debated several issues around the 2009 budget. Some members raised concerns that the budget was not aggressive enough, as it still ran a \$800,000 deficit. Others urged the Council to adopt the budget as is.

**\*Resolution**

COGS approved the 2009 budget, as presented.

COGS considered a resolution “that the General Secretary’s office ensure sufficient financial and staff resources for the Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG) to fulfill its mandate, noting that on previous occasions,

funds for the extra costs of COGS training were granted from the budget for the healing and reconciliation work of General Synod.”

Suzanne Lawson moved that this matter be referred to the General Secretary’s Office for serious consideration in budget development.

**\*Resolution**

COGS resolved that in principle, and subject to funding availability, the Youth Initiatives Task Force, renamed as the Youth Initiatives Working Group, be established to continue through 2009 and beyond.

The purpose of the Working Group is

- to maintain vision and planning for successive years,
- to act as a consultative body to Council of General Synod in the Vision 2019 process and to the national staff position, and
- to stay broadly informed about the realities of ministry with and for youth and the need for training and formation of youth leaders.

**\*Resolution**

COGS moved to endorse in principle the Department of Philanthropy’s plan, “Achieving Financial Equilibrium: A Development Plan Forward for the Anglican Church of Canada.”

**\*Resolution**

COGS moved to establish a Philanthropy Committee for the purpose of providing leadership and support to philanthropy in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Bishop Greg Kerr-Wilson, Diocese of Qu’Appelle, introduced a resolution to make authorized liturgical texts available online.

Andy Seal, Canadian director of Augsburg Fortress and the Anglican Book Centre then spoke against the motion. He said that these liturgical books provide a source of income, and also, when you make texts available online, you lose control of the content and distribution. Finally, he noted that other

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printing companies could now download the texts and print unauthorized copies.

Council debated this resolution, and several concerns were raised. Members decided to refine the wording of the resolution so it could be reconsidered later.

**10:30-10:45 Break****Reflections**

Bishop Colin Johnson, Diocese of Toronto, reported on his role as Anglican Church of Canada representative on the National Church Council (NCC) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). He also sits on the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission.

Bishop Johnson noted some differences: NCC is a smaller group, and he is a full voting member.

He also noted that the NCC is dealing with the same issues as COGS, including strategic planning, and same-sex blessings. He said Anglicans and Lutherans are working out the challenges and joys of shared ministries and joint parishes.

“We are willing to engage fully, even if all the anomalies haven’t been worked out,” he said.

Judy Kochendorfer, the ELCIC representative on COGS, then presented her reflection. She said that she noted the strain and anxiety in this meeting, but also the passion that COGS members have for their church. She said she appreciated that Bible study, the Eucharist and prayers were central elements of every day.

Ms. Kochendorfer noted that the ELCIC is in a similarly constrained financial position, and she honoured the courage it takes to vote on budgets.

Finally, she mentioned that she would like to be made a full voting member of COGS, as Bishop Johnson is on NCC.

**Resolutions**

Council returned to consider the liturgical text resolution.

**\*Resolution**

COGS resolved to authorize the electronic publication to the web of the authorized worship resources of the Anglican Church of Canada for which the General Synod holds copyright, providing that necessary safeguards are in place to protect the integrity of the texts.

COGS then discussed their meeting schedule, considering that there are not funds for two meetings next year.

**\*Resolution**

COGS resolved that the Office of the General Secretary request dioceses and provinces to contribute to a pool for travel and accommodation expenses for a meeting of COGS in May 2009.

COGS then debated a resolution that presented a May 2009 teleconference as a possible second option if the travel pool plan failed. However, many members of the Council affirmed the importance of meeting face-to-face as a governing body. COGS decided to reject this resolution and seek funding, as explained above.

**\*Resolution**

COGS resolved to waive the requirement for an independent audit of the *Anglican Journal* for the financial years ended December 31, 2008 and 2009.

(The *Anglican Journal*’s financial records are already audited as part of Communications and Information Resources, so there is no need to duplicate this work.)

**\*Resolution**

After some bandying about of competing navigational adjectives, and wondering about the prevalence of gerunds in church language...

COGS resolved that the theme, “Feeling the Winds of God—charting a new course” be

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approved as the theme for General Synod 2010.

**\*Resolution**

Council resolved that a partner from ELCIC be included as a participant in planning meetings for General Synod 2010.

**12:00 Council broke for mid day prayers and lunch.****Reflections**

When Council reconvened at 1:30, Bishop Michael Ingham, Diocese of New Westminster and our representative on the TEC Executive Council, spoke about his work on the national council of the Episcopal Church of the USA (TEC). He mentioned their new advertising campaign, [putyourfaithtowork.org](http://putyourfaithtowork.org), and described how TEC's mode of governance differs from COGS.

Bishop Ingham made a number of observations about the tone of the TEC meetings. He said that TEC takes seriously the Anglican Communion and feels responsible for some of the strains at present.

He also mentioned that he takes every opportunity to thank TEC for their gift of over \$100,000 to the Anglican Church of Canada during the financial strains of residential schools litigation in the 1990s.

Finally, Bishop Ingham noted that the lens of mission is integral to TEC's national meetings, and every issue raised must pass the question, "what does this have to do with the mission of the church?"

**Key Messages**

Members of COGS brainstormed ideas for key messages, which will be formalized and distributed soon. Here are some samples:

-We are moving forward with national Indigenous ministries, specifically with a new governance structure, in full consultation with Indigenous Anglicans.

-We met our new director of philanthropy, Holland Hendrix.

-We struggled with and passed a budget for 2009 as a first step towards a balanced budget for 2012. We also struggled with and passed motions about philanthropy for the future of the church.

-We made budget decisions conscious of and saddened by the impact that these decisions will have on valued Church House staff.

-We celebrated and affirmed the initiatives in youth ministry, particularly around youth leadership training.

-We celebrated what God has done through the years of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund.

-We're looking at changing the governance of COGS and General Synod in terms of representation and size.

-The meeting was upheld and surrounded by a context of prayer, Bible study, and the Eucharist.

-We listened to four members of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples as they shared their work together.

-We re-affirmed our need to meet face to face as a governing body of the national church.

-We commissioned the Vision 2019 working group to continue with strategic planning and robust consultation.

-We were encouraged by reflections from our partners.

-We sang "Amazing Grace" in support of the Amazing Grace Project.

**2:00 COGS ended with a celebration of the Eucharist.**